

## SEVENOAKS: THE MANOR, CHURCH, AND MARKET.

BY HERBERT W. KNOCKER.

It is not without interest when considering any given area to trace the probable reasons why the towns and villages in that area occupy the positions in which we find them. It may be of equal interest to endeavour to arrange the order in which the institutions common to most ancient villages and towns first came into existence.

The subject of this paper is the town of Sevenoaks and its origin, coupled with the local institutions of Manor, Church and Market, and the order of their inception.

Much of the material is drawn from records in the writer's hands as High Steward of the Honor of Otford and Chief or Deputy Steward of hundreds and manors there.

Students of topographical history are agreed that in the majority of cases our heathen Saxon forebears abandoned the homesteads of village communities, which had been occupied during the pre-Saxon period, and preferred new ground of their own choosing, the general tendency being to select the fresh site in the lower and more fertile valley rather than on the higher and probably drier spot previously occupied. An advanced system of domestic architecture may have been the primary justification.

The growth of population naturally led to a multiplication of sites, and, apart from special reasons such as strategy, selections thus made fall roughly into three groups or classes:—

(a) A site developed because of its agricultural advantages.

(b) A site selected because of its extreme unfertility, whereon the casual squatter could establish himself without

leaving his manor, and with the less objection from the owners of the soil, and

(c) A site developed by the needs of the through traffic.

It is submitted that Sevenoaks town grew up where it is for reasons arising under heads (b) and (c) rather than for any others.

As regards the three local institutions to which reference has been made, the normal sequence was—

(1) The manor or its Saxon prototype.

(2) The arrival of the Christian missionary priest or parson in or after 597, followed at intervals by the erection of church or chapel for his use, and the delimitation of the parish defining his cure of souls and the area from which his own tithes were due. The intervals may have been considerable.

(3) The market. This, with power to levy tolls, was a royal prerogative.

It is submitted that as regards Sevenoaks the order is :

(1) The Market, (2) The Church, and (3) The Manor.

Considerable doubt exists as to the precise stage of land tenure which had evolved by 597. Whether the Saxon Thane was already the lord of the land occupied by his people, or only the lord of the people themselves, may be a difficult point. Maine, Seebohm, Maitland, Vinogradoff, Jenks, and a host of others hardly agree.

But we know that Christianity began in the upper circles of Saxon society rather than the lower. It was normally the lord rather than the people who built the parish "church," which often enough adjoined the manor house.

It was the new parish which was normally constituted out of the existing manor or its prototype, rather than the manor which was created out of any existing parish.

The market usually came later, and came by express Crown grant, still on record. No such record has been found for Sevenoaks.

Before proceeding further with the special characteristics of Sevenoaks, the three general suggestions as to village

origin shall be further considered. These three groups or classes naturally suggest an origin evolved by the wealthy landowner, the indigent cottager, and the industrious trader—and this is a sharp but ancient grouping of the members of most communities. All three factors may contribute in many instances, but one may predominate.

As to the two former—fertility of soil, or otherwise.

Here the first aid is geology. The question of soil and water supply may be conclusive. The best land would naturally be occupied first. For many centuries after 597 the supply of land far exceeded the demands of all available cultivators. A careful choice could be made. The very early settlement of a fertile area may be corroborated by (i) Saxon charters covering the estate in question; (ii) Specific mention in Domesday Book or other early record, coupled with a high yearly value; and (iii) Any unusual elaboration of manorial administration or extension of powers and privileges of its manorial courts as disclosed by early Court Rolls. Any one of these three may indicate a settled community of long standing.

Sevenoaks answers to none of these tests. The proper study of each of the matters in question is beyond the scope of this article. A short local review must suffice.

Examined geologically, Sevenoaks town presents a very definite if depressing picture. We find a great sandy ridge, which runs northward from the sandstone heights of Riverhill, spreading out as it proceeds into a fan-shaped plateau of bright yellow sand, until it meets the Otford gault in the Holmesdale Bottom, a couple of miles distant from Riverhill. On either hand lie crescent-shaped outcrops of Kent ragstone. That on the west extends from Solefields northwards nearly to Botany Bay. That on the east runs from Willinghurst Bottom northwards, *via* Knole Park, to Quaker's Hall and Stiddolphs. There is no great attraction for the agriculturist here. The southern portion of the parish is wealden clay, primæval forest land of slow development, with outlying woodlands extending northwards across patches of chert

and sand through Kippington and Knole almost to the northern limits of the parish.

