

The Chenduits in the Fine Rolls – A Gentry Family in the Reign of Henry III

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The Chenduits were a wealthy knightly family with property in Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and, from the 1230s onwards, Oxfordshire as well. They were a family long-established in their locality, most probably descended from Rannulf, Robert of Mortain's serjeant of Berkhamsted Castle, whose estate was recorded in Domesday Book, compiled in 1086.¹ By the thirteenth century, therefore, they had been living in the same part of the world for over a hundred years and many generations; a remarkable, though hardly unique instance of local continuity. They were members of that section of society, often described by historians as the local gentry, who owned a small number of manors and who were involved in local administration. Much wealthier than the average peasant, such people were nevertheless poorer than the great magnates who had national interests and influence with the king. These lesser knightly landowners were becoming ever more important during the reign of Henry III. Their political weight came more and more to be recognised in the structures and institutions of the English state as well as in the reactions and responses of the political leaders.² It was in Henry III's reign that representatives of each shire were summoned to parliament for the first time and the role of such representatives became central to Simon de Montfort's brief period of administration in 1264-1265. From the reign of Henry's son, Edward I, the role of representative 'knights of the shire' became routine and during the first half of the fourteenth century they came to form the House of Commons which sat alongside the House of Lords in parliament. The fine rolls provide us with important information about people at this level of society. In this Fine of the Month I will investigate the light that can be shed on the Chenduit family from two otherwise unrelated fine roll entries, made nearly forty years apart. They raise a number of issues that had an impact on members of the knightly or gentry class during Henry's reign, which will be explored in the context of information from other sources.

The earliest mention in the fine rolls of Henry III's reign is in 1229, when the record of a payment of a 'relief' by Ralph Chenduit of 55 marks to enter into the lands that had been held by his father, Ralph:

31 Jan. [...] For Ralph de Chenduit. *Ralph, son of Ralph de Chenduit, has made fine with the king by 55 m. for his relief of eleven knights' fees of the small fee (de parvo feodo), and the king has taken his homage for the lands that Ralph de Chenduit, his father, held of the honour of Berkhamsted in chief and that fall to him by hereditary right. Order to the sheriff of Hertfordshire that, having accepted security from the same Ralph for rendering the aforesaid 55 m. to the king at four terms, namely 13 m. 10s. at Easter in the thirteenth year, 13 m. 10s. at St. John the Baptist in the same year, 13 m. 10s. at Michaelmas in the same year, and 13 m. 10s. at Christmas in the fourteenth year, he is to cause him to have full seisin without delay of all lands formerly of the aforesaid Ralph, his father, in his bailiwick. Once he has accepted security for the aforesaid relief, he is to cause the sheriff of Northamptonshire to know this, to whom the king has commanded that after he has certified him of*

¹ *Great Domesday Book*, ff. 136v, 146, 146v; *VCH Hertford*, ii, p. 264.

² D.A. Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066-1284* (London, 2003), pp. 356, 378, 493; A. Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 193-219.

*this, he is to cause Ralph to have full seisin of all lands that fall to him by hereditary right in his bailiwick.*³

This entry is interesting in several respects. Firstly, the sum of money involved reflects the relative wealth and status of the Chenduits. The figure of eleven knights' fees probably represents an unusually high burden of military service rather than a large estate. This may be partly due to the fact that this was a very old estate, largely formed by 1086, and much of it had been granted away by the thirteenth century. So although they owed the service of eleven knights, only those manors which they held in demesne would have contributed to their income; for those that were held of them by military service, the Chenduits would have been entitled only to certain incidental rights where a tenant died without a male heir of full age. The Chenduits were thus left with a relatively small amount of landed property themselves. The core of this was probably the lands that had been inherited from Ralph's ancestor, Rannulf, serjeant of the count of Mortain, whose estate in Domesday Book included manors at King's Langley and Shenley in Hertfordshire, as well as at Swanbourne, Pitstone, Cheddington and Wavendon in Buckinghamshire, in 1086. It is difficult to assess accurately the income of such people, but it is likely to have been well above the minimum income expected of a knight, which the crown set in 1241 as £20 a year, though less than most minor barons whose incomes were generally over £100 a year. Although perhaps not as large as the knight service might suggest, this was nevertheless a substantial estate, confirming the Chenduits' position among the elite of local knightly landholders.

