

THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS,
EASTCHURCH IN SHEPEY.

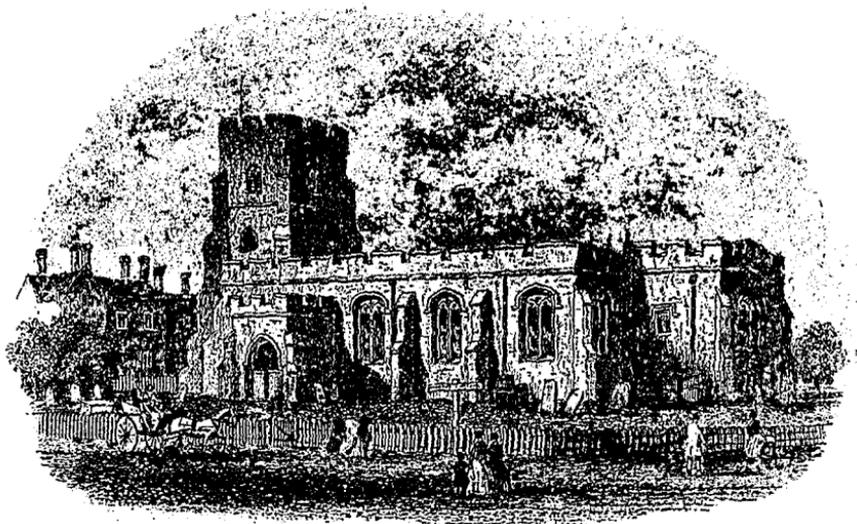
BY CANON SCOTT ROBERTSON.

THE Church of All Saints at Eastchurch has especial interest for antiquaries and students of architecture, because the date of its erection is known. During the ninth year of King Henry VI,* in November 1431, the chief parishioner, William Cheyne, esquire, of Shirland, obtained the King's license (needful to override the law of mortmain) to give three roods of land, to the Patrons† of Eastchurch Rectory, in order that a new parish church might thereon be built.

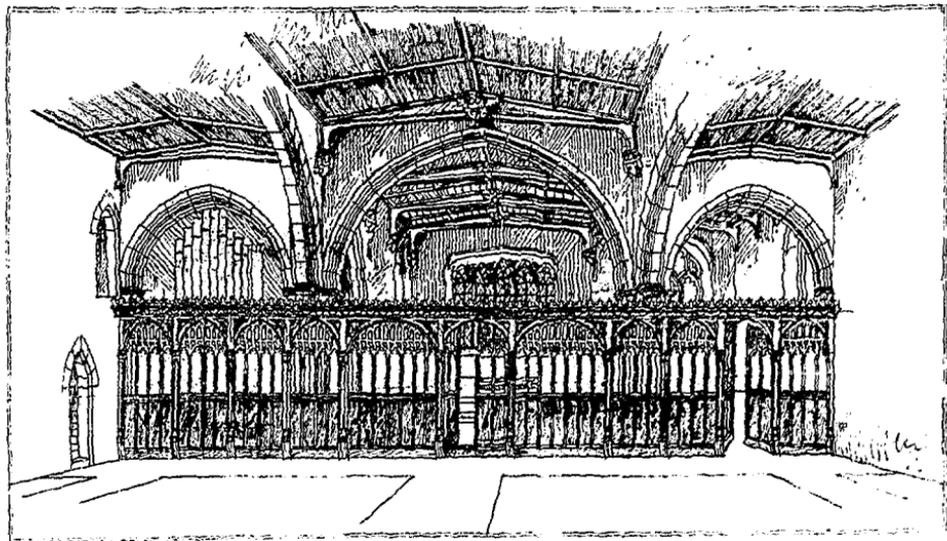
The soil of Shepey, being London clay, affords no enduring foundation for any edifice. Houses and churches erected on it are in continual peril from the subsidence of the soil; their walls crack in all directions, unless artificial foundations are deeply and solidly laid before any building is commenced. The royal license granted to William Cheyne mentions the fact that the old church at Eastchurch had gone to ruin "by reason of the sudden weakness of the foundation." Consequently, before the Abbot of Boxley began to build a new church, upon the fresh site given by William Cheyne, he caused deep and solid foundations of chalk to be laid. Wherever a wall was to stand, a wide trench was dug, some feet deep, and it was filled with solid blocks of chalk, brought from the mainland of Kent; thus firm foundations were obtained. Still further to support the walls, diagonal buttresses were constructed at every angle of the building; and three porches (north, south, and west) were erected, with diagonal buttresses at each of their angles; affording much additional support to the walls and to the western tower. Few parish churches possess so many buttresses in an equally limited space. Their number, however, adds greatly to the handsome appearance of the fabric, which stands well, on that high ridge of hill

