

NOTES ON BETHERSDEN.

BY THE REV. A. J. PEARMAN, M.A.

THE sale to Mr. Greenwood of the estate lately known as Oakhurst, in Bethersden, suggests the propriety of putting on record some particulars of the descent of the property, which may be of interest in the future, and can be depended on as the result of an examination of the title-deeds I was allowed to make forty years ago.

In the notice of the sale which appeared in the *Kentish Express* of 11 June 1904, the property in question was described as "a residential and sporting estate of 443 acres, consisting of 256 pasture, 108 arable, and 79 woodland; together with the excellent country residence, having an abundant supply of water, and standing in well-kept grounds of over two acres, timbered with handsome oak and other trees, and commanding pleasant views of the surrounding country; also seven cottages, well-arranged buildings, and stabling for 11 horses."

The estate is made up of various small properties brought together at different times. The bulk of it was called Brissenden Farm, as the Green and Bridge close at hand are known as Brissenden Green and Brissenden Bridge. Whether it belonged at an early period to the Brissendens, whose name occurs in the Parochial Registers in 1556, and who were owners or occupiers of land in Bethersden, I cannot say, but they were certainly connected with it at the end of the next century, for in 1699 Elizabeth Reatt of Ashford carried it in marriage to Daniel Brissenden, the owner of Street End, Willesborough. She and her husband died without issue, having bequeathed this property to Daniel Brissenden's sister, Mrs. Adcock, whose daughter or granddaughter, Elizabeth Adcock, married the Rev. George Hearne of Canterbury. About 1770 Mr. and Mrs. Hearne conveyed this farm to Mr. Sharpe. Mr. William Sharpe by his will in 1804 left it, with considerable other property, to his nephews, the Messrs. Avery. Under a deed of partition executed between the brothers, Brissenden Farm fell to the share of Mr. Thomas Avery, on whose death in embarrassed circumstances about 1830 it was sold, subject to some heavy mort-

gages, to Nicolas Roundell Toke, Esq., of Godinton, from whom it came to his only child, Ellen Maria, wife of her cousin, the Rev. Henry Bouchier Wrey of Tawstock, Devon. Mr. and Mrs. Wrey in 1859 joined in a sale of this portion of their estates to Mr. W. H. Mold of Alderwasley in Derbyshire.

About 20 acres between the Ashford and Woodchurch Roads, known as "Maylam's Corner," were conveyed, together with "Hoad's," in 1691, to Maylam, in which family they remained for several generations till, descending in the female line to Rowley, they were sold in 1786 to Mr. Samuel Belcher of Frid in this parish, and, becoming the property of Mr. Sharpe, passed in the same manner as Brissenden Farm to Mr. Mold.

Gable, or Caple Hooke's as it is written in the older deeds, at the foot of the hill leading to Great Chart, was bequeathed by Thomas Usher, a substantial yeoman who lived at Vitter's Oak in this parish, to his son Jacob, who, dying in 1717, left it "share and share alike" between his daughters, Mrs. Back and Mrs. Turner. The whole descended to Mr. Usher Back of Westwell, by whose sons, early in the last century, it was sold to the Messrs. Avery, and so came eventually to Mr. Mold.

Idenden's, or Ickenden's, on the north side of the Ashford Road, originally formed part of the Old Surrenden Estate, but was sold off by Mr. Wood.

Mr. Mold enlarged the house on Brissenden Farm and greatly improved the property, to which he made some additions, and gave it the name of "Oakhurst." He died 28 February 1904.

Adjoining Oakhurst, at the extremity of the parish towards Woodchurch, is a small farm, now called "Vine Hall," probably the abode, certainly the property, of a family named Vinoll who lived in Bethersden in 1570. From Robert Vinoll it came by purchase to John Sharpe of New Inn, Middlesex, gent., a member of the family so long connected with this and the neighbouring parishes of Westwell and Great Chart. By will dated 12 November 1607, he left to his second son, William Sharpe, "the possession and reversion of his house and land purchased of Nicholas Stither in Bethersden; four pieces of land bought of William Hukin, house and land lately purchased of Robert Vinoll; and that called Stoggard's land, with land called Christenterne, containing by estimation fourteen acres, and one piece of land and woodland called Marthfield, the gift of his father John Sharpe; an annuity of 20s. issuing out of two parcels of land called Great Wadden and Little Wadden in Beth-

ersden," with the reversion of a house and land at Hinxhill bought of Robert Stede, after the death of his wife Johane, to whom he gave, *inter alia*, "all that his Bedstedle and Bedd and all furniture thereunto belonging, in the chamber where she lyeth, with three pair of Sheets and three pair of Blanketts."