Secondly, the entry is interesting in that it says Ralph 'made fine with the king' suggesting that the sum of 55m. was a mutually agreed payment, perhaps the result of negotiation or else perhaps a rate customarily paid by the family to the lord of Berkhamsted. Magna Carta had limited the crown's ability to charge excessive reliefs to inherit lands by reaffirming the custom that barons should pay a fixed relief of £100 while knights should pay a fixed relief of £5 for a knight's fee.⁴ Indeed this is one of a number of provisions in the charter that would have benefitted lesser landholders who in many cases took part in the rebellion alongside the leading barons. Ralph's father, another Ralph, was among the rebels in 1215-1217.⁵ If the terms of Magna Carta were strictly adhered to, Ralph would have had to pay a fixed relief of £55 on eleven knights' fees. Yet this entry in the fine rolls shows that Ralph was able to come to an arrangement to his own advantage. That he was able to pay 55m. instead, represents a significant reduction. We do not know what Ralph's father had had to pay to enter into his inheritance, but it is possible that this was a payment the family customarily made to the lords of Berkhamsted and which had been agreed long in the past. Magna Carta also made provision for tenants of escheated honours (as Ralph was in this instance), to pay only the relief and do only the service that they would have done when the honour in question had been held by a baron rather than the king.⁶ If this was a customary relief therefore, this would have been the sum payable to the king now the honour of Berkhamsted was in royal hands.

This entry has another major point of interest in that it helps to shed light on the Chenduit family's links to great magnates and to the factional politics of the royal court, providing an important example of the way national politics impinged on a family of this social group, and how they were

³ *CFR 1228-1229*, no.105 (http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_028.html).

⁴ *Magna Carta* (1215), cap. 2; J.C. Holt, *Magna Carta* (Cambridge, 2nd Edition, 1992), p. 303-7.

⁵ Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1872-1883) iii, p. 22.

⁶ *Magna Carta* (1215), cap. 43.

able to pursue a strategy in their own interests. The Chenduits, like many gentry families, held their estates not from the king directly as tenants-in-chief, but as subtenants. The reason this relief was paid to the king and consequently recorded in the fine roll was that the honour of Berkhamsted, in which his manors lay, was temporarily in the crown's possession. Indeed, it is for this reason that we know the date of Ralph's succession to his lands; for many people of this status, information of this kind does not survive for this period, because such payments would have been made to the lord of the fee and as such records have not generally survived. But more significantly than this, royal possession of the honour of Berkhamsted affected the dynamics of lordship for the Chenduits in important ways.

Lordship was a significant factor in the lives of the knightly class, though historians have debated the continued significance of land tenure as a central component of lordship ties among the aristocracy in England in the thirteenth century.⁷ The case of the Chenduits illustrates on the one hand, the significance of tenurial ties in this period, but on the other, the extensive independence of tenurial lordship that could be enjoyed by knights like Ralph. The absence of any lord with the power to control the actions of the family seems, as we shall now see, to have given them greater freedom of activity than many of their peers.

In 1229 when Ralph Chenduit inherited his father's lands, the issue of possession and administration of the honour of Berkhamsted was one part of a broader tussle between different factions at the royal court between Hubert de Burgh, the king's justiciar, and William Marshal II, earl of Pembroke.⁸ The honour of Berkhamsted had been part of the dower land of Queen Isabella, widow of King John, and was granted in 1227 to her son, Henry III's younger brother, Richard, recently made earl of Cornwall. Richard was still only a teenager and so was too young to receive homages and administer the lands himself, and so he effectively received the revenues of the lands, still administered by the royal government. Richard's rights in his lands remained 'unclear and shifting' in this period, in Noel Denholm-Young's phrase. Hubert kept a tight administrative grip on these estates; his nephew Raymond de Burgh was appointed to administer the honour Berkhamsted on 12 July 1227, *after* it had been granted to Richard.⁹ Richard's ties with the Marshal family, meanwhile, continued over the following years of his minority. He eventually married William II Marshal's sister, Isabella, in March 1231.¹⁰ During this period, Hubert de Burgh's regime made several attempts to coax Richard away from the Marshals, and Ralph Chenduit's fine seems to have marked one of these. An entry on the close roll for 1229 records an order to Ralph to pay this fine of 55m. not to the king, but to Richard of Cornwall.¹¹ In the summer of 1231, however, Richard was again deprived of Berkhamsted and other lands, having apparently sided with Richard Marshal, heir of the recently deceased William II Marshal, in his dispute with the king and Hubert de Burgh, who had intervened to prevent Richard Marshal from inheriting the earldom of Pembroke.

