

= Hugh de Neville =

Hugh de Neville (died 1234 ; sometimes Hugh Neville) was the Chief Forester under the kings Richard I , John , and Henry III of England . He was also the sheriff for a number of counties over his lifetime . Related to a number of other royal officials as well as a bishop , Neville was a member of Prince Richard 's household . After Richard became king in 1189 , Neville continued in his service and he accompanied him on the Third Crusade . Neville remained in the royal service following Richard 's death in 1199 and the accession of King John to the throne , becoming one of the new king 's favourites and often gambling with him . He was named in Magna Carta as one of John 's principal advisors , considered by a medieval chronicler to be one of King John 's " evil councillors " . He deserted John after the French invasion of England in 1216 , but returned to pledge his loyalty to John 's son Henry III after the latter 's accession to the throne later that year . Neville 's royal service continued until his death in 1234 , though by then he was a less significant figure than he had been at the height of his powers .

= = Early life and career = =

Neville was the son of Ralph de Neville , a son of Alan de Neville , who was also Chief Forester . Hugh had a brother , Roger de Neville , who was part of Hugh 's household from 1202 to 1213 , when Roger was given custody of Rockingham Castle by King John . Another brother was William , who was given some of Hugh 's lands in 1217 . Hugh , Roger , and William were related to a number of other royal officials and churchmen , most notable among them Geoffrey de Neville , who was a royal chamberlain , and Ralph Neville , who became Bishop of Chichester . Hugh de Neville employed Ralph de Neville at the start of Ralph 's career , and the two appear to have remained on good terms throughout the rest of Hugh 's life .

Hugh de Neville was a member of the household of Prince Richard , later Richard I , and also served Richard 's father , King Henry II at the end of Henry 's reign , administering two baronies for the king . Neville accompanied Richard on the Third Crusade ; he was one of the few knights who fought with the king on 5 August 1192 outside the walls of Jaffa , when the king and a small force of knights and crossbowmen fought off a surprise attack by Saladin 's forces . It was famously reported that during the engagement Saladin sent Richard two remounts in the thick of battle , so that Richard would not be forced to fight on foot . Neville 's account of events was a source for the chronicler Ralph of Coggeshall 's entries on Richard 's activities in the Third Crusade .

In 1194 Neville acquired the wardship of Joan de Cornhill , daughter of Henry de Cornhill , and married her four years later . Also in 1194 he was given custody of the town of Marlborough in Wiltshire , and in 1196 was appointed as Sheriff of Oxfordshire . He was also named in 1197 as Sheriff of Essex and Sheriff of Hertfordshire , offices he held until some time in 1200 .

= = Chief Forester = =

Neville was appointed as Chief Forester under King Richard I in 1198 . As the official in charge of the royal forests , he was one of the four great officers of the state : the others were the justiciar , the chancellor , and the treasurer . The forester was responsible for enforcing the forest law ? the special law that applied to the royal forests ? and presided over the forest justices , who held forest eyres . There was also a special forest exchequer , or forest treasury . In 1198 Neville presided over an Assize of the Forest that was described by the chronicler Roger of Howden as greatly oppressive . The revenues could be considerable ; in 1198 the forest eyre brought in £ 1 @, @ 980 . Neville stated in 1208 that over the previous six and a half years the amount raised by the various revenues of the forests had been £ 15 @, @ 000 ; in 1212 it had been £ 4 @, @ 486 . Forest law was resented by the king 's subjects , not just for its severity but also because of the large extent of the kingdom that it encompassed . It covered not just woodlands , but by the end of the 12th century it covered between a quarter and a third of the whole kingdom . This extent enabled the Norman and Angevin kings to use the harsh punishments of forest law to extract large sums of money for their

government .

Neville continued to hold the office of Chief Forester under King John and he was often the king 's gambling partner . He was a frequent witness to John 's royal charters . Under John , Neville was named to the offices of Sheriff of Hampshire in 1210 , and Sheriff of Cumberland , offices of which he was deprived in 1212 . He was also reappointed to the shrievalties of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1202 , holding them until 1203 .

