

# Archæologia Cantiana

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## THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

By ROBERT H. GOODSALL, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A. (Retd.)

IN 1553 when Sir Thomas Wyatt paid the supreme penalty for opposing the Queen's marriage with Philip of Spain his estates in Allington and Boxley, together with the former Archbishop's Palace at Maidstone, passed into the possession of the Crown.

Among the Court circle of Elizabeth I was a certain John Astley, scion of ancient Warwickshire and Norfolk stock. His forebear, Sir Thomas, lord of Estleigh (from which the family name may have derived), lost his life at the Battle of Evesham in 1265 and for long there were Astleys at Melton Constable. His father, Thomas, married three times (see pedigree) and by his first wife, Anne Broughton, had one son John who espoused Frances, the daughter of John Cheney of Sittingbourne, whereby the reputed manor of Ufton in Tunstall passed to Frances. When a son was born to Thomas and his second wife Anne Wood he also was christened John and it was from these two Johns, as will appear, that the Maidstone Astleys descended.<sup>1</sup>

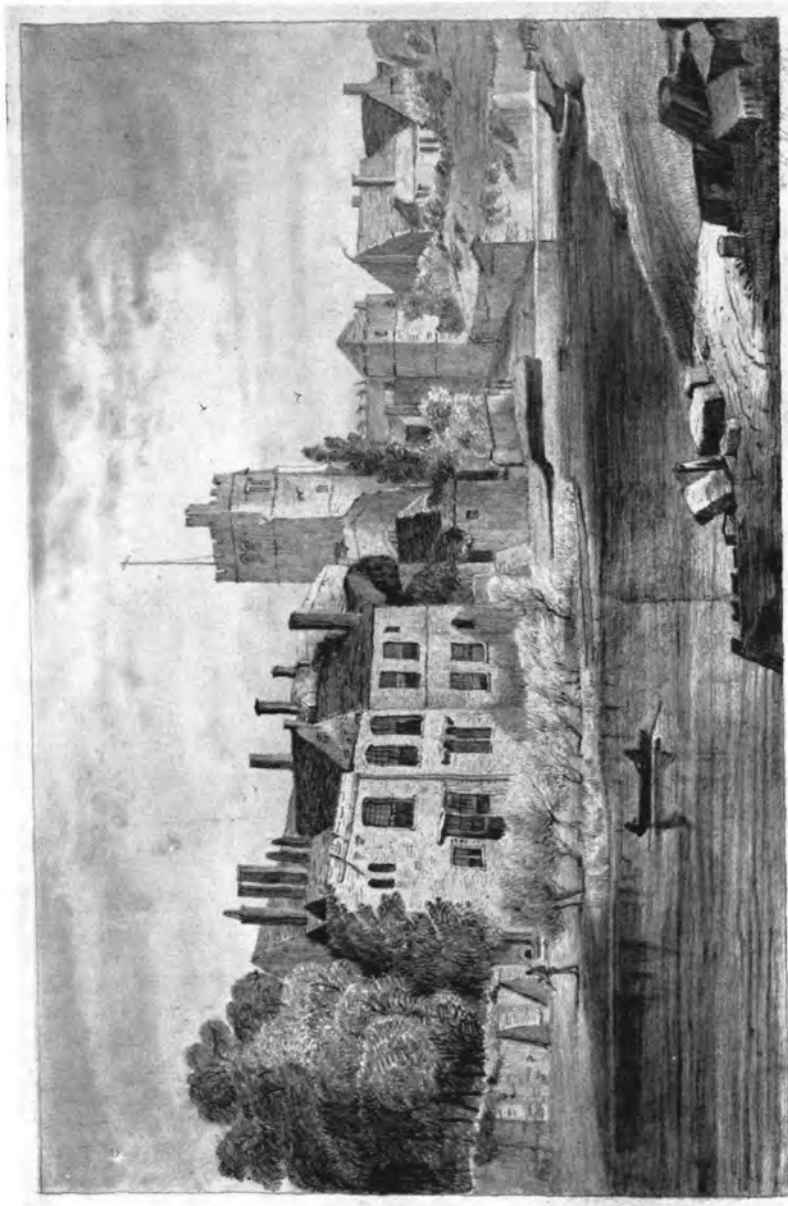
John the second was born in 1507. His mother's sister, Elizabeth, espoused Sir James, the brother of Sir Thomas Boleyn, and so became the aunt of the unfortunate Anne and great-aunt of Elizabeth I. No doubt it was because of this somewhat remote cousinly kinship that John Astley, at an early age, was received into the royal household "where his intelligence and accomplishments brought him to the notice of Roger Ascham, the Mentor of his day, an advantage he improved by marrying Katherine, the daughter of Sir Philip Camperdowne, who had been governess to the Princess and was one of the Ladies of the Bedchamber to the Queen."<sup>2</sup>

"During the reign of Mary he had served his country abroad; playing a conspicuous part in the troubles of the English Church in Frankfort."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Hasted, Vol. II, pp. 184, 579.

<sup>2</sup> Cave-Brown, "History of the Parish Church of All Saints, Maidstone," quoting T. Warton's *Life of Sir T. Pope*. See also Agnes Strickland's *The Life of Queen Elizabeth*.

<sup>3</sup> *D.N.B.*



THE PALACE, MAIDSTONE  
from a pencil drawing by E. H. Hills. 1831

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Upon Elizabeth's succession to the throne he returned home and in 1558 was rewarded with the appointment of Master of the Jewel House, an office which carried an annual stipend of £50. Two years later on 8th January, the Queen granted to Astley and his wife Catherine "the Queene's servants" the office of "Keeper of the manor of Elsinge in Endefeld co. Middlesex", to which in the following May was added the grant of "Keeper of the house and mansion called Seynte James near Westminster co. Middlesex, keeper of the Wardrobe there and of a garden and close next the mansion betwixt it and the road from London to Kensyngton". Additional duties were to be "bailiff of the fair called Seynt James Fayer and of lands in the parishes of St. Margaret Westminster, St. Martin by Charing Crosse and St. Giles in the Fields, to the north of the road from Charing Crosse to Knightbridge; wages 8<sup>d</sup> a day and profits".<sup>1</sup> On the 10th August, 1568, as a further mark of Royal favour, the Queen granted him a lease in reversion to hold by Knight's Service for 30 years at an annual rent of £100 2s. 7d. of the Castle and Manor of Allington.<sup>2</sup> At the same time she also granted him certain lands and premises in Aylesford and much of the parish of Boxley including the Abbey. On the 8th July, 1581, John Astley purchased from his brother Thomas of Dartford,<sup>3</sup> a Privy Councillor, for £500 "all that capital messuage or chief mansion-house commonly called or known by the name of the Old Palace, with appurtenances, in Maydestone, and the malt house commonly called the Old Palace stable, and the land called old stable close, and Palace mead and dovehouse, and the Palace pound and Palace close".<sup>4</sup>