⁷ F.M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism* (Oxford,), pp. 216-256; H.M. Thomas, *Vassals, Heiresses, Crusaders and Thugs: The Gentry of Angevin Yorkshire 1154-1216* (Philadelphia, 1993), pp. 44-47; P.R. Coss, D. Crouch, D.A. Carpenter, 'Debate: Bastard Feudalism Revised', *Past and Present* 131 (1991), pp. 165-177; D. Crouch, *The English Aristocracy 1070-1272: A Social Transformation* (New Haven, 2011), pp. 146-159.

⁸ N. Vincent, *Peter des Roches* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 266; N. Denholm-Young, *Richard of Cornwall* (Oxford, 1944), p. 11.

⁹ *CPR 1225-1232*, p. 134; Denholm-Young, *Richard of Cornwall*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, p. 272; F.M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 40, 53.

¹¹ *Close Rolls 1227-1231*, p. 157.

The evidence we have for Ralph Chenduit's actions in this period suggests that Ralph too threw his lot in with the Marshals. Ralph was recorded in the service of William II Marshal in 1230, travelling with him on the military expedition to Poitou of that year.¹² Another fine roll entry dating from 1242 records Ralph Chenduit's continued links with a kinsman of William II Marshal and Richard Marshal; Ralph was one of three men acting as surety for the payment by John Marshal and Margaret, heiress of Thomas, earl of Warwick, of the relief of £100 for Margaret's inheritance.¹³ John Marshal was a cousin of the earl of Pembroke, the grandson of William II Marshal and Richard Marshal's uncle, John Marshal. Quite how, if at all, this was related to the earlier connection is difficult to say. What is clear though, is that he served William II Marshal shortly after inheriting the lands which he held of a barony that was the subject of tension between Hubert de Burgh and the young Earl Richard. It is possible that this was the result of coercion by, or at least some degree of pressure from, Earl Richard, though it is more likely that Ralph was pursuing a strategy of his own, joining the retinue of a powerful magnate with whom his young tenurial lord had political sympathies.

If Ralph Chenduit had been acting in this period out of some self interest, it paid off for him. Once Earl Richard had come of age and was in full possession of his lands, he seems to have rewarded Ralph with marriage to an heiress. By 1234 Ralph Chenduit was married to the only daughter of Walter Foliot, a tenant of the honour of Wallingford, one of Earl Richard's other major estates, who had been a prominent Oxfordshire knight, and sheriff of the county.¹⁴ This was a valuable marriage and served to make Ralph even wealthier than he was to begin with. Joan's inheritance included the manor of Cuxham in Oxfordshire, the manor that became known as Isenhamsted Chenduit, and which is now Latimer near Chesham in Buckinghamshire. This was a marriage that would have been in the gift of Earl Richard as lord of the honour of Wallingford, and illustrates how rights of feudal lordship could continue to be an important means of dispensing patronage in the 1230s. In the case of Ralph Chenduit we see the significance of land tenure in the political alliances formed and in the rewards for service, but there is also the strong possibility of a significant level of independent action on the part of Ralph.

If we are to believe the St Alban's chronicler, Matthew Paris, Ralph was certainly a forceful individual. Ralph was a neighbour of the abbey of St Alban's and had at least one dispute with the monks thus bringing him to Matthew's unfavourable attention. The account survives in Paris's *Gesta Abbatum*. It is unusual in being a remarkably personal portrait of a member of the lesser nobility. Ralph is described on one occasion as 'heavy and robust and his whole body was built like a bull's for strength'.¹⁵ He rode, according to Paris, a valuable armoured horse at the head of a contingent of armed men who, in a show of defiance against the monks, chased about in view of the abbot and monks on land near Stanmore, Middlesex, where the abbot as well as Ralph claimed the right to free warren.¹⁶ The account is clearly very partisan, but it is possible that something of Ralph's character is preserved for us in this chronicle. Paris describes Ralph's early death in 1243 while travelling home from London, and attributes it to Ralph's profane attitude and unwillingness to take seriously the

¹² *CPR 1225-1232*, p. 357.

¹³ *CFR 1241-1242*, 485 (http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_039a.html).

¹⁴ *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for the County of Buckingham 7 Richard to 44 Henry III*, ed. M.W. Hughes (Buckinghamshire Record Society, 1940), p. 64; P.D.A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400* (Oxford, 1965), p. 4.

¹⁵ Matthew Paris, *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, ed. H.T. Riley (Rolls Series, 1867-1869), i, p. 139.

