THE ORIGIN OF THE HOWARDS

***by J H Round*[1]**

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This paper is an edited transcript of a set of Round's handwritten notes and draft texts held by the FMG library. The original papers appear to be incomplete, and do not follow a coherent whole, with several drafts of the same discussion, asides and discontinuities. Nevertheless we believe they may be of sufficient historical interest to present to our readers.

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It appears to have been an axiom – with those who provided pedigrees – that the higher the rank of an ennobled house, the longer its pedigree should be. The effect of such an axiom is nowhere better seen than in the endeavours of heralds to construct, for the house of Howard, a descent worthy of the race whose dukedom placed them at the head of all the nobility of England and whose chief, as earl marshal, controlled their own body.

I have purposely selected the title of this paper as one which will impress upon the reader the fact that its primary concern is not with the origin of the ducal house or of any other family that bears the name of Howard, but with the occurrence of that name in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and down to the time in the latter part of the thirteenth century when it first emerges as a surname. For it ought to be hardly necessary, in the present state of our knowledge, to say that we are not on sure ground, so far as the ducal house is concerned, till we reach the days of its true founder, William Howard the judge. It is possible that his father and grandfather may yet be safely identified, but, even if they can be, the point is of little interest; for they were not of sufficient consequence to invite further enquiry.

We have to deal, in my opinion, with three distinct names, each of which occurs in more forms than one. The three names are these:

1. Howard or Haward
2. Hereward or Herward
3. (le) Heyward or (le) Hayward

Happily, the identity of Howard and Haward is not only proved, up to the hilt, by the evidence of records, but has been definitely admitted by Mr Rye himself. He relied, for this, in the first instance, on an *Inquisition ad quod damnum* of 29 Edw I (1300/01), for the Abbot and Convent of Dereham, in which the judge is styled "*Wilhelmus Haward alias Howard*", which identifies the two surnames.[2]

It is, of course, the orthodox method, in such researches as these, to begin by collecting the evidence, and then to state the conclusions to which that evidence leads us. The readers, however, will find it easier to understand the evidence, in

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1 John Horace Round (1854-1928) was a leading English historian and genealogist of the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Despite having a known bibliography of some 960 items, there remain some previously unpublished materials.

2 *Doubtful Norfolk Pedigrees,*'Howard', pp.5-6.

this case, if one reverses the process and states briefly and clearly one's conclusions as to the name. For Mr Rye's statements have so confused the evidence actually available that readers will have to keep in mind the following brief analysis or to refer to it when they find the arguments difficult to follow.

I will now deal with the first of the three names concerned, namely Howard *alias* Haward. This form includes Oward. The evidence, we shall find, of the Patent Rolls, Close Rolls, etc., is in entire agreement with the view that Howard and Haward are forms of the same name. It is possible to illustrate this equation even as early as the twelfth century. I select, from contemporary evidence the three following instances:

1) On the Pipe Roll of 1166 (12 Hen II) we are given a long and valuable list of the men at Lynn (Norfolk), then an important seaport, who were amerced in various sums. The largest of these was £20 which was exacted from each of three men, *viz:* Nicholas of Wofrerton[3] and John his brother, and a certain "*Haward de Wihton*". In the following year (1167) the name of this man is again found on the Pipe Roll but appears as "*Oward de Wigton*" on the Chancellor's Roll.[4] This gives us a double equation; but the point is not the dropping of the aspirate; it is that Haward becomes Oward.

2) The second illustration is afforded by Professor Stenton's paper on *St Benet of Holme and the Norman Conquest.* In the notable document that he has printed and that he has been able to date as of 1101-1107, Roger Bigod is accused of robbing St Benet of two [sokemen??], "Leffi" and "Howard."[5] On the opposite page Roger's predecessor is charged with a similar aggression (at Repps) in the case of "*Wilmerum filium Sirici et Haward filium Tudeles*." We have in this instance not only the equation, but a good example of the use of Howard (or Haward) as a personal name. Moreover, Mr Stenton mentions Howard as one of "the personal names" in this 'memorandum' which are of "distinct Scandinavian" origin,[6] and does not treat Haward as being a different name.