The late Lord Conway's account of Allington Castle<sup>5</sup> seems to indicate that despite the repair work carried out to the structure by the Wyatts, father and son, at the date of the lease to John Astley, much of the fabric was in a pretty poor state. This may have influenced him in his acquisition of the Old Palace as a family home. Be this as it may from this time commenced the close Astley association with the town of Maidstone which was destined to continue until the early years of the eighteenth century.

In 1520 Sir Henry Wyatt, father of the poet, had received the grant "of free warren in his demesne lands of the manors of Alyntone etc." but upon the granting of the lease to John Astley the lands were deforested.<sup>6</sup> It must therefore have been subsequent to 1568 that

<sup>1</sup> Cal. Patent Rolls, 2 Eliz., Part VII.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, XXVIII, pp. 357-8

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Astley had estates granted to him by Edward VI in Dartford, Gravesend, Milton and Cobham (see Hasted, Vol. I). He also held certain lands and tenements in the parishes of Hoo and Iwade as will appear later from the terms of his Will.

<sup>4</sup> J. M. Russell, *The History of Maidstone*.

<sup>5</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, XXVIII.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.

many of the field names appearing in the schedule of 1629 quoted later came to be applied as and when the land was brought into cultivation.

John Astley's wife Katherine bore him no children and following her death he married Margaret, daughter of Thomas Lord Grey. Of this union there were a son, born in 1571 and christened John and three daughters. Of the latter the eldest, Margaret, married Anthony Nevile of Nottingham, Bridget, the second (Plate I) became the wife of Sir Norton Knatchbull of Mersham Hatch, and Eleanor (Plate I) espoused Sir Norton's brother, Thomas, of Maidstone.

In 1571 Astley had been selected by the Queen "to attend the Archbishop of Canterbury on an inquiry 'Touching matters of Religion'".<sup>1</sup> He would also seem to have been an authority on horses and horsemanship for in 1585 he published *The art of Riding* described as being "By a Gentleman of great skill and long experience in the Art".

Although the 30 years' lease granted to John Astley was not due to expire until 1598 the Queen, in 1583, for some reason unexplained, granted in perpetuity "the Castle manor and advowson of Allington" to his son. Subsequent to this difficulties appear to have arisen concerning the title to certain of the other estates held by John senior,<sup>2</sup> and in 1591 a determined effort was made to deprive him of some, if not all, of his lands by the expedient of seizing his deeds and other papers. Whether for a time he had fallen from royal favour or even suffered the indignity of being confined in the Tower is not altogether clear<sup>3</sup> but this perhaps might be the inference to be drawn from the long epistle, a model of beautifully clear penmanship,<sup>4</sup> which Margaret Astley addressed to her cousin, Vincent Skinner, "at his House in Blackfriars at London," on the 12th November, 1591.<sup>5</sup> No attempt has been made to translate the often quaint spelling into its modern accepted form.

"Good Cowsin whear as at our last meeting at Greenwich we both determined to have farther conferenses on that matter we then had som speech of at my return out of the Country which I did purpose shuld have been soon after mihilmas but that the sicknes of one of my daughters hath partly kept me at home and one other lett I have yet and that is that I stand in dowl whether I maye lie at m<sup>r</sup> Astleys lodging at the Tower for that ther was order taken by some of the

<sup>1</sup> Strype's *Annals* (1824), Vol. ii, pt. 1, p. 708.

<sup>2</sup> Hasted notes that the queen made numerous grants during her reign of land and premises, particularly in Boxley parish, to a number of individuals. Vol. II, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Alternatively of course, his duties as Master of the Jewels may have entailed residence at the Tower.

<sup>4</sup> Current Italic hand.

<sup>5</sup> S.P.D. 12/238, No. 11A.

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Cownsell as I understand that women maye not lodg within the Tower and being unprovided of any other lodging in London cawseth me to make my abode in the Cowntry longer then I did purpose for that I would first see how others doo ther rather then to make my self an insample to other, and yet I heer that som wemen that wear removed from thens are returned thether agayne & remaine so that I think I shall not be denyed to com, thus much I thought good to lett you understand of my occation of stey, lest you might think I had forgotten. One thing my good Cowsin I am to entreat you to doo for me which if you will doo effectually if ever it light in my lott to requite I will assuredly, & that is that you would take take som fitt time to see my good Lord Tresurer to let him understand that my humble peticon to his Lo. is that it would pleas him to remember when m<sup>r</sup> Astleyes cawes dooth com againe before him that all the evidens of such landes as her ma<sup>ti</sup> did geve unto m<sup>r</sup> Astley wear caried awaye from Alington Castell by m<sup>r</sup> floid who shewed my Lordes lett. for his authoritie so to doo to bring them into the exchequer which allthough m<sup>r</sup> Asteley was sorry for yet seeing my Lordes lett. thought best to obey. I must confes it did right well apeer that my good Lord had honorable consideration that m<sup>r</sup> Astleyes graunt from her Ma<sup>tie</sup> shuld not be hindered by carieng them awaye adding to that letter which was directed both to m<sup>r</sup> floid & m<sup>r</sup> Bainham a post script of his owne hand that all such evidens as concern him shuld be delivered to him self m<sup>r</sup> Astley supposing that som resonable time would have been permitted for the perveing of them & to have had some learned in the lawe to help to sever them for him, which upon that sodaine being in the cowntry we cowld not have onlye m<sup>r</sup> Docter Lewen happened to be then with m<sup>r</sup> Astley & m<sup>r</sup> floid & by that time that they had looked upon the evidens half an ower word was browght to m<sup>r</sup> floid that his cart was com to carie the evidens awaye to his howes. At this extreme haste we cowld not but wonder, and to make short my lett no perswation that this was not the meaning of my Lordes lett nor any entreating of stey eyther by m<sup>r</sup> Asteley m<sup>r</sup> Lewen & m<sup>r</sup> Randell who came thither before this comody wear ended, could serve. My self entreated m<sup>r</sup> floid as I should have entreated a right good lord but could effect nothing, & seeing no perswation nor entreating cowld take plase to tell yow trew I sent furth & made the cart to stey whilest thees jentilmen wear at diner then m<sup>r</sup> Astley seing m<sup>r</sup> floid to arise sodainly from the table so much moved was angry with me & the other tow jentillmen perswaded with me that the cart might pas which wold god I had never yelded unto allthough I had gon to prison for it & better it had been for me to have pulled more sprit to me then to suffer our selves & children to be undoon. Cowsin it was such a perplexity to me that if the goodness of god wear not of a mighty power, yet it had

