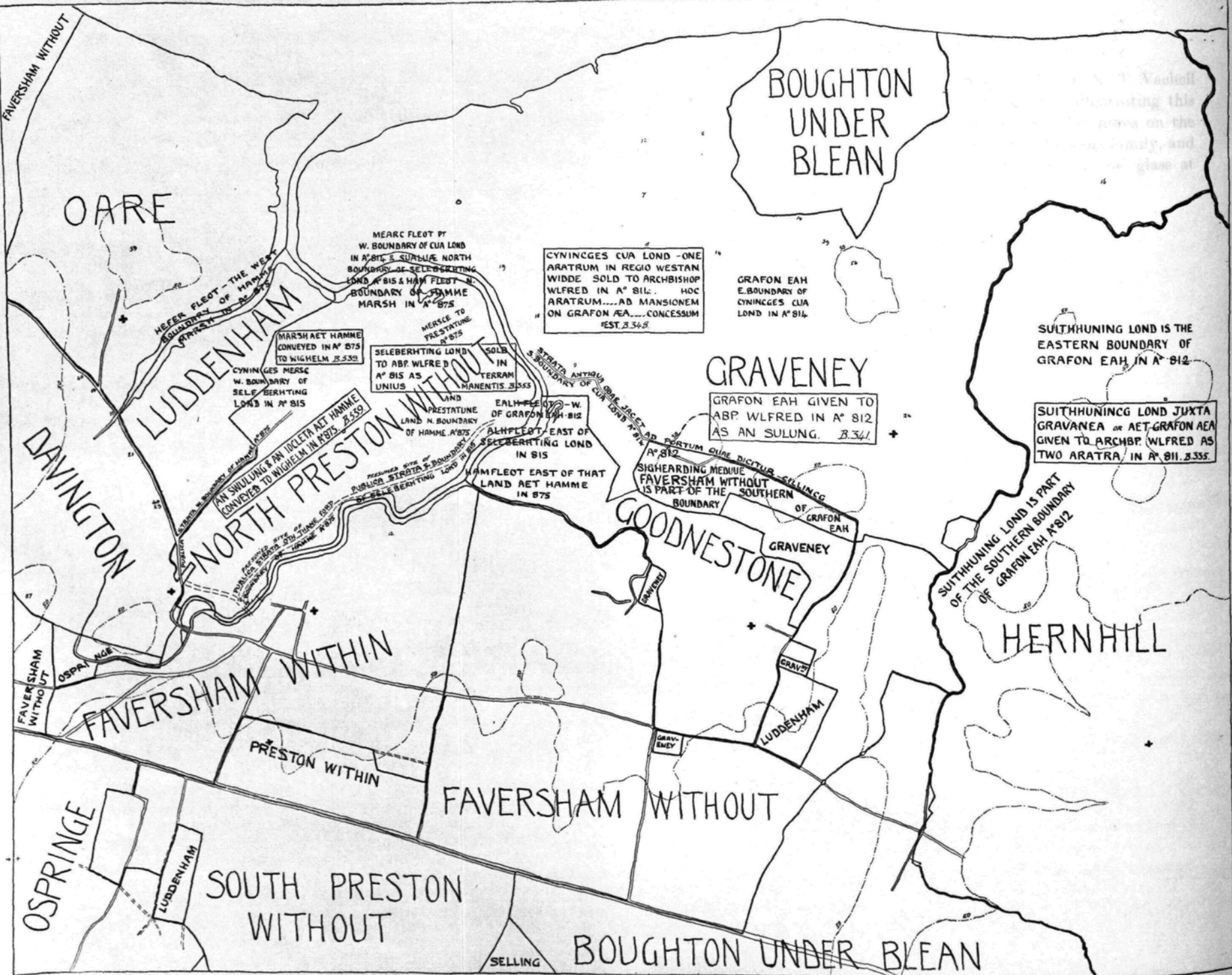




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OARE

BOUGHTON
UNDER
BLEAN

LUDDENHAM

DAVINGTON

NORTH PRESTON WITHOUT

GRAVENEY

GRAFON EAH GIVEN TO
ABP. WLFRED IN A° 812
AS AN SULUNG. B.341

SUTHUNING LAND IS THE
EASTERN BOUNDARY OF
GRAFON EAH IN A° 812

SUTHUNINGC LAND JUXTA
GRAVANA or AET GRAFON AEA
GIVEN TO ARCHBP. WLFRED AS
TWO ARATRA IN A° 811. B.335.