It is true that there are some dozen estates wholly or partly in Sevenoaks, most of which became sub-manors, such as Bradbourne Hall, Brook Place, Brittain's, Kippington, Wickhurst and Bowzells, all lying along the western boundary, with Stiddolphi, Blackhall, Knole and Rumpsted along the eastern boundary. As such the sub-manors indicate early agricultural centres of self-governing communities. But neither was their arable area nor their annual value at any time considerable before the fifteenth century. All were alike held of Otford Manor. Some, possibly all, of these sub-manors had actual permanent footholds in or close to Sevenoaks market-place. Blackhall, Knole and Bowzells are proved instances. The sub-manors in Croydon show the same special features.

There is not now, nor was there ever, in Sevenoaks parish any large area of demesne land of the superior lord under the plough, nor even much enclosed meadow land, and the superior lord was the lord of Otford, not of Sevenoaks.

Possibly the residence now known as Park Grange, and a few acres of modus land in Solefields (as to which see the parish tithe map), have the best claim to be called the manor house and land of Sevenoaks manor.

True it is that Whitley Forest was lord's demesne, but great woods hardly pre-suppose adjacent populous areas.

Extensive land purchases in and after 1455 by Archbishop Bourghier, the lord of Otford, in Sevenoaks parish, such as Knole and Panthurst Parks, do little more than point to outlying enclosed areas of some value.

As regards Saxon documents—there are charters, etc., genuine or otherwise, for Westerham, Otford, Kemsing and Wrotham, but with the exception of Greatness the writer knows of nothing relevant to Sevenoaks.

Dugdale quotes a record by Gervase of Canterbury, writing about 1169, that in 791 Offa, King of Mercia, gave "Otford" to Christ's Church in Canterbury.

In the light of the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the

earliest Court Rolls it appears that "Otford" extended from Knockholt Beeches to the Kent Water on the Sussex county boundary and embraced the parishes of Shoreham, Chevening, Otford, Dunton Green, Riverhead, Sevenoaks, Sevenoaks Weald and Penshurst and parts of other parishes, while the manors of Sundridge (which included much of Chiddingstone) and Brasted appear as subordinate manors held of Otford. Until after Cranmer's surrender in 1537 there was no manor of Sevenoaks nor any manor house. Unclosed lands in Sevenoaks were wastes of Otford manor.

Otford village, with its main street built on a causeway across the marsh, may represent an inhabited centre of the greatest antiquity and have been populous when Sevenoaks was a gorse-grown waste.

By the custom of the manor of Otford live heriots are payable on ancient arable or "Yoke" land, but not on "Inland" or on recent grants from the waste. If this test is applied to the four Reeveships or Prepositures of Shoreham, Otford, Chevening and Sevenoaks, the result shows that Sevenoaks was later in general development than the three other areas.

As regards the Domesday Survey of 1086, Sevenoaks as such escapes mention. "Otford" included Sevenoaks, and is recorded, as are Westerham, Brasted, Sundridge, Seal and Wrotham.

Most of the villages and parishes previously mentioned as constituting the manor of Otford approximately represent another area particularly associated with Saxon jurisprudence. Its nature is indicated by its name, the Hundred of Codsheath. Both manor and hundred may have belonged to the Archbishop from 791.

The Hundred Rolls of Edw. I. (c. 1275) recite (on p. 234 of the official print of 1812) thus: Kanc' . . . Hundred of Godeshethe . . . The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury holds the hundred of Godeshuth and half the hundred of Sumerdenn . . . and the Archbishop of Canterbury has the return of writs, a gallows, the assize of bread and ale, and pleas "de namio vetito" (forbidden distress).

There is no mention of any market. The inference to be drawn is not that there was no market, but that it was of no value to the lord.

Unfortunately the corresponding Rolls of Quo Warranto of 1278 (on p. 323 of the official print of 1818) under the hundred of Codesheth omit all mention of the Archbishop's claims being brought to trial.

Search in the printed indexes of Charter Rolls 1199 to 1417 discloses no reference to any market franchise for Otford or Codsheath or Sevenoaks.