been inough to have put me in as mad a caes as my lady floid, & if I had stayed the cart I am now fully perswaded that my Lo: would not have been displeased when his Lo: shuld have understand the treweth. Non I think that had any spark of jentillman or honest man but wold have been moved to see the maner of the taking away those writings, thees wrie lines will wittnes with me now whether I will or no of some part of hurt I received then having ever sins at times such a shaking in my handes that sometime I can not wright a streight line if I would never so faine. Sins that time it is well known that m<sup>r</sup> floid & m<sup>r</sup> Bainham - hath had half a dusen letters from my lord by m<sup>r</sup> Asteleyes procuerment bothe for the delivering to him those evidens that doo concern him as also the rest to be browght in to the exchequer, & for the stey of wod felling which they make no accownt of at all, so that I see if we had not been tow fearfull to offend my Lo: we had not now stand in this hard estate ower adversarye having all that shuld make for us in his custodye. Before he had gotten ower evidens he never fownd fault at iextrations nor thees many holes that now he fyieth in m<sup>r</sup> Astleyes graunt & not only him self dooth thus continewally seek by all means to trowble us but he procureth other to lay claime to part of those landes being assured that m<sup>r</sup> Astley hath not to show for it but the voise of the cuntrye & as it is reported him self hath bowght ther titelles so that unles my lord be good unto us in this tedyows cawes ther wilbe no ende of vexation, & what this maye be to the shortning of m<sup>r</sup> Asteleyes time now in his aged yeers, he being one that hath allwayes sowght to be quiet rather then to gaine with trowble, I have great cawes to fear, & if I shuld loose him I wear utterly undoone. It can not be but grefe to him to see one of such mean begining the son of a welch Cobler him self having a wors tread at the first, to be able to prevaye so much against him with craft & suttelty, considering his plase long servis of her ma<sup>tie</sup> & equitie of his cawes as I sayde to prevaille so much against him as to put him from the possession of a pees of grownd that had long traverst in lawe & at lengeth recovered by lawe in the presens of my Lord & an order from my Lo: to put m<sup>r</sup> Astley in possession yet notwithstanding this adversary of owers cowld finde the means to have it sequestred for the queen & so it dooth yet remaine in the custody of m<sup>r</sup> floid, to ower no littell discredit heer in the cowntry. Happlye yow maye think I wright this with a revenging minde, I thank my good god I have learned to lett him be the revenger, but I think it wear too much simplisitie to put up such a deale of intollorable iniurye in secret, being well assured that my Lo: dooth not know the one half of it, I can not but acknowledg ower great bond of duty unto my good Lord whilest we live for the having of thees landes w<sup>ch</sup> althowgh m<sup>r</sup> Astley paide deerly for the wodes & timber yet we had them by his Lo: good means w<sup>ch</sup> maketh me the

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rather to desire yow my good Cowsin to present my humble sute to his Lo. Good Cowsin be not weery of this my trowbellsom scribing but heale me owt of this laborinth I besече yow which tucheth neer & hath been very costly. When it shall please god to bring m<sup>r</sup> Asteley & mee to gether which I hope will not be long to then if we may meet with yow we shall conferr at lardg of other matters. Thus with my hartly salutations to yowr self & my cowsin yowr wife I leave yow to the grase of god.

Maideston the 12 of november.

your assured loving cowsin  
ever Margret Astley.

Vincent Skinner forwarded this letter to Lord Burghley with the observation that "the Master of the Jewel house is willing to resign his office and place it entirely at Lord Burghley's disposal. Told this to Sir Robert Cecil last summer, who was thought to affect the place, unless he expected something better".

The whole affair must have been satisfactorily resolved for John Astley retained his appointment up to his death. Who Mr. floid (or Lloyd) may have been the writer has been unable to discover unless he was the Commissioner, Thomas Fludde, who with others surveyed the mansion house of the Manor of Otford in 1573.<sup>1</sup>

When on 1st August, 1596, John died full of years he was buried in the chancel of the parish church. He had executed his Will on the 25th January, 1592.<sup>2</sup> In this, after the customary committal of his soul to the Almighty he directed that his body should be "buried in such decent and christian manner as myne executor (his wife Margaret) shall seeme fitt". To "ffortye poore persons" in the parishes of Maidstone, Boxley and Allington he left "ffortye nobles" to be distributed at "the discrecon of his executor".