SUTHUNING LAND IS PART
OF THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY
OF GRAFON EAH A° 812

HERNHILL

FAVERSHAM WITHIN

GOODNESTONE

OSPRINGE

SOUTH PRESTON
WITHOUT

FAVERSHAM WITHOUT

BOUGHTON UNDER BLEAN

MERC FLEET PT
W. BOUNDARY OF CUA LOND
IN A° 812. S. BOUNDARY NORTH
BOUNDARY OF SELEBERHTING
LOND A° 815 & HAM FLEET N.
BOUNDARY OF HAMME
MARSH IN A° 875

CYNINGCES CUA LOND - ONE
ARATRUM IN REGIO WESTAN
WIDDE SOLD TO ARCHBISHOP
WLFRED IN A° 812. HOC
ARATRUM... AD MANSIONEM
ON GRAFON AEA... CONCESSIONEM
EST. B.348.

GRAFON EAH
E. BOUNDARY OF
CYNINGCES CUA
LOND IN A° 814

MARSHAET HAMME
CONVEYED IN A° 875
TO NIGHELM B.339

SELEBERHTING LOND
TO ABP. WLFRED
A° 815 AS
UNIUS

SOLD
IN
TERRAM
MANENTIS B.353

CYNINGCES MERC
W. BOUNDARY OF
SELEBERHTING
LOND IN A° 815

LAND
PRESTATUNE
LAND N. BOUNDARY
OF HAMME A° 875

EALHCEST - W.
BOUNDARY OF GRAFON EAH - 812

ALHFLEOT - EAST OF
SELEBERHTING LOND
IN 815

HAMFLEOT EAST OF THAT
LAND AET HAMME
IN 875

SIGHEARDING MEDIE
FAVERSHAM WITHOUT
IS PART OF THE
SOUTHERN
BOUNDARY

FAVERSHAM WITHOUT

FAVERSHAM WITHOUT

LUDDENHAM

PRESTON WITHIN

SELLING

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF SOME SAXON CHARTERS RELATING TO THE FAVERSHAM DISTRICT.

BY GORDON WARD, M.D., F.S.A.

It is proposed, in this essay, to study the topography of certain Saxon charters relating to Faversham and the neighbourhood. These are of much interest and it is fortunate that most of them are either still in existence or are known from almost contemporary copies. But the topographical questions involved have not yet been decided and the use of these charters for historical purposes has therefore been open to criticism. Thus, the "region of Faversham", and the "region suburban to Faversham" are sometimes considered to be the same; others believe them to be separate areas. Again, the common expression "publica strata" or "antiqua strata" may be a valuable guide to an old road hitherto unidentified, or it may be one of the synonyms for Watling Street. The whereabouts of Cilling, the old port of Faversham, has never been decided but these charters afford us indications of great interest in this connection, even if it can hardly be said that they leave no more to discover. The evidence of how a considerable area was deliberately taken from the manor and parish of Faversham and placed in the adjoining manor and parish of Graveney seems to have escaped comment until now and is of great historical significance. I feel sure that I shall not be able to refrain from enlarging somewhat on these points but in the main this essay is intended to be topographical. There will be no extensive quotations in Latin or Anglo-Saxon (the original charters and the Cartularium Saxonicum are available for students), nor is it proposed to deal in any way with that King's Wood belonging to Faversham which lay in Ulcombe and neighbouring

parishes. For convenience of reference the charters discussed will be distinguished by letters, as follows :