* *Patent Roll*, 9 Henry VI, part 2, memb. 4.

† It should be noticed that the land was not given to the parish, but to the patrons of the benefice, namely to the Abbot and Convent of Boxley.



**ALL SAINTS, EASTCHURCH, SHEPEY,
IN A.D. 1850.**



**EAST END OF ALL SAINTS, EASTCHURCH, SHEPEY,
IN A.D. 1880.**

which runs through the entire length of the Isle of Shepey. The annexed plate shews the exterior of the building, as it appeared thirty years ago. Through the efforts of the late rector, stone was given by R. S. Holford, Esq., and a special church rate being granted for the purpose, a comely wall was erected around the churchyard in 1863, instead of the old palings; and the waterbutts shewn in the plate were removed; they indicated the great scarcity of water which is felt in Eastchurch at certain seasons.

When the new church was built, in 1432, some windows of the old edifice seem to have been preserved. The western porch has small windows of early character; and the western windows of the two aisles seem to be of the Decorated period, each of two lights. Of the earlier church and its site nothing is known. Late in the twelfth century it had been appropriated to the Cistercian Abbey of Dunes in Flanders. Pope Celestine's confirmation thereof is dated 1196. The earliest record respecting it at Lambeth, is the institution of William de Wylton to the benefice, on the presentation of the Abbot and Convent of Dunes, in August 1279. An endowment for a vicar was granted by that Abbey in June 1300; when glebe land measuring $11\frac{1}{2}$ acres was assigned to him, together with a sum of 8s. per annum. The benefice had previously been sequestered by Archbishop Winchelsey; perhaps he thereby compelled the Abbey to endow a vicarage.

The ancient family of Shirland was flourishing at that period, and the knight whose tomb is a chief feature in the mother church, at Minster, was then resident at Eastchurch. The story of his tragic end, as caused by his horse's head, has been made familiar to all, by Barham, in his *Ingoldsby Legends*. William, Vicar of Eastchurch, was concerned in some settlements of the Shirland family, drawn up perhaps at the time of a marriage. He had been trustee or feoffee of the manor of Ufton in Tunstall; which (by Fine No. 144, 4 Ed. II) he granted in 1311, to "Robert de Shirlaunde" and Katherine his wife.

A few years later, the Cistercian Abbey of Dunes transferred their rights of Patronage here to the Kentish Cistercian Abbey of Boxley. This transfer was consummated on the 8th of the ides of June 1315; when Archbishop Reynolds caused the Abbot and Convent of Boxley to be duly inducted, into all the rights of the rectory and advowson.

The Northwode family, at that period, held large possessions in Eastchurch. Sir Roger Northwode's chaplain, Richard Sheme, who

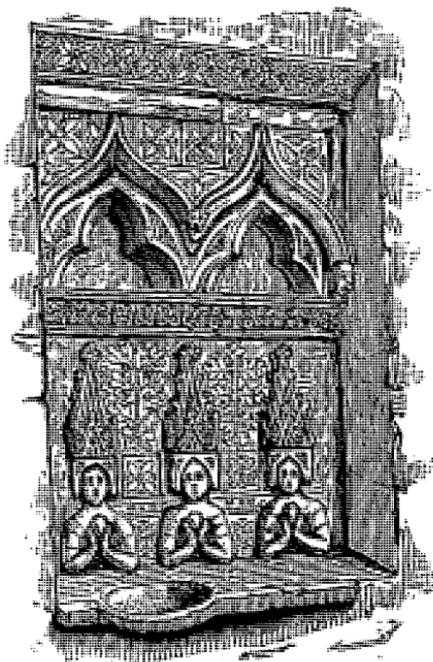
became vicar here in June 1353 was, on one occasion, required to testify that, from the very early marriage of Sir Roger to Juliana de Say, their first child Sir John de Northwode was baptized, in 1321, before Sir Roger had completed the fifteenth year of his age.