The Calendar of Grants of Markets and Fairs published in 1889 and covering the period 1199 to 1482 is no more helpful.

Grants of market franchises in many West Kent manors occur: Orpington in 1205, Kemsing in 1218, Westerham in 1226 and 1351, Seal in 1232 and 1284, Shipborne in 1294, Wrotham in 1314, Ightham in 1315, West Wickham in 1317, Tonbridge in 1318, Farnborough in 1344, etc. But there is no mention of Otford, Codsheath or Sevenoaks by any variant in spelling.

The inference to be drawn from all these grants is that the lords applied for and obtained these markets because the tolls would be a source of profit to themselves.

But it is by no means so clear that Sevenoaks market was ever of any value to the lord.

In 21 Rich. II., 1398, an Inquisition was held at Otford following the attainder of Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury. Details are given of Otford manor with its parks and woods and rent services, also of its "Perquisites of Courts with View of Frankpledge and issues and profits of the fairs at Otford, Woodland, and Cendon, worth by the year £13 . 6 . 8."

Unless "fairs" include markets, and "Cendon" means Sevenoke, there is no mention of Sevenoaks or any other market in Otford manor. But the inference is again only that there was no market of any value to the lord. If valueless, the market was properly omitted.

The Ministers' account for the Bailiwick of Otford for

the year ending 13 Hen. VI., 1492, in the writer's hands, gives the following:—

“Sevenok' New Rent.” John Carpent pays two pence “for a certain parcel of land lying in the Market there,” formerly John Pollesholt's, Poulterer, as described in the Court Roll of 16 Hen. VI., 1437. This plot measures 6 feet only on its north boundary.

William Fraunces pays two pence “for one parcel of land lying in the Market of Sevenok', late Richard Lucas',” as described in the Court Roll of 24 Hen. VI., 1445.

John Wybourne pays one halfpenny for “a parcel of land containing in length seven feet and in breadth two feet, lying in the Market of Sevenok next the Shop of John Barnard.”

The plots of land probably all became standings or stalls, and were afterwards built over. The earlier dates quoted will be when these standings were first granted.

“Sevenok'—Farms.” Six shillings and eightpence is due “for shops and shambles in the Market of Sevenok'.” A later account of 1492 adds that these “used to be farmed for twenty shillings yearly.”

“Sevenok'—Issues of the Fair.” Seven shillings is received for “the issues of the Fair held there on the Feast of St. Nicholas the Bishop.”

“Knoll Bailiwick—Farm of the Shops.” Thirteen shillings is received “for the farm of thirteen shops in the Market of Sevenok so demised to divers persons.”

This account is in Latin, and inscribed on sixteen full-length skins with very fine scroll work.

A later account of 1532 (of which a copy in Latin, certified in 1826, is in the writer's hands) repeats the above items, and includes a reference to a rent of 5*3s.* 4*d.* for “the farm of a certain Inn or tenement called the Newyn, situate at the East End of the Church of St. Michael [<sup>?</sup>Nicholas] of Sevenoaks.” This new inn was pulled down. The house now standing there is called “The Manor House.”

Markets and fairs were not unknown in Saxon times, and it has been suggested, though instances are not quoted,

that the point of intersection of through routes, or the central point, possibly a bare heath, in an area of scattered villages became, at an early date, a natural and actual rendezvous for the disposal or exchange of the surplus products of the surrounding countryside.

The suggestion is obvious, and almost certainly true.

Furley, in his *Weald of Kent*, quotes (in 1871) Faversham and Newenden as having possessed markets as early as 812. No authority is mentioned. Hasted (in 1790, vol. iii., p. 77) says that Newenden (equally with Otford) was given by Offa to Christ's Church in Canterbury, and Newenden is on the road to Rye, of which more hereafter.

The earliest mention of Sevenoaks market known to the writer occurs in the Pleas of the Crown for the Eyre of Kent, 6 Edw. II., 1313, as translated by Frampton in 1881.

The jurors of the hundred of Wrotham present the theft of a heifer at Ightham, which was driven "to the Town of Sevenoaks," where the two accused "sold it in the market there to a certain stranger for seven shillings, and immediately took to flight. The Jurors suspect them . . . ."

