

Introduction

The documents

The documents published here are part of a collection transferred to the Hampshire Record Office from Bedford in 1989. Prior to that they appear to have been unknown to local and forest historians. The collection contains a wealth of material concerning the day to day administration of a Royal Forest as the sun was setting on the forest system. Many of the documents reveal the impact of forest law upon the lives of villagers within its jurisdiction. None of the material here has been previously published, although an unofficial copy of the Samber Manuscript, in substantially the same form, has circulated privately for some years. This document is of particular interest because it is the source of much of the history contained in William Gilpin's *Remarks on Forest Scenery* published in 1791.

The remaining documents throw new light on the problems and solutions found in the New Forest during a period in which it was recognised that the Forest Eyre was unlikely ever to be held again. [HRO 149M89/R4/6142 Birt, 31st January 1753.] They focus attention on how the 1698 New Forest Act was put into practice along with its shortcomings. [9 & 10 Wm & Mary, c.33. *An Act for the Increase and Preservation of Timber in the New Forest in the County of Southampton.*] Very little original material from the 18th century has been published elsewhere. [Cross, A.L. (ed.) (1928) *18th Century Documents relating to Royal Forests, Sheriffs, and Smuggling*, Michigan Univ. Pubs., History & Political Science, Vol. 7, New York; Stagg, D.J. (1983a) *New Forest Commoners AD 1792*, New Forest Association.] Much of the understanding of the 18th century New Forest has relied upon the fifth report of the Commissioners in 1789. Its limitations have been remarked upon before. There is now doubt about the reliability of one informant, Nassau Jervoise Coleman, son of Charles Coleman, whose recollections are at variance with the information in this book. [*Fifth Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the State and Condition of the Woods, Forests and Land Revenues*, 22nd July 1789, App. 15; Stagg, D.J., (1974) *Order and Rules of the New Forest, 1537*, pp. 33-8, Hampshire Field Club, *New Forest Section, Report 13*, January 1974.]

During much of his term of a quarter of a century as Lord Warden, the Duke of Bedford was also occupied in matters of state. He was for a time the equivalent of Home Secretary. It was in this capacity that he sought the services of Henry Fielding, who with his half brother, John, helped provide

some security in Westminster. There were, therefore, parallels in Bedford's attempt to provide calm and order nationally as well as in the New Forest.

The Samber Manuscript

This document affords a snapshot of the Forest at a moment in time which may be compared with the fifth report of the Commissioners in 1789 or even the *The orders and rules of the New Forest A.D. 1537*. The information was collected and collated by William Samber, an Under Keeper, living at Castle Malwood Lodge. He was from a well known Lymington family whose ancestors had lived for a time at Walhampton House, Lymington but whose personal fortunes had not been good. The work was to form part of a history of the Royal Forests which was being edited by Zachary Chambers, Deputy Surveyor General and also Registrar for Crown Lands. The history was never published and the version of the New Forest section found here, though well ordered, is incomplete and, in places, inaccurate but shows the understanding of the Forest System in the mid 18th century. A number of asides by Samber also indicates his own views and guides us through some of his research. Little more than ninety years after Preservators returns ceased to be filed their existence as Forest Officers seemed to have been forgotten. His is a local knowledge, enhanced by some research, but he is no academic. He clearly has no idea when the Abbey at Beaulieu was established. [Samber, p. 25.]

Forest Rentals and arrears

The rental lists provide a useful reminder of how large a part the Forest played in the lives of the local villagers. Grazing was apparently free through the year for manors within the Forest except for payments to cover the Fence Month when the deer were due to fawn - 'Month Money'. Manors beyond the bounds paid 'Lease Fee' for summer grazing, Hocktide to Michaelmas. A few outside manors also paid 'Hocktide Money' for winter grazing, Michaelmas to Hocktide. 'Turf Delf' paid by manors within and beyond the Forest for turf rights was always 6d. The rents, originally paid in the spring, midsummer and Michaelmas, were all paid at the latter by 1765. [Stagg, D.J., *Order and Rules of the New Forest, 1537*, pp. 33-8, Hampshire Field Club, *New Forest Section, Report 13*, January 1974.]