- A. A sale by King Coenwulf of Mercia to Archbishop Wlfred of Canterbury "in the region suburban to the town of the King which by the natives there is called Fefres ham, the land of two aratra in places named thus, Suithhuning lond (Swithhun's land) aet Grafon Aea (Graveney)." This is an original charter of the year 811 (B.C.S. 335).
- B. In a Lambeth Register (Lamb. 1212) of the 13th century there is an entry in the form of a charter which seems to be of a composite character. It includes the land mentioned in A as "land of two aratra which is called Suithuningland juxta Gravanea". It is of interest only because the suggestion of A that two different places may be involved, (as shown by the plural "in places named, etc"), or, alternatively, that Swithhun's land was "aet", that is, "in" Graveney, is here corrected by the plain statement that his land was "juxta Gravanea"—next to Graveney (B.C.S. 336). This is of the year 811.
- C. Another narrative charter from the same Lambeth Register mentions the gift by King Coenwulf to Archbishop Wlfred of "20 acres in the place called Ibentea in the region Fefreshames, and in another place two acres" (B.C.S. 340). This is of the year 812, and is rubricated "Ibbintea."
- D. An exchange of lands between King Coenwulf and Archbishop Wlfred. The King gave "in the parts suburban to the King's town called Fefresham, one sulung where it is called by the inhabitants Grafon eah. Its boundaries are, on the east Suithhuning lond, on the west Ealhfleot, on the south Sighearding meduue (Sigheard's grass land) and likewise Suithhuning long (error for 'lond')." This is an original charter of the year 812 (B.C.S. 341).

- E. A sale by King Coenwulf to Archbishop Wlfred includes "land of one aratrum in the place and in the region which is called Westan Widde (probably meaning 'west of the wood', i.e. of Blean Forest) where it is called Cynincges cua lond (land of the King's cows)." The boundaries were, on the east Grafon eah, on the west a channel which is called Mearc fleet (the boundary lake) and Seleberhting lond (Selebeorht's land), on the south the old road which leads to the port which is called Cilling ("strata antiqua quae jacet ad portum"). This is an original charter of the year 814 (B.C.S. 348) and contains the important words "hoc aratrum . . . ad mansionem on Grafon aea . . . concessum est" (this aratrum has been ceded to the manor of Graveney).
- F. A sale by King Coenwulf to Archbishop Wlfred of "terram unius manentis" (land of one dwelling) in the region which is called Febres ham in a place which the countrymen are accustomed to call Seleberhting lond. The boundaries are, on the east Alhfleet, on the south the highway (publica strata), on the west the King's marsh and on the north "Sualuae." This is an original charter of the year 815 (B.C.S. 353) and it has an almost contemporary, but apparently inaccurate, endorsement "Gravanea hesbec".
- G. Grant by Earddulf to his friend Wighelm of one sulung and one yokelet "in that place where by the inhabitants it is called Aet Hamme". This is seen to comprise the land at Hamme and a marsh adjoining; the boundaries of each are given. Those of the land at Hamme are, on the east Ham fleet, on the west the high street, on the north the land of the brotherhood belonging to Prestatune with the marsh belonging to it which King Alfred gave, on the south the high street as far as the ford. Those of the marsh are, on the east the Praesta tune brotherhoods marsh, on the

west Hefer fleot, on the north Ham fleot, on the south that land at Hamme. This is a nearly contemporary charter (B.C.S. 539) of the year 875. It will be seen later that during the sixty years which elapsed between the date of G and A-F there were various changes in the names of places, which is not very surprising.

- H. A charter by which King Wihtrred of Kent grants certain privileges to the monasteries of Kent. We have only a copy of this charter and this is not very satisfactory in some respects. The only point of present interest is that it is dated "in loco qui appellatur Cilling"—the place called Cilling—or, as other copies spell it, Cillinc; and this may be the same as the Cilling of E. The date of H is more than 100 years before E, in 699 (B.C.S. 99).

It is now proposed to identify the places and boundaries named in these charters, giving such reasons for the identification as may be possible. The strongest reason, however, is to be found on the accompanying maps from which it may be seen that the lands and bounds of these several charters fit together like a jig-saw puzzle, each supporting the evidence of the others.

Swithhunincg lond. In A and B this is "at" or "next to" Graveney, while D tells us that it forms the eastern boundary of Graveney. It is assessed at twice the amount of Graveney and must therefore be a place of some importance and this is born out by the further evidence of D that it forms not only the east but part of the southern boundary of Graveney. From all this it is evident that *Swithhunincg lond* must be looked for in the parish of Hernhill, of which we have no other written record earlier than that of a church of Haranhylle soon after the conquest (*Arch. Cant.*, XLV, 83). In the northern part of this parish is a small hill on which is situated Monkshill Farm. I do not know how old this name may be, nor what monks are referred to, but it affords some evidence of church ownership. At the time of Domesday

Book Hernhill seems to have formed part of the Archbishop's manor of Boltune (Boughton under Blean), of which Graveney also formed a part (D.Mon.) and this brings evidence of church ownership nearer to the time of Archbishop Wlfred. For all these reasons I think that the land which Swithhun owned must have been what is now called Hernhill.