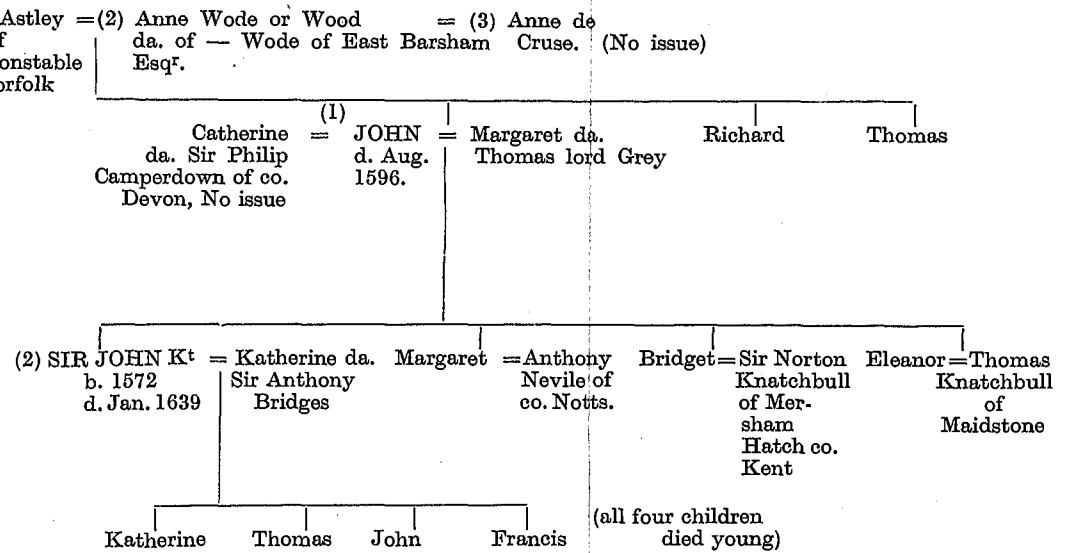
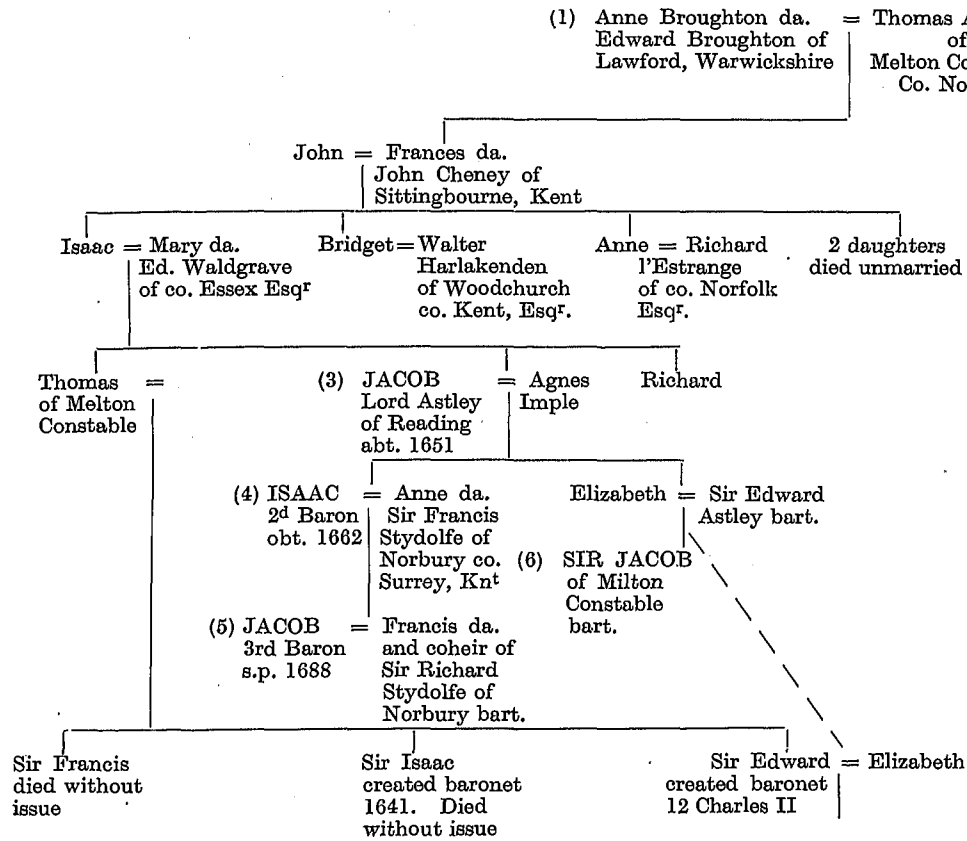
To his "welbeloved wife Margaret" he left the "greate house in Maidstone comonlye called the Pallace . . . which I late purchased of my Brother Thomas Astley Esquire," also all his lands tenements (etc) in the parishes of Hoo and Iwade.<sup>3</sup> Sir Thomas Wyatt had held lands in both parishes, those in the former having belonged to Boxley Abbey. Similarly he held lands called Swainesdowne in Iwade previously possessed by the same Abbey,<sup>4</sup> and the remainder of the lease of Allington Castle and Manor. The will continues: "Also where I have for divers yeres yettosome, by force of severall conveyances the Mannor of Osmington in the Countye of Dorcett I bequeath unto my wife the saide manno<sup>r</sup> . . . for by and duringe so many yeares onelie as yt shall

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, XXXI, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Somerset House, Drake fol. 61.

<sup>3</sup> It is not clear if the lands in "the parish of Hoo" were in Hoo St. Werburgh or Hoo St. Mary.

<sup>4</sup> Hasted, Vol. I, pp. 560 and 563, Vol. II, p. 641.



PEDIGREE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ASTLEY FAMILY ASSOCIATED WITH THE ESTATES IN AND AROUND MAIDSTONE. NUMBERED IN ORDER



happen her to live, and ymeadyalie after her decease All and everye the saide premises soe willed shalbe and come as followeth:—”

The Manor of Osmington to Ellynor if she remained unmarried, otherwise jointly to the three daughters Margaret, Bridgett and Ellynor for their lives and after to his son John.

The estate at Hoo and Allington after the decease of his wife to John if still living and his lawful heirs, otherwise to Ellynor, if unmarried, but if she was married jointly to the three daughters.

The lands and tenements at Iwade and the Palace estate at Maidstone to his son John, his heirs and assigns for ever.

In consideration of the legacies and the residue of “the goodes” willed his wife Katherine was to pay all his outstanding debts. If Ellynor was unmarried at the time of his decease she was to receive One thousand markes of lawful money of England from the profits of the estates and from “the sale of coppies, woodes growinge uppon the same.” John, if still unmarried at his father’s decease was to receive One Hundred markes to be paid quarterly at the usual feast days during the period of the Allington lease. His wife was to “verteouslie bringe upp and fynde my saide daughter Ellynor untill she shalbe married” and if she, his wife, or her agents with her consent, “cutt downe anye trees of Oke, Ashe, Elme or Beecke growing uppon the devised premises, that then shalbe of the age of ffortye yeares in growthe, and of the value of Tenne poundes in the whole otherwise then for the necessarye repaea<sup>cons</sup> of some of the buildings” she was to pay the son John “the dubble value of the trees soe cutt downe.”