The burials of the Shirlands and the Northwodes in the mother church at Minster, shew that for a long period Eastchurch did not possess the full rights of a parish church.* The royal licence granted in 1431 to William Cheyne, whose ancestor had married the heiress of Shirland, distinctly states however that it was at that time fully privileged, as a distinct parish church. Yet, in 1473, Robert Manne, of Eastchurch, making his will, directed that he should be buried in the Minster Churchyard in Shepey. His bequests to Eastchurch are peculiar. To the high altar there be left 6d.; to the light of our Lady in the High Quire he bequeathed "a moder shepe;" and likewise to the High-Cross Light "one moder shepe." These ewes were to be hired by one of the farmers of the parish, who would pay for the use of each an annual rent sufficient to supply with oil one lamp in the church throughout the year. Robert Manne also bequeathed one moder shepe to the Brotherhood and Light of "Seynt Jamys of Wardon."

The church built in 1432 was, as we can still attest, fully worthy of a parish which was inhabited by the lords of Shirland, and connected with the great family of Northwode. It has a nave and chancel, each with two aisles; a western tower and three porches. The nave arcades, each of five bays, have octagonal shafts, with fluted sides hollowed to a concave surface; while the caps and bases shew similar laborious curves. The arches are moulded in two orders, with a deep hollow between. The chancel arch is four-centred. The side chancels do not extend so far eastward as the high chancel; provision is therefore made (by means of an ogee-arched squint, or hagioscope, on each side) for affording a view of the high altar to any one placed near the side altars. Projecting much from

* The importance of these rights may be illustrated by the following incident. In 1355, at the complaint of the Abbess of St. Sexburg in Shepey, Wm. de Riphull, Vicar of Leysdown Parish Chapel, was admonished by Archbishop Islip's legal auditor, and fined, for burying certain bodies in his churchyard at Leysdown, and receiving fees for so doing. These fees were due to the mother church of Minster Abbey, whither the bodies were ordered to be carried. The burial fees in question were:—for John Sanders 3½d.; Joan Gamone 7½d.; Juliana daughter of John Aleyn 3d.; Elias Spaylard 3d.; John Feyre 4d.; and Joan daughter of John Hauckyn 2½d. Nevertheless, within fifteen years this "parish chapel of Leysdown" was described as the "parish church of St. Clement in Shepey," when John Mere of Rainham was admitted to be its vicar in January 1370.

the base of the northern hagioscope, or squint, there is carved in the stone a very shallow circular basin. Mr. R. C. Hussey calls it a piscina, and thought it had a drain-hole, but there has never been any orifice, and the peculiar position precludes any possibility of a drain. Mr. Matthew Bloxam has drawn attention to a similar shallow basin, which is attached to an Easter sepulchre, in East Kirkby Church, Lincolnshire.* He says that they were offertory basins



OFFERTORY-BASIN, ATTACHED TO AN EASTER SEPULCHRE, IN EAST KIRKBY CHURCH, LINCOLNSHIRE.

wherein the devout deposited their offerings, upon special occasions, for special objects. At Eastchurch the basin is gone from the south chancel, which was for many years used as a day-school; it must have stood on the north side of the altar there, attached to the squint; but in the north chancel, its relation to the squint places

* "I shall conclude by a few brief remarks on a curious stone offertory basin in East Kirkby Church, Lincolnshire. This is fixed to and forms a portion of the structure called the Holy Sepulchre, placed on the north side of the chancel; and this basin, which as a fixture, is a singular, perhaps unique, appendage, was for the purpose of receiving offerings called the creeping silver, made there-at at Easter." (Matth. H. Bloxam, in the *Report for 1850-1 of the Northampton and Associated Architectural Societies*, p. 22.)

it on the south side of the altar. At Stone in Oxney there is, in the south wall of the south chancel a basin similarly shallow, which may likewise have been an offertory basin. In its centre, however, inquisitive observers have so urgently striven to find an orifice, that they have made a slight indentation which mars the surface of the bottom of the basin.