3) My third illustration is taken from another monastic MS, namely the Ramsey Cartulary. In the far west of Norfolk, east of Wisbeach and Walsoken, lay the "Marshland" (*Merskland*) district south of the Wash. In the year 1331, on the petition of the men "*de partibus Merskland*", the king……*[text missing]*

Having thus shewn that the Judge and his descendants for many years were more frequently called Haward than Howard, and that the Judge himself was in one case styled "*Haward alias Howard"* - which identifies the two surnames (p.6), ...

I now pass to the second of the patronymic names of which I spoke above, *viz* Hereward or Herward. Its sound is so different from that of Howard or Haward that one finds it difficult to understand how anyone can have confused the two. Mr Rye, however, did at first try to accomplish this, writing of the judge as follows: "*If I were*

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3 Wolferton lies on the coast next Sandringham and only a few miles from Lynn.

4 Pipe Roll (13 Hen II) p.22. The place is probably Wighton in the north of the county between the Walsinghams and Wells-next-the-sea.

5 Eng. Hist. Rev. **37**: 226.

6 *Ibid*. p.229.

allowed a conjecture as to his descent, it would be that his name may be identical with that of Hereward… I find that a William Hereward, who may have been his father, was a merchant of Lynn, and apparently a wealthy one."[7] But it would not be fair to tie down the writer to this early guess, which indeed he must have afterwards rejected; for he himself in his *Norfolk Families* (part III, 1912) has, …….*[text missing]*

In his *Norfolk Families* (pp.332-3) Mr Rye has dealt with these two forms of the name as that of a local 'Visitation family', but appends a footnote "*as to this named family, see under Howard*". We turn accordingly to *Howard* (p.374) and there we read that the occurrence of the name Hereward at Terrington (in the neighbourhood of Wiggenhall) that probably accounts for the Hereward the Wake theory, that is to say that it accounts for "*the early alleged descent of the Howards from Hereward the Wake."*[8] He here however justly observes that "*in 1302 William Haward, the Judge, and Robert Hereward were named in the same Commission on July 28 (see Patent Rolls*[9]*) thereby apparently differentiating them"* (p.374). This indeed is an understatement; for we can fortify this evidence by citing from this volume six other commissions (1302-04) addressed to the two jointly.[10]

In *Feudal Aids* and Farrer's *Feudal Cambridgeshire* (p.9) he occurs, in 1302-3, as holding land in Guilden Morden, Cambs. Robert Hereward was dead in 1308.[11]

There is therefore no question that 'Hereward' and 'Howard' (or 'Haward') were quite distinct names.[12]

I will now turn to the third of the names with which I have here to deal, namely Heyward or Hayward (al. Haiward). There is, of course, no question that this is a surname derived from occupation or office. An excellent instance of this derivation is found in that volume of the Ramsey cartulary from which I have already quoted. It is there recorded (III, 300, 301) that……. *[end of text]*

This name needs fuller treatment for, although he has rightly distinguished it from that of Hereward (or Herward), Mr Rye has strangely, but confidently proclaimed its identity with that of Howard! His words[13] are: *"Haward alias Howard is a common form. The judge himself is so styled in 1300 as an Inquisitor* [sic] *ad quod damnum 29 Edward I, no.22, and as late as 1662 the will of an Edward Howard rel Heyward was proved in Norwich."*

I am here in entire agreement with Mr Walter Rye so far as the identity of the forms, Haward and Howard, is concerned. But there is no such "common form". It is very characteristic of his inexact methods that the only other instance that he can cite for the equation is "*Howard rel Heyward*" and that even for this he has to quote, not a medieval record but a will of so late a date as 1662! At that late period a man named Heyward might well try to pass himself off as a member of the house

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7 *Doubtful Norfolk Pedigrees,* 'Howard,' p.7, note.

8 *Norfolk Families*, p.371

9 CPR 1301-07, p.86

10 CPR 1301-07, pp.87, 89, 93, 223, 279, 289. In the last of these William is styled "William Howard", and Robert appears as "Robert de Hereward".

11 CPR 1307-13, p.97. "*Robert Hereward, deceased, sheriff of the counties of Cambridge, Norfolk and Suffolk."*

12 Mr Rye has dealt (*Norfolk Families*, pp.332-3) with the family of Herward in its due place. He there blazons the arms of Sir Robert Herward, and again in his *List of of Coats of Armour used in Norfolk before 1563* (p.29).