It was the practice apparently of the archbishops, as well as other magnates holding vast estates by barony of the Crown, to seek from successive sovereigns confirmation of their titles. The confirmation obtained by Archbishop Bourghier, dated 15 April 3 Edw. IV., 1463, is an example, and this grant recites earlier confirmations as follows:—

A confirmatory grant by Henry I. to the Archbishop and his monks of Christ's Church in Canterbury of "all the lands which they had in the time of King Edward my kinsman, and in the time of King William my father, and all franchises . . . ." The usual Saxon terms are given.

A similar grant by Stephen of "all the lands which they had in the time of King Edward my kinsman, and in the time of King William my ancestor, and in the time of King Henry my uncle, and all franchises," as before.

The like by Henry II., Henry III., and Edward III.

A charter by Richard II., confirming "that no Tenant of

the Archbishop of Canterbury for the time being resident within the Liberty of the Metropolitan Church of Canterbury . . . . should hold lands outside the same liberty of our Sheriff or our Minister."

The grant of 1463 then confirms all as before.

This note is taken from a Latin transcript inspected by the writer in the Stanhope Muniment Room in 1909.

The grants are all in general terms. There are no place names.

As stated above, the archbishops never claimed a "Manor of Sevenoaks."

Cranmer's surrender to the Crown of 30 November 29 Hen. VIII., 1537, covers "the Manors or Lordships of Otford . . . and Knole, and all the Manors, Lands and Rents of Sergeants Otford, Sevenoaks. . . ."

In 1550 Edward VI. granted the manors of Knole and Sevenoaks to the Earl of Warwick, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, after whose attainder Elizabeth granted in 1558, *inter alia*, the manor of Sevenoaks to Henry Carey Baron Hunsdon. The market is not expressly mentioned. The usual general words include "all fairs, markets, tolls, customs, Courts Leet . . ." The grant of 1550 created the manor of Sevenoaks.

A later Baron Hunsdon in 1618 sold the whole to Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset, and the present Lord Sackville is now lord of the manors of Sevenoaks and Knole and the hundred of Codsheath.

But prior to this sale Lord Hunsdon, in 13 Eliz., 1570, established a claim against the Crown to the market of Sevenoaks as being a franchise included in Cranmer's surrender of 1537, and in the Crown grant of 1558. The record is printed in full in Coke's *Book of Entries*, published in 1614, fos. 93—97.

Lord Hunsdon claimed "the Manor of Sevenoaks and the Hundred of Codsheath, with the Court Leet and View of Frankpledge and the fairs, market days, and Market Place in Sevenoaks." Probably both hundred and market were pleaded as franchises belonging to the manor of Sevenoaks.

But offences in the market place were dealt with at the Codsheath Hundred Court, as appears by the Rolls in the writer's hands.

The fact remains that prior to 1550 the manor was Otford, not Sevenoaks. The market is expressly claimed in 1570 as a weekly Saturday market. But the main point of this record for us is that no actual grant by the Crown to any archbishop of the market was quoted by Lord Hunsdon.

Had Lord Hunsdon's advisers been able to trace any such Crown grant he would surely have pleaded it, as he would had there been any confirmation in the Quo Warranto Rolls of 1278.

The best grant which Lord Hunsdon could quote was apparently in the Confirmation of 1463, made by Edw. IV. to the archbishop, "that he and all his men and tenants, as well resident as non-resident, should be quit through the whole realm of England of all toll in every market and in every fair, and at every ford and bridge, and that all goods of the Archbishop should be quit of pannage, passage . . . ." If this was observed, the 6s. 8d. received for issues of the Sevenoaks Fair in 1532 must have been collected for pickage or stallage rents, or for fines at the Piepowder Court, for all of which the archbishop, merely as owner of the soil, could doubtless charge his own men, or for these and tolls paid by strangers. But if the exemption from tolls extended also to the archbishop's own markets, much is explained.

Newenden, mentioned above, had other points of agreement with Otford. Traces of Roman occupation have been found in both. Each place was once of much greater relative importance in its own neighbourhood. Both are alleged to have been given to Christ's Church in Canterbury by Offa, King of Mercia.

The Domesday Survey records the Archbishop of Canterbury as holding both in 1086, and the archbishop still holds both advowsons. Both were surrendered by Cranmer in 1537. But in 1275 one de Walys, and not the archbishop, held the town of Newenden, and the trial as to his claims appears in the Quo Warranto Rolls of 1278.

