

SWAN ROLLS AND BEAK MARKINGS. HUSBANDRY, EXPLOITATION AND REGULATION OF *Cygnus olor* IN ENGLAND, c. 1100-1900

Arthur MACGREGOR*

Summary

From at least the thirteenth century until the late eighteenth or nineteenth century it was customary in England for swans, even although left on the open water, to be regarded as private property. Ownership was restricted and was closely regulated by officials appointed by the Crown. Marks applied to the beak (and sometimes to the feet or legs) of the birds signified the identity of the owner, all such marks having to be registered with the royal Swan-master. Books or rolls of marks were drawn up by the royal officials as aids to the administration of their duties. Many such documents survive, and, together with the laws and ordinances relating to swans which were promulgated from time to time, they allow many details of the practice of swan keeping to be reconstructed.

Key Words

Swans, Swan rolls, Beak marks.

Résumé

Registres de cygnes et marques de bec. Gestion, exploitation et régulation de Cygnus olor en Angleterre, entre 1100 et 1900.

Depuis le treizième siècle au moins et jusqu'à la fin du dix-huitième ou du dix-neuvième siècle, en Angleterre, on avait coutume de considérer les cygnes comme des animaux privés, même lorsqu'ils vivaient en eau libre. Leur possession était réglementée et étroitement surveillée par des officiels appointés par la Couronne. Des signes appliqués au bec (et parfois aux pieds ou aux pattes) des oiseaux marquaient l'identité du propriétaire. Tous ces signes étaient enregistrés par le maître des cygnes royaux. Des livres ou des registres de signes étaient dressés par les officiers du Roi pour servir à l'administration de leurs devoirs. Beaucoup de ces documents existent encore. Associés à des lois et règlements sur les cygnes, promulgués de temps en temps, ils permettent de reconstituer de manière détaillée les pratiques de gestion des cygnes.

Mots clés

Cygnes, Registres de cygnes, Marques de becs.

My concern in this paper is with the widespread ownership of swans that was formerly a characteristic of the rural economy of England and in particular with the elaborate regulatory system that evolved around it. While my own interest in the subject is of comparatively recent date⁽¹⁾, it quickly became apparent to me that a great deal of invaluable research on the subject had been undertaken by the late Norman F. Ticehurst: the extent and depth of his contribution to the subject may be judged from the frequent references to his published works which appear in my own text. In addition to these, I benefited from access to Ticehurst's archive, which he presented to the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1960: a version of the present paper was first read before the Society in 1995.

Early history: the development of swan-keeping in England

The species with which we are concerned is the Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) (fig. 1). Despite earlier speculation that it was artificially introduced to the British Isles (Gurney, 1921: 109; Ticehurst, 1924: 174; Idem, 1957: 1-9) there seems no reason to doubt that it is entirely native to England as it is to much of northern and central Europe. Corroborating evidence for this conclusion is provided by archaeozoological studies which have recognized the bones of Mute Swan from Iron Age contexts at Glastonbury and Meare, Somerset (Gray, 1966: 409; Harrison and Cowles, 1977: 25); other swan bones, possibly *Cygnus olor*, come from Romano-British sites at Barton, Corbridge and

* Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford OX1 2PH, England.

(1) I owe my introduction to the subject to a handsomely presented catalogue of antiquarian books sent to me by Simon Finch Rare Books which included an example of a seventeenth-century book of swan-marks. Mr Simon Finch generously allowed me to photograph this volume and to transcribe the text (see Appendix).

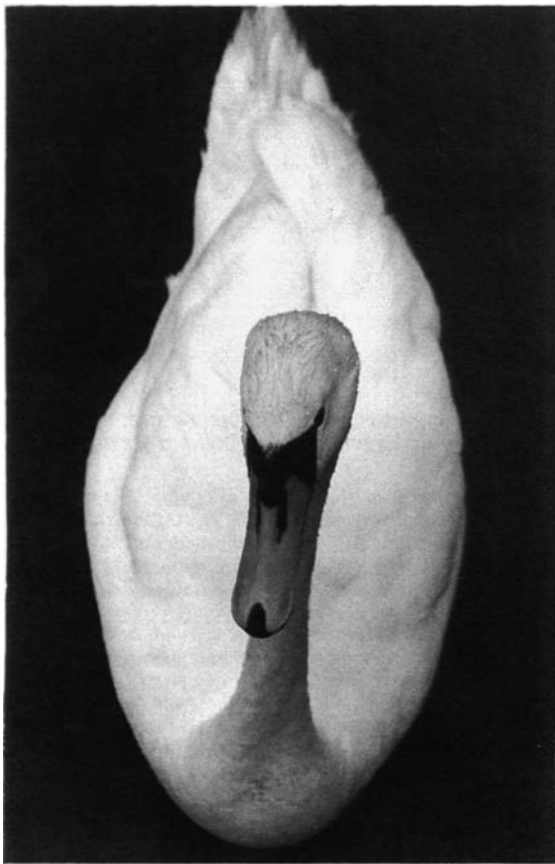


Fig. 1 : Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*). Note the cusped 'nail' at the tip of the beak and the nostrils towards the base. Photo : A. MacGregor.

Silchester (Bell, 1915 : 406-7 ; Northcote, 1983 : 175) and a firm identification has been made from a ninth-century context at Barking Abbey, Essex (D.J. Rackham, pers. comm.). The historical record takes over in the early thirteenth century with an incontrovertible description of the bird in Giraldus Cambrensis's *Life of St. Hugh of Lincoln* written at some time between the death of Hugh in 1200 and that of Giraldus in 1220 (Giraldus Cambrensis, 1877 : 73-6, 109-10 ; translated in Ticehurst, 1957 : 6). The fabulous bird that attaches itself to St. Hugh in the story was not itself a common swan but was described as '... unlike them in this, that he did not exhibit the knob and the black colour on the bill after the manner of swans, but had in truth the same part of the bill flat...' Of all the varieties known in England today, only the Mute Swan has such a knob on its beak (fig. 2), so that the identity of the common race referred to in the text cannot be disputed. Pinioning was no doubt the principal means by which the swan's semi-domesticated status was first engineered - certainly no



Fig. 2 : Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*). The knob at the base of the beak is characteristic for the species. Photo : A. MacGregor.

later than the twelfth century - and by which they were induced to remain on a particular stretch of water.

In time, stocks of swans - like many domesticated or semi-domesticated species in England - were expanded or improved by the introduction of new blood from the Continent. We know that swans were kept on the Scarpe in Belgium (Ticehurst, 1957 : 9) and at Saint-Omer in northern France (Pas, 192-9), but to the best of my knowledge the highly structured system of ownership reviewed here is an English peculiarity⁽²⁾. It is a striking fact that in a surviving

⁽²⁾ Even in Scotland no such system developed and the swan never came to be considered there as a royal bird (Erskine, 1793 : vol. I, 275). Kear (1990 : 167) suggests that the tameness exhibited by British Mute Swans (i.e. their willingness to nest in close proximity to humans) distinguishes them to some degree from their Continental counterparts ; she notes, however, that they retain a high degree of territoriality and that their changing seasonal habits (flocking only as non-breeders or in winter) mark them out from almost all domesticated animals, which can be herded throughout the year.

list of customs dues payable to the King's Bailiff at Sandwich in the mid fifteenth century, live swans attracted duty at the rate of half a mark per bird - twice their value on the market as food and double the duty paid on the next highest taxed item⁽³⁾. Despite these punitive rates, imports

were occasionally made, as witnessed by an entry for two pairs of swans in the Chamberlain's accounts for Canterbury under the year 1529-30⁽⁴⁾. It seems unlikely that importation was ever on a large scale, but even local trading brought together swans from a variety of habitats⁽⁵⁾.

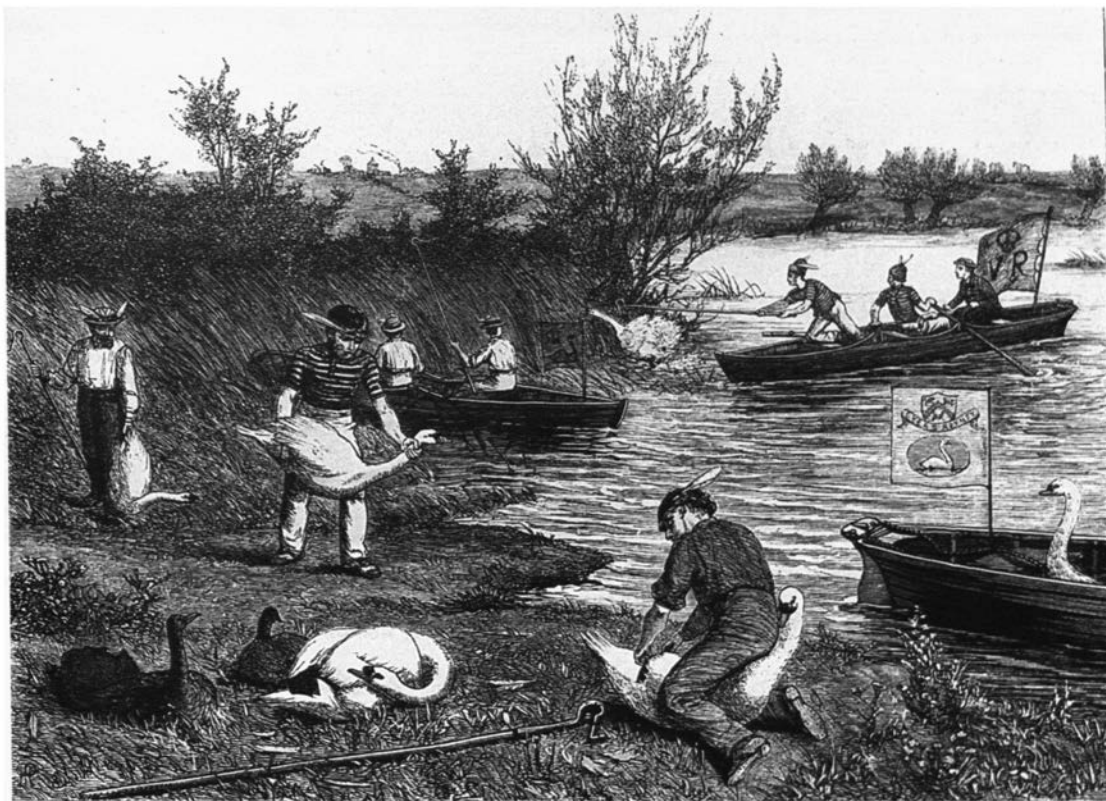


Fig. 3 : Swan-upping on the Thames. In this nineteenth-century illustration the skiffs belonging to the Queen, the Dyers' Company and the Vintners' Company are identified by their respective flags. The crews, sporting swan feathers in their hats, catch the birds by the neck with their swan-hooks and immobilize them in the boats by tying their feet behind their backs; marking - or as shown here pinioning - of both adult and immature birds is carried out on the bank. Engraving of unknown origin, reproduced by courtesy of Gordon House.

⁽³⁾ 'De chescun cygne... vjs. viijd.' Although dated 1461-5, this manuscript may embody material of much earlier date (Ticehurst, 1935 : 61-2).

⁽⁴⁾ 'Item paid for ij Copls of yong swannys & the Costs & charges of cariage of them bought beyond the see... ixs.' Presumably customs duty could not have been included in these 'Costs & charges': it may be noted that freemen of the city would have been exempt from such charges (Ticehurst, 1935 : 62).

⁽⁵⁾ Witness a number of such purchases made by William Rayner of Orton Longville, Huntingdonshire, in 1563 (Paley-Baildon, 1912-13 : 181-3) :

Item I bought this same yere and put on the rever ij bl [e] w bylles alias witte s [w] annes of an yere old, att Orton Longfeld townes end, wiche cost me of the company of the S [w] anne herdes xiijs. iiijd.

Item bowgte att the same tyme ij syngnetes att Peterborough bryge, and put them on the ryver there, the pryce was iijs. iiijd.

Item I bowght ij syngnetes att the bryge in Brodly fen, and put them out, wiche cost me ijs. iiijd.

Item I bought att the same tyme in Forset fen ij syngnetes, and brought them home, wyche cost ijs. 4d.

Item I put owt in to Orton lode att the same tyme j other bl [e] w bylle, wiche had thys marke both on the bylle and leg [...]

Item I bought ij barans [i.e. swans in their third year, not yet breeding] of Witylsmayre, wiche on of them cost vjs. vjd. and I put them in my water att Orton agayen the medow.

Item I bought on signet att Caster myll, cost xxd.



Fig. 4 : The swannery at Abbotsbury, Dorset. The picture encapsulates the integral position that swan husbandry can occupy in such a landscape, where reeds may be harvested for thatch as well as for making hurdles, baskets, etc. The arched structure in the background is a duck decoy, formerly used as a highly efficient means of trapping wildfowl (see Mansel-Pleydell 1886). Photo : A. MacGregor.

The present-day marking of swans on the Thames between Walton and Whitchurch⁽⁶⁾ by the Swan-masters of the Royal Household, the Vintners' Company and the Dyers' Company (fig. 3) provides a picturesque echo of what was formerly a widespread practice⁽⁷⁾, while the well-known swannery at Abbotsbury in Dorset (fig. 4), acquired by the Earl of Ilchester at the Dissolution, perpetuates what seems always to have been one of the largest colonies in England⁽⁸⁾.

A number of distinct swan-bearing areas (fig. 5) provide most of the historical evidence for the extraordinarily comprehensive system of regulations that developed around the swan, designed to ensure its protection and increase and, most importantly, to establish a legal framework of ownership⁽⁹⁾. To a large extent these areas can be defined in terms of their respective river systems, and in several instances they coincide with the territories historically assigned to particular officials,

⁽⁶⁾ Formerly marking took place between London Bridge and Henley, but in recent years it has been curtailed in view of the fact that swans no longer breed on the tideway (Dyers' Company, n.d. : 4).

⁽⁷⁾ See, for example, an undated leaflet issued by the Dyers' Company (Dyers' Company, n.d.), an undated booklet published by the Vintners' Company (Vintners' Company, n.d.) and Humphrys (1987).

⁽⁸⁾ In 'The Case of Swans', Coke (1826 : vol. IV, 82-8) cites an inquisition of 1592 in which it was established that in the estuary from Abbotsbury to the sea there were 500 swans of which 410 were adults and that the greater part of them were unmarked ; 400 birds had been seized by the sheriff, upon which the persons claiming the swans, Lady Joan Young and Thomas Saunger, pleaded that they derived their title from the abbot of Abbotsbury who 'had always had and enjoyed the swans without using any mark'; the Crown admitted the facts but denied the alleged right of the defendants ; judgment was given in favour of the Crown, which held that swans unmarked in a public river are the king's. Nowadays, however, the swans at Abbotsbury are entirely at liberty.

⁽⁹⁾ Ticehurst (1926a : 186) accurately characterizes these arrangements as 'one of the most interesting experiments in combined bird protection and aviculture that England has produced'.