Grafon Aea. This is Graveney and we have independent evidence that it was in church ownership in the Will of a priest named Werhard (B.C.S. 402) who seems to have farmed very extensive lands belonging to Christ Church, to which they reverted, on his death about 832. But there was evidently a break in ownership, a very usual happening with church property, for King Eadmund restored it again to the church in 941 (B.C.S. 766, 811). In 1006 it is returned as still belonging to Christ Church (Kemble, 715) and so it seems to have remained until it was leased to Richard the Constable soon after the conquest.

Ealhfleot. This is the western boundary of Graveney in D. It appears again as the eastern boundary of Seleberhting lond (now North Preston) in F, and is possibly the Ham fleot which is cited as the eastern boundary of Hamme in G—which is sixty years later than D and F, so that the name might well have changed. The only possible location of a fleot, which usually means a sheet of water communicating with a river or with the sea, something of the character of the Norfolk Broads, although in Kent much smaller in area, is somewhere on the main channel between Faversham and the sea. At a spot on this channel indicated on the map there are evidences of a previous fleot and this area has been enclosed with a wall, suggesting that the sea penetrated here in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This is not, of course, evidence that it penetrated here in 812 but the fact that the wall was built round the area which seems to be Ealhfleot and not across its mouth so as to cut it off from further flooding suggests that this area was too deep for the purpose, in other words, that it was the site of an ancient fleot and not a flooding of level country.

Cilling. This place is considered out of its proper order because it seems that it may have been a port or harbour situated on the Ealhfleet just mentioned. It will be noted that two important roads lead towards Ealhfleet. On the west bank of the river is a road which no longer exists but which is evidenced on the combined authority of F and G, each dealing with a different section of it. On the east bank is another road which still exists. This seems to be the "strata antiqua quae jacet ad portum quae dicitur Cilling" of E. That it is in fact an old road is evident from its forming a parish boundary, and from the fact that this boundary takes no note of an obvious southern diversion of the road near a house called Sandbanks. Both these roads must have had a purpose. That of the eastern road is obvious, it was the way to Cilling and this was a port. That of the western road is scarcely explicable unless it led to the other side of the same anchorage. There is further the evidence of the name "Ealh-fleet". The word "ealh" meant a temple or, in more general terms, a sanctuary. It matters little which meaning we adopt for either of them would be appropriate to an important harbour. When we can add that there was in 699 (H) a place called Cilling of sufficient importance for King Wihtred to transact business there, we are entitled to attach considerable importance to the different threads of evidence which suggest that the Saxon port of Faversham was on an open bay of the river, just south of the existing Nagden Farm. The evidence is not complete, but it is worth following up by those who have a knowledge of the detailed history, field names, etc., of the district.

Sighearding medwe. We return now to the boundaries of Graveney. On the south is a "medwe", what we now call a meadow. The word means grass land and not necessarily the water meadows which were commonly divided amongst several owners at this period and for hundreds of years afterwards. I know of no facts which can certainly identify Sighearding medwe but the map shows in the required position south of Graveney a curiously shaped portion of

Faversham Without, i.e. of the old parish now outside the bounds of the town, which from its size and shape can hardly have been a separate holding such as would have been called Sighearding lond (i.e. farm) but may well have been a meadow detached from some farm belonging to a man called Sigheard. It is worth noting that a magnate of this name attested royal charters in 805 (B.C.S. 319) and 809 (B.C.S. 328). He is possibly the "Sigheard comes" of 804 (B.C.S. 316) who also attests royal Kentish charters.