In 1643 James Sharpe, gent., of Nash in Westwell, in view of a marriage between himself and Jane Randolph, daughter of William Randolph, gent., of Biddenden, deceased, covenanted to settle as a jointure "one messuage, one kitchen, one barn, two orchards, one close, and nine pieces of land, containing 33 acres in Bethersden, bounding N. to the King's Street and E. to the land of the heirs of Robert Piers. Also 8 pieces of pasture and wood, called Stalk's meadows and Gallants, containing 22 acres in Bethersden and Woodchurch, bounding W. to the lands of the said James Sharpe. Also 4 pieces containing 24 acres in Bethersden, bounding E. to lands now or late of Isaac Brissenden, S. Engham Farm, N. and W. the King's Street. Also 5 pieces pasture and wood containing 30 acres, called Stogate in Woodchurch, bounding S. King's high-way, E. land of David Dervit, N. and W. land of the said James Sharpe. Also 4 pieces of pasture and wood containing 17 acres, called Combarn Land and Combarns field in Bethersden, bounding E. and W. the lands of the said James Sharpe, N. lands of Laurence Brissenden. Also 6 pieces of land and 2 of wood called Christenterne, containing 14 acres in Woodchurch, bounding a lane called Elfess. Also 3 pieces of Marshland containing 16 acres, called Smitherland in Snave. Also 2 messuages, 1 barn, 1 close, 2 orchards, 2 gardens, and 4 pieces of land and meadow containing 7 acres in Bethersden, bounding E. N. S. King's Street, and W. and N. to the lands of the Rectory and Manor of Bethersden. Also 1 piece of land containing $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres in Bethersden, bounding S. N. E. land of heirs of Thomas Piers and the land of heirs of Sir William Lovelace, and W. to the common of pasture there called Lowood, late in tenure of Richard Bull and Miles Norrington."*

The same James Sharpe in 1680 devised to his son Stephen a house in Bethersden Street, with lands thereto belonging, and lands in Woodchurch. Stephen Sharpe, 23 April 1713, gave his moiety of Nash and other property in Westwell, Bethersden, Woodchurch, and elsewhere, not previously bestowed, to his brother William.

* Mr. R. Hovenden informs me he has seen another "settlement" of the same date, etc., containing the same names, but differing from this in the description of the lands.

Much of the Bethersden and Woodchurch property came eventually, as we have seen, to the brothers Avery, and at length by purchase to Mr. Mold, but Vinoll's passed by foreclosure of mortgage to the late Mr. Schreiber of Henhurst in Woodchurch, who, at his death 1 May 1863, left it to his widow for life, with remainder to his nephew.

The Sharpes were seated at Nin-house in Great Chart in the time of Henry VI. In Chart Church there was "in the middle aisle next the west end, a stone with the figures in brass of a man with his 5 wives, 3 on one side and 2 on the other, for William Sharpe and his 5 wives. He died 29 Sept. 1499. In the cross aisle on a white stone a memorial for William Sharpe the elder, who died 1583." John Sharpe was Churchwarden of Westwell 1556. His son John Sharpe "of Westwell" in 1588 gave £50 to the Kent Aid for repelling the Armada. There is an inscription in Westwell Church to his memory: "Hic jacet corpus Johis Sharpe de Nash gen. ætatis 60 añorū fil. Johis Sharpe de eadem defunct q obiit xii die Novembris anno Dñi 1607." Several members of the family are interred in the Church, but the vault, which is beneath a chantry on the north side, was closed after the burial of Mr. Barling Sharpe, whose only surviving brother, Mr. William Sharpe of Baker's Cross, sold his estate of Nash to Lord Hothfield and died, the last of his race, 23 June 1891, aged 82.