13 *Norfolk Families* (p.374).

of Howard. It is one of Mr Rye's perverse ways that we find him apt to rely on a single and quite exceptional instance as equal in weight to scores or even hundreds of cases affording proof to the contrary. The notorious looseness in the spelling of surnames long after the days of what I term 'the early Howards' makes it rather surprising that so few variations are found in the case of their famous name.[14]

It is because Mr Rye insists that the name of "Howard" is identical with that of "Heyward"[15] "*the latter is a trade name, the Messor of a manor,"* [16] that he attached so much importance to his allegation that William, the judge, "*wrote himself 'Le Heyward' and 'Hayward', words which signify the man who kept ward of the haia (hay) or enclosure of a manor,"* [17] etc, etc.

Apart from the fact that we do not possess any MS to serve as proof of how how the judge "*wrote himself*" we do not even find his name written by others (*ie* in the public records) with a 'Le' before it.[18] I desire to draw special attention to the statement in the same paragraph, which follows:

A curious example of how even the records themselves have been tampered with years ago, to destroy the damming evidence of the "le" will be found in my Doubtful Norfolk Pedigrees, sub Howard.[19] Let us verify this statement.

The 'example' cited is duly found on p.4 (note) of the 'Howard' paper. In that place Mr Rye's object was to dispose of the 'de' (not 'le') before the name of Howard in the printed text of the *Abbreviatio* (pp.259, 292). Having examined for himself "*the original documents",* namely the *Coram Rege Rolls* of 34-5 Edw I and of 23 Edw I, he found, as we have seen firm asserting above, that "*even the records themselves have been tampered with years ago, to destroy the damning evidence of the 'le'*. Now, as a member of the legal profession Mr Rye must be well aware that this is a serious charge. What then is the evidence upon which he…….

In another production of the same period, his *Popular History of Norfolk* (1885), Mr Rye deemed this discovery of sufficient importance to repeat it, - but with some difference. The version there given runs as follows:

> *Two Coram Rege Rolls referred to by the heralds as mentioning William 'de' Howard and William 'Haward' have each been tampered with to make them so read. The 'le' which was undoubtedly in the first, having been cut out; and the tail of the 'y' in the second having been also removed with a knife to make 'Hayward' read 'Haward'.*[20]

Let us examine this assertion. Even 'the heralds' are at least entitiled to fair play at the hands of critics. Are then these rolls "*referred to by the heralds*"? So far as the evidence given us goes, "*the answer is in the negative*". We hear nothing of the heralds in the other version of the story. Secondly is it the case that these rolls "*have been*

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14 I have in vain called Mr Rye's attention to this matter in the course of our correspondence and explained to him that I cannot accept exceptional forms as evidence.

15 *Norfolk Families* (1912) p.343.

16 *Norfolk Families* (1912) p.374. *Cf. Norfolk songs & Stories,* p.104 "*the Howards were the Hay-Wardens."*

17 *Norfolk songs & Stories,* p.106.

18 This statement is subject, of course, to the possible occurrence of a scribal error here and there among hundreds of entries.

19 *Norfolk songs & Stories,* p.706

20 *Op.cit. [??Popular History of Norfolk],* p.29.

tampered with to make" the first read 'de' Howard; for that is what is meant by the phrase "*to make them so read*." Either again, Mr Rye's other version above shows that this was not so: his case is that 'le' was cut out, but not that 'de' was substituted for it. Indeed he insists that "*the roll …… does not, as alleged by the printed vol., refer at membrane [sic] to William de Howard*".[21]

Thirdly his mere query, in the other version – ("*can it be that the roll …… had William le Howard*") becomes here the definite assertion that "*the 'le' was undoubtedly in the*" roll, "*having been cut out*." Such is Mr Rye's "*damning evidence of the 'le'* " which it was sought to destroy! If I were called upon to suggest the word which was, he says, cut out, it be not 'le' but 'de'. My reason for this suggestion is that, in the printed *Abbreviatio* (p.259), the names of the judges are given thus: "*Willelmus de Tremesby[?], Harvicus de Staunton, Willelmus de Howard, et Willelmus de Carleton*." Surely the most likely suggestion is that the scribe had written 'de', under the influence of the three other names, and that when this was detected the 'de' was cut out as an error.[22]