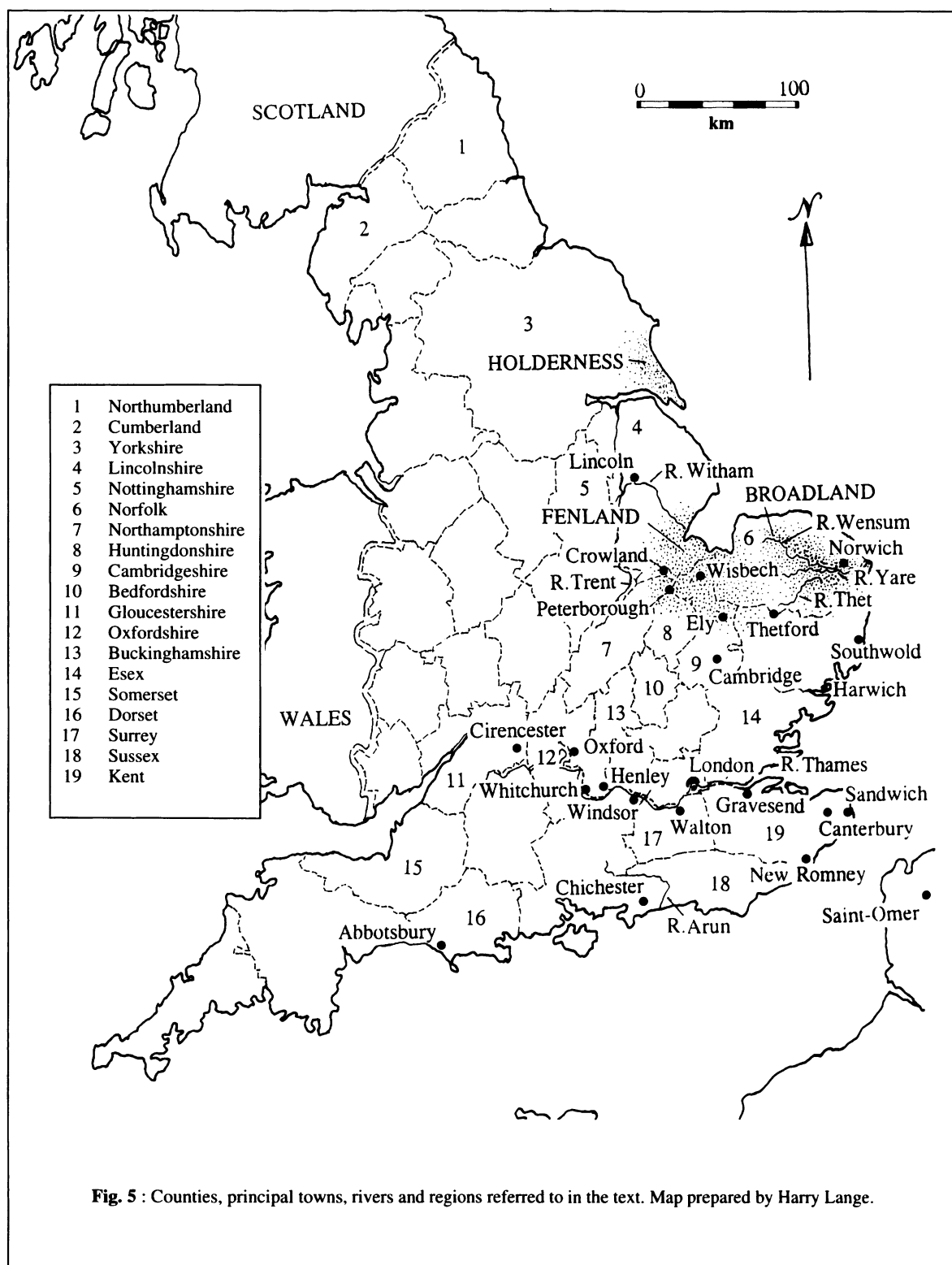


Fig. 5 : Counties, principal towns, rivers and regions referred to in the text. Map prepared by Harry Lange.

further reinforcing their validity. Norfolk, for example, is generally divided into an eastern sector referred to as Broadland and a western region forming, together with Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton and Lincolnshire, the area known as the Fenland⁽¹⁰⁾. Lincolnshire was certainly prolifically stocked⁽¹¹⁾, and as far north as Holderness swan-rearing was widely practised. Bedfordshire is represented in the ownership rolls; otherwise we shall be particularly concerned with the River Thames, a jurisdiction stretching originally from the estuary up to Oxford but later extended to Cirencester (Ticehurst, 1936b : 99) and commonly designated as including all other creeks and rivers running into it⁽¹²⁾. The large numbers of swans to be found on the Thames attracted the attention of Francesco Capello, the Venetian ambassador, in 1496/7 : 'it is truly a beautiful thing to behold one or two thousand tame swans upon the river Thames', he wrote, 'which are eaten by the English like ducks and geese' (Capello, 1897 : 10-11). To the south, ownership on the River Arun is well documented, while the practice is recorded as far west as Dorset. Swans were to be found, of course, in many other areas of the country, but if kept wholly in captivity on private moats and pools would leave no trace in the historical record. Our concern is with swans held in private ownership on the open waterways⁽¹³⁾.

Legislative measures : the administration and protection of swans

Giraldus's text (Cambrensis, 1877) provides the earliest allusion to the swan as a royal bird, a concept which rests on the principle that ownership of property in swans at large was held only by grant from the Crown. By the time Henry de Bracton compiled his treatise *De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliæ*⁽¹⁴⁾ in the mid thirteenth century, ownership of the swan and its offspring had already become the subject of regulation and, inevitably, of dispute⁽¹⁵⁾. Several contemporary references show that flocks of swans throughout the length of the country were regularly acknowledged as being in the ownership of various individuals, while one such reference mentions the use of a swan-mark as early as 1230⁽¹⁶⁾. An entry in the Patent Rolls of 1276 relates to the theft of swans in Norfolk, in which the mark of the owner had been removed by the culprits⁽¹⁷⁾, and in 1282 mention is made of other miscreants 'who came by night to the water of la Riviere, co. Kent, and carried away eight swans of Stephen de Pencestre and assaulted Roger le Swonhirde, his man' - the first record a professional swan keeper (Ticehurst, 1924 : 175).

Ownership of a mark (Latin *cigninota*) was necessarily synonymous with ownership of the swans which bore it and, although a decree of 1405/6 reiterated the principle that no-one could own a swan-mark unless it be by grant of the king

(10) Ticehurst (1927-8) ; Idem (1936a) ; Idem (1937-8). The first of these areas was assigned historically to the Master of the Swans for Norfolk and Suffolk and the second to the Master of the Swans for the Counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton and Lincoln. The southern part of East Anglia, from Southwold to Harwich, figures hardly at all in this study, although it seems likely that there were many swans there fully in captivity : Idem (1931-3).

(11) See the remarks relating to Crowland, recorded in note 20.

(12) Ticehurst (1936b : 97-130) ; see also Idem (1935 : 55-70) ; Idem (1930 : 34-48) ; Idem (1932 : 62-91). The *Calendar of Patent Rolls* 22 Richard II, part I, m. 33, reproduces a grant of 1398 to the 'dean of the King's Free Chapel of Wyndesore, and the College of that place' of the privilege of 'all unmarked swans flying in the river Thames, that they may whenever and as often as they please search for the said swans throughout the said river and all streams flowing to and from it, between Gravesende and Oxford Bridge.'

(13) The mutually aggressive nature of swans meant that large numbers of them could never be farmed in close proximity, while their need for access to open water also placed limits on the size of flocks that could be herded in captivity (Kear, 1990 : 169).

(14) Bracton (1878-83 : lib. 2, c. 1, fol. 9 [vol. I, pp. 67-9]). Swans escaping from private waters might be brought back by the owner, but once the swans had regained their natural liberty they could be seized for the king on the open water, for if the property of a swan is unknown it belongs to the Crown, being in its nature a royal fowl (Bowyer 1847 : 423-8).

(15) In discussing the status of wild animals that have been tamed, Bracton (*loc. cit.*) states that swans (like doves and other creatures) may be regarded as property for as long as they have a disposition to return, but that losing this disposition they also lose their status as private property.

(16) In 1230, in an agreement between the priors of Coxford and Thetford over fishing rights on the River Thet, the former specifically reserved to himself the use of the swan mark of his own manor (Blomefield, 1805-10 : vol. I, 544). The earliest mark recorded is drawn in the Register Book of the Corporation of New Romney, c.1370 (Ticehurst, 1935 : 68).

(17) Tampering with a swan-mark later attracted severe punishment : see, for example, the Order for Swannes (1584-5), item 20, where it is ordained that '... if any person do raze out, counterfeit or alter the marke of any swan to the hindryng or losse of any mans game. And any such offender duely proued before the Queenes Maiesties Commissioners of Swannes, shall suffer one whole yeeres imprisonment and pay iijli. vjs. viijd. to the Queene' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 29).

(Bowyer, 1847 : 424), formal registration of owners and marks began only at the end of the fifteenth century⁽¹⁸⁾. Until this time property in 'games of swans' remained protected purely by customary laws which, although as yet uncodified, were sufficiently effective to be regularly invoked against poachers. Formal weight was first given to these provisions in the reign of Edward IV (1461-83) by the 'Act for Swans', which came into effect in 1482/3⁽¹⁹⁾. According to the preamble to this Act, illegal keeping of swans had seen a marked increase in the preceding years : 'our said Sovereign Lord the King, as other Lords, Knights, Esquires, and other noble men... heretofore greatly stored of Marks and Games of Swans' had found to their cost that 'divers Keepers of Swans have bought or made to them Marks and Games in the Fens and Marshes, and other Places and under Colour of the same ; and of Surveying and Search for Swans and Cygnets for their Lords and Masters, have stolen Cygnets, and put upon them their own Mark, by which unlawful Means the Substance of Swans be in the Hands and Possession of Yeomen and Husbandmen, and other persons of little Reputation'. Accordingly, the Act established formal limits on ownership, decreeing that thenceforward 'no person... shall have or possess any such Mark or Game of his own... except he have Lands and Tenements of the estate of Freehold to the yearly value of Five Marks above all yearly charges'; those disqualified by these measures were given until the following Michaelmas to divest themselves of marks and game, after which it was to be lawful for properly qualified persons to seize the said swans as forfeit, 'whereof the King shall have one Half, and he that shall seize the other Half'⁽²⁰⁾.

Even after the adoption of the new Act, additional codes of ordinances continued to be developed at a local level. One of the most extensive to survive is that relating to the River Witham and its tributaries, drawn up at Lincoln in 1524 and published by Sir Joseph Banks (Banks, 1812 : 153-9). Variations in local regulations must have been considerable, although they were never allowed to conflict with the national legislation ; accordingly, periodic steps were taken by higher authority to consolidate these local ordinances and to make them applicable to ever-larger areas. In the reign of Edward VI (1547-53), for example, a set of orders was issued (undated) by proclamation of the Privy Council to apply to the whole of the Fenland area⁽²¹⁾. These orders form the basis for all subsequent proclamations and represent a considerable advance on all those that preceded them⁽²²⁾. In 1584-5 a further step was taken towards unifying the ordinances and enlarging their scope with a new proclamation which applied to the whole of England⁽²³⁾. This was later re-issued, early in the reign of James I (1603-25), with six additional clauses added, and a further version appeared in 1615-20 (Ticehurst, 1957 : 29-30). At or soon after the accession of Charles I (1625-49) a new edition was formulated ; the text, reproduced from a copy of 1629, was published by Bowyer (1847). A further set of orders appeared in 1632 as an eight-page pamphlet entitled *The Orders Lawes and Ancient Customes of Swanns*, '... caused to be printed by John Witherings Esquire, Master and Governour of the Royall Game of Swans and Signets, throughout England'; the introduction makes it clear, however, that these were not new regulations but that they derive from others dating from the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) or earlier⁽²⁴⁾.

(18) At that time, however, a number of the marks catalogued were for owners who had flourished up to a century earlier. As early as the mid thirteenth century acknowledgement of ownership is implicit in legal proceedings concerning cygnets on open water : in addition to the deed of 1230 quoted in note 16 (above), a record from 1246 mentions the seizure of cygnets whose ownership was attributed either to the King or to the Hospital of Hampton (Ticehurst, 1957 : 4, 112).

(19) 22 Edward IV c. 6 ; *Statutes of the Realm* vol. II 1377-1504, 474.

(20) In the year following enactment of this legislation a single exemption to its provisions was granted on grounds of hardship to the inhabitants of Crowland [or Croyland] in Lincolnshire : in acknowledgement of the fact that they, 'by tyme out of mynde have contynually used to have and occupye in the Fennes and Marche ther, great Games of Swannes of ther owne, by the whiche the greatest parte of their relyf and lyvyng hath been susteyned', they were declared exempt from the provisions of the Act since these would have brought about the 'utter povertie and destruction of the seid Inhabitaunts ther, forasmuche as the seid Towne of Crowland stondesth all in Mersshe and Fenne, and noon arable Lande nor Pasture about it, soe that few or noon other profitts may or can be founde in the precincte of that Towne' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 20).

(21) For an original printed broadsheet see Historic Manuscripts Commission (1915 : 34).

(22) Ticehurst (1957 : 25) observes that what is seemingly the same proclamation of Edward VI was published by Banks, but professedly taken from a manuscript copy made in 1570 (Banks, 1812 : 159-62).

(23) Order for Swannes (1584/5) ; reproduced by Ticehurst (1957 : 28-9).

(24) The text is said to have been '... taken forth of a booke which the Lord of Buckhurst deliuered to Edward Clerke of Lincolnes Inne Esquier, to peruse, [1583/4]'. For an original example see British Library, c.31, e.26. A second, amended edition was published in 1664 ; it is reproduced in *Harleian Miscellany* III (1745), pp. 359-63, and as an appendix to Robins (1881 : 471-6). Hitherto all codes had been strongly influenced by those of the Fenland, but Ticehurst observes that these were derived from a number of other sources, though mainly based on a set of Thames orders in force prior to 1584 (Ticehurst, 1926a : 200-1 ; Idem, 1957 : 33).

Thereafter, only a few locally applicable ordinances are known (Ticehurst, 1957 : 36-8).

The drawing-up and enforcement of local legislation was a matter for the Courts of Swan-mote. These were similar in function and procedure to ancient Forest Courts and with a jurisdiction confined to certain swan-bearing areas - sometimes even to a particular river. They were set up under commissioners, often local justices, to deal with transgressions against swan law and to settle disputes between individual owners and between private gamesters and the Crown. The earliest appointment of Commissioners is found in the Patent Rolls for 1463⁽²⁵⁾. A manuscript in the Bodleian Library gives a full account of the 'true forme of keepinge a session of y^e swanmote'⁽²⁶⁾.

The officer charged by the crown with protecting its rights and implementing legislation, whether national or local, and with bringing malefactors before the courts of Swan-mote was the Master of the King's Game of Swans, also referred to as the Royal Swan-herd or Swan-master. The office is first recorded in 1361, when Thomas de Russham was charged by the king with '... the supervision and custody of all our swans as well in the water of the Thames as elsewhere within our Kingdom' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 55). Although the Swan-master's primary responsibility was for the care of the royal swans, this necessarily involved him also in supervision of birds under private ownership. In the fifteenth century it was a salaried appointment, but the office of Swan-master later became a post of profit under the Crown, its status rising to become

one of those posts reserved for some courtly favourite or high official. That the office survived under the Interregnum (1649-60) is shown by a certificate validating a Lincolnshire swan-mark dated 30 January 1651 and endorsed by one George Hill, who signs himself 'Swannerd to ye Comonwealth' (Peacock, 1885 : 19). No doubt the swans found themselves under particular pressure at this time, as did the deer and other species which hitherto had enjoyed royal protection from a hungry populace⁽²⁷⁾. Former practice was resumed at the Restoration with the appointment as Swan-master of Edward Montague, Earl of Sandwich, to be followed by his kinsman the Earl of Manchester. Thereafter, in the course of the eighteenth century, the prestige (and the profitability) of the office declined. The Duchy of Lancaster had its own Swan-master, who ranked equally with the royal appointee, although he was not allowed to up any swans even within his own jurisdiction except in the presence of the royal official⁽²⁸⁾.

The Swan-master exercised his authority at a local level through deputies, from whom he drew his profits from rentals⁽²⁹⁾. Five such deputies exercising functions in defined areas are mentioned in the Act of Resumption of 1 Henry VII (1485), but later they became more numerous and were appointed to supervise single counties or single rivers⁽³⁰⁾. The deputies derived their income from the fees of their office, most of which came from the registration of marks and for upping⁽³¹⁾, while summary fines also provided a useful source of income⁽³²⁾. In the earlier codes rights over

⁽²⁵⁾ Ticehurst (1928). In earlier years, some of their functions were carried out by manor courts.

⁽²⁶⁾ Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Tanner 91, fols. 184-5.

⁽²⁷⁾ See, for example, an instruction issued on 13 May 1651 by the Council of State to the governor of Leeds Castle, Kent, to the effect that the Commonwealth's own soldiers garrisoned there should be restrained from pillaging its owner's estate, for already '... great spoil is made in several ways about it, as well to his ponds, fish, swans as otherwise...' (*Calendar of State Papers Domestic* (1651), p. 197).

⁽²⁸⁾ Ordinances of Edward VI (1547-53), item [4] ; Banks, 1812 : 160 : '... it is ordained, that the Swannerd of the Duchy of Lancaster, within the said counties, nor within the liberties and franchises of the same, nor any other person by him, or for him, shall make any sale, or take up any swans, or mark them, within the said Duchy, without the King's Swannerd or his Deputy be present... And in like wise it is ordained, that the King's Swannerd of the aforesaid Counties, nor his Deputies, shall enter into the said Duchy to take up any swan or signets, nor them to mark, without the Swannerd of the Duchy be present...'.

⁽²⁹⁾ Lord Buckhurst, Comptroller of the Household and Swan-master for the whole of England, writing to a prospective deputy, Sir William Moore, on 29 July 1599, mentions that for the county of Surrey '... the auncient rent was £10 for the whole shere' and further that 'The profit of that office growes diversly as by divers bokes and orders, as wel printed as written, may apere... For all straine swans, all swans unmarked, all wild swans, all tame swans that fly, all swans of felons, owt lawed persons or traitors, and many other, are the master of the swans right. He is also to have xii^d for every growne bird and al ameracements and penalties that shalbe inflicted for any offenses... and many other rights and benefits belong to the master of the swans, w^{ch} I can not here recite' (Kempe, 1836 : 307-8).

⁽³⁰⁾ At first the deputies were also appointed by the Crown but later the Swan-masters made appointments themselves and posts were farmed out to friends or to the highest bidder.

⁽³¹⁾ For example, an alienation fee of 6s. 8d. was payable by every owner on succeeding to a mark by inheritance, purchase or gift ; 4d. per annum was payable for the registration of every mark in his book or roll ; 4d. was paid every year by each owner for maintenance of the upping book ; 1d. was paid for every white or grey swan upped and 2d. for every cygnet.

⁽³²⁾ For example, 6s. 8d. was payable for failure of any gamester to attend the upping and the same amount from any leaving the field without permission of the Swan-master (Witham Ordinances (1524), items 5 and 11 ; Banks, 1812 : 155, 157).

stray swans, swans belonging to outlaws or felons, etc., were assigned to the Crown⁽³³⁾, but in later years the fines and confiscated birds came to be counted among the perquisites of the Swan-master and his deputies (Ticehurst, 1928 : 76-7).