For “the better accomplishment” of his will he appointed Sir Henry Graye, Knight, Peter Osborne and William Jephson Esquires, Rause Roobye (Rookbye) Esquire “being M<sup>r</sup> of G<sup>t</sup> Katherynes” and John Dannel Esquire to act in the capacity of advisers to his wife. He also directed that should it seem requisite to his “good frendes” S<sup>r</sup> Edward Wootton K<sup>t</sup>, William Lewis Doctor of Civil Laws and Robert Cranmer, gentleman that money needed to be raised to pay his debts then his wife should sell the estate at Hoo.

The will was signed on the 14th February 1592 in the presence of Robert Cranmer and fra. Hytchocke. On the 31st July following a codicil was added which would seem to suggest that he was worried that the sale of the Hoo property might not suffice to satisfy and pay all his debts. He directed that if such, in fact, proved to be the case, the Manor of Osmington in Dorset should similarly be disposed of.

The ornate Astley memorial with its valedictory inscriptions in the stilted phraseology of the day originally in the chancel of All Saint’s Church, Maidstone, and now against the west wall of the nave commemorates not only Elizabeth the first’s Master of the Jewels and his second wife, Margaret, but also his son, John, and wife Katherine.

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Of the son we learn that having inherited the royal favour "from his tender years (he) attended on Queene Elizabeth in her Honorable Band Of Pensioners; and after was Master of the Revels to King James and King Charles."

The honour of knighthood was bestowed upon him on the 11th May 1603 at the Charterhouse when James 1st entered London on his accession.<sup>1</sup>

Sir John chose as his wife Katherine Bridges, daughter of Anthony Bridges, third brother of the first Lord Chandos. This union resulted in four children all of whom died young. The eldest was a daughter, Katherine, baptised at St. Margaret's, Westminster, on the 10th December 1607. A son, Thomas, was baptised in the same parish on 2nd July and died a year later. Two younger sons, John, born about 1613 and Francis, who was an infant in 1617 were buried in the Undercroft of St. Faith, St. Paul's Cathedral in the tomb of their grandmother, Elizabeth, widow of the first Lord Chandos.<sup>2</sup>

In August 1603 Sir John made a present of land close to the Palace and Church to a certain John Climpson who must have held some important position in the household of his late father, possibly as major-domo or steward for the wording of the grant.<sup>3</sup> of this substantial gift reads "for divers good and lawful causes and chiefly for the good service which John Climpson of Maidstone hath heretofore done unto my late father and mother".

The land was described as "One peice or plotte of ground beinge a corner of a certen peice of meadowe of me Sir John Astley next adioyninge to the Churchyard of the p<sup>sh</sup> Church of all S<sup>ts</sup> in Maidstone aforesaid w<sup>ch</sup> corner or plotte of ground adioyneth to the highe-street there leadynge between Wrencrosse and the Colledge ther & lyeth between a pound or plotte of ground of me the said Sir John Astley inclosed w<sup>th</sup> a stonewall towards the west, a certen pale beinge the inclosure of a certen waye leading to a garden ther neere adioyninge towards the East & extendeth in length towarde the Northe as farre as the corner of the Stone wall of the pounce aforesaid."

On a part of this ground nearest the churchyard John Climpson or his descendants built a messuage or tenement "known by the signe of the Seaven Starres". In 1675 Edward Clympson, possibly the son or grandson, described as a bricklayer, entered into a hundred years lease of the property to John Hills of Maidstone, husbandman, and in 1691 it passed from Edmund Hodsall, who had acquired the remainder of the lease, to Thomas Bliss, and somewhere about this period the name of the "alehouse" was changed to "The Globe." It remained

<sup>1</sup> *Review of the Chandos Peerage Case*, G. F. Beltz, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale's *St. Paul's Cathedral*.

<sup>3</sup> Bliss deeds in the writer's possession.



John Astley  
Master of the Jewel House  
by Antonio Moro. 1555



Margaret Grey  
wife of John Astley  
British School. 1551



Bridget Astley  
wife of Sir Norton Knatchbull, Knight of  
Mersham le Hatch, Kent. British School



Eleanor Astley  
wife of Thomas Knatchbull of Maidstone  
British School

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Allington Castle



The Columbarium, Allington Castle

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as licensed premises until comparatively recent times and the building is standing today. It was on the garden-land fronting Knightrider Street (the name is mentioned in the 1st Burghmote Book in 1602)<sup>1</sup> that Thomas Bliss about 1719 sponsored the erection of the Workhouse.<sup>2</sup>

For some ten years from 1615 Sir John seems to have been at loggerheads with the Mayor and Jurats of the town concerning a number of matters but principally over the cart way along the Medway bank below the Palace and fishing rights in the river at the same spot. The *Records of Maidstone* provide details of the long drawn out dispute which appear to have been amicably settled during Ambrose Beale's mayoralty in 1625 when "certain Proposi<sup>cons</sup>" were put forward for "a Pacification".

An Indenture dated the 15th June 1629 between Sir John and "Francis Bourne of Maidstone, gent." (described in Sir John's Will as "my servant") to the end that the former's estates might be subject to a Fine and Recovery, provides a complete schedule of all the lands with their acreages and the buildings. This document<sup>3</sup> extending to three skins of parchment bears no signature or seals and so, for some reason, appears never to have been executed but it is a valuable record of the field names and buildings on the 1,800 acres estate.

Unfortunately at some time in the past damp has attacked the parchment which in places has disintegrated at the folds so that the script cannot be read in its entirety. Such gaps are indicated in the following summary.

*The Castle and Manor of Allington.* One Messuage, three barnes, two Stables, two Dovehouses,<sup>4</sup> one Orchard, one Garden.