Westan Widde. This is the name of the "regio" in which the land granted in E was situate. The word "regio" is placed in inverted commas because some writers consider that any area so denominated must have been a definite and very ancient administrative area, a view which seems to need more support than is at present forthcoming. The term *Westan Widde* means the west wood and, in this district, the only wood likely to be intended was the great forest of Blean. We have the combined evidence of A, D and E to show that this forest did not in 814 extend as far west as Hernhill except, perhaps, in the form of isolated masses of woodland amongst large clearings with reasonably high assessments. In this case it is probably better to read *Westan Widde* as meaning "to the west of the wood", a meaning which would seem also to attach to the manor of Westwood in South Preston. We have every reason for supposing that neither of these places was actually in the wood at the date of these charters, but that both alike were situated in an indeterminate area very properly described as west of the great wood of Blean.

Cynincges cwa lond. This means "the land of the King's cows", i.e. his cattle pasture and the boundaries tell us that it was somewhere to the west of Graveney, i.e. of the Graveney of 814, for it is clear from this very charter that the cow land was actually added to Graveney and so should be sought for within the confines of the Graveney of to-day, the parish and old manor of Graveney. The western boundary of the cow land was a channel ("unum fretum") called the *Mearc fleet*,

which means no more than that it was a boundary, or mark, fleet with a channel through it. There is only one such channel west of the Graveney of 814 and so placed that it could also be west of the cow land. This is in the position shown on the map where, as in the case of Ealhfleet, certain contortions of the local watercourses suggest that there must formerly have been a fleet. On the other side of this fleet and to the south of it we find, as the charter requires, *Seleberhting lond* (North Preston) which is discussed later. The "antiqua strata" which formed the southern boundary of the cow land has already been discussed. It is concluded therefore that the cow land was a farm (for, in spite of its name, it was rated as such, paying on the same assessment as Graveney itself) of which the farm house may well have been on the site of the modern Nagden Farm, while most of the land would necessarily be to the north-east of this. It may be hoped that the local antiquary will find some trace of the cows in some still remaining field name, or in some ancient charter.

Seleberhting lond. This is the land sold to Archbishop Wlfred in 815 as recorded in F. It probably obtained the name Preston (i.e. Priest-town) from this fact or because it was administered as part of what is now South Preston, centred on the Archbishop's manor of Copton. In any case, it appears that the *Seleberhting lond* of 815 and the land and marsh of *Prestatune* of 875 are the same. They are the northern and eastern parts of North Preston Without as it is to-day. The eastern boundary is that *Aelhfleet*, now spelt *Alhfleet*, which has already been discussed and of which the position can hardly be in doubt. The southern boundary is a public road which presumably followed the west bank of the river. The western boundary is the King's marsh and this I take to be the marsh which was later given by *Earddulf* to his friend *Wighelm* and which was then appurtenant to the land at *Hamme*. Such private charters have seldom if ever survived until to-day except in the hands of the church and were, indeed, very usually made in contemplation of a gift to the church. It is an undoubted fact that *Hamme*

came later to the church and was attached to the manor of Copton in South Preston. This King's marsh presumably occupied the site of the Ham Marshes of to-day, extending into Luddenham. The northern boundary of Seleberhting lond is "Sualuae", the Swale. This word is a general name for a watercourse, which has become the name of a particular watercourse between Sheppey and the mainland. It occurs again in Swalecliff further to the east and probably in many of the Swallow holes known to local antiquaries and in various places names compounded with the word swallow, e.g. Swallow Mill in Little Chart. In this charter the word seems to be applied to a stretch of the stream between the Aelffleet and the Mearc fleet of E. The name would be quite appropriate here or, since the boundaries of these charters are seldom exact, it may be that Sualuae is only a synonym for the latter fleet.

Hamme. This place is the less difficult to identify since The Ham and Ham Marshes both appear on the 6 in. map. According to G the northern boundary of Hamme is the Prestatune land and its marsh. This is rather north-east than true north. On the west is a public street. This remains to-day and is in part of its course a parish boundary. On the south is another highway "as far as the ford". I do not know where this ford may have been but it seems likely that it may have been at the end of the road leading from Faversham church to the river, and replaced later by the present bridge (i.e. by one of its predecessors) a little higher up the stream. Such a position suits well with the requirements of the charter. The eastern boundary is Ham fleet and this, I think, must either have been situated to the south of Ealfleet, or may possibly have been the same place under a synonym. On the whole the spot at which a subsidiary stream from the east joins the river south of Ealfleet seems the most likely spot for Ham fleet but an alternative possibility is indicated by the fact that the river seems formerly to have made a bend, still followed by the parish boundary, in the position indicated for Ham fleet. The land now contained in this bend has an inner wall strongly

reminiscent of that of the Ealhfleet and the argument previously suggested in favour of this indicating a former fleet may apply to Ham fleet also.