There were strong protectionist dimensions to the Swan-master's duties, extending beyond the birds themselves to the environment in which they lived. Needless to say, there was nothing altruistic in these measures, which were designed rather to maximize returns to the owners or 'gamesters'. The proclamation of 1547-53, for example, is prefaced with the statement that it was drawn up '... for the conservation and keepyng of the Kynges Swanes and Sygnetes... And for the co [n] servation of fish and foule... wythin the sayde counties and liberties'. During the nesting season no land-owner could '... mow, shear, or cut any thackets, reed, or grass, within 40 feet of the swan's nest, or within 40 feet of the stream'⁽³⁴⁾. Stealing eggs was judged a particularly heinous crime : under Henry VII (1485-1509) it was punishable by a year and a day in prison plus a fine⁽³⁵⁾ ; later the punishment became less draconian, so that by the time of Edward VI (1547-53) anyone who should '... wilfully put any swans away from their nests... or else take up and destroy, or bear away their eggs' was to be fined, for every offence, 13s. 4d.⁽³⁶⁾, but under James I three months' imprisonment or a fine of 20s. became customary⁽³⁷⁾. Hazards to the young birds were banished from the river, with strictures that 'If there be any Weares upon the Rivers not hauing grates before them, whereby the Swanes and

Cignets may be defended from drowning : the owner of such Weare shall forfeit to the King thirteen shillings foure pence' (Orders, Lawes and Customes, 1632 : item 33) ; elsewhere the owners, their swan-herds or the Swan-master himself were given authority to demolish any such weirs⁽³⁸⁾. The ordinances also regulated the construction of fish garths and the setting of nets⁽³⁹⁾, while the steeping of hemp or flax was prohibited in any running water and within 40 feet of the waterway ; there was also a ban on 'any other filthy thing be [ing] thrown in the running waters, whereby the waters may be corrupt'⁽⁴⁰⁾. The setting of 'engines, or any manner of snares, to take bitter [n] s, or swans, between the Feast of Easter, and Lammass' was banned and was punishable by fines, as was the use of hooks, nets or 'lymestrynges'⁽⁴¹⁾. For eight weeks following Easter the hunting of 'ducks or any other chase in the water or neere the haunt of Swannes... with any dogges or spaniels' was forbidden⁽⁴²⁾. Hawking and later the shooting of wildfowl with handguns was banned from the beginning of May until early August⁽⁴³⁾. All breaches were punishable by fines or by forfeiture of swans to the Crown⁽⁴⁴⁾.

In seasons of extreme weather the Swan-master had a duty of care towards all the birds in his territory. In times of drought he had to remove them to a well-watered place and during periods of severe frost had to ensure that they were fed and that the ice was broken to provide open water for them⁽⁴⁵⁾. Needless to say, there was a cost, the convention being that the officer should 'have recompense for his

(33) Orders, Lawes & Customes (1632 : item 6) : 'Also all stray Swannes which no man can challenge by his Marke, these are the King's onely. And they are to be seized for the King, and marked on the legge, but are not to be carried away the first yeare.'

(34) Witham Ordinances (1524), item 14 ; Banks, 1812 : 157.

(35) Statute 11 Henry VII, ch. 17, 4 (*Statutes of the Realm*, vol. II, p. 581), in which it is ordained that '... no man [ner] of p [er] son, of what condicion or degree he be, take or cause to be taken, be it upon his owne grounde, or any other mannys, the eggis of any faucon gossehaue laners or swannes oute of the neste upon payne of ymprisonment of a yere and a day and fyne [atte] Kingis will the one halfe thereof to the King and the other halfe to the owner of the grounde where the eggis were so taken...'

(36) Ordinances of Edward VI (1547-53), item [6] ; Banks, 1812 : 160-1.

(37) 1 James I, c. 27, 2 (*Statutes of the Realm*, vol. IV, pt. ii (1586-1623), p. 1055).

(38) Order for Swans (1629), item 4 ; Bowyer, 1847 : 426.

(39) Ordinances of Edward VI (1547-53), item [13] ; Banks, 1812 : 162.

(40) Witham Ordinances (1524), item 17 ; Banks, 1812 : 158.

(41) Ordinances of Edward VI (1547-53), item [9] ; Banks, 1812 : 161 ; see also Ticehurst, 1932 : 66.

(42) Order for Swannes (1584/5), item 12 ; Ticehurst, 1957 : 29.

(43) Witham Ordinances (1524), item 16 ; Banks, 1812 : 158.

(44) As late as the mid nineteenth century, seven years' transportation was imposed for killing a swan, while from 1895 a sentence of seven weeks' imprisonment with hard labour is recorded (Vintners' Company, n.d. : 5).

(45) A dramatic illustration of the danger to swans in severe weather is given in a series of fifteenth-century records from Saint-Omer (Pas, 1922-9) : in the winter of 1440-1 three *sous* was paid to each of four men to venture out on the frozen river where the feet of the swans had become entrapped in the ice and their wings had become laden with ice ; in 1443-4 no swans were sold as stocks had been decimated by the great frosts ; in 1445 costs were incurred in feeding the swans which had been engulfed in the ice ; and in 1462 again no swans were sold, many of them having died in the freezing weather and the others having to be fed to keep them alive. In London, the Dyers' Company records for 1509 contain the following entry : 'Payd, in the grete frost, to James the under Swanherd, for upping of the maister's swannes iiijjs.' and 'For bote hyr iiijjd.' (Robins, 1881 : 466), while an early account book in the Vintners' possession includes an entry 'for 31 swans taken up in the Frost for their taking up and their meat 4d. a piece, 10s. 4d. (Vintners' Company, n.d. : 5).

paines, in making wakes [i.e. channels] and the owners therby who have their Swanns p[re] served shall beare p[ro] portionable charges in that behalfe⁽⁴⁶⁾. For these and for all his claims against individual owners, the Swan-master had the ultimate sanction of seizure of birds against payment.

His primary duties, however, were concerned with the establishment of ownership and with its manifestation by marking the birds and maintaining a record of all the marks in his territory. The period of most concentrated activity fell during the annual upping, when all the swans were in turn lifted from the water and the new broods of cygnets⁽⁴⁷⁾ were parcelled out among the gamesters. The rules for conduct of the upping were elaborate and precisely defined. They established first of all the period during which the upping and marking of swans was to take place, normally immediately following the feast of St. John the Baptist (25 June - 1 July)⁽⁴⁸⁾. (The timing coincides with the period when the adults are in wing-moult and when the cygnets have not yet fledged, factors which have implications for the ease with which they can be caught : see Kear, 1990 : 170). The Swan-master or his deputy was responsible for seeing that proclamations to this effect were read in all the market towns in the area. The Master had a duty to attend the upping himself, the regulations decreeing that he should 'yearely come at the vsual dayes of marking Swannes in that

streame (on pain of losing his Fees during his absence)'. The presence of all the gamesters with swans in the given area was also required⁽⁴⁹⁾ ; they were allowed to send deputies, each to be provided with a written deputation which was read aloud to the assembled company before marking started. The deputies had to be approved by the Swan-master⁽⁵⁰⁾, and if in due course he became dissatisfied with their conduct, he had the power to dismiss the deputy and to appoint another in his place⁽⁵¹⁾. There were strict limits as to the number of owners who could be represented by any one deputy⁽⁵²⁾. Neither the gamesters nor their deputies were allowed to leave the field at the end of the day without express permission from the Swan-master⁽⁵³⁾. Rowers and waders had to be assembled by the master and were paid by him : he had the power to command them to attend⁽⁵⁴⁾. He also had to arrange at the start of the day for supper to be provided for the entire company when they had finished⁽⁵⁵⁾. All of the charges involved were recovered in proportion from the gamesters.

Swan-upping : the marking, recording and disposal of swans

So assembled, the party would set off on the water, systematically surrounding with their boats each family of swans in turn, securing them with their swan-hooks⁽⁵⁶⁾ and

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Wisbech Ordinances (1587), item 12 ; Ticehurst, 1957 : 46.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Yarrell (1884-5 : vol. IV, 325-6) states that the young generally hatch towards the end of May and stay in a family group until the following spring, when they are driven away by the parent birds.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Witham Ordinances (1524), item 4 ; Banks, 1812 : 155 ; cf. Ordinances of Edward VI (1547-53), item [1] (Banks, 1812 : 159), which specify the Monday after Trinity Sunday.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ The penalty exacted on owners for failing to attend the upping is revealed by the Witham Ordinances (1524), item 9 (Banks, 1812 : 156), where it is stated that 'if the King's Swannerd, or his Company, meet with any swans that hath young, and no Swannerd for them, and the mark in the book, then the Company shall have one, and mark the rest after the sire and dam, but if their mark is not in the King's book, then all the signets shall be seized for the King...'

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Ticehurst (1957 : 60-1) found four deputations, the earliest from 1599 in favour of John Mann of Upwell, deputizing for Matthew Walsingham of Refeham, in Norfolk : it includes, as well as the written deputation, a drawing in the margin of Walsingham's mark, known as 'the Doble Bowes'.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Witham Ordinances (1524), item 3 ; Banks, 1812 : 154 : '... if the King's Swannerd doth mislike of the said Swannerd at any time... then it shall be lawful for the King's Swannerd for to discharge him... and... to appoint one for to row for his masters, and the same Swannerd for to have the same fees that the other shuld have had...'

⁽⁵²⁾ Witham Ordinances (1524), item 8 ; Banks, 1812 : 156 : '... no Swannerd shall row for no masters, than his named within the same book, and that no Swannerd have no more masters than three, or four at most...'

⁽⁵³⁾ Witham Ordinances (1524), item 11 ; Banks, 1812 : 157.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ '... the Cheife M^r Swanner, or his Deputy for the tyme being shall haue power & authority to command Rowers & waders for the swanning tymes & to punish such as shall refuse to obey in that service' (Wisbech Ordinances (1587) ; Ticehurst, 1957 : 50). On upping days fishermen were to assemble 'with their boats at the vpper end of their severall waters, vpon paine of ten shillings for every default' (Orders, Lawes & Customes, 1632 : item 34).

⁽⁵⁵⁾ The Wisbech Ordinances (1587) included provision for 'Appointing of euery man their suppers & they that bee absent to pay euery one vj d. the meale upon calling y^e booke' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 48).

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Those who attended without a swan-hook were liable to be fined : according to the Orders, Lawes & Customes (1632), 'vpon the Vpping dayes every Gamster that caryeth not a Hooke (except such Gentlemen as for pleasure goe to see their owne game) shall forfeit eight pence a day'. To be found carrying a swan-hook at any time other than the upping could also be punishable : the Order for Swans (1629), item 5 (Bowyer 1847 : 426) states that 'If any person, or persons, be found carrying any Swan-hooke, and the same person being no Swan-herd, nor accompanied with two Swan-herds ; euery such person shall pay to the King thirteene shillings foure pence (that is to say), three shillings foure pence to him that will informe, and the rest to the King.'

lifting them from the water in order to establish the ownership of the parent birds and to mark the offspring accordingly. No swan could be upped or marked except in the presence of the Swan-master. Much of the practice is shown in a Victorian engraving of swan-upping on the Thames (fig. 3) : the legs of the captive swans are tied behind their backs until they are put ashore with their companions for marking (and in this instance for pinioning)⁽⁵⁷⁾. When the entire family had been marked and recorded, the Swan-master would authorize its release ; before the birds were returned to the water a tuft of feathers was pulled from the back of the head of the parent birds by their owners, so that those already treated would not needlessly be pursued a second time⁽⁵⁸⁾.

Despite the large body of knowledge that survives concerning the appearance of the marks, surprisingly little is recorded concerning the method of their application, although most were undoubtedly inscribed with a knife, as recorded by Sir Joseph Banks⁽⁵⁹⁾ :

In the autumn of 1820 M^r Chapman of Marshchapel [Lincolnshire] informed me that in his youth, about forty years ago, the custom of marking Swans was still kept up in the Marsh Towns in his neighbourhood and that he had attended when the persons employed by the owners met together and marked the birds. He showed me the manner of marking, which he did by cutting with a sharp penknife a double line through the skin that covers the beak and stripping off the skin between.

Many of the additional nicks in the edge of the beak mentioned below were also certainly formed in this way as is still the practice of the present-day Vintners' and Dyers' Companies on the Thames. But not all were made with the knife : Henry Best of Elmswell in Yorkshire recorded in

1641 that 'Our marke is three holes boared with an hotte-swipple in the right side of the nebbe, and a gagge cutte betwixt the two uppermost holes' (Best, 1857 : 123). A further reference to a mark being applied by branding rather than cutting occurs in the Water Bailiff's record of marks in use on River Arun in the 1630s (Fowler, 1929 : 53) :

John Apsley of Pulborough Esq. 'his swanns are butted on the left wing, and burned with a boate key (in this sort I/I) on the left side of the beake neare to the eye...

Similar practice is implied by mention of swans belonging to David Cecil, appointed bailiff of Whittlesey Mere in 1507, which were '... marked on both sides of the bill with the print of a key' (Minet, 1903-5 : 286). Branding was perhaps quite widely used, particularly for the more elaborate marks, but only a single branding iron has so far come to light (Ticehurst, 1957 : 88). It was found in 1925 at Heydon Hall in Norfolk, together with documentation relating to the mark itself and had been used for impressing the crowfoot mark of the Richers family : it is described as a thin iron rod, mounted with a wooden handle and with the crowfoot device at the other end, the whole some twelve to eighteen inches (30-45 cm) long. It accompanied a deed of sale by Henry Richers to Erasmus Earle in 1637, relating to the mark and to the game of swans identified with it.

Most such marks belonged to private owners and were their absolute property : an owner could not only sell his mark, as just instanced, but could alienate it by deed of gift or he could lease the mark (including, of course, all the swans which bore it) in return for rent ; like other property, marks were heritable by the owners' heirs⁽⁶⁰⁾.

It was less common, but not unknown, for marks to be associated with certain manors, from which they were inalienable⁽⁶¹⁾. A number of corporate bodies and

⁽⁵⁷⁾ See also an account by the zoologist J. E. Harting (1906 : 191-2) of an upping in 1895 on which he accompanied the Swan Warden of the Vintners' Company.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ '... none shall bee marked before they bee booked, neither shall the white Swans bee put forth before they bee puld in the necke...' (Wisbech Ordinances (1587)); the same document decrees (item 11) that 'Noe man must pull feathers off the swans back, for none butt the owner may doe itt' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 45, 47).

⁽⁵⁹⁾ From a manuscript introduction by Banks to British Library, Additional Manuscript 6302 (swan roll), quoted by Ticehurst (1957 : 87). From time to time marks might become obscured and had to be renewed : Southwell (1889-94 : 270) ; see also Idem (1894-9 : 387-9) and Idem (1899-1904 : 579-81). Elsewhere, Edward Robins, a Prime Warden of the Dyers' Company, suggests that on the Thames in the 1880s it was normal practice to renew the marks every three years (Robins, 1881 : 467).

⁽⁶⁰⁾ See, for example, the will of Nicholas Upton of Northolme, Lincolnshire, dated 25 April 1527 : 'to my sonne Nicholas my swanne marke with the halffe barrys for term of hys lyffe, remainder to my son John... to my sonne Hamond my swanne marke with the ij halfe mounes... to my son John my swanne marke wt the barre and iij nykks' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 100). Registration fees were, of course, payable to the Swan-master on inheritance. In granting new marks the Swan-master had a particular duty to '... look that the mark shall not hurt no other mark in the book' : Witham Ordinances (1524), item 6 ; Banks, 1812 : 155.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Ticehurst (1957 : 99), while noting that this arrangement was most common in the Broadland area, highlights the case of Amberley Castle in Sussex, principal official residence of bishops of Chichester, which passed in succession until 1648 when the castle was sold under the Commonwealth with all its appurtenances, among which are specifically mentioned swan rights.

institutions also owned marks : these included religious houses, colleges and hospitals, all of whose chief officers might also hold marks in their own right ; certain chantries, parish churches⁽⁶²⁾ and livings ; and a few towns⁽⁶³⁾ and guilds, including the two City of London livery companies who are the only owners to retain their rights on the Thames to the present day - the Dyers and the Vintners.

The convention today is that all unmarked birds belong to the monarch, but formerly the Crown had its own mark (or rather several marks) as well as laying claim to unmarked adult birds and to cygnets whose parentage was not established⁽⁶⁴⁾. There was always a presumption that if ownership was in doubt or if an owner became disqualified for any reason, the game reverted to the Crown⁽⁶⁵⁾. The most dramatic instance of this nature took place with the Dissolution : many monastic marks survive in the rolls long after this time, evidently passing first to the Crown and later being granted to private owners, although the marks themselves continue to be referred to as 'the mark of the abbot of...'. In time other smaller-scale forfeitures, including those of miscreants, became the perquisite of the Swan-master rather than the monarch.