These distinctions, kept in 1537, were being lost by 1670. Here 'Hocktide Money' is not mentioned at all and 'Lease Fee' only once in repeating a claim of 1670 at Burley. Turf Delf remained without any obvious confusion. Minstead paid the same figure (3s) in 1537 as 1765, in both cases the money

was shown as ‘Month Money’. Bisterne Bartley in the same ownership, paid 1s 6d ‘Hocktide’ and 2s 6d for ‘Leasefee and Turfdel’ in 1537 but in 1765 the total of 4s was paid and described as ‘Month Money’. Similarly with Stagg’s example of Cadnam, which in 1537 paid 1s Month Money, 1s 3d Hocktide and 3s 8d Lease Fee. The same total of 5s 11d was paid in 1670, shown as the sum for the three purposes without any breakdown. By 1765 the distinction was lost, the 5s 11d paid was described as ‘month money’. [Stagg, D.J., *Order and Rules of the New Forest, 1537*, pp. 33-8, Hampshire Field Club, *New Forest Section, Report 13*, January 1974; *Abstract of Claims for New Forest, 1670*, Eyre and Spottiswood, 1853.] The three rentals published here help show continuity and change in the population as well as the land they worked. It also acts as a reminder of just how far Forest rights spread and were used in the 18th century. Together with the manuscript reports of the surveyors for the 5th report which survive in the National Archive they provide a rare insight into the value of the Forest to its inhabitants and its borderers. [TNA:PRO F 20/48.]

The rent arrears of 1747/8 were collected by Charles Coleman, who, on various occasions, noted the difficulties of the job. He stated that the current rental list had been set in 1707 by Thomas Coward, the High Steward. John Coleman, Charles’s father, had collected it from that time, with a short break, until his death in 1728, before he took it over a couple of years later. [HRO 149M89/R4/6140 Coleman, 4th December 1749; the break was probably 1710-4 when Henry Somerset, 2nd Duke of Beaufort was Lord Warden.] The Colemans, with connections at Hackwood, probably came to the Forest with Charles Powlett 2nd Duke of Bolton, an earlier Lord Warden, around 1700. [5th Report, App 15 pp. 59-61.] Samuel Miller, Coleman’s successor as Lord Warden’s Steward, collected the rents from 1750. [Miller, 3rd April 1750.] The collector of the three full rentals here was Thomas Bullock, the Lord Warden’s Steward, whose successors continued this system until at least 1789. [5th report App 7, pp. 52-4.] An earlier version of the 1770 rental exists, differences between this and the one printed are indicated by a footnote. [HRO 149M89/R4/6145.]

Correspondents - the officers and authors

The documents that follow are mainly the correspondence from forest officers, under the Lord Warden, whose duty it was to oversee the daily workings of the New Forest. Charles Coleman, (1746-50), Samuel Miller (1750-56) and Thomas Bullock (1756-73) all acted as the Duke of Bedford’s local agent with the title of Lord Warden’s Steward or Housekeeper. Coleman seems

to have been the collector of rents from 1730 but received a warrant from Bedford, dated 25th March 1746, confirming his position. [HRO 149M89/R4/6129.] William Samber as signatory to orders to the keepers for a drift seems to have been the agent in 1743. [HRO 149M89/R4/6129.] Miller worked for Bedford and went on to become steward at Woburn in 1760.

Henry Fielding, the novelist and reformer, was appointed High Steward of the New Forest and in turn appointed Richard Birt his deputy in 1746, a position the latter was to retain until his death in 1759. [HRO 149M89/R4/6129 Fielding's Appointment.] Fielding's appointment, on 14th April 1746, appears to be one of the first indications that he had come under the patronage of Bedford. It is thought that he started working on *Tom Jones* in the same year; it was first published in 1749. In it the 'the well-wooded Forest of Hampshire...' is thought to be the New Forest. His tenure as High Steward lasted until 1748 when he resigned on his appointment as a magistrate at Westminster. Francis Tregagle was appointed Fielding's successor immediately afterwards and held the post until at least 1757 and possibly his death in 1759. [G Matcham, (1844) *Hundred of Frustfield, The History of Modern Wiltshire*, p. 79.] Although working from chambers in Middlesex he held Melchett Park a few miles to the north of the New Forest.

Vincent Hawkins, as Purveyor, was responsible to the Navy. Although Purveyors had been involved with the Forest in the 17th century their position was clarified by the Act of 1698. Hawkins was an associate of Charles Coleman having been granted a house in Lyndhurst in 1746 that Coleman had an interest in. It is also worth recording that the connections continued for Hawkins's daughter, Mary shared the grant; she married Edward Gilbert who succeeded Coleman as Deputy Surveyor in 1756. [TNA:PRO CRES 5/50, Lyndhurst Manor court books.] Their only son, Vincent Hawkins Gilbert, was the founder of the New Forest Hunt.