The roofs at Eastchurch are nearly flat, and are panelled with wood throughout. This panelled ceiling was painted in 1730; when the two chandeliers of brass were made, each of them with twelve branches. The tiebeams (chamfered slightly on the under side, and more acutely above) are continued down the side walls with curved brackets, which rest on angel corbels in the nave and chancel, but stop square in the aisles. There are also central bosses with angels having outspread wings. On the exterior the leadwork of the roof was laid in 1693.

The Tower is not groined, but it was prepared for groining. In each angle of the interior there is the springing of vaulting arches. Perhaps the treacherous nature of the soil induced the architect to avoid the additional weight which groining would have entailed. There are in the tower five bells; all cast in Kent. Number 4, the oldest, was made by Joseph Hatch of Ulcombe and Broomfield in 1605; Nos. 2, 3, and 5, by John Wilner of Borden in 1623; and No. 1 by the same John Wilner in 1634. These bells have been several times taken down and re-hung; in 1665 at a cost of £5 : 2 : 0; in 1696 at a cost of £6; and again in 1724.

Near the south door of the church stands an almsbox, on a tall stem, all carved out of solid oak. It has three locks, the keys of which are held, one by the rector, and one by each of the churchwardens.

The pulpit is a handsome example of those which were inserted during the last years of Queen Elizabeth, or in the reign of James I.

The church plate is two centuries old. On the larger Paten, are the words "Eastchurch in Shepey 1675"; on the back of the smaller Paten is the date 1675, within a wreath of foliage. Undated, but bearing the same silversmith's marks, the cup is inscribed "Sacris Fidelium usibus In Ecclesia Orientali Ovinia D.D. Indignus Christi Minister Thomas White." This and the two Patens were probably all given by the Rev. Thomas White, who was vicar of Eastchurch from 1667 to 1682. The flagon is thus inscribed: "This Flagon was given to y^e Parish Church of East Church in y^e Isle of Shepey in y^e county of Kent by William Barrow of Borden in y^e said County, Gent. For the vse of the Holy Sacrament Anno

Dom. 1707." Mr. Barrow owned land in Eastchurch, which is now the property of the Trustees of Barrow's Borden Charities.

In the chancel, on the south side, blocking up the lower part of a window, there is a handsome monument, bearing the recumbent effigies of Gabriel Livesey* (who died in 1622) and his second wife Ann, daughter of Sir Michael Sondes. He resided in the Parsonage or Rectory, which had been purchased in 1571 by his father from Henry Lord Cheney the lay impropiator.

This old Parsonage farm-house, which still stands about one-eighth of a mile south of the church, bears traces of Gabriel Livesey's hand. He probably rebuilt it. Upon one of the mantelpieces are carved the arms of Gabriel Livesey (*argent*, a lion rampant *gules*, between three trefoils *vert*) impaling those of his wife Ann Sondes (*argent* between two chevrons, three Moors' heads *sable*). Gabriel Livesey was the third son of Robert Livesey of Streatham (who was Sheriff for Sussex and Surrey in the years 1592 and 1602) by his second wife, Elizabeth, sister and heir of Thomas Berkeley.

* *Inscription.*

D. O. M.

Here sleeps in y^e hope of Resurrection y^e Body of Gabriel Livesey of Hollingborne in y^e County of Kent Esq. He first tooke to wife Anne daughter of S^r Thomas Crumpton K^t who dying wthout issue he married Anne daughter to S^r Michael Sondes K^t By whom he had 2 sonnes Michael now living and Robert deceased. He lived honoured wth y^e vertues and qualities becoming His degree and died both beloved and lamented of friends and neighbours. Anno 1622. March 18. Ætat. 55.

On a corresponding panel.

We thinke not that true fame doth rest upon
Each costly monument of carved stone
Or that well polishd *ranoe* or marble can
Add honor to the name of any man
And though y^e fashion of y^e world we borrow
To build y^e dead these complements of sorrow
We raise them not because it is conceaved
Death had y^e fame of Livesey els bereaved
But rather we this monument provide
To shoue our love is living though he hide.

On the front of the tomb.