It was during the upping that the Swan-master's skill as record-keeper was put to the test, for all depended on

meticulous notation of every detail. A prime requirement of the office was that 'the King's Swannerd, or his Deputy, shall keep one swan book, with all the marks of the swans, in the same book'⁽⁶⁶⁾. This book or roll formed a reference-source on which the whole operation depended. As a running record the Swan-master had to maintain also '... a book of the name of every Swannerd, and his masters, and so shall inroll in the same book every swan that is marked, and of what mark, and who is the owner of the swan mark'⁽⁶⁷⁾. This 'upping book' or journal was renewed each year ; in it was recorded the location of each brood of swans found, the number of cygnets in each brood, the mark and the name of the owner of each parent bird and in what manner and to whom the cygnets were allocated⁽⁶⁸⁾.

If both parent birds bore the mark of the same gamester, all the progeny would be similarly marked. Rules regarding the apportioning of cygnets between respective owners of differently marked birds were strict, although variations are recorded at different times and in different places⁽⁶⁹⁾. Equal division of the brood was the general aim, with the owner of the male parent having the first pick : typical is the rule that '... when Cignets are taken vp, the owner of the Cob must chuse the first Cignet, and the Pen

⁽⁶²⁾ One method by which parish churches might come to own swans is illustrated by the will of Thomas Hippe of the parish of St. James, in Sutton in Holland, Lincolnshire, dated 25 April 1527 : 'I bequeth my marke of Swanes to the chapell of St. James for to kepe an obit yerly upon the Fryday before Care Sondag... for my soule and all my good frendes soules' (Ticehurst 1926b : 300). Four parish churches in Norfolk (Acle, Billockby, Caister and Hickling) possessed rights through endowments for maintenance of lights before the image of the Virgin : their marks are recorded as 'Our Lady's light of...' (Ticehurst, 1927-8 : 434).

⁽⁶³⁾ Under a dozen towns are recorded as owners. Ticehurst (1935 : 64-5) records a payment made by the Corporation of Canterbury in 1611 'for two synnettes or yong swannes for the cyttie and marckying them w^l the cytties marke as the Cytties old cock swane is marked'. The practice of swan-keeping at Canterbury was by this time already in its terminal stages.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Orders, Lawes and Customes (1632 : item 5) : '... all Swannes that are cleere of Bill, without Marke, these are the King's onely, whether they be pinioned or flying Swannes'.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Swans are unique among birds in that they may be declared strays ; if no claimant comes forward the right of possession falls to the crown or to such persons or bodies to whom the royal privilege has been devolved. See Orders, Lawes and Customes (1632 : item 6), quoted in note 33 (above).

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Witham Ordinances (1524), item 6 ; Banks, 1812 : 155 ; see also Wisbech Ordinances (1587) (Ticehurst, 1957 : 47) : 'And the Cheife Deputy or some for him shall euery yeare keepe a trew & perfect booke of the swans & birds brought vp & marked wth y^e owners names also of the odd birds bought & sould to whom & for how much in what range & one what day...'.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Witham Ordinances (1524), item 8 ; Banks, 1812 : 156 ; see also Orders, Lawes & Customes (1632 : item 9) : 'And he shall keepe a Roll or Standard booke containing all the vsual marks of that streame. He shall also keepe a register booke of the number of euery mans Swannes, and the place where they are vpt. And he shall likewise bring the booke of the last yeere. For which euery Gamster is to give him yearlye, Foure pence.'

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Other particulars that had to be recorded such as the sale of cygnets, the names of the buyers and sellers and the prices paid, the capture of unpinioned, unmarked or doubtfully marked birds, the determination of their ownership, and their disposal, were also probably entered in the upping book but may (together with other records of fines, receipts, etc) have been recorded in a third book. For some extracts from upping books see Ticehurst (1957 : 66-71).

⁽⁶⁹⁾ In this respect swans are said to be unlike other creatures, where the normal custom is that all the progeny belong to the mother. Coke (1826 : vol. IV, p. 85) gives the following explanation - romantic in concept but not wholly accurate in points of fact : 'the cock swan is an emblem or representation of an affectionate and true husband to his wife above all other fowls ; for the cock swan holdeth himself to one female only, and for this cause nature hath conferred on him a gift beyond all others ; that is, to die so joyfully, that he sings sweetly when he dies... [and] therefore this case of the swan doth differ from the case of kine, or other brute beasts.'

the next, and so in order'⁽⁷⁰⁾. Alternatively, ownership could be decided by lots : if only one cygnet was being disputed over, the winner might pay half the value to the loser or the loser might become eligible for the next bird produced by the same match. If three or more cygnets were produced, then the owner of the land on which the nest had been built was entitled to one of them 'for the spoyle of his Grass'; he paid a fee of 1s. to the Crown for this privilege⁽⁷¹⁾. If the landowner was himself a gamester, then the bird could be marked with his own mark, but if not it would be sold to one or other of those present. If only one parent survived of the original pair then half the cygnets were marked for the Crown, though they were left with the family⁽⁷²⁾.

Birds of ambivalent status which were seized by the Swan-master had to be made available for inspection by possible claimants and to this end it was ordained of 'every Swannerd, intending to keep any swans or signets, that they shall keep them in a p[e]n, or a pit, within twenty foot of the King's highway, so that the King's subjects passing by, may have the sight of the said swans, upon pain of 40s'⁽⁷³⁾.

The Swan-master's authority did not end with the open water, and he was empowered to enter any rivers, ponds or moats in pursuit of his duty. It was deemed that '... if any Gamester or other person whatsoever hauing swans to feed doe feed them in any vault, celler or priuy corner, close, yard or otherwhere th[at] n in open place where gamesters may come to see, and vew them : that in such cases it shalbee lawfull for any suspecting the same... to search the place wthout contradiction of the owners thereof' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 50).

Neither were his duties entirely seasonal, for he had year-round control of all transactions involving swans. Gamesters might gather up cygnets destined for fattening

and eating that year at the time of the upping (in which case they were not marked)⁽⁷⁴⁾, but if at any other time a gamester wished to remove swans from the open water he could do so only under supervision of the Swan-master and in the presence of two or three neighbouring gamesters or their swan-herds. When marks and birds changed hands, it was essential that the transaction was attended by the Swan-master⁽⁷⁵⁾ and entered in his roll, otherwise it had no validity. When an entire game of swans was transferred it required no more than registration of the fact that the mark was in new ownership (and, of course, payment of a fee to the Swan-master). In this way, several marks might come to be owned by a single gamester (see Appendix). If they changed hands by inheritance, again the records had to be amended for the new owner's title to be validated.

Swan marks and rolls : the iconography of ownership

The marks applied to the beaks of swans were varied in nature. A number of groupings or families of marks have been distinguished, but the choice of one kind of mark or another seems to have been entirely arbitrary. The simplest were linear devices, transverse or diagonal lines, triangles, squares, circles and the like. Some were clearly stylized representations of objects, often weapons, including swords (fig. 6 : 1), spears, bows and arrows, and crossbows, or implements, including forks (fig. 6 : 2), spades (fig. 6 : 3), hammers, masons' squares and combs⁽⁷⁶⁾. The latter types were particularly popular in the Fens but almost totally absent from the Thames, whereas the adoption by monastic houses of the abbot's or prior's staff as their device (later transferred to secular ownership : fig. 6 : 4) is found

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Orders, Lawes and Customes (1632 : item 7).

⁽⁷¹⁾ Orders, Lawes and Customes (1632 : item 7) : 'But if there be three, then the owner of the Grasse where they breed, must haue the third, for the spoyle of his Grasse : and must pay the King Twelue pence for the same Landbird sauing in such places where of ancient custome they pay lesse or more.'

⁽⁷²⁾ Orders, Lawes and Customes (1632 : item 8) : 'If any Heiry be led with one Swanne onely, the half of these Cignets shall be seized for the King, till proof be made whose the Swanne was that is away : but are not to be carried away that year'. Similarly, if a marked swan was found coupled with one bearing no mark, the pair were not to be separated nor the brood broken up, though one part of the signets was to be marked for the Crown and one part for the owner of the marked swan.

⁽⁷³⁾ Ordinances of Edward VI (1547-53), item [11] ; Banks, 1812 : 161.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Neither were they pinioned, for cygnets mutilated in this way would not have fattened so readily in the months leading up to Christmas (Southwell, 1889-94 : 270).

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Ordinances of Edward VI (1547-53), item [7] ; Banks, 1812 : 161 : '... no man [shall] make sale of any white swans, nor make delivery of them, without the master of the game, or his deputy be present, with 3 or 6 Swannerds next adjoining...'

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Such marks were commonly referred to by the name of the object represented : e.g. 'To the marke of John Tegoe beinge the speare head that there be added an oylet hole [i.e. a roundel] in the speare head on the farr side' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 52). A deed of sale for the swan-mark of Robert Ladde (1646) reads 'All my Swannmarke called the Hammer-head and Roman R with all other additions unto the same belonging or in any waies appertaining' (ibid : 110).

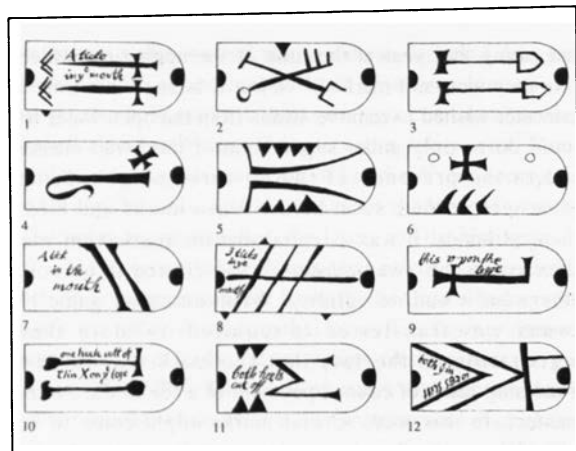
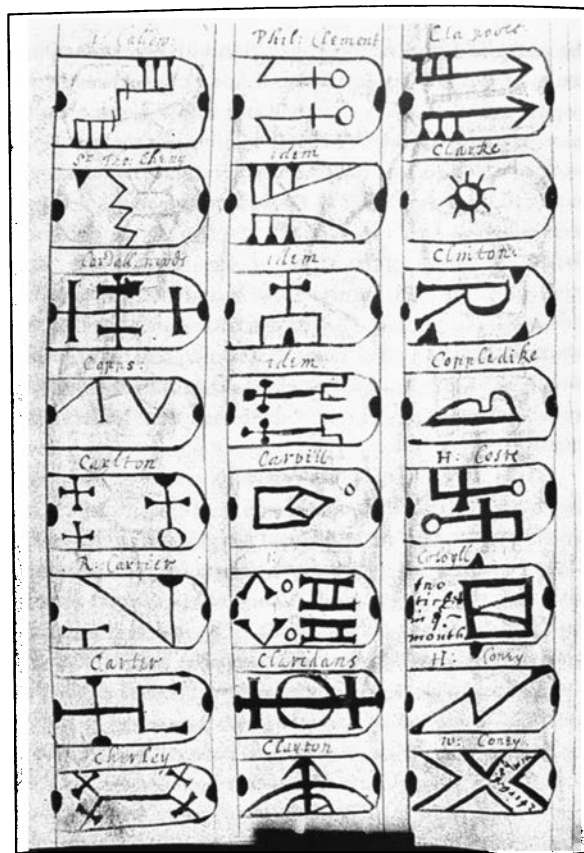


Fig. 6 : Examples of beak-marks (1-8) and other marks from the Trafford manuscript, redrawn by Harry Lange. 1 Swords and ticks (fol. 5v : Baldwer); 2 fork and [?] key (fol. 20r : Wensley); 3 spades (fol. 18r : Some); 4 crozier (fol. 20r : Worleth); 5-6 gaps (fol. 17v : Shadd; fol. 15v : Odome); 7-8 ticks (fol. 9r : Crisby; fol. 9r : Crane); 9 leg-mark (fol. 22r : Cockett); 10 leg- and heel-mark (fol. 15r : Medly); 11 heel-mark (fol. 14r : Marshall); 12 web-mark (fol. 10r : Edwards).

Fig. 7 : The Trafford manuscript (fol. 7v). Note especially the entries for Coloyll and Coney, both marked 'two tickes in ye mouth'. Photo : A. MacGregor, reproduced by courtesy of Simon Finch.



equally in either area⁽⁷⁷⁾. Others resemble merchants' marks, but although Ticehurst traces several sixteenth-century owners who were wealthy merchants, he is able to establish links with a known merchant's mark in only one instance. Canting allusions to the owner's name can sometimes be detected : Ticehurst (1957 : 85) notes one certain example, that of William Rippling in the Fens who adopted as his device a 'rippling comb', used in the carding or rippling of hemp, and mentions two others which seem likely candidates - the fleur-de-lys of Richard Flower of Ely and the two bows of Sir William Bowes. Some marks are overtly heraldic in character, although there seem to be few connections between the devices represented and those of armigerous gamesters : shields are common, as are

chevrons, annulets, crosses, trefoils, lozenges and other charges. Letter-marks are occasionally found (fig. 6 : 11), but all are comparatively late in date.

Marks could be 'differenced', in heraldic terminology, by various means - for example by changing their orientation on the bill or by adding to or omitting components. An important means of distinction involved cutting lateral nicks of various shapes to either side of the upper mandible (fig. 6 : 2, 5-6, 11 ; fig. 7) (in which case they were termed 'gaps')⁽⁷⁸⁾ or to the lower mandible (known as 'ticks')⁽⁷⁹⁾. In the earlier period ticks were depicted in the rolls as triangles or semi-circles projecting from the outline of the bill, but later it was more common to indicate them by a written surcharge on or beside the bill.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ It is presumably to this device that Bromehead (1850 : 301 note 4) refers to when he writes that 'The swanhook... is frequently introduced as a symbol amongst the varied devices composing the swan-marks in the MS'. Given the frequency of its association with monastic houses, however, he must be mistaken.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Lower mandible marks took the form of triangular (occasionally semi-circular) notches cut on the lateral margins. They invariably formed supplementary marks to those on the upper mandible. Due to the fact that the lower mandible shuts inside the upper, necessitating the bird's beak being forced open in order to check these marks, they can never have been very practical (Ticehurst, 1957 : 81-2).

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Ticks are common in Fenland rolls up to about 1550, but they are unknown in those from the Thames area (Ticehurst, 1936b : 102).

The Trafford manuscript includes several marks in which the ticks are indicated by both methods (e.g. fig. 6 : 1, 8 ; fig. 7) as well as a number with written surcharges only (fig. 6 : 7 ; fig. 7).

Further variations could be introduced by pinioning one wing or the other⁽⁸⁰⁾ or by marking the legs or feet of the swan. The legs could be marked by cutting or branding on the flattened outer surfaces ; such a mark could be used as a secondary distinguishing feature, for example, for identifying birds, already beak-marked, that had been forfeited to the Crown⁽⁸¹⁾. Leg-marks were normally described on the rolls by a written surcharge, sometimes with a drawing of the appropriate symbol⁽⁸²⁾. In the Trafford manuscript one mark is illustrated on a beak outline but is indicated as being on the leg (fig. 6 : 9) ; on another the leg-mark is recorded alongside the conventionally-placed beak-mark (fig. 6 : 10).

The feet were not marked on the surface but were cut or notched in a distinctive manner. They presented two possibilities : one involved the cutting-off of one or both of the hind toes (referred to in the documents as the 'heels' : see fig. 6 : 10-11) or one or more of the claws⁽⁸³⁾ ; the other involved cutting notches into the edges of the webs, punching holes out of them⁽⁸⁴⁾ or cutting parallel slits to form what was termed a tongue, free on its long edges but

attached at either end (fig. 6 : 12). The majority of these were used in association with beak-marks ; in the Fens they were used as a method of differencing, while in Yorkshire every owner had a leg- or foot-mark⁽⁸⁵⁾ which was placed upon the cygnets at the midsummer upping, while the beak-mark was added at a second upping at Michaelmas only on those birds selected to remain on the water to increase the stock, the remainder being penned-up for fattening⁽⁸⁶⁾. Elsewhere foot- and leg-marks might be applied when swans changed hands, for a registered owner acquiring already-marked birds was not allowed simply to add his own device : double-marked birds were liable to be declared forfeit to the Crown⁽⁸⁷⁾. Foot-marks are again recorded by means of superscripts accompanying the beak markings (fig. 6 : 10-12).

All the illustrations of marks referred to so far have been from rolls of the simplest and most common sort, in which a plan view of the beak is given with the marks inscribed in the appropriate places. Most of the sixty or seventy surviving books and rolls comprise tabular grids showing outline bills of this sort, generally including a representation of the curving 'nail' at the tip and often showing the knob at the base of the bill as mentioned earlier (fig. 7). Some variety of anatomical elaboration is encountered. A few examples include the nostrils (fig. 1, 9,

⁽⁸⁰⁾ As a distinguishing feature pinioning was always combined with a beak or foot mark, or both. Its use seems to have been confined to Sussex Arun, where all but one of twenty-two owners in 1632 used it. Recent practice on the Thames involved painting the site of the removed pinion with pitch in order to minimize bleeding (Robins, 1881 : 467).

⁽⁸¹⁾ Orders, Lawes and Customes (1632 : item 19) : 'No Swanne (other than Cleerbild [i.e. hitherto unmarked]) is to be marked for the King on the beake, but only on the legge. For two markes on the beake are vnlawfull'.