In both cases Views of Frankpledge, Gallows, and other franchises were claimed. But for Newenden town the market claimed was a weekly market, "with Toll and all things that belong to a market." Here, then, is value to the lord, and an express plea as to this market is therefore raised.

This claim was for the town only, a small populous area having special privileges outside the hundred, just as Brasted had.

For the rest of the manor of Newenden a separate market was claimed by another claimant, who relied on and produced an actual charter of 20 October 31 Edw. I. His claim was allowed. But for Newenden town market, just as in Sevenoaks, no charter could be traced. The plea, supported by the oaths of the men of the two adjacent hundreds, was that Newenden town market had been enjoyed *a tempore quo non exstat memoria*. Lord Hunsdon in 1570 could plead nothing more for Sevenoaks. Both pleas were allowed.

From the above the following may be postulated:—

(i) That the origin of Sevenoaks market was of such unquestioned antiquity, even in 1570, that it could not be traced.

(ii) That there had been no confirmatory grant of the archbishops' privileges between 1463 and 1537.

(iii) That Sevenoaks market had been up to 1570, and still is, toll free, and therefore was and is of value to the men of the manor, but possibly of little value to the lord, apart from rents of plots in the market-place, which the lord of the manor could impose in his capacity of owner of the soil.

It may be mentioned that the word "tolls" occurs in leases of the market made in the seventeenth century, and in the Sackville Estates Act of 1791. The writer has seen no evidence that any tolls were ever actually paid in Sevenoaks market. But tolls must not be confounded with the stallage rents now being paid, and still less with auctioneers' commission.

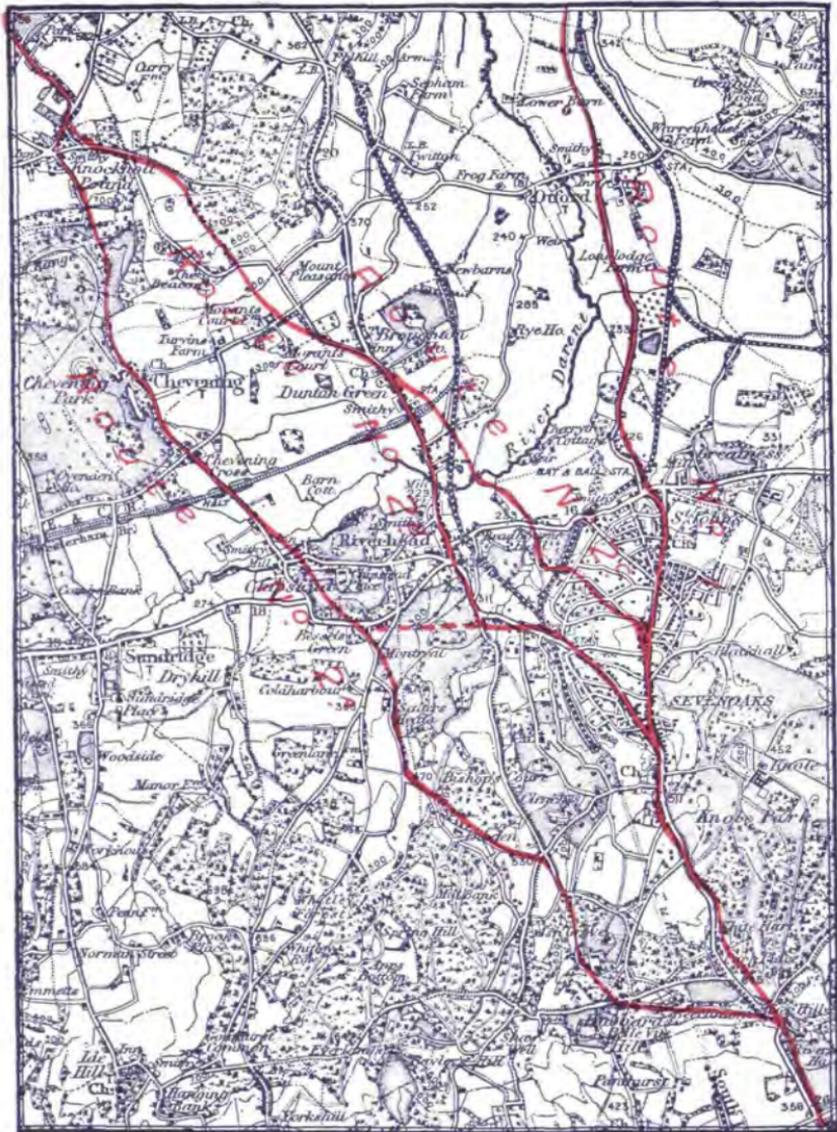
As regards manorial courts and their powers, the lords of Westerham and Wrotham held, and hold, both manor courts and hundred courts with jurisdiction extending