To these "Notes" I add a few particulars supplementary to the account in *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. XVI., of "Bethersden: its Church and Monumental Inscriptions":—

On the wall of the North, or Frid, Chapel of the Church, an ancient brass has been placed to the memory of "Lidia, wife of Edward Chut of Bethersden, esquire," who died in 1631. She was the daughter of Thomas Gibbon of Bethersden, a descendant of the Gibbons of Hole in Rolvenden, and was buried in the vault under the chapel, the brass being placed on the floor. Sometime before 1857 the brass was removed to Hole. It has now been restored to the church whence it came.

The wall between the churchyard and the high road was built in the incumbency of the Rev. A. F. Smith, and not in that of the Rev. W. Clementson, as I stated by mistake.

The whole Tower, from the belfry floor to the summit, having fallen into a dilapidated condition, was thoroughly repaired in 1896, when the third bell, which had been broken, was re-cast by Mears and Stainbank.

The fourth bell is one of the twenty-eight oldest bells in the Kingdom. It bears the inscription: "✠ In multis annis resonet Campana Johannis," and probably came from the London foundry of Peter de Weston, who carried on business from 1328 to 1348. Its size is $38\frac{1}{2}$ inches. In the time of Edward VI. there were five great bells in the steeple, and a Sanctus bell.

VICARS.

The name of William Clerke should be inserted in the list of Vicars between Thomas Leche 1433 and William Thomas 1446.

Of John Copley it may be added that he belonged to a Roman Catholic family, and was ordained a priest abroad, but joined the English Church in 1611, and published his reasons for so doing. His father was second-cousin once removed to Queen Elizabeth, through the marriage of Anne Copley with Sir Geoffrey Boleyn. The Vicar was married three times. The first wife Rebecca Moone was buried at Pluckley 10 March 1622, as was the second, Alyce, 31 August 1638. The third, Martha, lies with him at Ashford.

The following inscription was formerly in Pluckley Church: "In Obitum Religiossime Matrone Rebeccæ uxoris Johannis Copley Rectoris Hujus Ecclesiæ Pluckley Nobili Mahunorum, alias Moonorum in Pago Cornovallensi Familia Oriundæ, Corpus Huic Sepulchro, Animam Legavit Deo, Decima Die Mensis Martii Ann. Peractæ Salutis 1622.

Here lies embalmd with teares within this tombe
All that was sublunarie of the moone.

While this inferior orbe enioyd her shine,
No Cynthia shewed a radiance more divine.

Her change being come, heere her externe shell,
Her essence farr beyond the moone doth dwell.

Learne mortalls heavenly path with her to tread,
Yoo shall immortal shine with her being dead.

. levit nepos mcestissimus.

R. O. FFenn" [?].

Richard Rands is described as "a man of good parts and sound principles, but full of vaine, bragging discourse." He was Chaplain to Henry, 2nd Earl of Peterborough, and with him was joint author of "Halstead's Genealogies," a rare folio of family records, published in 1685, of which only some 24 copies were printed. He became Rector of Turvey, Beds, where, on a slab, is an inscription

to his memory : " Hic jacent reliquiæ Ricardi Rands, hujus Ecclesiæ Rectoris qui 8^{vo} Die Februarij e vitâ Discessit, Anno Domini 1699 ætatis suæ 63." He belonged to the family seated at Radwell, Beds.

Jonathan Whiston, " son of Mr. Jonathan Whiston, late of Northampton," graduated 1660. He left his wife, *inter alia*, " a piece of gold money as a curiosity, and all his plate, furniture, implements, etc., on condition that she pay £20 per ann. towards the maintenance of their 4 daughters," of whom Anne, the second, married Nathaniel Hulse of Canterbury, died 21 April 1749, and was buried at St. Andrew's in that city. Into the possession of her descendant, Mr. A. E. Roberts of West Norwood, passed from her (as he believes) the original of the beautiful pedigree of the Hulse Family, of which Hasted made the copy now in the British Museum. Licence was granted 2 May 1698 for the marriage at Hinxhill of Thomas Booth, widower, of Ashford, and Aphra Whistone, widow, of Bethersden.