Hamme marsh. The boundaries here are, on the south, the land at Hamme already discussed and on the east the Prestatune marsh of which the position can hardly be in question. The northern boundary is Ham fleet but this is clearly not the Ham fleet discussed above but another of the name, occupying the position of the Mearc fleet of E. The western boundary is another fleet called Hefer fleet. There is no fleet to the west until we come to Oare creek and even to-day Ham Marshes extend in this direction across part of Luddenham detached. That this is the fleet to which the charter refers is obvious from the fact that Hefer and Oare are both names which can be derived from O.E. ufer or ofer meaning a river bank, or from some common stem with the same meaning from which both hefer and oare (A.S. ora) are derived.

Having now set out the identifications which I favour, it remains to indulge in some comment. It will be convenient to arrange this under separate headings, and the first of these is—

IBENTEA.

This word occurs as the name of a place in C, and the place is in the regio of Faversham. The word "Ibentia" is extremely unsatisfactory as may be understood from the remarks of Wallenberg (*Kentish Place Names*, 108-9). Moreover, it comes from a MS., Lambeth, 1212, which contains many other errors in place names. In this connection mention must be made of a very similar name in the same register which tells us in summarizing another transaction between King Coenwulf and Archbishop Wlfred that the King added to his grant "in alio loco in Cancia" twenty-five acres of land "nomine Ibbinctun". It will be remembered that the grant at Ibentea was of twenty acres together with two acres "in another place". With regard to these two

records it is worth noting (a) that we have no other record of grants at Ibentea or Ibbinctun, (b) that both grants are in terms of acres, an unusual unit except with reference to pasture land, which might be specified or might merely be understood to pass with some manor the subject of a grant, to which manor it had long been attached, (c) that both records come from an untrustworthy source, a source in which narrative charters are often found to include rights not mentioned in the originals which they profess to condense, and (d) that the two places named are very similar to each other but very unlike the common run of Kentish names. In these circumstances I venture to suggest that the clerk who wrote Lambeth 1212 in both cases entered particulars which he felt would strengthen the rights of the church, but which were not contained in the original charters. And since *Ibentia* at least was in the region of Faversham (a detail which need not be disputed) we may look for it somewhere attached to the manor of Graveney, which was the Archbishop's largest holding in that area ; nor have I much doubt that Ibentea and Ibbinctun are one and the same place. It has already been noted that grants in terms of acres are likely to be grants of pasture outside the actual circle of the manor lands. It is therefore of interest to note that there are, in the neighbourhood of Sighearding medue, already discussed, no less than four detached portions of Graveney parish. The larger of these adjoins Sighearding medue. All are definitely within the regio of Faversham. I have not found here any trace of the names Ibbinctun and Ibentea, but I admit to entertaining some suspicion that the latter is a mistaken form of Grafonaea, and the former a further illegitimate amendment. A clerk who could transcribe the two names Wy and Taenham, both clearly written in his original, and make of them a new place called Pittenham, would be quite capable of transcribing Grafonaea as Ibentea or even as Ibbinctun. All this is admittedly very far short of proof but it may be that the suggestion will assist philologists who have sought in vain to identify these places with Davington, Evington, etc.

THE "REGIO" OF FAVERSHAM.