over more than one parish. Brasted village had peculiar privileges of self-government. Otford, with the Hundred court of Codsheath, is dealt with elsewhere. Kemsing's lord had court leet jurisdiction far beyond the limits of Kemsing parish. Sevenoaks had none of these things. There was neither court baron nor court leet. As comprehended in Otford manor, and specifically in Sevenoaks reeveship, Sevenoaks men may have, from an early date, elected their own officer to enforce the rights of the lord of the manor of Otford in their own area. Similarly the three tythings or boroughs of Riverhead, Sevenoaks town, and Sevenoaks weald, all lying within the reeveship of Sevenoaks, each sent their tything man to attend the Codsheath Hundred court.

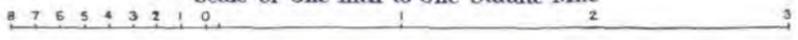
Certainly as early as the fourteenth century a separate homage jury were sworn at the Otford manor court to make presentment as to affairs in Sevenoaks reeveship. But they sat at Otford, and it was at that village that the men of Sevenoaks foregathered to render their manorial dues and get their grievances, as barons of the archbishop, redressed. This is proved by the rolls, including those in the writer's hands, which commence in 1460.

There remains the third group or class of villages, whose origin is mainly connected with through traffic. The village, built on the enclosed green of the borough of Wrotham in Wrotham Hundred, is perhaps the best modern instance in West Kent. The point involves a full study of the old roads in West Kent, a question quite beyond the scope of this article. As before, a short local review must suffice. The writer has mentioned the matter in a paper in Vol. XXXI. of *Arch. Cant.* Speaking generally, the old roads in West Kent ran either east and west or north and south. Some reasons are given in the paper referred to. The principal exception, the road to Rye, is also mentioned.

The difficulties of the channel passage and the uncertainty of arrival at any particular English port, and the resulting growth of Canterbury on the worst site in Kent, all these things have been explained by Belloc in *The Old*



Scale of One Inch to One Statute Mile



*Road.* Furley, writing in 1871, Roach Smith, and others have dealt with Romney Marsh, the British town of Anderida, and the succeeding Roman station at Pevensey or elsewhere. Details are beyond the scope of this article. But all three may have been served by the road to Rye.

The fact remains that the Romneys, the Winchelseas, and Rye for many centuries, possibly for over 2000 years, have needed and have possessed a direct route to London and the Midlands, and this route ran and runs near or through Sevenoaks market-place. Much variation and some alternative routes there may well have been. The winter floods may have closed a shorter summer route. Improvements in vehicles have demanded a better gradient by a longer road. It is not suggested that there has always been one, and only one, road to Rye.

The traveller from the Midlands towards Rye, or any of the adjacent ports, must have crossed the Thames, the Darent, and the Medway, as well as the Rother, and just as the high ground runs forward from Hampstead and Edgware to London Bridge and Westminster and nowhere else so conveniently, so does the higher ground run down from the North Frith forest and Dry Hill park to the Medway crossing at Tonbridge. Both spots must have been the obvious choice for the earliest traveller. Each needed, and later possessed, an artificial causeway from the ford across the marshes on the southern side of Thames or Medway when the traffic grew in volume. The road to Rye certainly crossed the Medway at Tonbridge. Much the same argument can be applied to the crossing of the Rother, then much wider, at Newenden; and the church, possibly far less old than the crossing place, stands hard by. Snodland Church, by Snodland ferry, may be a parallel instance.

The Darent crossing is more difficult. The accompanying plan shows alternative routes.