<i>Field Name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Acreage</i>			
		a.	r.	daie	work p.
The sportinge place	Meadow	2	—	—	—
The Mount	Meadow	6	—	3	—
nether Beeches	Arable	11	—	1	2
upper Beeches	do.	19	3	9	2
the Roughes	(1) do.	4	1	3	—
	(2) Pasture	8	2	1	—
Churchfeild	Arable	31	2	2	—
The Wyndmill feild	(1) Arable	15	1	—	—
	(2) do.	14	2	4	—
Great Broomes	do.	39	—	2	—

<sup>1</sup> Maidstone Records.

<sup>2</sup> Russell, *History of Maidstone*, pp. 379-81.

<sup>3</sup> Among the Astley deeds in the writer's possession.

<sup>4</sup> These must be among the oldest examples in the country. William de Allington the builder of the adulterine castle in the reign of Stephen called himself "de Columbariis" or Columbers (Philipott).

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Highwood	(1)	do.	21	2	6	—
	(2)	do.	16	—	5	—
Okefeild	(1)	do.	32	—	7	—
	(2)	do.	12	2	—	2
Barnefeild		do.	9	3	7	1
The Eight Acres	(1)	Meadow	4	3	5	—
	(2)	do.	4	—	6	2
The Wellfeild	(1)	Arable	23	2	8	—
	(2)	do.	16	2	1	2
Lower Frost		do.	24	1	3	—
Upper Frost		do.	23	1	7	—
Long Bothoms	(1)	do.	21	1	7	2
	(2)	do.	17	2	4	—
	(3)	do.	25	2	—	—
Little Broomfeild		do.	14	1	6	2
Ye Horse Pastures	(1)	do.	18	1	6	3
	(2)	Woodland	—	2	9	2
Thorne Hills	(1)	Pasture	3	3	7	2
	(2)	do.	1	2	3	2
Thorne Roughe		Woodland	3	3	5	2
Twelve Acres	(1)	Arable	13	—	4	2
	(2)	Woodland	—	3	2	—

All in the parishes of Allington and Aylesford in the occupation of John Best, gent.

And the sd. Sir John Astley is seized of and in the Advowson of the parish Church of Allington (and of)

Ye Quarry Croft	(1)	Arable	2	1	2	2
	(2)	do.	—	3	6	3
Parkewood		Woodland	218	2	—	—
Rytewood		do.	8	—	—	—
The Hermitage Grove		do.	7	3	4	—

Being in Allington and Aylesford in the occupation of Robert Smyth.

*The Manor House called the Hermitage, with one Garden, one Orchard and Closes.*

Parkwoodfields reputed to	(1)	Pasture	1	1	4	—
be parcell of Parke-	(2)	Arable	3	3	—	3
wood before mentioned	(3)	Pasture	4	2	7	—
Fallowfield		Arable	8	2	9	1
the Bushy Croft		Pasture	7	—	7	2
Ye Bromefield		do.	9	1	9	—
Hoathlands	(1)	Pasture	6	2	—	2
	(2)	do.	8	2	3	—
	(3)	Woodland	1	3	6	2

THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

In Allington or Aylesford in the tenure of William Feild and Robert Smyth.

Milkeway	(1)	Arable	8	3	3	3
	(2)	do.	4	1	6	2
	(3)	do.	5	3	3	—
	(4)	do.	7	1	4	—

In Allington or Aylesford in the tenure of Robert Smyth.

The Broomes	(1)	Arable	5	—	7	2
	(2)	do.	10	—	2	2
	(3)	Pasture	6	1	9	1

In Allington or Aylesford in the tenure of (blank) Cheesman.

*The Manor of Little Buckland*, with one Barne, one Stable, one Orchard, one Garden and:

The Walnutt Tree Crofte		Pasture	—	3	6	—
the Hyther Strake		Arable	2	—	1	—
Ryver Meadow		Meadow	—	3	5	2
Streffield		Arable	8	—	4	—
The Lower Deane	(1)	do.	3	1	5	3
	(2)	Woodland	—	1	5	—
The Quarry		Pasture	2	1	—	—
The Middle Deane		do.	4	3	5	—
The Pallace Wood		Woodland				
The Farther Storke	(1)	Arable	1	—	8	—
	(2)	Woodland	—	—	7	2
Storke Stilewood		do.	1	—	—	—
Storke Stile land		Arable	3	1	8	—

In the parish of Maidstone in the occupation of William ffremlyn.

*A dwelling house called the Bower*, one Barne, one Stable, one Orchard (parchment partially defective for 13 lines).

			4	—	4	3
Lane feild		Arable	4	(defective)		
Hart Croft		do.	1	2	5	—
Bower Wood		Woodland	14	—	5	—
(—)ach land	(1)	Arable	4	1	(unreadable)	
	(2)	do.	6	2	—	2
	(3)	do.	2	—	3	—
	(4)	do.	2	1	1	—
	(5)	do.	4	—	6	2
	(6)	Pasture	2	—	5	2
ffant Gardens	(1)	ffurse land		(unreadable)		
	(2)	do.	—	2	—	3
	(3)	do.	—	1	7	—
	(4)	do.	—	—	3	1

THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

The Comon Meadows	(1)	Meadow	-	1	2	3
	(2)	do.	-	1	3	2
	(3)	do.	-	1	4	-
	(4)	do.	-	2	7	2

In Maidstone in the occupation of George Bylls and Robert Hallings.

One piece of meadowe ground nowe devided by (?) and Payles into fyve severall parcells commonly called the (?) Park Wild with a certain osier bed adjoining to the said parke in Maidstone containing 26 acres 2 roods and six daie worke in the occupacon of sd. Sir John Astley and William Yate.

One other Mansion house or farme house called *Bourley farme*, with one Barne, one Stable, one Orchard.

Horsehill		Arable	9	2	9	2
Shalbrooke		Meadow	1	1	-	-
The Foure Acres		Arable	4	2	2	2
The Lade Valley	(1)	do.	16	2	6	-
	(2)	do.	28	-	3	2
The Lower Hobbs feild		do.	8	1	-	3
The Upper Hobbsfeild		do.	3	3	9	-
The Tewe		do.	5	-	4	-
The Greenhill		Pasture	65	2	4	-
White Hill		Arable	10	-	6	3
The Yoke with the Little						
White Hill		do.	14	-	-	-
Lottice and Staplecroft		do.	31	1	3	-
Junston and Woulfesfeild		Pasture	97	1	5	-
Junston Hill		Woodland	14	2	7	-
Boddernehill		do.	15	1	3	5
(unreadable) feild wood	(1)	do.	29	2	5	0
	(2)	do.	28	3	3	-

All in the parish of Boxley in the occupation of Thomas Newman.