Again, if (as Mr Rye informs us)the judge's name "*appears as William Howard, wherever his name occurs on the skin in question (and elsewhere on the roll)*" it would have been useless to "*tamper with*" one entry alone, whether in order to suppress the 'le' or to alter it to 'de'. Lastly, as to the other roll, Mr Rye himself admits that it may have been the original scribe who "*tampered with*" the roll by altering the 'y' to 'u';……

The one class of public records with which we can most closely associate the judge himself is found the *Feet of Fines.* For these he must have preserved among his own title deeds. Now these, according to the *Calendar* (1885) compiled by Mr Rye himself, extend over twenty years (pp.129-170),[23] and in them the judge's surname occurs thirteen times; in every one of these we find spelt 'Howard'!

I think that Mr Gerald Brenan, in his excellent book on the House of Howard (1907), must have derived from Mr Walter Rye his observations on the name. For he wrote that the surname which Howard bore tells us little in that direction. From 1467 he is styled 'Dominus Howard',[24] which seems to indicate that he had already been summoned to Parl. as a baron.

The first point to be made clear is that 'Howard' belongs to the large class of surnames which have been formed from Christian names. Such names as Williamson and Williams, Wilkinson and Wilkins, Richardson and Richards, Johnson, Edwards, etc are obviously derived from such Christian names as William and its diminutive Wilkin,[25] Richard, John and Edward. Sooner or later the stage was reached when, instead of changing with every generation, the surname became stereotyped. Apparently the reign of Edward I was a period when this

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21 Doubtful Norfolk Pedigrees, p.4 note. The reference in the *Abbreviatio* is to 'ret.57'

22 This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that Robert Hereward, whose name is found so often in conjunction with William Howard's (*CPR* 1301, 1387), occurs in one out of many entries, as Robert de [sic] Hereward (*Ibid.* p.289), although as Mr Rye rightly urges, "*Hereward is a personal name*."

23 From 14 to 34-5 Edw. I.

24 Brenan I, 31-32.

25 This diminutive is found very early.

development was fast taking place, but, of course, one cannot limit it to any one reign.

In the case of rarer names, such as Howard, it became obsolete as a Christian name at so early a date, that it is hard for us to think of it as anything but a surname. Nevertheless there is ample evidence that at least as late as the early years of the 13th century, a man or woman might be styled the son or daughter of Howard, just as they might be known as the son or daughter of William or Richard, of John or Edward. There is no need therefore to seek the origin of 'Howard' in Hayward or Heyward; for 'Howard' itself appears in early days.

…..the gifts of 'Huard' in London which occurs the West country and in Kent in about 1212 and in 1223;[26] while in Domesday itself we meet with 'Huard' (or 'Huart') de Noderes as a Juror in Herts.[27] Finally we have but to turn to Mr Rye's own *Calendar of the feet of fines for Norfolk* to discover in 10 Ric I (*ie* 1197-8) "*Houward Lomb*" (p.7).

From 'Howard' as a Christian name it is an easy transition to its early occurrence as such in the region from which the family of Howard eventually emerged. It seems to have escaped notice that in the far west of Norfolk, south and south west of Lynn, with the Wash to the north and Marshland to the sourth, there lay a group of villages – between the Nene river and the railway from Lynn to Ely – from which the Howards sprang. In the cartulary of Ramsey Abbey[28] we find some notable 'extents' of the monors of Walsoken (by Wisbeach) and Wimbotsham with Downham Market.[29] In the latter there occurs "*Howardus*" who held a"*toft*" for threepence of annual rent and the week-work of a villein tenant.[30] On this page there is also mention of Ralf "*Haiward*", which illustrates the marked difference between the two names. In a custumal of Walsoken[31] there is similar mention of "*Howard.*" We also meet with the name in its softer form of "*Oward*" in this custumal, where "*Seman filius……."*

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[26] *Red Book of the Exchequer,* pp.540, 549; *Testa de Nevill,* pp.167a, 187b; *Bracton's Notebook*, case 1638.

[27] *Ing.Com.Cant.* p.100.

[28] *Rolls Series.*

[29] A Ramsey Abbey charter speaks of "*placiam nostrum ad caput villae de Wygenhale versus Wynbodesham." Cartulary,* II, 279.

[30] *Op.cit.* III, 286.

[31] *Ibid.* p.291.