⁽⁸²⁾ A representation in the Everard Roll of a leg and foot together with a leg-mark, drawn alongside the beak, is exceptional (Ticehurst, 1957 : 83).

⁽⁸³⁾ To the Wisbech Ordinances (1587) (Ticehurst, 1957 : 52) are annexed the following : 'for the breakinge of Controversies that may ensue to certain Swann markes Itt is ordered as followith viz^t that to the Swann marke called the sheild (being the mark of John Colvile Esq.) the outward clawes of each foote to be cutt of and a Ticke of either side of the neather chapp within the mouth to be added.' Similarly, 'ffor the marke called the Battledore apperteyninge to Alexander Balam gent. Itt is ordeyned that one of the heeles of the Swanns & Signetts be cut of.'

⁽⁸⁴⁾ An illustration from Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Bodley 204, fol. 124b^v, dating from the mid fourteenth century, which Gurney (1921 : unnumbered, plate on p. 71) and Ticehurst (1957 : pl. XI) illustrate as a swan having a mark punched on its foot, is to be interpreted rather as a goose being shod to go to market. I am grateful to Miss Maureen Pemberton of the Bodleian Library for this observation. In the mid seventeenth century, Best (1857 : 123) recorded that 'our footmarke is to cutte or slitte them on both the inwebbes, and to cutte rownde holes in the out-webbes'.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ See, for example, the 'Orders and paynes of the Court of the manor of Hempholm to be observed by the Swanners' (c.1679-1708), reproduced by Poulson (1840 : vol. I, 356) : 'Every person shall enter into the swanning book his foot mark, as well as his beak mark, in pain of forfeiting all such swans to the King'.

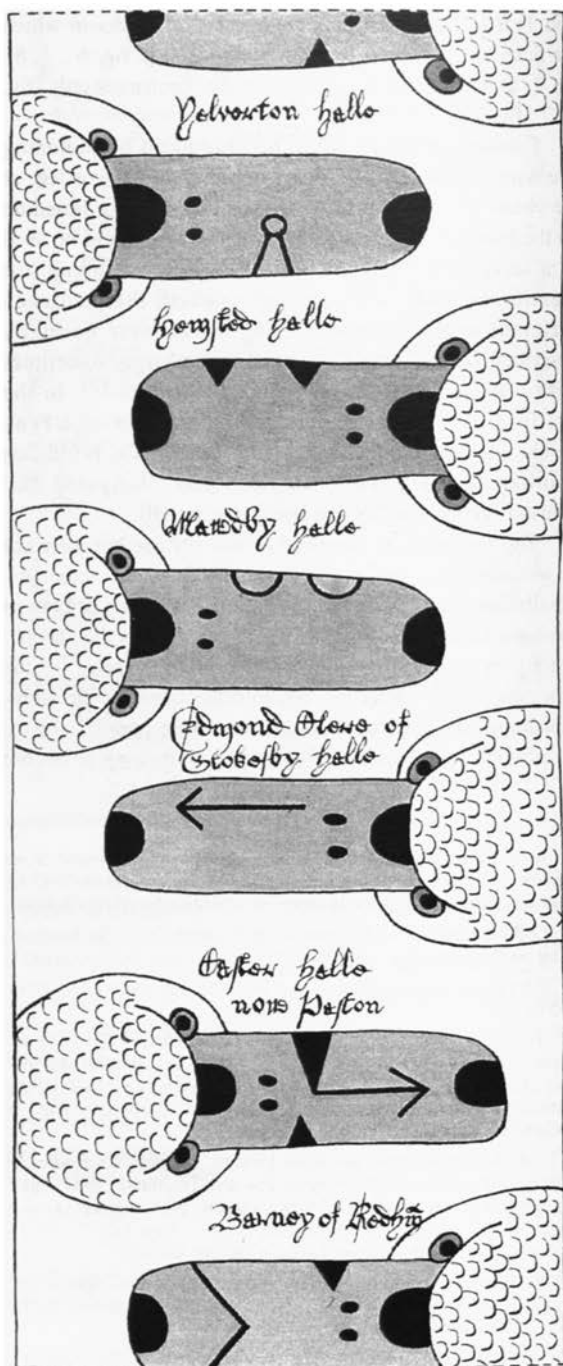
⁽⁸⁶⁾ See Best (1857 : 123) : 'The swanners gette up the younge swannes about Midsummer, and footmarke them for the owners ; and then doe they allsoe pinnion them, cuttinge a joynte of theire right winges ; and then att Michaelmasse doe they bringe them hoame, or else bringe hoame some, and leave the rest att some of the mills, and wee sende for them...'.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Orders, Lawes and Customes (1632 : item 14) : 'If any Swanne be found double marked, imbezeled, or by unskilfulnesse put out of right marke, the Master of the Game is to chuse fve Gamsters... to judge who hath right to that Swanne. And hee to whom the Swanne bee adjudged shall pay Four-pence for registering the said imbezeled or wrong marke'; if no agreement was reached, the swan was to go to the King. Cf. also Witham Ordinances (1524), item 10 ; Banks, 1812 : 156-7, and Ordinances of Edward VI (1547-53), item [5] (Banks, 1812 : 160).



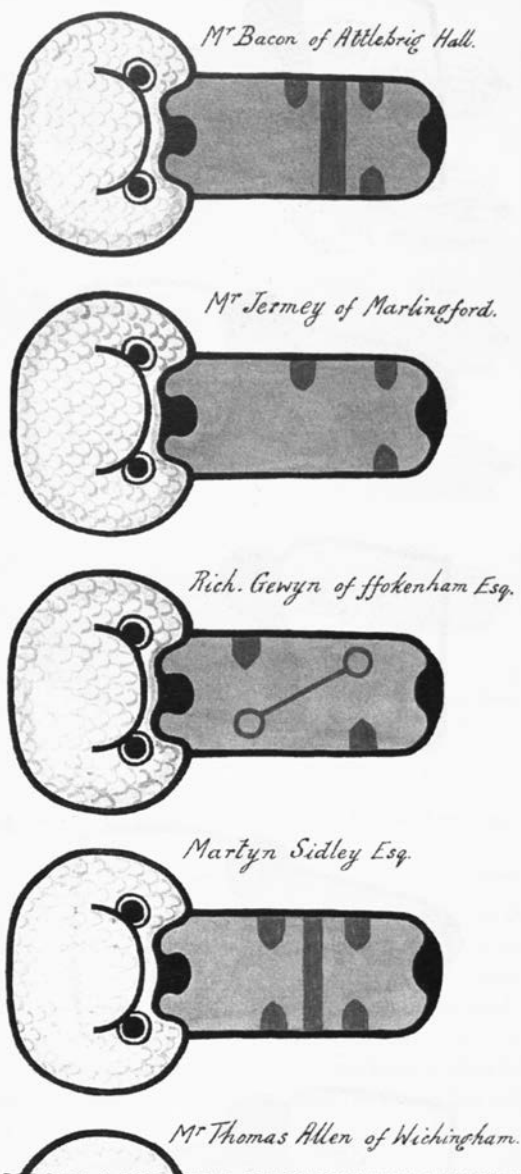
The Blofeld Roll.
circa 1670

Fig. 8 : Blofeld roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



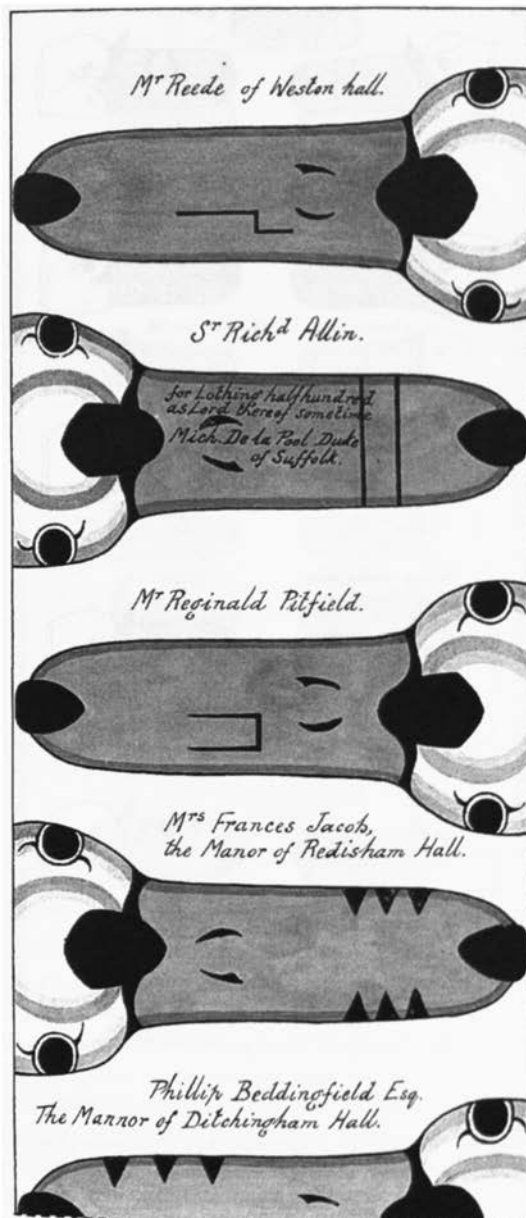
The Penshurst Roll.
circa 1540

Fig. 9 : Penshurst roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



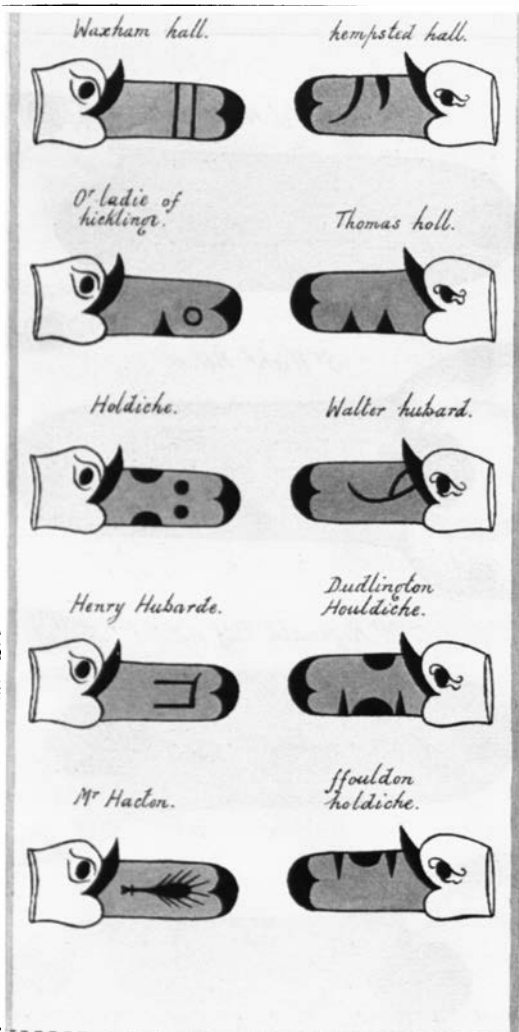
*British Museum Add. MS. 23732, m.v-ix.
after 1648.*

Fig. 10 : British Library MS 23732. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



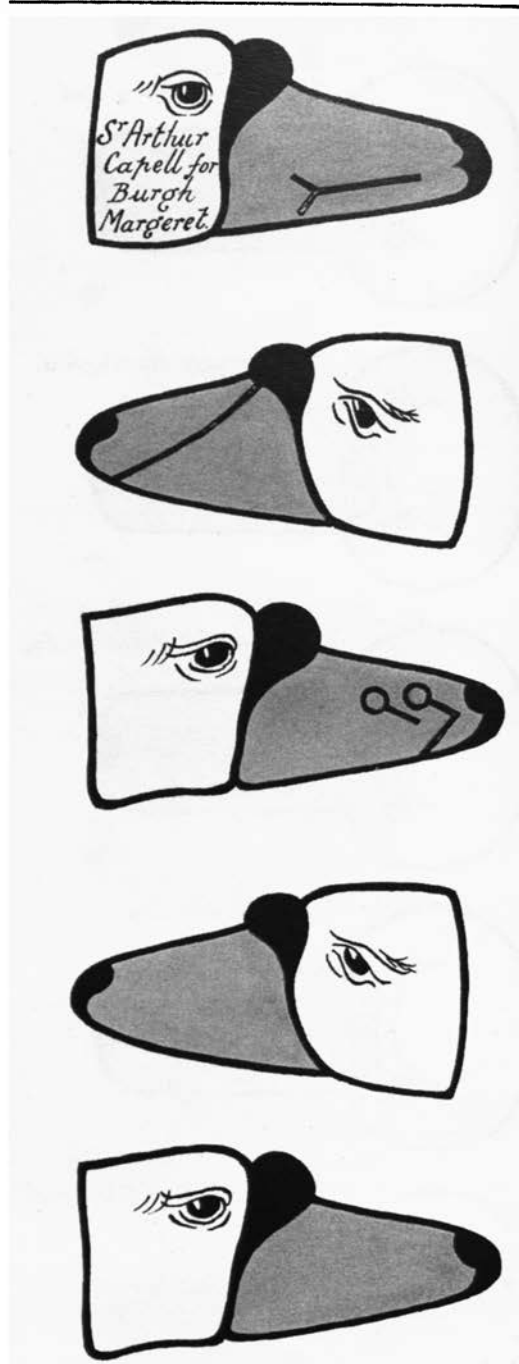
*British Museum Add. MS. 23732, m.v.
circa 1677.*

Fig. 11 : British Library MS 23732. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



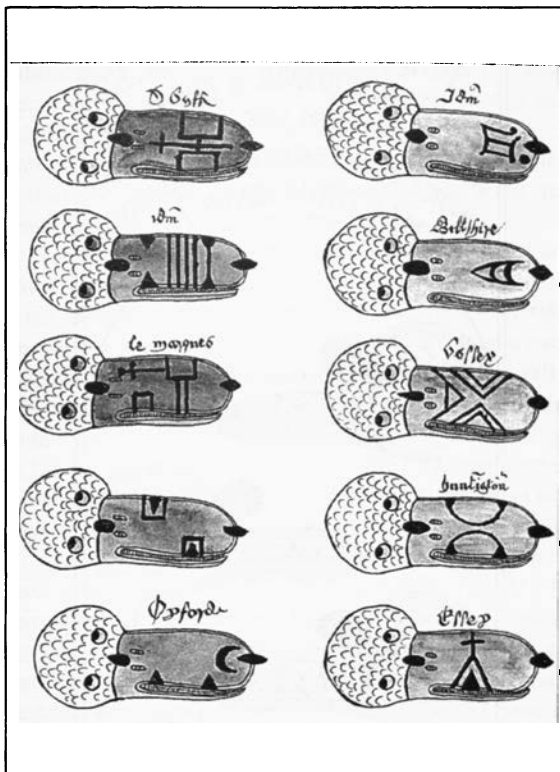
The Society of Antiquaries' Roll.
circa 1630.

Fig. 12 : Society of Antiquaries roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



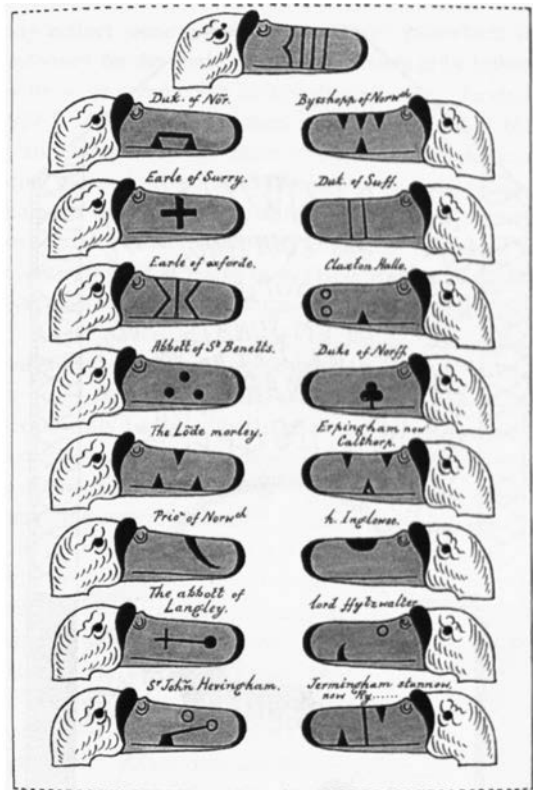
The Capel Roll.
circa 1620.