Stay passenger & marke before thou passe
Thine owne condition in death's looking glass.
Thou y^t dost read these lines shalt lye among
Worms bones & roten carckesses er long
Tenn thousands y^t are full of life today
Shall by tomorrow y^s tyme sleep in clay
And freind for ought y^t any mortall knowes
Thou maist be marked out for one of those
Let therefor these dead lynes remember thee
How well preparèd thou hast need to be.
So thou shalt gaine by looking on y^s tombe
A better life than from thy mother's womb.

Gabriel's elder brother Edward had a son Robert; his next brother William died without issue, and his half-sister, Martha Livesey, married Sir Edward Peyton. He had a third cousin, named John Livesey, whose son Ralph married a Minster heiress, Parnel, daughter of John Allen, and settled there, near Eastchurch. Originally Gabriel Livesey resided at Hollingbourne Hill, where he kept his shrievalty in the year 1618. When he died, on the 18th of March 1622, he left an only son, Michael, then aged eight years. This son was created a baronet when 16 years old, and eventually, at the age of 34, sat upon the commission which condemned to death King Charles I. Yet he was not the youngest member of that sad commission; for Robert Tichborne, who also sat thereon, then numbered only 30 years. Sir Michael Livesey was a very active magistrate, by whom many couples were married during the Commonwealth, and he served as a Colonel in the Parliamentary army for Kent. He represented Queenborough in the House of Commons under the Commonwealth, and served the office of Sheriff.

The rectorial rights and advowson have been subjected to many vicissitudes. At the beginning of the sixteenth century so slender was the income of Boxley Abbey that Archbishop Warham permitted the Abbot to take this benefice into his own hands, and to send a secular chaplain to serve the cure instead of a vicar, Pope Sixtus IV having permitted this appropriation of the Vicarage in 1472. Accordingly on the 30th of January 1511-12 the Abbot, John Crambroke, received the necessary license.* The consequence of this was that the cure was henceforth served not by a vicar but by a curate. After the Abbey was dissolved the rectorial rights were held by the Cheney family, and it is evident that frequently there was no curate at all. In the Visitations of 1551-3 Robert Browne was cited as curate; in 1554 there was none; in 1555 the curate is called Ds. Hugo; perhaps he may have been an old monk of Boxley Abbey. The records of the curates here are very scanty and obscure throughout the reign of Elizabeth, but we learn that, in 1580, Thomas Webb was the curate here. This fact is recorded in the rolls of the Archdeacon's ecclesiastical court, wherein John Saunders of Eastchurch had been condemned to excommunication, in May 1579, for fornication. Saunders went away and lived at Sturrey. Thither the court's censures followed him, and he was compelled to return and do penance publicly in Eastchurch Church.

* Archbishop Warham's *Register*, fol. 356^b.

This he did upon Sunday the 31st of January 1579-80; and the curate Thomas Webb gave a certificate of the fact. It appears that during ten years from 1545 to 1555 the rectory of Warden was vacant; so in 1584, when R. Livesey held the rectorial rights, the benefices of Eastchurch and Warden were united. Their union, however, soon ceased.

At the Restoration, the estates of Sir Michael Livesey, forfeited by his attainder for high treason, were granted to James Duke of York, the King's brother; but it is said that Sir Michael died before this took place. The Rectory and advowson, after some years' delay, was granted by King Charles II, in the 13th year of his reign, to twelve gentlemen and to the survivor of them. The first named, of the twelve, was Sir Thomas Peyton, a cousin of Sir M. Livesey. Meanwhile the King had himself twice exercised the right of patronage. In March 1660-1 he presented Robert Wilkinson to the vicarage; and in February 1666-7 Thomas White was presented by him. Upon Mr. White's death, in 1682, the right of advowson seems to have belonged to the Rev. Robert Aucher of Queen's College, Oxford, who had recently died. Consequently the administrator of his goods, Mr. Hatton Aucher, presented the Rev. Anthony Woolrich to the vicarage. He died within two years, and then we find that the trustees exercised the right of patronage, in June 1684, presenting to this benefice Dr. James Jeffreys, a brother of the notorious Chief Justice Jeffreys. Death had removed Sir Thomas Peyton, Sir Edward Hales, Sir Richard Hardres, Sir William Mann, Mr. George Newman, and Mr. Thomas Peke.

