

NOTES ON EDENBRIDGE.*

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EDENBRIDGE is not mentioned in Domesday Survey; it is as its name implies the bridge of the Eden, a tributary of the Medway which runs into it between Penshurst and Tonbridge. It has been variously spelt "Edelmesbrigge," "Edulmesbrig," "Edelingbridge," "Eatonbridge," and in Latin "Pons Edelmi." The river is not fordable at this place, hence the necessity of a bridge. There is little question that the straight road which leads from Den Cross over Crockham Hill to Limpsfield is a Roman road, and as a means of access from the south and the Great Wealden district northwards to London it must always have been a passage of great importance.

Timber in abundance was ready to hand, as we see by the fine roof in the church, and the many timber houses in the district. (Hasted describes the farmhouses as "old-fashioned timber buildings.") The first bridge here, and certainly the Romans would have had one, was a timber structure probably in the same place as now, and so it continued to be until the reign of Henry VII., when, as I am informed, it is on record that the first stone bridge was built. How long this lasted I know not. The drawings of the bridge which preceded the present one do not give the impression of a bridge so old as that. It had a succession of arches on either side the actual bridge, and continued in use until 1813, the date on the present structure.

By the kindness of the Bridgewarden† I have had the opportunity of inspecting their account-book and some ancient deeds belonging to them. It appears that at some time there were much

* At the Evening Meeting at Edenbridge on July 25, 1893, I read a paper called "Jottings about Edenbridge," from which I have taken the following Notes.

† C. E. Gildersome Dickinson, Esq., of Crockham Hill, near Edenbridge, has carefully abstracted a great part of the accounts, and has kindly allowed me the use of his MS.

earlier deeds and accounts which have perished, and they would have been full of interest.

The present book of accounts, which is in excellent preservation and beautifully written, begins in 1595, and is carried down to 1742. The first year is headed: "The accompte of George Tichborne gentleman and Roberte Leighe th'elder gardeyns of the landes and stock of money belonging to the greete Stone Bridge in Eatonbridge made from the Twenty Two daye of September 1595 37 Eliz. unto Dec. 1602."

A few extracts from them may be of interest. The Bridge-wardens had lands in Edenbridge, Brasted, and Chipsted, the rents of which went to the repair of the bridge, but when they had money in hand they seem to have devoted it to parish purposes, *e.g.*, "Pd to Richard Lambe in Anno Dⁿi 1595 for a coate for Edward Plomley wth lyneing buttons and makeing ix^s vi^d" (allowing for the difference in value of money this was a very expensive coat). "To Dennys of Tunbridge for mending and keeping the clock for . . . yeares ended xxix Sep. 1599" (this was probably the church clock). In 1608, Ten Guineas to the Bells. 1611, 21 June, this entry: "New paveinge of the great stone bridge v^{cxxx} yardes at iii^d the yard—10 bushells of Lyme and Carriage of it v^s." "To Gyles Maunday in earnest for a dial to be sett upon the Bridge 11^s" in 1624. In 1642, to Rich^d Luxford for a dyall and other worke ix^s. In 1622 considerable repairs were done to the bridge; there is a "charge for making the baye crosse the river when the Bridge was mended iii^{li} xiii^s vii^d; mending the Bridge iii^{li} v^s viii^d."

There is a record of a lawsuit with Thomas Potter about some land called Purchas field and boddle meade, and, as usual, the lawyers ran up a good bill. The Wardens had to pay liiii^s and viii^d in 1599, and it did not end there though they won their suit, for the whole cost came to xxv^{li} vi^s ix^d.

In 1607 there is this entry: "Pd by John Stanford for 7 days work for new makeinge a chest for the keping of the evidences and wrightinges belonging to the greate stone bridge viii^s. Two lockes and other irone to the said chest xxiii^s ii^d," so that it was strongly bound. In 1616, "To John Stanford for mending the Chest in the Church belonging to y^e Bridge xviii^d; to John Taylor for iron work i^s x^d."

The following entries are curious, and shew that a tax was imposed on the bridge property for the expenses of the royal household: On 1st Feb. 1602, Paid by consent of the feoffees and parishioners to M^r Jeames, one of the receyvers appointed for the

receipt of moneys for the composition for the *Queen's Majesties housholde*, for such persons as have refused to paye according to an assessment made by the parishioners; and later on, about 1605, is, "Composition for King's housholde x^s;" and again xxxv^s.