Joseph Hinxman, the Woodward, was appointed by the King. He received a salary of £150 per annum for himself and £50 per annum for his deputy. Hinxman had succeeded to his post following the death of his father, also Joseph, in 1740. [*Cal. of Treasury Books and Papers 1739-41*, p. 200.] In 1727 Hinxman senior had stood successfully with Charles Wither for parliament at Christchurch, both were supporters of the government. [Sedgwick, R., (1970) *House of Commons 1715-54*, Vol. I, H.M.S.O., pp. 249-50.] It is unlikely to be a coincidence that Wither was also Surveyor General of

Woods and Forests from 1720 until his death in 1731. Both Samuel Miller and John Smith, the Regarder were clear that a good deal of the problems of the Forest could be laid at the door of Hinxman junior, who, as Woodward, received the bark of the trees felled for fuel wood. [Miller, 3rd June 1750.] This perquisite, along with others had been stopped on the appointment of a predecessor, Edward Pyle, but clearly revived. [Reeves, R.P., (ed.) (2006) *Use and Abuse of a Forest Resource, New Forest Documents 1632-1700*, New Forest Record Series Vol. 1, New Forest Museum and Library, p. xxv.] Miller's understanding is that Hinxman is of a totally different character to his father in whose time '...no person dared to sell or dispose of their fuel...' [HRO 149M89/R4/6141 Miller, 16th June 1751.] Simon Witherington was Hinxman's deputy as Woodward, responsible for day to day assignments of timber.

The recipient of most of these letters was Robert Butcher, Bedford's chief agent at Bedford House in Bloomsbury. The efficiency of the system of control is evident in the speed of reply on important issues and the ability to refer directly to the Duke when necessary.

Forest Law

In the absence of the Verderers' court books the importance of the Lord Warden's papers for the period the Duke of Bedford held office, 1746-1771, cannot be over emphasised. They provide an insight into how one part of the *divisum imperium* that ruled the forests operated after the demise of the forest eyre in the 1670s. The last eyre held at Lyndhurst, in 1670, was adjourned until March 1671 but never re-started. Eyres had been infrequent, the previous one was 35 years earlier so it was not clear that it would never be held again. The office of Chief Justice in Eyre South of Trent remained until the death of the last holder Thomas Grenville in 1846. The position was abolished by the same statute that removed the Lord Wardens in 1817, effectively ending the twin powers. [57 Geo. III c. 61.] The system of management and government evolved with fresh regulation in 1698 after the difficulties of the years following the Civil War. [Reeves, R.P., (ed.) (2006) *Use and Abuse of a Forest Resource, New Forest Documents 1632-1700*, New Forest Record Series Vol. 1, New Forest Museum and Library.] Deputy Justices could have continued to dispense law but no record exists of such proceedings. The 1698 New Forest Act provided for timber inclosures but specifically retained the forest laws and significantly increased the powers of the Verderers who were then able to exact fines of up to £5 and impose sentences of 3 months for timber offences. [*Act 1698 op. cit.*, s. 6.]

It was possible, and indeed preferable, for venison offences to be heard in the statute courts where the game laws were in frequent use. With the Acts for the Preservation of Timber in 1765/6 there was no longer a need for these to be taken in forest courts. The evidence here is that prior to that poachers were already being prosecuted in the ordinary courts. [HRO 149M89/R4/6124, Groom Keepers to the Duke of Bedford, 1747.] Perhaps the most revealing document with regard to the state of forest law is that entitled '*The presentment of the Grand Jury at the Swainmote Court usually held for this Forest but of late years that, and the Attachment Courts are become obsolete*' referring to a court held in September 1746. [HRO 149M89/R4/6125, Presentments, 15th September 1746.] It detailed the current difficulties and set the scene that Bedford had to work with. It also explained that only one Verderer was present and so no fines could be levied; this is perhaps why no other record of this Court exists. A further list of presentments with fines noted ten years later seems to be concerned only with timber offences. [HRO 149M89/R4/6125, Presentments in New Forest, 1756.] The penalties ranged from 1s 6d to £4 16s 6d. The difficulties of obtaining the services of the verderers are noted by Richard Birt, the Under Steward, who states that one has '*...fled from the kingdom...*' another '*... never does nor will attend...*' the Courts. A third is '*...very ancient...*' and often absent through ill health, whilst the fourth, Richard Mill is the only one '*...to be at all times depended upon.*' [HRO 149M89/R4/6142 Birt, 4th September 1751.]