Route No. 1 gives a line *via* Farningham, Otford, Sevenoaks High Street to Riverhill.

A second route, *via* Bromley, Farnborough, Knockholt pound to Riverhill, is more direct, but the doubtful part is

from Knockholt pound to the foot of Riverhill. Before the sixteenth century this doubtful part was almost certainly—

Route No. 2A.—Knockholt Pound, Chevening Church, Chipstead, Salter's Heath, Dibden, Cross Keys, Ashgrove, Hubbard Hill top, and Beechmont Bank diagonally to Riverhill foot.

There was probably a later diversion along Gracious Lane to Riverhill top after Archbishop Bourghier had purchased, in 1455, Panthurst Park, and doubtless enlarged this estate by enclosing the Beechmont Bank from Sevenoaks Common, then waste of his own manor of Otford. The item "Decay of Rents" in the Otford manorial records shews the archbishop continually extending his boundaries in this way. Students are generally agreed that Chipstead was an important crossing point of the Darent during the sixteenth century.

Route No. 2B gives a variant of Knockholt Pound, Morants Court, the Long ford at Riverhead, Tubs Hill, and Sevenoaks town to Riverhill top. And Tanners Lane, which until about 1764 intersected Montreal Park, provided a diversion which brought Route No. 2A through Sevenoaks town. The lane is shewn by dotted lines.

Route No. 2c is a further variant—Knockholt Pound, Morants Court, the lower ford on Bradbourne Farm, the Vine, Sevenoaks High Street, and Riverhill top.

Symonson, in his Kent map of 1596 (*Arch. Cant.*, XXX., p. 85), suggests Route No. 2A as the then prevailing road to Rye, but he makes his road pass west of Knockholt church. The writer has during the last thirty years trodden many old hollow ways, long since closed or diverted. Details are again beyond the scope of this article. But Route No. 2B or 2c may have been the road in use before Symonson's map, and before the clearing of the forest areas traversed by Route No. 2A was sufficiently advanced to make the latter practicable.

The antiquity of the road to Rye may be very great. It may have been old when Harold marched south, probably by this very route, to Hastings fight, and when the weary

fugitives hurried northward by the same track bearing the news of the great disaster. Along the route must have been points for distribution, if not for collection. Sevenoaks market-place may have been one of these, as doubtless was Chipstead. The road to Rye may have made Sevenoaks town. Pack-horse trains were not the only users. The food supply of London the insatiable needed ever-increasing droves of animals, and mediæval christian England needed more and more fish. All this is later history.

But the following may be noted: (a) the Cinque ports and their members around Romney Marsh were relatively of greater importance in their earlier history than at a later date; (b) Sevenoaks market-place is a natural junction for routes from Rye to London; and (c) the fact that the road to Rye was in general use in the sixteenth century between London and ports of dwindling importance, at least implies that the road may have been even more in demand during an earlier period.

One other point. Our later records shew that sea-borne freights were carried right through from Rye to London by sailors on horseback escorting pack-trains. This practice may have been older than Sevenoaks church. Deacon, writing in 1914 on Rye, speaks of its Saxon church, and quotes the ancient privilege which the men of Rye possessed of supplying fish for the king's court. And the parish church of Sevenoaks is a sailors' church. St. Nicholas is its patron Saint, and as such he is the protector of sailors, merchants, and travellers, as well as of children. It may be true, as the *Enc. Britt.* quotes, that there are 400 churches in England dedicated to St. Nicholas. But England is a sailors' country.

The date of the building of the first Sevenoaks church is uncertain. But if all four churches of Shoreham, Otford, Chevening, and Sevenoaks had been standing in the one manor of Otford in 1086, Domesday Book might have mentioned so unusual a fact. Tait, writing on Dartford Church in 1909, quotes that the Domesday Survey mentions 174 churches and three chapels in Kent. These included Brasted

and Sundridge. Domesday mentions no church in Otford manor, nor was it essential in a record dealing only with values, but Otford manor is there credited with no less than six mills. Sevenoaks town in 1086 may have been much as Stone Street or Under River is to-day, but with more waste and fewer houses. Of all the four churches, Sevenoaks is likely to have been built last in order.

We know that the upland developed later than the weald, and the upland manors and parishes included areas to the south which only became independent manors and parishes at a much later date. Some of these parishes only severed this link within the memory of living men. The following are examples :—

Westerham, with the chapel of Edenbridge, severed about 1860.