Fig. 13 : Capel roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



*The Everard Roll. Sketch-facsimile of f.6.
1566.*

Fig. 14 : Everard roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



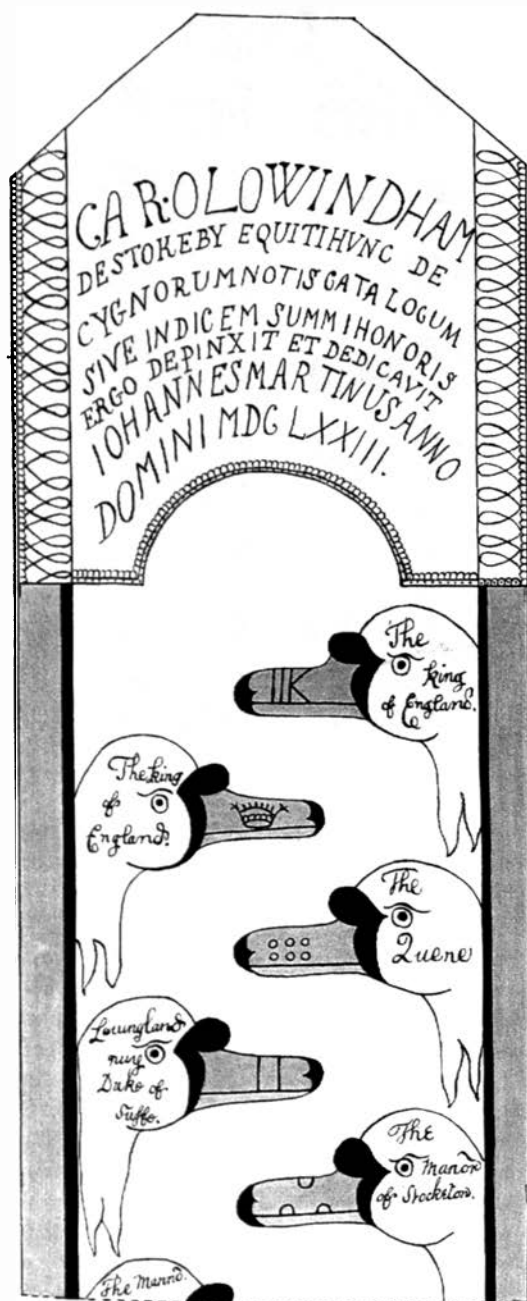
*The Emeris Roll.
circa 1620.*

Fig. 15 : Emeris roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.

11, 14). Some show the eyes and the forward part of the head, represented in plan view like the beak and varying both in completeness and in realism (fig. 8-11). More elaborate are those in which a side-elevation of the head is combined with a plan view of the beak, turned through ninety degrees in order to display the markings to their full advantage, a form peculiarly associated with Norfolk rolls (Ticehurst, 1927-8 : 428-9). Among the illustrated examples (figs. 12-13) is one from a privately-owned roll, seemingly drawn up for Sir Arthur Caple in the period 1588-1632 (Minet 1903-5 : 277). This curious anatomical convention was misinterpreted by an early author on the subject, W.H. Yarrell in his *History of British Birds*, who mistook the plan views of these beaks for side elevations and in redrawing them for publication doubled-up the nicks

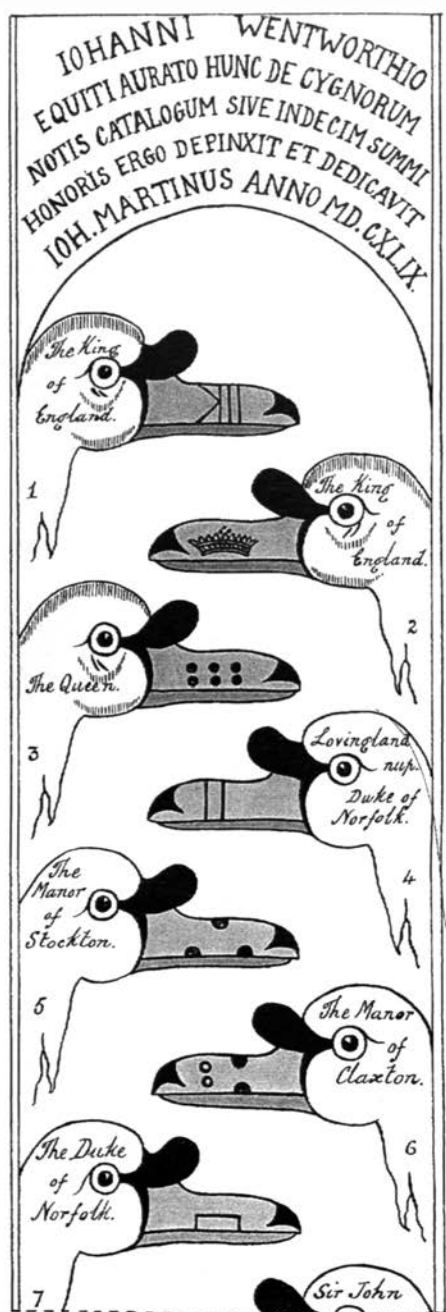
on the margins to form lozenges in the centre - an understandable error but one which attracted Ticehurst's particular scorn⁽⁸⁸⁾. Others occur with an even more idiosyncratic perspective in which the lower element of the bill is represented along one edge of the beak, viewed either from the top (fig. 14) or from the side (fig. 15). Even in some realistic-looking representations (fig. 16-17) the representation of the nail on the tip of the beak draws our attention to the fact that they are distorted in order to show the whole extent of the mark. Most accomplished but uncommon are views in which the head and the upper neck are shown in elevation while the beak with its markings is shown almost naturalistically in a three-quarter view : these are found in a facsimile volume based on a register of ninety-two marks used in the Isle of Ely and dated 1581.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ Yarrell, 1844-5 : vol. IV, p. 339, nos. 9-10 ; Ticehurst 1957 : 74, pl. XXXI.



The Windham Roll. 1673.

Fig. 16 : Windham roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



*The Wentworth Roll.
1649.*

Fig. 17 : Wentworth roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.

now in the Wisbech Museum (fig. 18)⁽⁸⁹⁾. Some quite realistic heads are shown on a roll of marks said to have been in use on the River Yare in 1661 (fig. 19) but in fact including marks of all ages and drawn up only in 1846 ; it owes little in terms of style to the earlier series beyond the curious perspective of the beaks, which the artist has seriously misinterpreted.

The grids or frameworks within which the marks are shown also vary in elaboration. Some rolls have no grids at all but most have simple linear boxes, each box enclosing one marked beak with the name of the owner written over it, generally arranged horizontally but occasionally vertically. A few have more decorative treatments of the borders : the fleurs-de-lys inserted between the beaks on the Cooper roll of c.1590 (Ticehurst, 1957 : 74) are further elaborated in a British Library⁽⁹⁰⁾ manuscript with dots and hatching to give it a whimsically arcaded appearance (fig. 20). One example in the Wisbech Museum has decorative green, yellow and blue bands forming borders (fig. 21). In the roll formerly at Hanford Hall near Blandford, Dorset (fig. 22), the frame as well as the heads and bills on each page have been printed by hand from a single, rather irregular wood-block, providing a labour-saving boon to the scribe (described in Mayo, 1913). In two instances, the Colville Roll in the Wisbech Museum (fig. 18) and the Cutts Roll in the Bodleian Library (fig. 23), the frame is divided into squares each containing a drawing of a swan's head and upper neck in profile, with the bills coloured red in one instance and pink in the other ; only in half a dozen other books, mostly from Norfolk, are the bills coloured.

The order in which marks are registered in the rolls is very variable. Ticehurst finds that in Broadland rolls the majority begin with royal marks (see fig. 16-17), followed by those of the spiritual and temporal peers ; thereafter the order on the Broadland rolls becomes unclear, although it

may reflect some territorial sequence ; elsewhere it is customary for the marks of religious houses to be followed by those of commoners in alphabetical order (Ticehurst, 1927-8 : 429). In one instance, the Towneley roll of 1621-4, an attempt has been made at classification, the marks being grouped according to the number and disposition of the gaps or nicks on the upper mandible. Colouring, beyond occasional reddish tints on the bill is unusual : an incomplete book of marks from Elsing Hall, Norfolk, has a blue wash on the first membrane and a green tint thereafter.

In the course of repeated copying and recopying of marks there was ample opportunity for error or variation. In order to promote uniformity, orders were issued periodically to the effect that all swan-rolls in private possession were to be compared with the official one and made to agree with it, both in respect of the marks recorded and of the owners' names⁽⁹¹⁾. At other times the keeping of rolls by private swan-herds was specifically forbidden : the Witham Ordinances, for example decreed that '... there shall no Swannerd keep, or carry any swan booke, but the King's Swannerd or his Deputy', possessing such a book or showing it to another person attracting a 40s. fine⁽⁹²⁾.

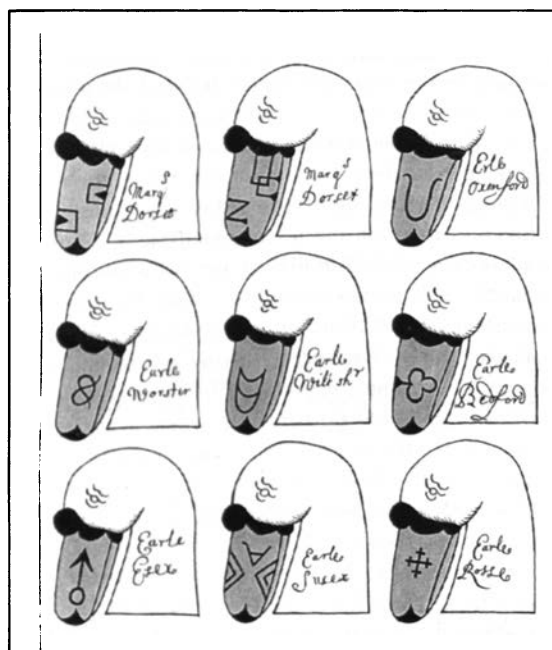
Of sixty-one swan-rolls examined by Ticehurst, twenty-five were vellum books and six on paper ; twenty-seven were vellum rolls and three on paper, of which the last were of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century date. Of twenty-three belonging to the Fenland area, all but three were books, while twenty-eight belonging to the Broadland area were, with four exceptions, all rolls ; the most extensive of these rolls measured almost 10 m in length. Of five Thames rolls four were books (two of paper) and one a vellum roll ; there was one vellum roll each for Surrey and for the Lincolnshire coastal marshes, one paper book each for certain rivers in Dorset and Sussex, and a vellum book for the Nottinghamshire Trent.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ The title page is inscribed 'This collection of Swan Marks, used in the Isle of Ely, 1581, is a fac-simile of the original Register, in the Possession of C.R. Colville, Esq., M.P., and Presented by him to the Trustees of the Wisbech Museum, 1866'.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ British Library, Additional MS 6302.

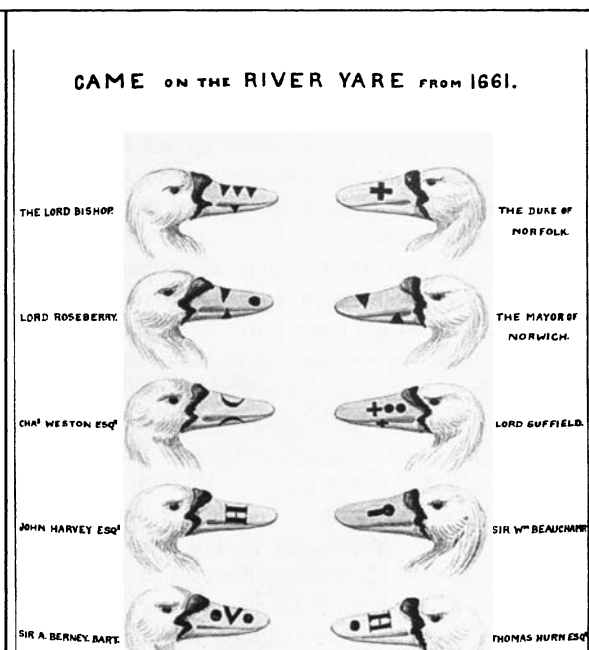
⁽⁹¹⁾ 'It is ordered & Decreed that all bookes & swannmarks bee reformed, corrected, amended & made vniforme vnto one booke wh^{ch} shall remayne in y^e hands of the Mr Swanner or his Deputy for y^t tyme being, wthout varying from the same either markeing, placing of Gapps, ticks, oylet holes, slitting of webs, cutting of Heels or claws : And that all owners ffarmers & Deputyes of swans shall reforme all such bookes or Rowles as they haue vnto the sayd Mr Swanner or his Deputyes booke & shall for euer after soe nigh as possibly by any meanes they may follow the order of the same in marking, Gapping, ticking, oyleting, slitting of webs, cutting of heeles or clawes... & to the end that the sayd Mr Swannard or his Deputy may make such a p[er]fect booke as aboue sayd agreeable to the truth of the owners markes It is ordered & decreed that the Cheife Deputy Swannard shall cause p[ro] clamation to bee made in the market before Christyde next that euery such owner of swanes his farmer or deputy by the purification next after it doe bring or cause to be brought to the Cheife Deputy swaner his seuerall marke or markes fairly Drawn vnder his hand that thervpon the Cheif Deputy Swannard may marke his sayde booke to be shoven and agreed vpon before the next swanning tyme... [and]... euery owner ffarmer or deputy shall pay to the Cheife Deputy Swanner for euery his marke or markes soe to be entred & the booke keepinge of the same at the next generall swaning after such entry therof made the sum of ijs. 6d' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 48).

⁽⁹²⁾ Witham Ordinances (1524), item 7 ; Banks, 1812 : 155-6.



The Colville Roll.
1587.

Fig. 18 : Colville roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



The Holmes Roll.
1846.

Fig. 19 : Holmes roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.

None of the surviving rolls is thought to antedate the statute of 1482 : the oldest known example, now in the Public Record Office, dates from the decade following the passing of that Act, but many of the names are written over earlier erasures. Of sixty-one examined by Ticehurst only twelve can be dated with any accuracy and seven of these belong to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Ticehurst, 1957 : 73-9). Many are copies of earlier documents : it seems to have been of frequent occurrence that, on his appointment, a new deputy did not necessarily succeed to his predecessor's roll, but had a copy made which would include any additions or amendments made during the latter's term of office. They rarely present an accurate picture of any one moment in time : names are to be found on rolls of a date long after the owner recorded had died, while other marks continued to be referred to as those of former owners. Ancient monastic marks are a constant feature of late sixteenth-and seventeenth-century rolls and

are almost always referred to by the names of their original owners⁽⁹³⁾. Of those examined by Ticehurst, two belonged to the years just before 1500, three to the years 1535-58, twelve were Elizabethan, twenty-five to the first half of the seventeenth century, eleven to the second half, and eight were later. To these can be added the roll which prompted the present paper (see fig. 6, 7 and Appendix) ; a vellum book of the time of James I (1603-25) containing 883 marks on forty-seven folios, bearing the inscription of ownership and the arms of Thomas Peirson of Wisbech, together with the date 1637⁽⁹⁴⁾ ; and a roll of c.1603-35 which was sold abroad in recent years⁽⁹⁵⁾.

By the mid eighteenth century the custom of swan-keeping had become much reduced both as to numbers of gamesters and to stock, with only a few of the largest landowners maintaining the practice. The increasing popularity of the turkey on account of its taste, its cheapness and the ease with which it could be reared eventually made

⁽⁹³⁾ For private owners who were dead at the time of compiling the roll, it was customary for the surname only to be entered, a practice which can be of some help in dating.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Recorded on the London market some years ago : see undated (c. 1975) bookseller's catalogue : 'List XLI', Martin Breslauer, Hallam Street, London W1, no. 40. Mr Jeremy Gray kindly drew this reference to my attention.

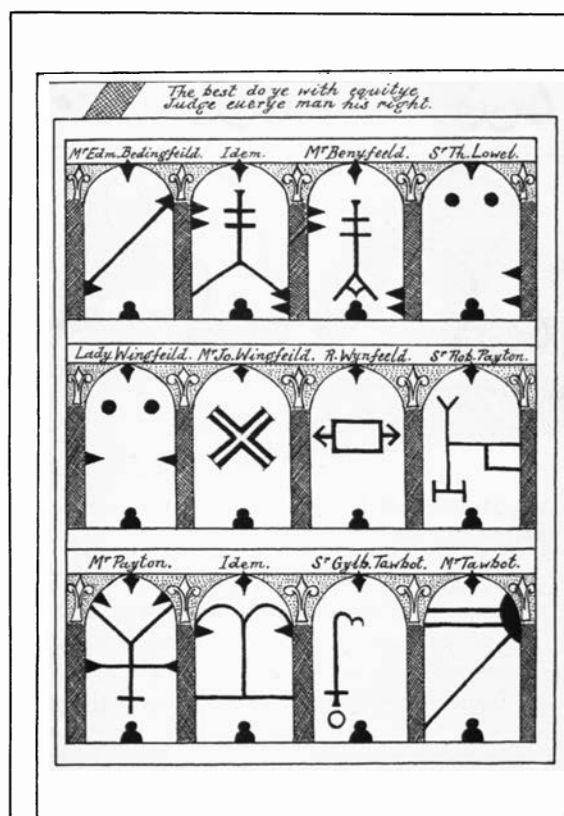
⁽⁹⁵⁾ A microfilm copy is lodged in the Department of Manuscripts, British Library (RP 456). I am indebted to Mr Nigel Ramsay for this reference.

the keeping of swans wholly uneconomic. The account by Sir Joseph Banks quoted above makes it clear that the practice had survived in Lincolnshire up to the previous generation but that it had then died out. In Norfolk it survived very much longer : a roll of c.1820 shows a number of marks then in use on the River Wensum ; 'the mark now in use for breeding swans left on the river' is mentioned in 1897 (Southwell, 1894-9 : 388) and as recently as 1928 nine owners still exercised their rights on the Yare and the Wensum (Ticehurst, 1957 : 118-19). Today, most people are aware of it (if at all) through Stanley Spencer's evocative

image of *Swan-upping at Cookham*, begun in 1915 and completed on his demobilization from the Army in 1919 (Tate Gallery, London : see Bell, 1992 : no. 27), or from press-reports of the annual swan-voyage of the Vintners' and Dyers' Companies⁽⁹⁶⁾.