The Verderers Court was fast losing its authority, Charles Coleman as the Lord Warden's Steward, advised Bedford that the High Steward formerly attended a Swainmote Court and gave a speech which informed the inhabitants of '*...what the forest laws required them to observe.*' and that the new High Steward, Henry Fielding had not yet done so. [HRO 149M89/R4/6140 Coleman, 1st December 1747.]. Master Keepers were supposed to be sworn into their office at the Attachment or Swainmote Courts. It was noted that two had failed to appear and that their neglect was '*...a derogation to the dignity of the Verderers Court...*' [HRO 149M89/R4/6141 Miller, 2nd July 1751.]

Confusion of the roles of various officers also seems apparent. The Grand Jury of 1746 contains at least five names who were Regarders at some time. It is worth comparing with the complete separation shown in the 17th century courts. [Stagg, D. J. (ed.) (1983b) *A Calendar of New Forest Documents: the*

Fifteenth to Seventeenth Centuries Hampshire County Council.] Samber's limited description of their duties and comments about them being '...styled Preservators...' in the Civil War period suggests a change of duties.

Divisum Imperium

A crucial aspect of control of the forests remained the relationship between the two divisions that ran them. The phrase *divisum imperium* was used by Coke in his 4th Institute to describe the system in which the newer, Exchequer controlled, Tudor officers had to work with the Justice in Eyre and his officers who ran the old forest law system '...the one for the profit of the king, and the other for his pleasure.' [Coke, E, *The fourth part of the Institutes of the Laws of England*, 1669, p. 299.] The Surveyor General, his Deputy and the High Woodwards were under the former whilst the Lord Warden's department and the Verderers were under the latter.

The opportunity for the Duke of Bedford and the Surveyor General to work well together were marred from the outset. In 1744 Bedford, as first Lord of the Admiralty, had refused to have John Phillipson on the board as he was 'not of quality enough.' [Sedgwick, R., (1970) *House of Commons 1715-54*, Vol. II, H.M.S.O., pp. 345-6.] As compensation Phillipson was appointed Surveyor General of Woods and Forests. It is apparent that fault was soon found with his deputy, Charles Coleman, and that attempts to persuade Phillipson to remove him were fruitless. [Birt, 28th November 1751.] Indeed it is clear that most thought that Phillipson would protect Coleman.

The interest of the Exchequer in the economic development of the forests for timber production and subsequent clashes with those running the forest law system has been well recorded. [Stagg, D.J. (1989) *Silvicultural Inclosure in the New Forest to 1780* In: *Proc. Hants. Field Club and Arch. Soc.*, Vol. 45, pp. 135-145; Hoyle, R.W. (1992) *The Estates of the English Crown 1558-1640*, Cambridge University Press.] The Surveyor General instigated an enclosure commission in 1751 without notifying the Lord Warden and commenced work setting out enclosures the following year. [Birt, 5th January 1750/1; Miller, 13th March 1752.] Severe doubts as to their purpose were expressed by John Smith, a Regarder who thought they were '...for the benefit of Coleman and his master...'. [Smith, 27th April 1752.] Keepers of the walks presented the enclosures as being in improper places and a fine, of £40, was received by the Verderers from the locally responsible officer, Deputy Surveyor, Charles Coleman. [Miller, 4th January 1750 and Samber

Mss., p. 14.]

Difficulties between the two arms of Forest government remained until Phillipson's death in November 1756. Fewer letters survive from the later period of Bedford's tenure. Those that do indicate Bedford's distrust of the Surveyor General's department in setting out enclosures. He was probably exceeding his duty when he gave instructions on enclosures following a visit to the Forest in August 1769. [HRO 149M89/R4/6144 - The Duke of Bedford's instructions on enclosures, 3rd August 1769.]

Corruption and dual roles

Charles Coleman was appointed steward to the Lord Warden as well as collector of the rents by the Duke of Bedford in 1746. He was also Deputy Surveyor to the Surveyor General of Woods and Forests, probably in succession to Thomas Phillips who died in 1739. A Regarder by 1733, he appears to have remained in that post until his death. [TNA: PRO F 24/72.] There is no doubt of the incompatibility of the post of Regarder with any other position in the Forest for the former has essentially to act as a check upon the (potential) misdeeds of the latter. A major part of their work passed with the ending of the Forest Eyre for which they were required to produce a general report on the condition of the forest. He also seems to have acted as Woodward on occasions, being in possession of the Woodward's hammer for marking trees, perhaps due to the ill health of Simon Witherington. [Miller, 20th March 1750/1.]