Henry Hughes was a Minor Canon of Canterbury. His son and successor, Simon Hughes, was baptized in the Cathedral 23 January 1676.

Henry Kent, son of Henry Kent, gent., of Potterne, Wilts, matriculated 1737, aged 18.

William Clementson died at Tunbridge Wells, 1896, aged 75.

ENDOWMENT OF THE LOVELACE CHANTRY. [Liber Eccles. 1535.]

"The certificat of S^r Morys Griffith chauntre prest there.

First a mansion house worthe yerly	vj	viiij
It ^m xl acres of land called Marle, worthe yerly	xxxviiij	iiij
It ^m xxij acres of land worthe yerly	xxv	
It ^m xx acres of land worthe yerly	xxx	
It ^m vj acres of land called Burghefeld, worthe yerly	vj	viiij
It ^m vj acres of land called Oldland, worthe yerly	xiiij	
It ^m xvj acres of land called Boreherst, worthe yerly	xiiij	
It ^m viij acres of land called Welynden, worthe yerly	viij	
It ^m certen lauds lying at Romney in the marshe called Brokeland, worthe yerly	vj	
S ^m a vij vij viij		

Whereof deduct for rents resolute yerly

So resteth de claro vj x viij

X^{ma} inde xiiij-ob' q^l."

"In the Parochial Accounts the following very unusual entry appears:—

1552. Item a *base* peare of organes.

"The use of the word 'base' is unique, and it is not clear to what peculiarity it might have referred, if indeed to any at all."—*Archæological Journal*, 1888, p. 156.

9 May 1658, there was collected in Bethersden Church, "for the reliefe of the distressed Protestants, the sum of twenty-eight shillings and three pence," as was testified by Andrew Symson, Minister, and John Dyne and John Waterman, Churchwardens.

The "Protestants" in question were "churches driven out of Poland, and 20 families driven out of the confines of Bohemia."

Among the Dering MSS. were the following documents:—

1357. Jo de Malemayes confirms land in Bethersden to Roger de Haulo and Joan his wife.

1361. John de Surrynden of Pluckley confirms land in Bethersden to Sir Wm. de Redlyngg, Rector of Pluckley, and others.

1391. John Surrynden of Pluckley confirms lands and tenements to Bocherfuller and others.

1391. John Surrynden, John Haute, and Christina de Haute, conditions of feoffments of lands to John Bocherfuller and others.

1397. John Bocherfuller and others of Pluckley to John Surrynden of Pluckley, lease for life of lands in Bethersden.

1595. Accounts of the "Administrators" of Laurence Crouchman.

13 Richard 2, 1389. The King granted to William Elys of Canterbury, among other property lately belonging to the attainted Robert Belknap, "un. pastur. vocat. Berbobyndenne in Beatrichsdenne et Woodchurch."

2 Henry 5, 1414. Bertram de Wylmyngton had in "Beteresden lxxx acr' pastur' et c acr' bosc' vocat' Grete Lamberden, unum mes' vocat' Inner Court, unum mes' vocat' Outer Court, clxxvj acr' pastur' et xxiiij acr' bosci."

Lamberden Wood is still called by the name it bore 500 years ago.

I end my "Notes" with two extracts, one from an old poster in which the last "Squire Witherden" figures:—

"CRICKET EXTRAORDINARY.

On Friday, 13 August 1813, a Single Match of Cricket was played upon the Goodwin Sands, between Mr. Thomas Elgar of Ramsgate and four gentlemen of that town, and Mr. George Witherden of Bethersden and four gentlemen of the Isle of Thanet, after which the health of His Majesty King George the Third was drank with three times three."

The Witherden party scored 22, their opponents 21.

The other from a letter, dated 15 July 1858, addressed to me by the late W. W. T. Baldwin, Esq., of Stede Hill, Harrietsham, owner of Lovelace and Frid Farms:—

"I remember when there was no hard road to approach the Village, and I accompanied my good Father in his Carriage as far as the bottom of Sir Edward Dering's park at Ford Mill, where we were met by the Tenant of Frid Farm in his dung cart, with a board nailed across as a temporary seat for the Squire and his son. We arrived in due course, and in summer, when days were long, found time to return without disaster, but it was a long day's operation."