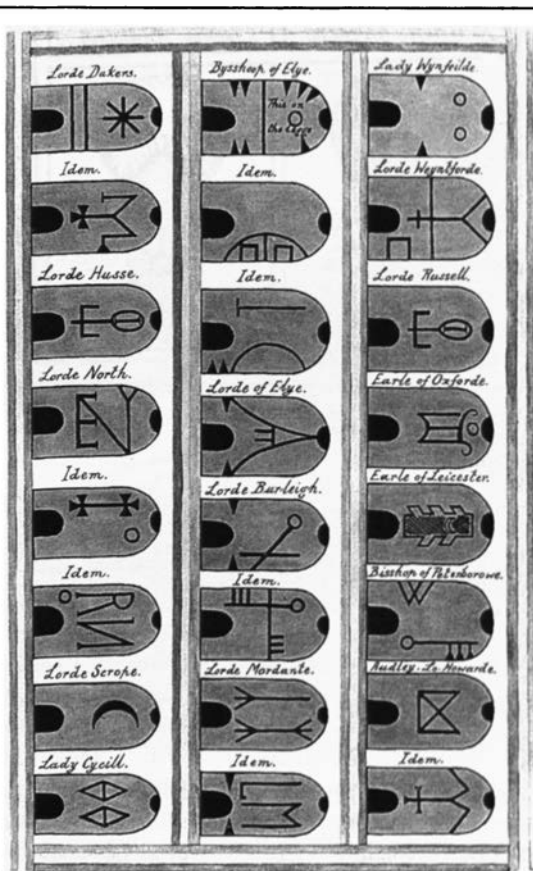
Physical remains : the archaeological record

By its nature, swan-keeping has left little trace in the archaeological record. Even when cygnets were removed from the open water to be fattened for the table, a hurdled enclosure around a pond or pit was all that was needed to



*British Museum Add. MS. 6302.
circa 1580-1602.*

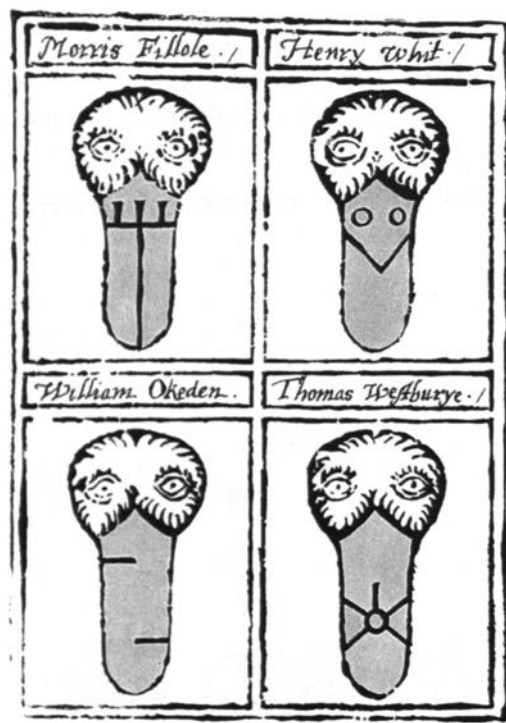
Fig. 20 : British Library, MS Add. 6302. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



*The Wisbech Museum Roll.
circa 1640.*

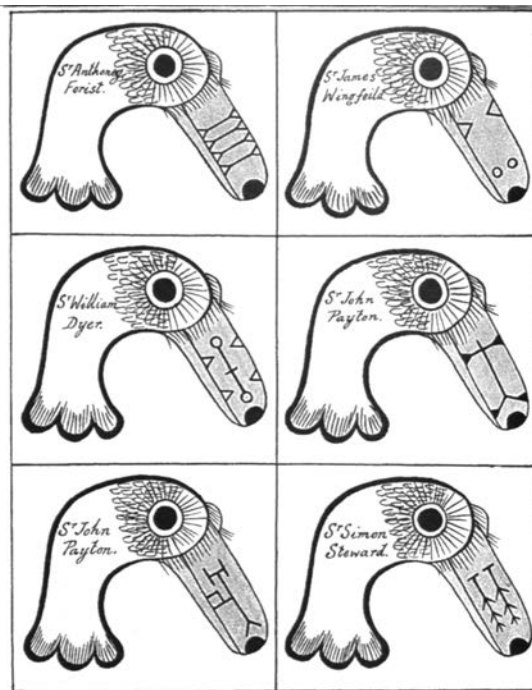
Fig. 21 : Wisbech roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ The Dyers seem to have exercised their right with sober propriety since the early sixteenth century but a more hedonistic streak marked the swan-voyage of the Vintners, whose right to mark is first recorded in 1510 ; in addition to those who did the marking, it was the custom in the eighteenth century for the livermen and their guests to lend convivial support by following on behind in the Company's barge, appropriately named 'The Bacchus', carved and painted with festoons of grapes and with gilded bacchic figures on the prow (Vintners' Company, n.d. : 2-3).



The Hanford Roll.
circa 1620.

Fig. 22 : Hanford roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.



Bodleian MS. Rawlinson, B277.
1656.

Fig. 23 : Cutts roll. Facsimile in the Ticehurst archive, Society of Antiquaries.

contain the birds. In the mid sixteenth century the city of Oxford customarily placed its annual quota of cygnets for fattening with private citizens who had appropriate facilities, supplying them with bread, oats and barley at the city's expense; later the city's game of swans was placed on lease in return for four fattened cygnets a year⁽⁹⁷⁾. Those with larger numbers of swans who regularly fattened them for the table found a need for more permanent swan-houses and swan-pits of their own. Two Cambridge colleges certainly had swan-houses, although little is known of their details. The corporation of Norwich acquired from the Crown the property of the suppressed Blackfriars and in 1544 gave approval 'for castyng a mote next the ryver, to kepe in sygnettes, where some tyme was the friers jakes aforesaid;

and for makyng a fense-wall out of the grownd, from the north end of the dortor to the water-gate, to fense in the mote' (Ticehurst, 1957 : 115). Also in Norwich is the only preserved swan-pit, belonging to St. Helen's Hospital, founded in 1547 on the site of the dissolved hospital of St. Giles and succeeding to the latter's swan-rights. The present swan-pit (fig. 24) was constructed in 1793 on the site of an earlier one. The pit itself is a rectangular brick structure some 25 m by 10 m in extent and 2 m deep, with a ramp at one end for ease of access. Water from the river was fed through a sluice and regulated to depth of about 0.6 m; floating troughs for holding food were anchored along three sides and filled through spouts (Southwell 1899-1904). From early in the nineteenth century private owners were allowed

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Ticehurst (1936b : 112, 114). A lease of 28 August 1578 reads as follows : 'At this Counsayle was granted to Mr. Thomas Smythe to have the games of swannes of thys Cyttie from Mychaelmas next for xxj^{tie} years, yf he so long lyve, payeng yearlie fower fatt fedd signets, and leaving twelve old breaders at thend of the said tearme...; the tyme of payment must be thone agaynst the eleccion dynner, and thother agaynst the comyng home of the Mayor yearlie.'

to send their cygnets there for fattening ; a fixed charge of 1 guinea was levied, or alternatively the owner could bring two lean birds on condition of receiving one fat one in return⁽⁹⁸⁾ ; others were bought by the Hospital at upping time to be fattened and sold later, at a profit, to anyone requiring them. Up to the 1880s as many as 100 cygnets are said to have occupied the pit between Michaelmas and Christmas, but thereafter public taste for the birds seems to have gone into terminal decline⁽⁹⁹⁾.

The end of a custom

With the loss of public appetite for the swan came the gradual abandonment of the rituals and regulations of

ownership. No legal device marked the end of these customs : they simply became irrelevant. In 1878 the SPCA brought a private prosecution at Slough, Berkshire, against the three Swan-herds who continued to mark - those of the Dyers' and Vintners' Companies and the Royal Swan-master himself, alleging that the practice inflicted unnecessary suffering on the birds. The case failed, but thereafter the current royal mark was simplified in order to minimize discomfort to the swans and later, at the behest of Queen Alexandra, the royal swans ceased to be marked, although the Queen's Swan-herd still accompanies those of the Dyers and Vintners on their annual voyage. Pinioning was abandoned in 1978⁽¹⁰⁰⁾.

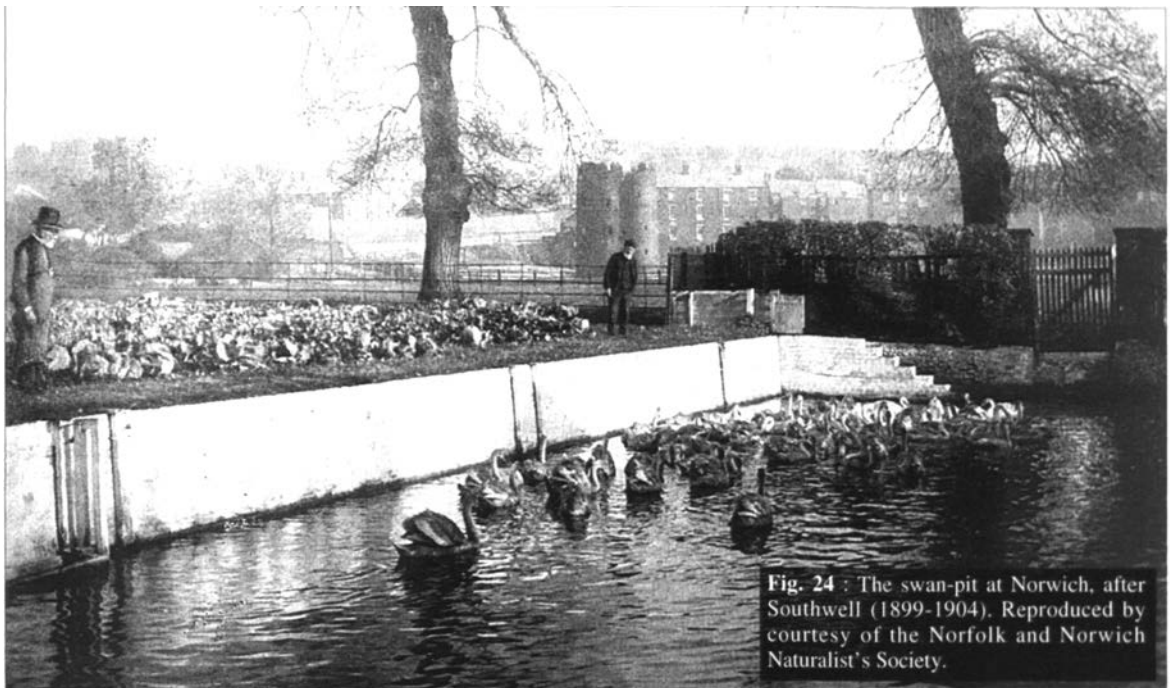


Fig. 24 : The swan-pit at Norwich, after Southwell (1899-1904). Reproduced by courtesy of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalist's Society.

⁽⁹⁸⁾ Frere (1846) : 'The proprietor sends to be fatted either two lean swans, on condition of receiving one fat one, or a swan and a guinea. After most of the swans have been sent for, till perhaps not above half a dozen are left, these are killed, as so small a number will not feed sufficiently, they will only fat in flocks. If you get one at Norwich the expense is this : Lean swan, one guinea ; fattening the swan, one guinea ; dressing the swan, one guinea ; cook's customary fee, one guinea ; so that it costs four guineas, and when done is nearly as good as a goose : *experto credo*.'

⁽⁹⁹⁾ Southwell (1899-1904 : 580) mentions in 1903 that 'although the numbers sent in [to St. Helen's swan-pit] in the last two seasons were only fifty-seven and fifty-two respectively, the supply exceeded the demand and resulted in a serious loss to the master of the Hospital whose privilege it was to fatten them, this loss having occurred repeatedly of late he cannot be expected to bear'. Opinions as to the eating qualities of swans have always varied (see note 98) : only cygnets in their first year were considered worthy of consumption and then only for a brief season, for after Christmas they quickly lost quality and were judged 'by no means good for the table' (Southwell 1889-94 : 271). Even in prime condition, swan was not to everyone's taste : in Francis Willughby's *Ornithology* (1678 : 356), the judgement is given that 'for its rarity [the swan] serves as a dish to adorn great mens Tables at Feasts and entertainments, being else in my opinion no desirable dainty'.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Robins, 1881 : 467 ; Harting, 1906 : 192-3 ; Dyers' Company, n.d. : 3. The Mute Swan continues to occupy a somewhat anomalous position in relation to its near relatives : the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) makes provision for the protection of Bewick's and Whooper Swans but curiously makes no mention whatever of *Cygnus olor*.

Conclusion

Behind the prestige and the ritual which formerly surrounded the ownership of swans lay the all-important fact that they were there to be eaten and that they formed a source of profit, selling at much higher prices than any other bird⁽¹⁰¹⁾. The swan was the supreme bird of the feast and was consumed in huge numbers in former years. Several requisitions for the supply of swans to the Court at Christmas survive from the reign of Henry III, the largest of them for 125 birds⁽¹⁰²⁾; at a feast celebrating the installation of George Nevell as Archbishop of York in 1466 some 400 swans were consumed, while for the regular feasts held by the Serjeants of Inner Temple in the mid sixteenth century annual totals of up to 168 are recorded (Dugdale, 1666 : 128). It seems extraordinary that the swan population could have withstood these depredations, yet in a real sense it was the elaborate machinery set up to exploit the swan on a systematic basis that saved it from following into extinction from England the crane, the bustard and other ungainly species that fell prey all too easily to the indiscriminate attentions of hunters and hawkers⁽¹⁰³⁾. Today we no longer harvest the swan on an annual basis but we reap a continuing benefit from the centuries of careful husbandry that certainly supported conspicuous consumption on a grand scale but which protected at the same time the breeding stock that ensured a stable and above all an enduring population.

Appendix : The Trafford Roll

The manuscript which prompted this paper appeared on the London market in 1992 : see Simon Finch Rare Books, *Catalogue Seventeen : Recent Acquisitions*, no. 153, from which the following description is reproduced. 'Small 4to (174 x 130 mm), manuscript on vellum, 20 leaves (followed by 22 blank leaves), with 720 swan marks, named in a contemporary hand. Eighteenth-century tan polished calf, red label unlettered, spine worn at head and tail.' Folio 1r records that on 22 July 1719 it was in the ownership of Sir Clement Trafford of Stoke, Norfolk; fol. 3r bears the signature of Sigismund Trafford⁽¹⁰⁴⁾.

Note. In the following transcript, the columns are read consecutively from top to bottom, as is clearly intended from internal evidence. Multiple marks attributed to a single owner, as indicated by successive entries marked 'idem' are indicated here by an appropriate number in square brackets. In some instances the same name may appear in different parts of the roll, in which case they are listed as encountered, with no attempt at consolidation. Blank folios are omitted.

fol. 1r

'Sir Clement Trafford, Stoke, Norfolk, July 22 1719 requests Edw^d woodsStone Jun^r to take care of this Book till he is desired to return it.'

fol. 3r

C.R. [King Charles I]; [unidentified]; [?] Gilbert. [signature] 'Sigismund Trafford'

fol. 4r

C.R.; The Queen [2]; Duke of Suffolk; Earl of Oxford [2]; Duke of Suffolk; Lord Montague [2, 1 marked for Norfolk]; Earl of Huntingdon; Duke of Norfolk; Duke of Suffolk; Earl of Essex [2]; Earl of Wiltshire; Earl of Sussex; C. R.; Earl of Huntingdon [2]; Lord Clinton; Lord Dacres of [illegible]; Earl of Oxford; Lord Dacres; Marquis of Dorset

fol. 4v

[illeg.]; Lord Wentworth; Marquis of Dorset; Earl of Surrey [2]; Lord Gray; Duke of Richmond [2]; Lord Scroop; Lord North [3]; Lord Scroop; M. El [illegible] [7, 1 for Ely]; Lord Bratlett; Lady Lidell; Lady Wakefield; Lord Wentford

fol. 5r

Lord Morton [2]; Earl of Exeter; Bishop of Peterborough; Earl of Leicester; H. Adams; Tho. Adams; Algood; Margetts; Astles [2]; Atkinson; Adamson; Arley; Ashton [2]; Audley [5]; Aylofe [2]; Aylose; Astrop

fol. 5v

Athow; Bar; Armin; Thomas Audlin; L. Athow; Bacon; Badgroft [3]; Baker [3]; Balam [6]; Baldwer;

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ In 1572 the price of a fat swan was fixed by statute at 6s. 8d. while a fat goose merited only 1s. and chickens 4d. each (Capello, 1897 : 62).

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Ticehurst (1957 : 3). Over the Christmas in question the Court was installed at York and the birds were to be collected from Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Cumberland and Northumberland.