The Deputy Surveyor, The Deputy Woodward and the Purveyor of the Navy were all accused of corruption. Richard Birt wrote to Henry Fielding in 1747 that '...I could open such a scene of villany of C[oleman.]...' '...there never was so great a vermin as C...' [Birt, 3rd February 1747/8.] The power wielded by these men proved difficult to break for although it seemed to be generally known in the New Forest it was a decade after Bedford took office before Coleman and Hawkins were relieved of their posts. [Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service: The Russell Collection R3/141/50.] Nothing was proved of the charges against Simon Witherington the Deputy Woodward before he died in February 1752.

There were also officers who turned a blind eye or refused to co-operate with those pursuing enquiries. Joseph Hinxman apart from being the Woodward was also a Justice of the Peace but refused to assist a Keeper who had apprehended a deer thief. [Miller, 3rd April 1750.] John Smith,

a Regarder, attempted to alert Hinxman of the misdeeds of Coleman in destroying timber but found that ‘...he seemed quite deaf and only said there was no courts...’ [Smith, 27th April 1752.] Smith, a timber merchant and former Riding Surveyor under Charles Withers, Surveyor General, in the same letter to the Duke of Bedford expressed the idea that he might be considered for the post of Deputy Woodward or Purveyor; neither post was in Bedford’s direct gift.

Perhaps the most amazing scam was one run by Under Keeper, Henry Petty who produced a licence, purportedly from the Chief Justice in Eyre authorising his right to collect a fee in respect of those digging for fullers earth. [Birt, 1st December 1750.]

Deer stealing

The keepers found a great deal of difficulty in enforcing the laws against poaching. The problems ranged from finding a willing magistrate, through effective punishment, to the costs incurred, apart from threats to their property and the personal safety of themselves and their employees. [Miller, 3rd April 1750; HRO 149M89/R4/6124, Groom keepers to the Duke of Bedford, 1747; HRO 149M89/R4/6124 Throgmorton affidavit, 15th December 1753.] It is not surprising that there was a lack of zeal in pursuing all their duties; the traditional ‘blind eye’ is much in evidence. It is interesting to note the direct connection between the fine and those procuring it. One third was due to the informer and often two thirds to the Crown who through the Lord Warden usually gave it to the Keeper as encouragement. [Birt, 22nd February 1752.] Corrupt or inefficient Keepers were another problem. Bedford removed two, Henry Petty and Nathaniel Clark fairly early on under the guidance of his staff though not without some difficulties. [Miller, 6th February 1750/1.]

Administration and privilege

Many of the positions in the Forest were regarded as a privilege and showed the importance of the recipient to his fellows. Colonel Mostyn, when newly appointed as Master Keeper of Ironshill treated it as his own private estate failing to consider forest etiquette. [HRO 149M89/R4/6141 Miller, 2nd July 1751, Mostyn, 11th June 1751.] Some regarded possession of a Master Keepership as a means to a pleasant life in the country, affording sporting rights and position in society. Others, Bedford included, had no need of another large (and largely paid for) house in the country. The successive Lords Delawarr’s, who held Bolderwood Lodge, were clearly fond of the

area and the exception in laying out their own money on the Lodge in addition to Treasury grants. [Coleman, 4th February 1748/9.] That there should be the occasional falling out is perhaps not surprising as may be seen in the exchange between Bedford and Delawarr, his deputy or Lieutenant of the Forest, at the turn of 1765/6. [Bedford, 31st December 1765; Delawarr, 2nd January 1766.] Similarly Delawarr, following the dismissal of a keeper, Henry Petty, by Bedford, forbade his successor from ‘walking’ an adjoining Manor. [Miller, 16th January 1750/1.]. Samuel Miller indicated that Delawarr had ideas at variance with Bedford on how the Forest should be managed, even using his influence over others to make his point. [Miller, 6th February 1750/1.] The Delawarrs built substantial kennels at Bolderwood and used this as a hunting base for themselves and their friends. [Lennox, Charles, (1910) *Records of the Old Charlton Hunt*, Elkin Mathews, p. xiii.] Others whose position was not so exalted enjoyed the sport. Charles Coleman wrote of a twenty two mile point from Winkton to Beaulieu around 1727. [Coleman, 22nd July 1747.]