¹⁶ Paris informs his reader that the abbot successfully defended this right against Chenduit's claims.

abbot's excommunication of him. Paris even included one of Ralph's irreverent jokes: 'one day in the royal palace at Westminster, laughing, [Ralph] said derisively, "the monks of St Albans have excommunicated me so much that I have become so heavy and fat that I can hardly get into my saddle"'. Again, it is clearly impossible to say how accurately this represents Ralph's character. Nevertheless, one aspect of the St Alban's account is verifiable. Paris wrote that Ralph, having been taken ill, he confessed his sins to his 'special friend', the abbot of the Augustinian house at Missenden, Buckinghamshire, who was also the executor of Ralph's will. This is likely given that the Chenduit family did indeed have long-standing connections with Missenden Abbey; his father witnessed a large number of charters preserved in the abbey's cartulary, and members of the Chenduit family had made grants to the abbey in the twelfth century.¹⁷ Paris's account therefore gives us a possible glimpse of the personality and character of Ralph Chenduit to add to the name entered on the fine rolls; a rare opportunity for members of the lesser nobility in this period.

After Ralph's death in 1243, the next we hear of the Chenduit family in the fine rolls, is in the context of a very interesting entry from December 1264, by which time, Stephen Chenduit had taken possession of the family estates. Stephen Chenduit was not the immediate successor of Ralph Chenduit, though he was holding all that had been Ralph's by 1250, seven years after Ralph's death.¹⁸ The entry records the cancellation of all interest and penalties accrued on Stephen's debts:

18 Dec. Worcester. For Stephen Cheyndut. To the justices assigned to the custody of the Jews. The king, of his special grace, had remitted to his beloved and faithful Stephen Cheyndut all fees, interest payments and penalties in which he or his ancestors were bound to any of the king's Jews of England whatsoever, namely for the money that either he or his ancestors took from the abovesaid Jews as a loan for which he shall be bound to satisfy the same Jews, about which money Stephen is believed to have sworn an oath before them [the justices] and other trustworthy men sworn to this. Order to cause all Jews who are presently in the kingdom, or the heirs of those who are dead, to whom Stephen or his ancestors were bound in any debt, to come before them at certain days and places, to cause all charters by which they were bound to the abovesaid Jews in any debts or fees to be extracted from the chests containing the chirographs of the Jews and delivered to Stephen, to cause him to be quit from the aforesaid fees, interest payments and penalties, and to cause this to be done and enrolled thus, on condition, however, that he shall satisfy the same Jews at reasonable terms that they [the justices] will assign to him for the said money accepted from the abovesaid Jews as a loan thus, and on condition that the said money accrues no interest. If the abovesaid Jews, or any one of them, have died, whereby their chattels are the king's escheats, then Stephen is to satisfy the king for them at the Exchequer.¹⁹

This entry in the fine rolls was made during the period after battle of Lewis in May 1264 and the battle of Evesham in 1265, when Henry III and the royal chancery were under the power of Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester. The chancery continued to issue orders in the king's name, but under the direction of the earl. This fine roll entry must therefore be seen in the context of Montfort's building support in local society to buttress his position. Two knights from each county had been summoned to parliament in 1254 to discuss taxation, but Montfort, for the first time, summoned knightly representatives to parliament as well as representatives of the boroughs and Cinque ports, to

¹⁷ See for example, *Missenden Cartulary*, iii, no. 874.

¹⁸ *VCH Hertford*, ii, pp. 234-245.

¹⁹ *CFR 1264-1265*, no.54 (http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/calendar/roll_062.html).

discuss the business of the realm.²⁰ This was partly due to the lukewarm, if not hostile position taken by many of the leading magnates. Unlike the regime of 1258-1259 when the reforming council had consisted of fifteen, including five earls, the council with which Montfort ruled in 1264-1265 had only nine members, of which only Montfort himself and Gilbert de Clare were earls.²¹ By contrast, the Montfortian regime made much greater efforts to involve men from the localities and to prioritise the enforcement of reforms of local government from which they benefitted. The reforms of local government envisaged in the Provisions of Westminster of 1259 took a much more central position under Montfort than they had in 1259-1263, and Montfort seems to have had a great deal of support in the wider society of the localities, among those of middling wealth.²² Indeed, as Dr John Maddicott has pointed out, it is unlikely that Montfort would have summoned these representatives had he not expected them to be sympathetic.²³ This fine roll entry cancelling Stephen Chenduit's debts, along with around forty-eight other entries dating from the Montfortian period offering respite for Jewish debts, was an important part of this effort to win support among the knights of the localities, many of whom had substantial debts to Jewish money-lenders.²⁴

