

NOTES ON NINETEENTH-CENTURY ALTERA-  
TIONS TO HIGH HALDEN CHURCH;  
WITH EXTRACTS FROM THE PARISH  
BOOKS AND REGISTERS.

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THE following Notes may serve as a short supplement to the "Architectural History of High Halden Church," by the Rev. G. M. Livett, F.S.A., printed in this Volume:—

Previous to the restoration of the Church in the year 1868, the Churchwardens' Accounts record the following additions and alterations to the fabric. In 1786 a dial which is still in existence was bought. In 1836 a vestry-room was built in the angle between the chancel and south chapel, at an expense of £63 3s. 5d. It was demolished in 1868. In 1847 the clock of the old Church at Frittenden was bought. This clock was restored at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. In 1849 the Rural Deans were "much gratified . . . by the scraping of the Pillars and arches, which affords good hope that those that remain will be completed."

In the year 1868 a sum of £3000 became available under the will of the widow of the Rev. Evelyn Levett Sutton (Rector 1806—25). It was left to be expended for the "spiritual good" of the parish, and it was decided to restore the Church and build a parochial school. Both these works were carried out under the direction of the late Mr. G. E. Street.

I have been able to gather the following information from persons who remember the Church before this restoration. The floor-levels of the nave, south aisle, and south chapel were then the same as the present level of the west lobby, and there was a step up to both the chancel and north chapel; but at the restoration the level of the nave and south aisle was lowered by about a foot, and the

level of the north chapel was made to correspond with it. There is now one step leading up to the south chapel, two steps leading up to the chancel, and two to the sanctuary. The pulpit (which is now in Smarden Church) and reading-desk were at the north-east corner of the nave. The Rectory pew was at the south-west corner of the chancel, and I was informed by Mrs. Honey, a daughter of Rev. W. B. Staveley (Rector 1861—87), that “backing against the east side of that pew was a long narrow one in which the occupants faced east. This pew had a fine stall end, and the front and book-desk were of heavy oak carving. These were the model of the present chancel stalls.” The old bench end is still in the Church. There was a west gallery, which was approached from the lobby by a staircase which passed through the upper part of the west screen. The rest of the screen was probably closed, and the door which gave entrance into the Church still forms part of a shed in the parish. The chancel roof was renewed, and the east end of the chancel was rebuilt. An oak screen was placed in front of the arch between the chancel and south chapel. All the memorials of the dead (other than mural) were taken out of the Church, and most of them were placed in the lobby, but a fragment of one was used to make a step down to the furnace, and another to cover the foundation-plinth of the west respond of the nave arcade.

Twelve of the inscriptions are recorded by Philip Parsons in his *Monuments and Painted Glass of upwards 100 Churches, chiefly in the Eastern Part of Kent* (1790), but two which escaped his notice are recorded in the faculty of 1868 and in a paper in the parish chest. They are as follows: “. . . . Body of Joanna Baker, widow of James Baker, October 20, 1623”; and, “Here lieth the body of Stephen Stokes, gent., who departed this life the 13<sup>th</sup> day of December 1627 in the 85<sup>th</sup> year of his age. He had by his wife Jane one sone and one daughter, who lieth under this stone.”

The following inscription was added after Parsons' time to the memorial to Benjamin Burrige (Assistant Curate 1729—59, Rector 1759—80): “Near also lieth the body of Thomas Burrige, Gent., son of Benjamin and Mary Burrige above mentioned, who died 14 July 1809, aged 76 years.” This inscription is now lost, but is recorded in the paper in the parish chest. Eleven of these inscriptions are still more or less legible.

Over the inscription in memory of Elizabeth, eldest daughter and coheir of Robert Jordan of Harborne and wife to Stephen

Odiarne, is a coat-of-arms; and a framed wooden panel 20 inches by 17 inches with the same coat-of-arms, and a similar inscription hangs on the south wall of the chancel.

Lieut.-Col. W. Odiarne Cavenagh has supplied me with the following notes on the memorial panel to Elizabeth Odiarne:—

“(1) Description of the coat-of-arms: ODIARNE, Sable, a chevron between three covered cups, or; impaling JORDAN, Sable, on a chief, or, three almond (or oak) leaves, proper, an eagle displayed, argent, membered, gules, between two bendlets, argent.