The names of the trustees surviving, in 1684, were Sir Henry Palmer, Sir Anthony Aucher, Sir William Rooke, Sir John Tufton, Sir Francis Clerk, and John Boys, Esq. After an interval of five years, four of these gentlemen had ceased to live, or to act; and in January 1689-90 the Rev. Wm. Milles was presented by Sir Henry Palmer, Sir Anthony Aucher, and Sir William Rooke. Nine years later Sir Henry Palmer was the sole survivor, and on the death of Mr. Milles, in 1699, he presented the Rev. Richard Forster, who held the vicarage for 29 years, and was a benefactor to the parish. Sir Henry died in 1706, and was succeeded by his nephew Sir Thomas Palmer, M.P. for the county of Kent. Sir Thomas was the patron to whom the vicar, Dr. Forster, by deed of gift dated 1721, Nov. 8th, made over a house and orchard in Leysdown, to form a perpetual endowment for teaching poor children to read, write, and learn the

Church Catechism. Dr. Forster was also rector of Crundal, where he was buried in January 1728-9.*

Sir Thomas Palmer never exercised the right of patronage, and when he died, in 1723, he bequeathed that right to Herbert Palmer, his natural son by his second wife, born before their marriage. When Dr. Forster died, this young man was still a minor, and his guardian Elizabeth Hey, third wife, and widow, of Sir Thomas Palmer, presented the Rev. Alex. Young to the vicarage, in March 1728-9. The young patron Herbert Palmer died before another vacancy occurred; and his widow Mrs. Bethia Palmer having married Colonel Cosnan, the next vicar Dr. Thomas Hey (eldest son of Sir Thomas Palmer's widow, by her last husband, Thomas Hey) was presented by Colonel Cosnan in 1755. Dr. Hey was both rector and vicar, as Miss Frances Palmer bequeathed to him her reversionary right of advowson, which he sold to the Rev. Henry Barton, who succeeded to the benefice upon Dr. Hey's death in 1809.

Whether Dr. Hey was the first vicar who likewise held the Rectory, I am not certain. In the burial register, his predecessor, the Rev. Alex. Young, was styled "rector" when he died in March 1755.

The Rev. Henry Barton died in 1827, and was succeeded by the Rev. John Barton, who styles himself vicar before 1835, and rector after that date. From him the advowson was purchased by the Swainson family, who in 1858 presented the Rev. T. B. Dickson (formerly Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge), who married a sister of Professor Swainson, Canon of Chichester, now Master of Christ's College, Cambridge. When Mr. Dickson died, in 1870, the advowson descended to his second son, who presented to the benefice his elder brother, the present rector, the Rev. R. Henry Dickson; by whom the church and the churchyard have been very greatly improved.

The existing Rectory-house, beside the church, was built (on the site of a forge, and a cobbler's shop) in 1835. The old Vicarage-house, which stood in the south-west angle of the churchyard, was then pulled down, and its site now forms part of the Rectory garden.

* The inscription upon his monument there is:—*In spe Resurrectionis per Christum beatæ hoc corpori suo dormitorium, vivus præparabat, RICHARDUS FORSTER, A.M. Generosâ ortus ex familiâ apud Dumock in com. Glouc. olim sitâ. Ad rectorias de Beckley dioc. Cicest. et de Crundale, Cant. ac tandem ad vicariam de Eastchurch in Scapeiâ, favente Deo promotus Rectoriam Edificiis, gleba, libris, redituque adauxit. Pauperibus annum legavit stipendium. Trinuno Deo animam reddidit viij^o Die Januarii a^o Christi 1728, ætatis 79.*

The ancient Parsonage farm (once inhabited by the Liveseys) was alienated by the patrons of the benefice very many years ago.

The Rev. R. Henry Dickson has made copious extracts from his Parish Registers and Parish Accounts, and by his courtesy I am able to mention some of the facts therein conveyed.