Stephen is well-known to historians as the knight who was eventually forced to sell up large portions of his estate in the 1260s and 1270s, including to the royal chancellor, Walter de Merton, who used them to endow his new Oxford college; thus Merton College continues to hold valuable manorial records relating to the Chenduit estates.²⁵ Professor Peter Coss drew attention to the fate of Stephen Chenduit in an important article of 1975, which argued that the thirteenth century was a period of crisis for the knightly class. Coss argued that the debt facing Stephen and other lesser landowners at the same time was one of a broader series of social and economic issues, including the pressures of rising prices combined with a reliance for many on fixed customary rents, and the rising cost of maintaining the accoutrements of a developing higher-status knighthood, which threatened many members of this social group, and which gave wealthier landowners such as great monasteries and royal servants, the opportunity to buy up their land.²⁶ Professor Coss argued that part of the reason for the extent of support for Simon de Montfort's regime among lesser landowners, was the potential relief from these financial difficulties that it offered them. Cancellations of debts to the Jews, like the one under discussion, go some way towards supporting this.

This fine roll entry should also be seen in the context of a broader antipathy towards the Jewish communities of England that made itself felt in outbreaks of violence during the mid-thirteenth century, with attacks on Jews in a number of English towns during the disturbances of 1264.²⁷ One aspect of the cause of this violence was the resentment of knightly debtors to their Jewish creditors.

²⁰ *Documents of the Baronial Movement*, ed. R.F. Treharne and J. Sanders (Oxford, 1973) [hereafter, *DBM*], pp. 291, 301.

²¹ *DBM*, p. 195; J.R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 286.

²² J.R. Maddicott, *The Origins of the English Parliament 924-1327* (Oxford, 2010), p. 257.

²³ Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, p. 317.

²⁴ Coss, 'Sir Geoffrey de Langley and the Crisis of the Knightly Class', pp. 30-34.

²⁵ P.D.A. Harvey, *Manorial Records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, c. 1200-1359* (Oxfordshire Record Society, 1976), pp. 1-6; P.D.A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village. Cuxham 1240 to 1400* (Oxford, 1965); *The Early Rolls of Merton College, Oxford*, ed. J.R.L. Highfield (Oxford Historical Society, 1964), pp. 41-2.

²⁶ P.R. Coss, 'Sir Geoffrey de Langley and the Crisis of the Knightly Class in Thirteenth-Century England' *Past and Present* 68 (1975), pp. 3-37; P.R. Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (Cambridge, 2003), chapter 4.

²⁷ R. R. Mundill, *England's Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion 1263-1290* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 37-44.

This attitude was not new in the 1260s; the infamous massacre of the entire Jewish community in York in 1190 had been perpetrated by indebted local landowners.²⁸ The political will to act against the Jewish community, however, reached a new tenor in this period. In part this was the result of intellectual developments and changing religious attitudes towards non-Christians and the practice of money-lending; the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 made provisions for the separation of Jews from Christians, and Henry III legislated in England for greater separation in 1233 and 1253, and in 1255 ordered the execution of nineteen Jews at Lincoln.²⁹ In addition to this, however, must be added the growing influence within the political community, of debtors among the knightly class in the localities. This as well as the moral and intellectual climate led to the adoption of anti-Jewish measures by Montfort, and then, after his defeat, also by Henry III's government and later by Edward I. Dr Maddicott, in his recent history of the origins of the English parliament identified 'a gathering wave of measures against the Jews, beginning with Montfort's cancellation of Jewish debts in 1264-1265 and culminating in the Jews' expulsion by Edward I in 1290, by which successive governments sought to buy what they now needed: the support of the gentry.'³⁰

This process is borne out to some extent by the case of Stephen Chenduit. The cancellation of the interest and penalties on Stephen's debts in December 1264 would seem to have been an attempt by Montfort to secure his political support. Forty-nine fine roll entries from this period record Montfort's relief of Jewish debt. Only six of them were outright pardons of debts, though the cancellation of interest granted to Stephen was generous none the less.³¹ Yet Stephen's political alignment in the Montfortian period is difficult to discern from the available sources, and was also a matter of contention at the time. After royalist forces led by the Lord Edward had defeated the Montfortians at the battle of Evesham in August 1265, Chenduit suffered forfeiture as a former rebel, but successfully pleaded his innocence, and by November he was trusted enough by the royalist regime to be appointed to keep the peace in his home counties of Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Middlesex.³² The reason for his acceptance by the royalist regime probably owes much to his close connections with Richard, earl of Cornwall, and to Henry of Almain, Richard's son. Like Ralph Chenduit before him, Stephen entered the service of the earl, and travelled with the comital retinue to Germany in 1256 for Richard's coronation as King of the Romans, and the knighting of Richard's eldest son, Henry.³³ He returned to England the following year with Henry of Almain.³⁴