“(2) ODIARNES. This family was probably an offshoot of the Odiarnes of Wittersham in the isle of Oxney who, according to Hasted, were “a family of good note in the county” as far back as Richard II. They possessed lands in Bethersden and Halden for three or four generations previous to moving to Leeds about 1640. Joan, sister of Stephen Odiarne of Bethersden, married James Baker of Halden in 1597. His daughter Dorothy married Rev. Richard Taylor in 1625. He was Vicar of Bethersden 1622—26-7, Rector of Halden 1626-7—51. His grandson Stephen of the Middle Temple married Elizabeth Jordan.

“(3) JORDANS. This family migrated to Halden from Cranbrook. They were very possibly of Flemish weaver origin, the name being occasionally spelt, in the Cranbrook Registers, Jourdainne.”

The registers begin in 1558, and are continuous to the present time. There is also a register of briefs ranging from 1689 to 1761. There are a few entries of some interest in the earliest book.

1. John Crawford was appointed Rector on 5 September 1645 by a Committee of Parliament on the sequestration of Richard Taylor, and was admitted on 9 May 1651, after Mr. Taylor's death. He continued to hold the Rectory until his death in 1683. Walker, in his *Sufferings of the Clergy*, says that John Crawford “refused to baptize, saying that he was sent not to baptize but to preach the Gospel.” The registers do not confirm this statement. In the margin, against the entry of a baptism on 21 September 1645, is written, “The first child baptized by Mr John Crawford,” and throughout his incumbency baptisms are entered in his handwriting. There is also apparently a record of a dispute between him and an Anabaptist, for on 4 August 1651 he baptized Thomas Gibbens “19½ weeks after he was born, the anabaptist sayde beeing dead.”

2. John Walker records his induction in 1682, and adds, “*Ac in eodem Anno predicto Ruinosam domum edificabat (plusquam*

*centum libris edificando expensis) Certis annis in parsimonia nec non melancholia vivit. Antea quam Crumena Cæsaris imagine florebat."*

He also records that on 28 April 1688 the Archdeacon "decreed in open Court that y<sup>o</sup> parishioners of Halden have no authority, power, or right to dig or flaw any Turf for graving their graves, it being the Rector's peculiar freehold," and adds, "I record this for the benefit of my successors."

There are five bells, called locally the nightingales of Kent. Nos. 1—4 bear the inscription "Joseph Hatch made me," in old English letters with an ornamental border over each word. No. 5 has "Josephus Hatch me fecit, Reinold May C.W." in capitals. The inscription is round the shoulder of the bells; and on No. 2, about one inch below the beading under the inscription, is the word "water" in capitals. The dates are: No. 3, 1609; No. 2, 1610; Nos. 1 and 4, 1611; No. 5, 1620. Hatch's trade mark, a medallion bearing three bells, is stamped on Nos. 4 and 5.

A curious object in the churchyard is a monument of wood which originally stood in the ground, but the lower part has now rotted away. The base is 14 inches square, and projected about 2 feet above the ground. The upper part is pyramidal, rising about 5 feet from the base. Round three sides of the upper part of the base there runs a groove 4 inches wide by half-an-inch deep. On the fourth side there is, above the groove and adjoining it, a similar depression 4 inches square and half-an-inch deep; and below the groove, and adjoining it, another depression 10 inches wide and 1 inch deep, extending to the bottom of the base. No one has any certain account to give of it, but it is said by some to be a monument to a soldier who was hung, by others that it commemorates a smuggler, or a suicide; others think—but this is very improbable—that it originally formed the top of the spire.

There is in the Church a fragment of stone which was till recently standing in the Rectory lawn, and which was brought there from the churchyard. It is about 3 feet 6 inches long and 7½ inches across. It is octagonal with slightly concave sides. The lower end is broken, and at the upper end is a knop supported by four half-figures of angels bearing shields. At the top is a plain circular hole about 4 inches wide by 3 inches deep. It may have been the upper part of the stem of the churchyard cross.

Mr. Wynford B. Grimaldi, formerly of Hathewolden Grange in

High Halden, has printed two pamphlets in connection with the parish—one in 1895, containing a full collection of all monumental inscriptions then legible in the Church and churchyard; the other in 1900, containing a list of forty-six Rectors, with extracts from records and other information.

In 1900-1 the tower and spire were resingled and repaired, with the exception of the south side of the tower, which was resingled twenty years earlier.