In 1210 King John fined Neville 1 @, @ 000 marks because he had allowed Peter des Roches , the Bishop of Winchester , to enclose some hunting grounds without royal permission ; although Roches was close to the king , his action was an infringement of the royal forests . Neville 's large fine was probably a warning that the king was serious about enforcing the forest law , but it was eventually rescinded . In 1213 Neville was placed in charge of the seaports along the English coast from Cornwall to Hampshire , but some time in 1213 it appears that he fell from royal favour , although the circumstances are unknown . A fine of 6 @, @ 000 marks was assessed on him for allowing two prisoners to escape , as well as other unrecorded offences , although the king did subsequently remit 1 @, @ 000 marks of the fine . In 1215 Neville lost his office of chief forester . Neville was present at Runnymede for the signing of Magna Carta and was mentioned in the preamble as one of King John 's councillors , as well as serving as a witness to the document . Roger of Wendover , a chronicler writing in 1211 , listed Neville as one of King John 's " evil councillors " .

= = John 's later reign and service under King Henry III = =

John 's style of ruling , and his defeats in continental Europe in 1214 , had alienated many of his nobles . Initially , a faction of the barons forced John to agree to Magna Carta to secure less capricious government from the king . John , however , after agreeing to their demands , secured the annulment of the charter from the papacy in late 1215 . The opposition magnates then invited Prince Louis of France to take the English throne , and Louis arrived in England with an army in May 1216 .

Neville joined the rebel barons in 1216 , shortly after Prince Louis invaded England . Neville surrendered Marlborough Castle , a royal castle in his custody , to Prince Louis in mid @-@ 1216 . Louis had not besieged the castle , and it appears that Neville took the initiative in making overtures to the prince . When John heard of the change of sides , he confiscated all of Neville 's lands held directly from the king on 8 July 1216 . On 4 September 1216 the king further confiscated lands belonging to other rebels that had been granted to Neville before the surrender of Marlborough ; some were re @-@ granted to Neville 's brother William . Hugh de Neville 's son , Herbert , also joined the rebels .

After King John 's death in October 1216 , Neville and his son made their peace with the new king , Henry III , John 's son . Both men had their lands restored in 1217 , but the offices that the elder Neville had held were not returned quickly . Custody of some royal forests was returned by 1220 , but the office of Chief Forester was not returned until some time later . In 1218 Neville was supposed to have had the forest of Rockingham returned to his custody , but William de Forz , the Count of Aumale , refused to return it . It was not until 1220 that de Neville managed to recover his custody of Rockingham forest . By 1224 Neville was once more Chief Forester , but he never regained the power and influence that he had held under John . When he lost the office for the second time is unclear . The historian C. R. Young states that he held the office until his death in 1234 when it passed to his son John , but Daniel Crook , writing in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography , claims that Neville lost the forester office in 1229 , to be replaced by John of Monmouth and Brian de Lisle . He also served as Sheriff of Lincolnshire .

= = Records and lands = =

Neville 's household records for 1207 survive , detailing his itinerary for the year ; in one eight @-@ week period his household visited 11 different towns . In 1204 his wife offered the king 200 chickens for the right to sleep one night with her husband , an obligation recorded in the royal records . The

historian Daniel Crook suggests that this shows that Joan Neville was one of the barons' wives who attracted King John's sexual attentions .

Neville inherited lands in Lincolnshire worth one half of a knight's fee . These were augmented with gifts from Richard and John , much of which were in Essex . He also acquired lands in Surrey and in Somerset , and his marriage to Joan brought him estates in Essex . Joan's lands also brought him into conflict with Falkes de Breauté , the husband of Joan's younger sister and co-heiress , and the two brothers in-law were involved in lawsuits over their wives' lands for more than five years . Joan and her sister were also co-heiresses to the barony of Courcy , in right of their mother Alice de Courcy .

= = Death and legacy = =

Neville's first wife , Joan de Cornhill , died after December 1224 . Some time before April 1230 he married secondly Beatrice , the widow of Ralph de Fay and one of the five daughters of Stephen of Turnham . Joan and Neville had at least three sons ? John , Henry , and Herbert . Neville also had a daughter named Joan .

Neville died in 1234 , although his death was incorrectly recorded by Matthew Paris as occurring in 1222 . Neville was buried at Waltham Abbey , of which he had been a patron . Besides Waltham , he also made gifts to Christ Church Priory in Canterbury , Bullington Priory in Lincolnshire , and St Mary's Nunnery , Clerkenwell . The historian Sidney Painter said of Neville's career during John's reign that " a strong argument could be advanced for the thesis that the royal official who wielded the most actual power during John's reign was the chief forester , Hugh de Neville " . Another historian , J. R. Maddicott , states that Neville was head of " one of the most detested branches of royal administration " .