It is interesting to get prices of labour and materials of former days; of these numerous examples might be quoted. In 1599, 4 cords of wood xiii^s; in 1603, 19 corde iii^{li} iii^s iii^d (*i.e.* about 3s. a cord); 1 corde v^s (which, allowing for difference in value of money, is about the same price as now*).

In 1622, Paid for ten loads of stone and diginge and carriage from Dormans iii^{li} x^s (*i.e.* from Dormans Land in Lingfield). In 1642, To Robert Waller for carrying of stone out of the Castle (*i.e.* Starborough in Lingfield) viii^s iii^d; and in 1684, To Mr. Streatfeild for 46 loads of stone out of Starborough Castle xi^{li} x^s.†

In 1673, To Mr Spencer for the purchase of a house and land in y^e town in y^e occupation of Andrew Furminger £347. In 1684, To Andrew Furminger for Trophy (?) money.

For an old Pollard growing in Bridgecrofte vi^s viii^d; for do. in Bridge Crofte next churchyard xii^d. 4 lodes of stone iii^s the lode. Wages about i^s a day. 1622, To Mr Tho^s Seyliard for 3400 of shingles to shingle the cross-howse iii^{li} viii^s vi^d. To John Brett for laying of the shingles xxiii^s. A labourer in 1630, 13 days' work 12^s.

There are a number of interesting signatures at the end of the accounts—Seyliards, Tichbornes, Holmdens, Stanfords, etc. Francis Tichborn seems to have been very undecided how to spell his name; he writes it Titchbourn—Titchbron--Titchbeorn.

The Manor, which is known as Stangrave *alias* Edenbridge, gave name to a family of De Stangrave, one of some note in the middle ages. John Dynley was owner in Edward III.'s reign, and from him it passed to the Audleys, Earls of Gloucester, and by their heiress to the Staffords, Dukes of Buckingham. Edward, Duke of Buckingham, was attainted and executed in 1521. In 1541, by letters patent dated 16th August, King Henry VIII. granted to Sir John Gresham, Knight, the manors of Westerham and Eatonbridge in consideration of his past services performed to the Crown and for the sum of £1441 19s. 7d. It continued in the

* In 1621, in Westerham Churchwardens' Accounts, half a corde 2s. 8d.

† These two entries are of interest as giving the dates of the destruction of the old castellated mansion of the Cobham family, Starborough Castle, in Lingfield.

Gresham family until about 1715, when it was sold by Sir Charles Gresham, Bart., to Mr. Still.

There are a number of wills of Edenbridge folk in the Consistory Court of Rochester, a few extracts from which will be of interest:—

MATTHEW MOVSHERST of Edynbrig.—“To be buried in the Churchyard of Edynbrig. To the highway between the bridge of Edynbrig and the tenement formerly Henry atte Hookes 6^s 8^d. To the repair of the bridge 6^s 8^d. I leave to the priest of the parish one penny yearly out of a part called ‘le Broke.’ Twenty masses yearly for 20 years in the house of the friars of Alysford.” Dated 12 Sep. 1447. [Cons. Rochester, i., xlii.]

MICHAELL COUPER.—“To be buried in the Churchyard of St Peter of Edynbregg. To the parish clerk and to the sacristan 4^s each. For a trental for my soul and for the souls of all faithful 2^s 6^d.” Dated 12 May 1449. [Cons. Roch., i., lxxv.]

WILLIAM BELE.—“Body to be buried in the Churchyard of the Apostles Peter and Paul of Ethonbrigge. For making the way between Ethonbrigge and Lyngfelde 5^s. To the bridge of Ethonbrigge 3^s 4^d. To John Bele my son all my hides and tools of my craft.”* Dated 1457. [Cons. Roch., i., l.]

WILLIAM MOYS of Edonbregge.—“To be buried in the parish Churchyard of SS. Peter and Paul. To the muddy and vile way leading from Hertefeld to Longebregge xx^d. To the vile way from Cowden to Pilegate iii^s iii^d. Joan my wife shall have my message called ‘le Cardinals hatte’ in Edonbrigg township.” Dated 15 Oct. 1473. [Cons. Roch., iv., cxv.]