The Manor house or Farm house commonly called *Tylelands*, two barns, one Stable, one Yard, one Garden, with the field adjoining being arable of 11 acres 2 roods and 9 daie work.

the Great Albutte		Arable	7	3	7	-
the Little Albutte	(1)	do.	2	3	-	-
	(2)	Woodland	1	1	1	-
Ye Ruggett		Pasture	1	1	4	1
Greate Wellfeild		do.	5	3	-	1
Little Wellfeild		do.	1	1	1	2
the Little Meadowe		Meadow	1	-	1	2
Bushie leaze		Arable	6	-	2	-
The Roughe with the	(1)	do.	7	1	8	2
Rouggett Croft	(2)	Woodland	-	3	-	-



THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

Horsecroft	Arable	9	1	6	-
Mayfield	do.	5	1	9	2
Tyland Shott	do.	16	2	1	2
the Nyne acres	do.	9	2	2	-
Jurdon Valley	do.				

In the parishes of Boxley and Aylesford in the occupation of (blank) Warren.

Mayefeilds	(1) Arable	16	2	-	-
	(2) do.	17	-	4	2
	(3) do.	14	-	2	2
	(4) do.	18	1	7	-
	(5) do.	20	1	6	-

In the parish of Boxley in the occupation of Thomas Newman.

One other Dwelling House, one barne, one Stable, one Yard, one Garden and Croft thereunto belonging.

Barne Meadows	Meadow	8	-	5	-
Barnefeild	Pasture	7	-	7	-
the long Feild	do.	7	1	5	-
Little Mayfeild	Arable	8	2	4	2

In the parish of Boxley in the occupation of George Payne.

One other Dwelling House near to Bourley ffarme, one pasture crofte containing 2 roods six daie work and 2 perches. One other crofte, being arable containing 1 acre 3 roods and 3 daie work.

In the parish of Boxley in the occupation of Bridget Waynewright, widowe.

One other Dwelling House, one Yard, one Garden, at or neare the Abby gate in Boxley:

Pennyes Rough	Pasture	12	1	4	2
the Upper Dughette	(1) do.	4	3	6	-
	(2) Meadowe	1	3	3	2
Hillyfeild	Arable	6	2	9	-
Lower Dughette	(1) do.	4	1	1	-
	(2) Pasture	2	1	-	-
Bushyfeild	Pasture	3	2	3	-
the Little Meadow	Meadowe	2	1	6	-

In the parish of Boxley in the occupation of Thomas Newman.

A Dwelling House situate at a place called Tile pond with a field adjoyninge containing 3 acres and 1 rood of arable land.

Tyle Pond Roughes	(1) Pasture	2	-	6	2
	(2) Meadowe	2	2	6	-
Tyle Pond	do.	8	1	2	2
the Quarry feilds	(1) Arable	3	2	7	-
	(2) Pasture	4	-	4	-
Castle Wood	Woodland	14	1	6	2

THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

Cottland (? Crosse)	(1) Arable	3	3	6	2
	(2) do.	1	2	7	-

In the parish of Boxley in the occupation of Thomas Knatchbull, gent.

A messuage lately built called *Cottlands* with one barne, one Stable, one garden and severall parcells of ground thereunto belonging in all 2 acres:

Cottlands	(1) Arable	(unreadable)	9	2
	(2) do.	7	1	3
	(six lines unreadable)			

In the parishes of Boxley Allington and Aylesford in the occupation of (unreadable).

One other Dwelling House in a place called Sandling with the Orchard, Garden, Backside and Croft thereunto belonging:

the Brooms	(1) Arable	2	1	-	-
	(2) do.	3	1	6	2
	(3) do.	1	2	-	2
Hoggehall	do.	-	3	6	2

In Boxley in the occupation of (blank) Baker.

A Dwelling House with a Barne, Yard, Orchard, Garden and the Cornmill called *Sandling Mill* and a Croft next adjoining being undivided containing 1 acre and eight daie work:

Millfeild	Arable	3	1	4	-
the Wet Meadowe with the pond and streames	Meadow	2	1	5	2
the Strake	Arable	1	2	4	-
ffeney meade	Meadow	8	8	9	2
Larkeholes	Pasture	5	3	-	2
the Broomes	(1) do.	2	-	1	-
	(2) do.	2	-	-	3
	(3) do.	3	1	3	2
	(4) do.	2	2	8	-

In the parish of Boxley in the occupation of Phillipp Gilberte.

One other Dwelling House called *Harberland* with a barn yard orchard and garden.

the Belles	Meadow	3	-	5	2
the Plashetts	do.	1	1	-	-
Plashett feild	Arable	3	-	3	-
Barnefeild	do.	3	2	9	-
Capon Panne	Pasture	4	-	-	2
Dorehill (? Lordhill)	(1) Arable	8	3	3	1
	(2) Woodland	3	-	-	2
	(3) Arable	1	-	9	2

THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

Harberlands	(1)	Pasture	1	2	9	3
	(2)	do.	3	-	9	1
	(3)	Arable	5	1	9	-
Barnis Hill	(1)	do.	1	1	1	2
	(2)	do.	2	-	4	2

In the parish of Boxley in the occupation of John Mole.

