

EATON, CHESHIRE, AND EATON,
BUCKS

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IN vol. 28 of the *Transactions* of the Society is printed a paper, read by the late William Beamont on 24th February 1876, entitled "A Reeve's Account of a Cheshire Manor" in 1372. He stated that he had in his possession an account, in the form of a roll, of a bailiff of Sir Henry de Grey, knight, lord of the manor of Eton (Eaton) near Tarporley. Mr. Beamont gave an interesting analysis of the roll with explanations of various manorial customs and charges. His remarks seemed familiar, and after a little search I found that he had taken his paper practically *verbatim* from his introduction (pp. 13 sqq.) to his "Calendar" of the Eaton Hall Charters printed in 1862, fourteen years earlier, and this very document appears on p. 22 (Nos. 101-2) as then belonging to the Marquis of Westminster.

In both his accounts of the roll Mr. Beamont definitely regards it as relating to the manor of Eton (Eaton with Rushton) near Tarporley, granted to the de Greys by Henry III., and tells us that in 1372 Sir Henry de Grey was lord of that manor. We find the document refers to manor courts held at "Eton" and Fenny Stratford, and often mentions Bletchley, but contains, so far as one can judge from the extracts, no mention of Cheshire or Cheshire places unless "Eton" was one. Still, on Mr. Beamont's authority, any one investigating

Cheshire manorial customs might well assume that those referred to in this roll were in force in the county in the 14th century and make consequent inferences and deductions. They would be sadly misled. For the roll does not relate to a Cheshire manor at all, so that Mr. Beamont's remarks on the cost, for example, of carrying letters and food to and from the supposed Eton in Cheshire, and so on, are beside the mark.

In 1372 Sir Henry de Grey, fifth Baron Grey de Wilton, was lord of the manors of Fenny Stratford and (Water) Eaton in Buckinghamshire. Both are in the parish of Bletchley, and they are but three-quarters of a mile apart. The roll relates to this Eaton. A better example to the local historian of the danger of confining his investigations to a single county could hardly be found. It is the fact that in the same year Sir Reginald de Grey, second Baron Grey de Ruthin (a cousin of Sir Henry), possessed the Cheshire manor of Eaton, but the contents of the roll should have prevented Mr. Beamont jumping to a conclusion which may already have misled some, and will do so again unless his error is noted up. It is not easy to understand how this roll came to be in the possession of the Grosvenor family unless some one thought it related to yet another Eton, namely, Eaton Hall.