BARNARD CREKE.—“To be buried in the Churchyard. To the reparac'on of the brigge of myn own coste 6^s 8^d. I will that Thomas Medehurst shall do for my soull and all Xpen soules yerly xii^d of the house of Lynhurst† in dirige masse and ryngeing and he shall find yearly a taper before the Sepulchre.” Dated 16 July 1513, proved 6 Feb. 1514. [Cons. Roch., vii., ii.]

JOHN STANDFORD.—“To be buried in the churchyard. William Standeford shall have my best jakett, John Standeford 2 cotes, Thomas Standeford his brother a doblett, a capp. To John Standeford and Thomasyn Bowier each 11 elles of creste cloth. To Christian Medehurst a cheste and 11 elles of creste clothe. The

* The tanyard is still a leading feature in the industries of Edenbridge, and it is interesting to note that the trade of a tanner here dates back to 1457.

† A farm north of the town on the road to Westerham.

residue of my pakks I will ye olde bowier's wif have it." Dated 2 Dec. 1518, proved 9 Feb. 1519. [Cons. Roch., vii., cix.]

JOHN SKELTON.—"To be buried in Churchyard. To a priest to celebrate 'apud Scala cæli* xx^d et apud Savoy.'" Dated 6, approved 16 May 1519. [Cons. Roch., vii., clxii.]

WILLIAM MEDEHURST.—"To be buried in Churchyard of Apostles Peter and Paul. To Margaret my daughter a cow called 'Olde neghtyngale.'" Dated and proved 19 March 1526. [Cons. Roch., viii., lxxviii.]

WILLIAM COMBE.—"To be buried in the Churchyard. To George my son my great maser. To sons John and Laurence the next best maser and the thyrd best maser. To son William the bonde of a maser. To daughter Margaret the best pair of bedis. To Johane my son John's wife my wyffes best gyrdyll." Proved 17 Nov. 1534. [Cons. Roch., ix., cxlix.]

CRISTOFER ALYNSON.—"To be buried in the Churchyard. To each of my sons James, William, and John every one of them 'a wevyng Lowme.'" Dated 13 Aug., proved 17 Sep. 1543. [Cons. Roch., x., xxix.]

JOHN MAYNARD, Yeoman.—"To be buried in the Church Porche of Eatonbridge. Witness, Robert Spratt, mynister of Eatonbridge." Dated 6 June, proved 28 Oct. 1586. [P.C.C., 52 Windsor.]

ALICE POTTER, widowe.—"To son-in-law Nicholas Seyliard, gent., my stone pott bound and covered with silver. To my daughter Jone Tycheborne my beste Frivadoe† gowne and my best stammell‡ petycoate. To my daughter Anne Heathe one stone pott bound aboute with silver and gilte, one maser bounde about with silver and gilte, six silver spones, my greatest chest of wainscott. To my grandchild Anne Heathe one silver salte gilte, one stone pott covered with silver gilte, and six silver spones. Daughter Sara Seyliard. Residue to son Nicholas Seyliard, gent., Ex^{or}. Witness, John Seylyard." Dated 19 July, proved 9 Aug. 1600. [P.C.C., 37 Wallop.]

Much of interest might be written about the place-names and field-names with which these old wills abound, and much about the Seyliards, Tichbornes, and other families of note in the parish whose names occur so frequently in the Registers. Their manor-houses are for the most part reduced and decayed, containing only traces

* The Chapel of Scala Cæli was removed from Windsor to Westminster in 1507 by an order of Pope Julius at the request of Henry VII.

† Frivadoe (F).

‡ Stammel, a kind of worsted.

of their former size, and are now occupied as farmhouses. On the north side of Church Lane, adjoining to the churchyard, is an old half-timbered house, partly covered with Horsham stone, which tradition says was the abode of the chantry-priest.* The "Crown Inn," which has doubtless been an hostelry for several centuries, contains some fine old timbers; a drawing of a bracket supporting an oak beam is given on Plate.

* "Cantaria Capellæ B. Mariæ de Ponte Edelmi infra manerium Roberti de Stangrave mil. situat. D^r Johes Glowere de Lesheworthe Presb. admis. Nov. 20, 1341. Patrono Rob. de Steyngrave mil." (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fo. 196^a).