*The Manor of Newnham Court*, the capital messuage or Mansion House called *Newnham Court* with one barne, one stable, one hemplott, one garden, one orchard and one fforestall:

Barnefeild		Arable	7	2	8	1
Well Crofte		do.	7	1	8	3
Capon Hill		do.	12	2	3	-
Bartnolles	(1)	do.	5	2	3	1
	(2)	Pasture	6	1	7	3
Crockerlands	(1)	Meadow	1	-	3	3
	(2)	Arable	18	1	2	-
Boylie Wood		Woodland	8	-	1	3
Rushpett		Woodland	8	1	3	-
the Rushette	(1)	Meadow	2	-	7	-
	(2)	Pasture	3	3	8	-
Pickenden feild		Arable	17	3	7	-
Hearons Croft	(1)	Woodland	1	3	-	-
	(2)	Arable	5	3	9	3
Pickenden feild		do.	21	-	4	-
the threecornered Croft		do.	5	-	5	-
Pickenden hoath		Pasture	22	2	5	-
Gallowe wood		Woodland	3	1	8	-
Hoathfeild		Pasture	7	3	8	-
Drawdens (?)		Arable	12	3	6	-
Hoathfeild		do.	3	2	3	-
Lower Drawdens		do.	12	3	6	-
Part of Hoathfeild			3	2	3	-
Hoathfeilds Croftes	(1)	do.	2	-	-	3
	(2)	do.	2	1	9	-
Quarry Feilds	(1)	do.	10	2	2	3
	(2)	Woodland	1	2	9	2
	(3)	Arable	9	-	3	-
	(4)	Woodland	1	3	-	3
y <sup>e</sup> Quarryfeild	(1)	Arable	11	-	1	2
	(2)	do.	7	3	3	-
	(3)	do.	7	3	8	1
	(4)	Pasture	-	3	9	2
	(5)	Arable	8	-	5	-
	(6)	Woodland	-	1	6	-

THE ASTLEYS OF MAIDSTONE

In the parishes of Boxley and Maidstone in the occupation of William Oxenall.

One dwelling house with a fulling mill adjoining called *Powle Mill* with one Barne, one stable, one yard, one garden, one orchard one millpond, one osier bedd and one meadow Strake adjoining containing 2 acres 4 daie work and 2 perches.

Myll. land	(1) Meadow	2	1	2	3
	(2) Arable	7	2	3	1
	(3) Pasture	5	-	-	-
	(4) Arable	4	1	8	3
	(5) Pasture	5	-	6	-
	(6) Arable	4	2	4	1
	(7) do.	2	-	4	2

In the parishes of Boxley and Maidstone in the occupation of Steven Berry.

One parcell of Woodland adjoining unto Pickenden Hoath neare the Shire house containing 2 acres three roods 2 daie work and 3 perches. In the parishes of Boxley and Maidstone in the occupation of John Warren.

A common pasture for all mano<sup>r</sup> cattell in and upon a certain Hoath in Boxley and Maidstone knowne by the name of *Pickenden Hoath*.

One parcell of Pasture land being part of Longfall Hoth in the parishes of Allington Aylesford and Maidstone in the occupation of William Horspoole.

The deed summarizes the whole estate as follows: "The Castle of Allington with the Manors of Allington and Newnham Court, twelve Messuages, foure tofts,<sup>1</sup> two Mills, three dovehouses, sixteene Barnes, sixteene Stables, twentie gardens, twelve orchards, one thousand and two hundred acres of land, one hundred and fifty acres of meadowe, foure hundred and twenty acres of pasture, foure hundred and thirtie acres of wood and twentie acres of ffurze and heath in Allington Aylesford Boxley and Maidstone and Allsoe the Adouwson of the Church of Allington."

A member of the Palace household who was highly esteemed to judge by the considerable legacy bequeathed to her by Sir John was Anne Bridges, a niece of his wife, Katherine. Her father, Katherine's elder brother Robert, was buried in Maidstone church on 15th July, 1636, and may also have been included in the Astley ménage for his wife had died and was buried at Maidstone in September, 1616.<sup>2</sup> The Calendar of State Papers Domestic for the years 1634-5 provides the story of an unproved charge of immorality involving Sir John and his wife's

<sup>1</sup> Tofte = "A homestead, the site of a house and its buildings, a house site." *O.E.D.*

Day work = "Four perches make a day worke; ten day works made a roode or quarter." Twysden MSS.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix to *The Chandos Peerage Case*, G. F. Beltz.

niece. The matter was examined by the Court of High Commission and commenced on the 12th June, 1634, when it was ruled that Sir John Astley "being unable to travel a commission to take his answers" presumably at Maidstone. At the end of the month "Drs Wood and Aylett" were "to consider articles and answers and if they found cause, to take order to remove Anne Bridges, Sir John's wife's kinswoman, out of his house and restrain them of each other's company". In November "additional witnesses" were "produced" and in January "Sir John Astley's cause" was "promoted by Edward Fillmer" who "took his oath to answer articles". On 18th June, 1635, the Court heard the evidence and found that "Sir John being about 70 years of age, yet it stands proved that Mrs Bridges by direction from Lady Astley did sometime of late lie in Sir John's chamber when he was sick and troubled with the gout but not without some other woman lying there with her. The Court thought fit that Sir John should be judicially admonished by the Archbishop of Canterbury from henceforth to suffer Mrs Bridges to lodge in his bedchamber upon pain of law".

"On reading the proofs in the case it appeared that the prosecutor had upon some discontent between him and Mrs Anne Bridges, and to accomplish some ends of his own, commenced the suit and had charged Sir John with incest and adultery, yet had not proved either the fact or fame thereof, Sir John on the contrary, having ample testimony of his reputation. The Court therefore acquitted Sir John and Mrs Bridges and condemned the prosecutor in costs of suit to be taxed next Court day."

It was this same Anne Bridges who figured as a vital link in the chain of evidence presented at the famous Chandos Peerage Case, promoted by Sir Egerton Brook Bridges and deliberated upon by the Committee of Privileges of the House of Lords between 1790 and 1803. The long-drawn-out story of argument and alleged fabrication of evidence cannot be embarked upon here except in the briefest way. The case turned on proving that the Rev. Edward Tymewell Brydges the elder brother of Sir Egerton was a lineal descendant of Anthony, third son of the first baron Chandos. Germane to the issue was the necessity of establishing the existence of a son of Robert, dame Astley's brother and father of Anne. To this end an entry in the Maidstone church register among the christenings of the year 1603 which reads "Edward and Anne son and daughter of Robert Bridges Esquire" and is almost certainly a fabrication and one page of the Archdeacon's Court Transcripts for the parish of Ore near Faversham recording the marriage in May, 1641, of Anne Bridges to William Best which appears to be equally spurious were produced before the Committee as vital evidence. The author of these frauds, if frauds they were, was never discovered, and after thirteen years of protracted argument the Claim was dismissed.

*(To be concluded.)*