Previous to the year 1771 it would seem that bodies washed up by the sea, were buried on the shore, probably without any religious service. Thus in 1698 four men were buried at the seaside, as an entry in the Account Book (not in the Register) records. The first record in the Register of the regular burial in the churchyard, of such bodies from the beach, is dated June 20th, 1771. In 1797, a man who had been buried on the beach, was afterwards re-interred in the churchyard. He was supposed to have been one of the victims killed during the mutiny at the Nore. Two men, supposed to be Russians, found on the shore, were buried in September 1798. The long buffetings endured by a body drowned on the coast are shewn by the fate of Lieutenant Thomas Parsons, R.N. He was drowned on the 9th of November 1803, off Whitstable Bay, in attempting to get on board the *Hecate* gun-brig; and his body was buried in the churchyard here on the 2nd of January 1804.

Among the burials we find that of "Captain John Ruffin of Newington," September 19th, 1678. His family sprung from Eastchurch.* In March 1683-4, Dr. John Dade, of St. Margaret's, Westminster, was buried here; and also in 1684 Mrs. Bridget Dade, of Bostal in Minster. The latter, by her will, left 20s. per annum, to be divided on Christmas-day between four poor widows of this parish. Vice-Admiral Sir Richard King (commanding at the Nore) died of cholera in August 1834, and was buried here as a tablet in the chancel states.

A curious entry respecting the burial of Thomas Stevenson, yeoman, in 1702, illustrates the size of farms at that time. It states that he "rented about £600 per annum;" and that he and his nephew, a youth aged 14 years, of the same name, died both within the space of three-quarters of an hour in the parsonage-farm on December 15th, and were interred in one grave on the 16th.

* Thomas Ruffin was, in the 37th year of Queen Elizabeth, one of the feoffees to whom John Boys, gentleman, conveyed ten acres of land in Eastchurch for the benefit of the poor of this parish and of Leysdown and Warden. This was done in fulfilment of the bequest of £53 by the will of Stephen Osborne, of Eastchurch, dated 29 September 1581, to be vested in land, from the rent of which 8s. per annum was reserved for the poor of Warden, and the residue to be divided equally between those of Leysdown and Eastchurch. In 1662 Nicholas Ruffin was one of the overseers or trustees of this charity.

Monumental stones of the Bargrave family are now hidden by the choir stalls on the north side of the chancel. Charles Bargrave was one of the churchwardens, in 1730, whose names are engraved upon the handsome chandeliers in the nave; and in 1753 he, or another of the same name, was appointed one of the trustees of Stephen Osborne's charity. There is a flat stone commemorating Edward Durrant: buried 25th March 1640-1.

The Register of Marriages shews that persons from a distance sometimes came hither for their weddings. A surgeon of Faversham, Edward Jacob, son of Alderman Edward J. Jacob, chamberlain of Canterbury, was married here by license, on September 4th, 1739, to Mrs. Margaret Rigden of St. Margaret's, Canterbury. He subsequently wrote a history of Faversham.

The Parish Accounts shew that the preacher used an hour-glass in the pulpit, up to the close of the seventeenth century. In 1667 a new hour-glass was bought, and in 1671 another was purchased; each of them costing 6d. Towards the Brief which was read throughout all the parishes of England in 1667, to raise funds for repairing the losses occasioned by the great fire of London, Eastchurch contributed 6s. 6d. At that period the parish officials attended Visitations of the Archdeacon at Faversham, as we find from an entry dated 1670. The Archdeacon came personally to Eastchurch in 1715, when £1 18s. 6d. was paid for a dinner given to him and his retinue.

The usual payments were made for killing vermin here as elsewhere. No less than 7s. 6d. went for hedgehogs and sparrows, in 1667; twenty-five dozen of vermin were paid for, in 1669, with 6s. 8d. An otter in 1676 was killed for 1s., but later in 1685 no less than 2s. 6d. was paid for the slaughter of another otter, in Eastchurch. The churchwardens waged war on rooks, in 1684, and paid 4s. for rooks' heads. Of hedgehogs, twenty-seven were killed in 1700, and forty-five in 1710. Two polecats are mentioned in 1701, when 10d. was paid for killing them.

The dog-whipper was maintained in office for a long period of years; but in 1672 "the clark" received 10s. as one half-year's wages for whipping the dogs; and in 1676 "the beadle" got 1s. for keeping dogs out of the church.