Reforms

The removal of some Forest Keepers was seen as a first step towards improving the fortunes of the Forest. This was relatively easy when compared to removing those officers in higher positions appointed by others whose interests was at variance with those of the Lord Warden. The difficulties in changing the habits of the native population would not be easily accomplished. Even corrupt officials, such as Coleman, were apparently unable to extract the Forest rents due from some individuals and in particular, communities. The title of the arrears of rent due in 1748 suggests some concerns as to his integrity ‘Rents accounted for by Mr Coleman but said by him not to be received at Michaelmas 1748’. [HRO 149M89/R4/6126; Coleman, 1st December 1747; Coleman, 9th December 1748; 24th June 1749; 4th December 1749.]

Encroachments were by the 18th century a way of life with entire new communities formed. Woodgreen was described by Joseph Hinxman, the Woodward, as ‘...every house there a trespass, and all the inhabitants live by pilfering and stealing out of the Forest.’ Bedford attempted to prevent new encroachments, noting in particular those in Lady Cross, Whitley Ridge, and Castle Malwood. The former was no doubt East Boldre, then known as Beaulieu Rails, where Samber said that Bedford was forced to desist because of ‘...diverse threatening letters from the inhabitants...’. [Bedford directions, 11th August 1751; Samber Manuscript, p. 24.] Whilst erection

of squatters housing on the fringes of the Beaulieu Estate rails and the Forest is likely to have increased with the foundation of Wyatt's shipyard at Buckler's Hard in 1744 it would seem from Samber's words to have existed before that time. [Holland, A.J., (1985) *Buckler's Hard*, Mason, p. 45.] In 1765, referring to Beaulieu he wrote '...all those parts of the manor which lie against the Forest are inclosed with rails. Round which on the skirts of the Manor sundry cottages have at times been erected.' [Samber Mss., p. 24.] Had it started just twenty years earlier, Samber, a forest officer from at least 1743, would surely have phrased it rather differently.

The character of the indigenous population was not considered high by some. In a letter not published here Richard Birt said '... I would not hang a dog upon the testimony of 50 of them' [HRO 149M89/R4/6143, 26th February 1759, Richard Birt to Mr Coulthard.] The Under Keepers were inclined to blame their own troubles on the local population. Minstead didn't get a good report from Benjamin Langford who said he was '...surrounded by a nest of pilfering people...' [Langford, 3rd March 1753.] Charles Coleman considered the population around Gorleton, Sway and Arnwood as well as the townships between Lymington and Christchurch as '...the most perverse people round the Forest...' [Coleman, 4th December 1749.]

Estate management

Bedford's system of management, used on his own estates, was applied to the Forest lands with considerable success, though not without a great deal of time and effort on his own part and that of his trusted stewards and advisers. He appointed a man from his own estates, first Miller and later Bullock to manage affairs for him. He ensured good communications between them and his chief agent in London, Robert Butcher, and also made sure he was approachable if needed. He took a personal interest, by visiting the area and providing directions for future management when he could. The existence of this material and his system of direction refutes the implication by Stagg that his absence precluded efficient management. [Stagg, D.J. (1989) *Silvicultural Inclosure in the New Forest to 1780 in: Proc. Hants. Field Club and Arch. Soc., Vol. 45*, pp. 135-145.] Bedford believed in looking after those who made his business theirs. His defence of Richard Scorey who was imprisoned for carrying out his duty was followed two years later by appointing him to a vacancy as Keeper. [Bedford, 17th November 1748; Miller, 1st and 10th December 1750.] His judgement, from the evidence shown here, is sound. He followed up criticisms, checked references, heard appeals and depositions before making decisions. When

he was confident of his aide's opinion he wasn't afraid to back it. He was prepared to take on the highest in the land, the Commissioners of the Treasury, whether over a case concerning a man he felt wronged, as Scorey, or about senior officers who he thought were abusing their power or even about actions of the Treasury themselves in authorising illegal enclosures. His energy, power and magnanimity undoubtedly made a huge difference, for the Forest was in a very poor state in the 1740s. The report of 1789 shows that some of the ground gained by him was lost after his passing although the authors did not hesitate to quote from the work that Bedford started. [5th report, pp. 25-6.]