²⁸ Carpenter, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 248-51; Thomas, *Vassals, Heiresses, Crusaders and Thugs*, pp. 65-67, 167.

²⁹ Carpenter, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 349; D.A. Carpenter, 'Fine of the Month: Crucifixion and Conversion: King Henry III and the Jews in 1255: Part 1' <http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/month/fm-01-2010.html>; D.A. Carpenter, 'Fine of the Month: Crucifixion and Conversion: King Henry III and the Jews in 1255: Part 2' <http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk/content/month/fm-02-2010.html>.

³⁰ Maddicott, *Origins of the English Parliament*, p. 271.

³¹ Coss, 'Sir Geoffrey de Langley and the crisis of the knightly class', pp. 31-32.

³² *CR (Supplementary) 1244-1266*, no. 417; *CPR 1258-1266*, p. 652.

³³ *CPR 1247-1258*, pp. 589-90.

³⁴ Paris, *Chronica Majora*, v, p. 653.

Henry of Almain wavered in his political alignment during the 1263-1265 period.³⁵ It is possible that Stephen followed him into Montfort's service. Henry, however, had left Montfort well before the battle of Lewes in May 1264, yet the cancellation of interest owed on Stephen's debts entered on the fine roll dates from December 1264. This may be evidence that even though his lord had deserted Earl Simon, the prospect of some relief from his indebtedness was too good an offer for Stephen to do the same. That he was quickly forgiven and accepted back into the trust of the new regime after August 1265 suggests that there may have been some sympathy with his plight. Indeed, Henry of Almain and his father both argued for leniency towards former rebels in the years after 1265 and once Richard had returned to Germany in late 1268, Henry was one of the architects, alongside Walter de Merton, of an ordinance restraining Jewish money-lending presented to the parliament of April 1269, which benefitted smaller landowners in particular.³⁶

The state of the evidence makes it very difficult to follow Stephen's indebtedness in any detail. Despite his closeness to the new regime, his debts remained, and following Montfort's fall, the interest owed was reinstated and by the late 1260s, he was selling four of his manors to Walter de Merton. Clearly, Montfort's grant of remittance had come at an important time for Stephen, and the measures adopted by the royalist regime were insufficient to do the same for him. By the 1280s, a note in the close roll suggested Stephen had a debt to the Jews of 1000 marks, which by then had been bought by the queen, Eleanor of Castile, with Stephen having been left with almost nothing of his former large estate.³⁷ His son, another Stephen appears rarely in royal records, and seems to have visited Merton College on several occasions, while his wife and daughters were provided for in the will of Walter de Merton.³⁸

Thus two entries in the fine rolls, relating to the same family, illustrate several important issues that faced the lesser nobility in England during this period, while shedding considerable light on the Chenduit family. By placing the fine roll evidence in the context of other sources it has been possible to identify the family's estates, and begin to assess their wealth at the time of Ralph Chenduit's accession. These fine roll entries also serve to demonstrate the significance of tenurial lordship and the strategic development of alliances with the powerful that could bring valuable patronage to the family. Finally, the fine rolls bear witness to the results of the financial strain and indebtedness that contributed to the dissatisfaction and politicisation of local society, and which in this case, as in many others, ultimately destroyed the family's wealth and position.

³⁵ William Rishanger, *Chronicle of the Barons War*, ed J.O. Halliwell (Camden Society, 1840), p. 17; A. Jobson, 'Richard of Cornwall and the Baronial Opposition in 1263', in *Thirteenth Century England* 12, ed. J. Burton, P. Schofield, and B. Weiler (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 61-74.

³⁶ N. Denholm-Young, *Richard of Cornwall* (Oxford, 1944), pp. 142-3; Maddicott, *Origins*, p. 268.

³⁷ *CR 1279-1288*, p. 80.

³⁸ *Early Rolls of Merton College*, pp. 82, 226; *Cuxham Manorial Records*, p. 762.