Shoreham, with the chapel of Otford, severed after 1825.

Kemsing, with the chapel of Seal, severed 4 August 1874.

The inference is that, of two or more churches in the same manor, that to the south is the latest, and that Sevenoaks church was built long after those at Shoreham or Otford or Chevening.

But as a roadside chapel, Sevenoaks church may have had an earlier chapter. So much was destroyed at the rebuilding after 1812 that early details are hard to find. An architect's plan of that date, communicated by the writer to the Rev. J. Rooker when compiling his history in 1910 of Sevenoaks church, indicates the previous existence of a tower at the east end of the north aisle, and Mr. Rooker quotes the Streatfeild MSS. (Add. MS. 33,889, B.M.) as mentioning the four clustered columns of this tower as standing in 1812. The north (or organ) transept may occupy the site of the whole of the first church or chapel, the tower in question being added later at its west end, itself becoming a central tower when a nave, now the north aisle of the present church, was added, all before the thirteenth century. The present south transept is called the Chantry chapel, the chantry having been established in 1257.

Mr. Rooker quotes the *Textus Roffensis* of 1120 as the first mention of the parish. A then existing church is presumed. He also quotes the earliest recorded rector in 1217. He could find no trace of Saxon work in the fabric.

So much for the few records analysed, and there are so many more.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter?

First, we have a market held at the junction of two ancient roads which led from London to a group of important ports giving access to the Continent. A toll-free market, which is itself of such antiquity that its origin cannot be traced. The market-place is surrounded by a town, admittedly of less original importance than the neighbouring village which gave its name to the great manor within which town and village lay—a town built on a ridge where there was no natural water supply, and where the unkindly soil offered no inducement whatever to the agriculturist to establish his homestead—a town the site of which adjoined, or more probably formed part of, the open heath which, as in so many instances, gave its name to the hundred—a town built on a spot which was a natural site for a British road or a Saxon place of assembly, and for nothing else.

Secondly, we have a church not built on or near the cultivated demesne land of any manor, but surrounded at a distance by a group of small sub-manors not varying much in value, on one of which the palace called Knole has grown up. Each of the rest of these sub-manors has survived only as a small private estate or farm.

Lastly, we have an outlying portion of a great lordship, all of which was surrendered to the Crown. Thereafter this outlying portion was itself created a manor for the first time in 1550.

It may be a matter of local interest only, but it seems clear that the sequence for Sevenoaks was—first, the market; secondly, the church; and lastly, the manor.

Mr. E. G. Box's comment and kind assistance has been helpful. Other criticisms of this article will be welcomed.

## POSTSCRIPT BY E. G. BOX.

May I suggest that the growth of a market at Sevenoaks was due, not only to the position of the town on the great north and south road from London to the coast *via* the Darent and Medway fords, but also to its position on other roads of, perhaps, earlier importance running east and west.

The scanty evidence suggests that, from the early Bronze age down to the end of the sixth century A.D., there was probably more traffic east and west along the Holmesdale Valley than south from Sevenoaks across the forest to the sea.

In the early Bronze age tin, copper, bronze, and gold probably came east from Hampshire (Crawford: R.G.S. Jo., 1912; Peake: *Bronze Age*, 1922), and bronze, pottery, glass from east Kent ports. *Cf.* finds at Aylesford and in Mere-worth or Hurst woods (*Arch. Cant.*). The evidence of finds of British coins (Evans, and *Vict. Hist. Kent*) also suggests more traffic along the Holmesdale Valley than southwards, though there is some suggestion of movement through Sevenoaks to Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, and perhaps even further south across the weald (*op. cit.*).

Again, both in peaceful Roman Kent as well as in heathen Saxon Kent (Leeds: *Archæology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements*), the evidence suggests the same conclusion; but after 600 A.D. it would be possible, I think, to find evidence to suggest the movement of trade and traffic north and south as well as east and west.

A market at Sevenoaks would have served not only through traffic along the great roads, but also the needs in each century of local farms, manors, villages, churches.

It should be noted that in the early fifteenth century the Rye road was called the Winchelsea road (see P.R.O., *Cat. Ancient Charters*, C. 2214).