The places described to be in this "regio" are Ibentea and Seleberhting lond (North Preston). Both are actually adjacent to the existing Faversham. Now, if one regards a map of the Faversham area, it is at once apparent that the amazing complex of parishes surrounding the town must have some special explanation. Faversham itself has one area called Faversham Within (i.e. the municipal borough) and five outlying areas constituting together Faversham Without. Graveney is in five sections, Preston and Luddenham have four each. Ospringe and Oare have two, while Stone and Boughton, Buckland and Murston, are similarly divided. These curious divisions might be very difficult to understand were it not for the charters which we are considering. These show that one of the divisions of Preston, viz. North Preston Without comprises two separate grants to the church, which were apparently attached for administrative convenience to another church manor, i.e. Copton or South Preston. They show also, as I believe, how Graveney came to combine such scattered holdings and how the land of the cows might have formed still another division if it had not been thrown directly into the manor of Graveney which it fortunately adjoined. Nor is it difficult to believe that Sighearding meduue was carved out of Faversham for the benefit of Sigheard and was later isolated by the formation of Goodnestone into a separate manor. It is not possible to trace all the processes which have given rise to the present state of affairs, but if Faversham be regarded as a royal manor slowly split up by bribes and gifts to powerful courtiers and churchmen, we can keep a clear conception of how this state of affairs came about. And it was, I take it, the neighbourhood of this original royal manor which formed the regio to which the charters make reference.

THE WESTWOOD "REGIO".

On the north this included the King's cow land and it is reasonable to suppose that it also included the manor of Westwood in Boughton under Blean. Between these two

places is situated Graveney which was in the "regio" *suburban* to Faversham. All these places were in the Hundred of Boughton in 1086 (when we first hear of it) and this Hundred might with equal right be described as west of the wood (as "under Blean" implies) or as suburban to Faversham. It seems that we have here two names for the same regio and it is at least worth note that the regio suburban to Faversham is seen to apply to the neighbouring Hundred, while the regio of Faversham itself is within the Hundred of that name. Unhappily there is an interval of 250 years between these charters and the date at which the constitution of the Hundreds is known. It is also a fact that certain other regios mentioned in the charters were not Hundreds, for example, the regio called Bromgeheg is Broomy Farm in Cooling (B.C.S. 228 of the year 779) while the regio Easterege of B.C.S. 332 (of the year 811) is stated to include lands "on Liminum" and cannot be a smaller area than East Kent. It is therefore very hazardous to attach any too particular and exact a significance to the word "regio" as used in the Saxon charters.

THE GRANT TO GRAVENEY.

It need hardly be said that the Kings made grants or concessions to individuals or to religious houses and not to places. Nevertheless we have in connection with the grant of Cynincges *cua lond*, in an original charter of the year 814 (E), the following words :

"Uulfredo archiepiscopo dilectissimo dabo et concedo aliquam partem terrae juris mei . . . pro commodo pecunio . . . in provincia Cantiae terram unius aratri in loco et in regione quae dicitur westan widde ubi nominatur Cynincges *cua lond* . . . et hoc aratrum cum omnibus utensilibus bonis ad mansionem on grafon aea aeternaliter concessum est."

The words omitted are further descriptions of the price, the King's benevolence and the boundaries, none of which

are needed for our present purpose. The remainder may be translated as follows :

“ To Wilfred the very dear Archbishop I will give and concede some part of my rightful land . . . for a suitable sum of money . . . in the province of Kent, the land of one aratrum (a unit of assessment) in the place and region called West-of-the-wood where it is named Cynincges cua lond . . . and this aratrum with all its agricultural equipment has been ceded to the manor of Graveney.”

The word “ mansio ” is commonly used as a unit of assessment of the same character and value as one aratrum, which was the value at this time of Graveney (D). But it seems also to be the word equivalent to the manerium of the Normans, although this latter applied to all fiscal units whatever their value. However that may be, it seems clear that Cynincges cua lond was in fact made one with the existing manor of Graveney or, if purists will refuse to accept the word manor, with the then existing estate of Graveney. It would thus become subordinate to the Lord of Graveney and to the ministrations of the priest of his manor church, in other words, it would become part of the parish of Graveney of which it has remained part until to-day. That this sort of thing happened is well known, and many examples might be given besides those dealt with above, i.e. Hamme and Seleberhting lond, but I cannot call to mind that it is expressly contemplated by any other charter of the Saxon period, and this exact information is therefore very welcome. In the same way the acres of Ibentea (always supposing they are correctly identified) became part of the manor and parish of Graveney, the two being usually the same in Kent until well into the early Norman period. And in the same way also ought we to suppose—this is the important point—the outlying parts of Luddenham, etc., were added to that manor and others, so that we have in a map of modern parishes a very valuable reflection of past history, although, alas ! a map by no means easy to read.