⁽¹⁰³⁾ A similar observation was made by Sir Peter Scott (Scott, 1972 : 174), who stressed the positive advantages to the breeding population of taking only cygnets in a controlled and systematic manner.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Seemingly the Sigismund Trafford born c.1644, who inherited the Dunton Hall estate in Lincolnshire, where he rebuilt the hall and stocked the park with deer at a cost of £22,000 (Rye, 1911-15 : vol. II, 937-8). I am grateful to Miss Jean Kennedy, County Archivist at the Norfolk Record Office, for this information. Further reference to Sigismund is made by Blomefield (1805-10 : vol. VII, 394) but I have found no information on Sir Clement Trafford.

Bevill ; Barly ; Bartlay ; Barret ; Bankes ; Barra [t]

fol. 6r

Bedingfield [3] ; Ed. Bedingsfield [2] ; Blewit ; Bowles [2] ; Bowes ; Boyes ; Bestny ; Bedete ; Beale [2] ; Ro. Beale ; Bell [2] ; Bearte ; Bale [2] ; G. Beale ; Boulton [3]

fol. 6v

Boulton [4] ; Butts [4] ; Bocner ; Ro. Bocner ; W. Brian ; Burton [4] ; Bongett ; Bosworth ; Bremely ; Bradberry ; Brightman ; Breysley ; Burte ; Butler [2]

fol. 7r

Burgan ; Bucke ; Bush ; Burwell ; Brander ; Ed. Burton [2] ; Buckworth [4] ; W. Browne ; Brumroe ; Bird ; Hen. Bedingfield ; Burgess ; T. Browne ; W. Browne ; Byrd [2] ; Blanche ; Callow [3]

fol. 7v

Callow ; Sir Tho. Cheny ; Cardall ; Woods ; Copps ; Carlton ; R. Carrier ; Carter ; Cherley ; Phil. Clement [4] ; Carvill [2] ; Claridans ; Clayton ; Clapoole ; Clarke ; Clinton ; Coppledike ; H. Coste ; Coloyll ; H. Coney ; W. Coney

fol. 8r

Cotton ; Sir Ro. Cotton ; Sir W. Cotton [7] ; Lord Coney ; Cloney ; Tho. Coney [2] ; A. Coney [3] ; Colbey ; Robert Cocke ; Croyland [2] ; Cray [2] ; Clarke ; Colletts

fol. 9r

Trinity College ; King's College ; Ry. Croft [2] ; Sir Lo. Cutts ; T. Carret ; Cromwell [2] ; Sir Hen. Cromwell [3, 1 marked H : C :] ; Croply ; Jo. Crisby ; Cansbee ; Chesson ; Jo. Crane ; Lady Deere ; Cullian ; Caltheropp ; Sir Ch. Crofte ; Cornewallis ; Ro. Carter ; Day ; Davy

fol. 9v

Davison ; Deane ; Sir Tho. Deram ; Diggle [2] ; H. Dayle ; Daniell ; Darsey [2] ; Tho. Darby ; Death [2] ; Dethick ; Darby [2] ; Dethick ; Death [2] ; Dunhold ; Dallington ; R. Dutton ; Jo. Drewry ; Dorrington ; Duckett

fol. 10r

Death ; Disney ; Diggle [2] ; Downes ; Durrant ; Earsby [3] ; Lo. Earsby [2] ; Edwards ; Ro. Edwards ; G. Eden ; Emson ; P. Eden ; Earsby [3] ; Eastmond ; Edmond ; H. Evvryd [3]

fol. 10v

Everard [2] ; Deane of Ely [2] ; H. Everill ; Everard ; Fant ; Fewilliam ; E. Feris ; Lo. Russell ; Foster ; Fityn ; Ro. Fynsham [2] ; Sir E. Feris ; Ed. Finsham ; Fynsham [2] ; Vacat ; Fitzidillias ; Flower [2] ; Francklin [2]

fol. 11r

Fysher [4] ; Tho. Fysher ; Figge ; Sir Miles Fleetwood ; Sir Jo. Gamson ; Gaffin ; Wm. Garner ; Gamblin [2] ; Gayzell ; Gibbon [2] ; Tho. Girlin ; Golfett [4] ; R. Godfrey ; Gaudey ; Gonnell ; Gadblout

fol. 11v

Goodricke [6] ; Godfry ; Granditch [3] ; Godmanchester ; Grift ; Greene [2] ; Graves [2] ; Lo. Goldwell ; Grindle ; Gyvon ; Sir Jo. Harrington [5]

fol. 12r

G. Hall ; Hallaswell ; Ro. Harrington ; Harriman ; Haw [2] ; Hall of Gratforth ; R. Hall ; G. Hall ; R. Hall ; Hack ; Hart ; Hayforth ; Sir Jo. Hare ; Hearon [2] ; Halfehead ; Hartwell ; Sir Tho. Hewar [2] ; Herris ; Sir Ed. Hind [2] ; F. Holland

fol. 13r

Horlins ; Holtoff ; Holland ; Holdege ; W. Hunston Tyd [2] ; Herne ; Herewood [2] ; Hill ; Howlett ; W. Hobson [2] ; Hobich ; Hordin ; J. Hunstone ; Hudleston ; Hart ; Roger Hubbard [4] ; H. Hunston ; Sir W. Hussy

fol. 13v

Humberston ; Mrs Holdrids ; Jermay ; Jerman ; Ingrey ; Jordan ; Jermingham [2] ; Sir Jon of Hesonrow [?] ; Kedbey ; Ed. Jakins ; S. Kilkam ; Knight ; Knare ; Kindey ; Kervill [2] ; Knevit [2] ; Lacey ; Rd. Lall ; Laverocke [3]

fol. 14r

[Laverocke] ; Sir W. Lovell ; Lynd ; Lactor [2] ; Lexam ; Tho. Love ; Ladd ; Lewes ; Littleberye [2] ; Manbey ; Sir Jo. Markam ; March [3] ; Mare ; Marteson [2] ; Mathew ; Manners ; March ; Jo. Marshall ; Mann

fol. 15r

Meares [2] ; Medly [2] ; Mounstruen ; F. Mumford ; Mumford [3] ; Milleunt [2] ; Meares [4] ; Sir W. Mildmay ; Tindal ; Miles ; Methold ; Meges ; Morton ; Montegue ; Monford [2] ; Martin Monford

fol. 15v

Napier ; Nelsam ; Newport ; Nicholas ; Nicotts [2] ; Sir H. North ; Sir Humphry Pre ; Ogar ; To. Odome ; Oxbrow ; Ogle [3] ; Sir Jo. Payton [5] ; Perry ; Prentis ; Parlett [2] ; Payne

fol. 16r

Pratt ; Pages ; Parke ; Parris [4] ; Abbot of Peterborough ; Jo. Perry ; Ed. Perry ; Pecock [3] ; Perkinson ; Peirson ; Persy ; Pinchbecke ; Vicar of Pinchbecke ; Powdich ; Procter ; Price ; Pulvertoff ; Pennycok ; Pers

fol. 17r

Pelle ; Dr Phillip ; Jo. Plagrasse [2] ; Prentice ; E. Prentice ; Penny ; Penne ; Putterel ; Peares ; Quarlis ; Repps of Tilny ; Repps of Walpoole ; Repps of Wilton ; Repps of Mendan ; Ramer ; Randall ; Renelson ; Robbs ; Robinson ; Rogers ; Robinson ; Ratlife ; Rowll

fol. 17v

Roger ; Rogers ; Rogers [2] ; Ruthall ; Rogers [2] ; Rudston ; Sir Miles Sandys ; Savill [2] ; Shaxbon ; Shadd ; Vin. Skinners [2] ; Scarbrough ; Skennington [2] ;

Skinner ; Samuell ; Saye ; Saunder [2] ; Smith

fol. 18r

Smith ; Springe ; Sleforth ; Stalion ; Steward [3] ; E. Skipwith [2] ; Steward [3] ; Storie ; Stalton ; Jos. Smith ; Tho. Smith ; Some ; Sparlige ; Prior of Spalding ; Styles ; Symcotts ; Sir Wm. Staford [2] ; Stafforth

fol. 18v

Sutton [2] ; Prior of Spalding ; Sidney ; Taylor [2] ; Tirrell ; Tegel ; Talbot ; Teder ; Jo. Thowrogood [2] ; Sir Tho. Temp [2] ; Thornton ; Tindall ; W. Thomyson ; Tooke ; R. Trice ; Les. Trice ; Ro. Trice [2] ; Tresham ; Thos. Tymngty

fol. 19r

[Tymngty] [2, 1 marked for Tye] ; Trinity Hall ; Abbot of Thornye ; W. Twels [2] ; Villers [2] ; Villers [2] ; Walpoole [4] ; Waters ; Wardale ; Sir Hen. Warner ; Walsingham [2] ; W. Wetch ; Ry. Wetch ; Ro. Wetch [2]

fol. 20r

Tho. Welby ; Welby [2] ; Wensley ; Wetherley ; T. White [2] ; Welby ; Sir Wil. Welby ; Jo. Trafford of Lydd ; T. Watts ; W. Whyte ; White ; Jo. White ; Jo. Winfeild [2] ; Wendey ; B. Whetstone ; Ro. Winnle ; Jo. Wildbore ; Wilkes ; Wilbertone ; Woolmer ; Worletch

fol. 21r

Wilsbey ; Wren ; Woods [2] ; Wigglesworth ; Wright ; Wynde [2] ; Wind ; Woolmer ; Warner ; Wenford ; Wenby ; Yelverton ; Watson ; W. Wich ; Welby of Tyd ; Yelverton ; Williams [2] ; Woods ; Sir Miles Bulle ; T. Barton ; Berryford

fol. 22r

W. Bacye [2] ; Bullington ; Barlings ; Boxhelme ; Bolton ; Sir Ed. Brundell ; Rich. Beuwley [2] ; W. Cockett ; Jo. Copeland ; Giles Bogg [2] ; W. Clarke ; Turvill

Acknowledgements

I am glad to acknowledge my debt to Mr Simon Finch for his generosity in making available to me the manuscript which prompted this paper and which is transcribed above. I am also indebted to the Society of Antiquaries of London for access to the Ticehurst archive and for permission to reproduce the facsimiles in that archive which form the basis of fig. 8-23 ; further details of these are given by Ticehurst (1957). Gordon House allowed me to copy the engraving in his possession which is reproduced in fig. 3. Harry Lange kindly prepared the artwork for fig. 5-6.

Bibliographie

- BANKS Sir J., 1812.— Ordinances respecting swans on the River Witham, in the County of Lincoln: together with an original roll of swan marks, appertaining to the proprietors on the said stream. *Archaeologia*, 16 : 153-62.
- BELL A., 1915.— Pleistocene and later bird fauna of Great Britain and Ireland. *Zoologist*, 19 : 401-12.
- BELL K., 1992.— *Stanley Spencer. A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings*. London : Phaidon.
- BEST H., 1857.— *Rural Economy in Yorkshire in 1641, being the Farming and Account Books of Henry Best*. Surtees Society XXXIII, London.
- BLOMEFIELD F., 1805-10.— *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*. London : Miller.
- BOWYER G., 1847.— Letter to Sir Henry Ellis, giving a summary of the old laws respecting swans. *Archaeologia*, 32 : 423-8.
- BRACON H. de, 1878-83.— *Henrici de Bracton, De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliæ*, ed. T. Twiss. London : Longman.
- BROMEHEAD J. M., 1850.— Memoir on the regulations anciently prescribed in regard to swans... and on an original book of swan-marks. *Memoirs illustrative of the History and Antiquities of the County and City of Lincoln* (Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Annual Meeting held at Lincoln, 1848). London.
- GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS, 1877.— *Vita S. Hugonis* (Rolls Series vol. XXI, vii). London : J.F. Dimock.
- CAPELLO, F., 1897.— *A Relation, or rather a true Account, of the Island of England... about the Year 1500*, trans. and ed. C.A. Sneyd. Camden Society XXXVII, London.
- COKE Sir E., 1826.— *The Reports of Sir Edward Coke, Knt.*, new edn., ed. J.H. Thomas and J.F. Fraser. London : Butterworth.

- DUGDALE W., 1666.– *Origines Juridicales, or Historical Memorials of the English Laws...* London : published privately.
- DYERS' COMPANY (n.d.).– *Swan Marking and Swan Upping*. London : Dyers' Company.
- ERSKINE J., 1793.– *An Institute of the Law of Scotland in Four Books*, 3rd edn. Edinburgh : Bell.
- FOWLER J., 1929.– *A Description of the High Stream of Arundel... written... about the year 1637*. Nature and Archaeology Circle, Extra Publications I, Littlehampton.
- FRERE H. T., 1846.– Norfolk swan fattening. *Zoologist*, 4 : 1250.
- GRAY H. St. G., 1966.– *The Meare Lake Village III*. M.A. Cotton ed. Taunton : Published privately.
- GURNEY J. H., 1921.– *Early Annals of Ornithology*. London : Witherby.
- HARRISON C. J. O. and COWLES G. S., 1977.– The extinct large cranes of the north-west Palaearctic. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 4 : 25-7.
- HARTING J. E., 1906.– *Recreations of a Naturalist*. London : Unwin.
- HISTORIC MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION, 1915.– *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury preserved at Hatfield House*, part XIII (Addenda). London.
- HUMPHRYS G., 1987.– Ups and downs for the swan. *Country Life*, 181, 30 : 112.
- KEAR J., 1990.– *Man and Wildfowl*. London : Poyser.
- KEMPE A. J. (ed.), 1836.– *The Loseley Manuscripts. Manuscripts and other rare documents... at Loseley House, in Surrey*. London : Murray.
- MANSEL-PLYDELL J. C., 1886.– Decoys and swan marks. *Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club*, 81 : 1-8.
- MAYO C. H., 1913.– Swans on the Salisbury Avon and the Dorset Stour. *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, 13 : 297-312.
- MINET W., 1903-5.– Two early seventeenth-century rolls of Norfolk swan-marks. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 20 : 276-86.
- NORTHCOTE E. M., 1983.– Morphology of Mute Swans *Cygnus olor* in relation to domestication. In : C. Grigson and J. Clutton-Brock (eds.), *Animals and Archaeology*, 2, *Shell Middens, Fishes and Birds*, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 183, Oxford, 173-9.
- ORDERS, LAWES and CUSTOMES, 1632.– *The Orders Lawes and Ancient Customes of Swanns*. London : John Witherings.
- PAS M. J. de, 1922-9.– Notes sur la garenne aux cygnes de Saint-Omer. *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de la Morinie. Bulletin Historique*, 40 : 387-92.
- PALEY-BAILDON W., 1912-13.– A sixteenth-century account book, with a note on swan-marks. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 25 : 181-3.
- PEACOCK E., 1885.– Swan marks. *Archaeological Journal*, 42 : 17-19.
- POULSON G., 1840.– *The History and Antiquities of the Seignior of Holderness*. London : Brown, Hull and Pickering.
- ROBINS E. C., 1881.– Some account of the history and antiquities of the Worshipful Company of Dyers, London. *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 5 : 463-76.
- RYE W., 1911-15.– *Norfolk Families*. Norwich : Privately published.
- SCOTT Sir P., 1972.– *The Swans*. London : Joseph.
- SOUTHWELL T., 1889-94.– St. Helen's swan-pit. *Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society*, 5 : 265-72.
- SOUTHWELL T., 1894-9.– St. Helen's swan-pit. *Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society*, 6 : 387-9.
- SOUTHWELL T., 1899-1904.– St. Helen's swan-pit. *Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society*, 7 : 579-81.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1924.– The early history of the mute swan in England. *British Birds*, 17 : 174-82.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1926a.– An historical review of the laws, orders and customs anciently used for the preservation of swans in England. *British Birds*, 19, 186-205.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1926b.– On swan-marks. *British Birds*, 19 : 262-73, 294-308.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1927-8.– The swan-marks of East Norfolk. *Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society*, 12 : 424-60.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1928.– The office of Master of the Swans. *British Birds*, 22 : 74-84.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1930.– Surrey swan-marks. *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 38 : 34-48.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1931-3.– The swan-marks of Suffolk. *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 21 : 139-52.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1932.– The swan-marks of Berkshire. *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 36 : 62-91.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1935.– The mute swan in Kent. *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 47 : 55-70.

- TICEHURST N. F., 1936a.– The swan marks of Lincolnshire. *Reports and Papers of the Architectural and Archaeological Societies of Lincoln and Northampton*, 42 : 59-141.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1936b.– The swan-marks of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. *Oxfordshire Archaeological Society, Report* no. 82 : 97-130.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1937-8.– The swan-marks of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. *Transactions of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society*, 5 : 121-76.
- TICEHURST N. F., 1957.– *The Mute Swan in England. Its history, and the ancient custom of swan keeping*. London : Cleaver-Hume.
- VINTNERS' COMPANY, n.d.– *The Vintners' Swans. Swan Upping*. London : Vintners' Company.
- WILLUGHBY F., 1678.– *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby*, John Ray ed. London : Martyr.
- YARRELL W., 1844-5.– *A History of British Birds*. 4th edn. London : H. Saunders, Van Voorst.
-