

THE RECORDS OF THE COURTS OF THE
ARCHDEACONRY AND CONSISTORY OF
CANTERBURY.

BY C. EVELEIGH WOODRUFF, M.A.

THE recent transference (1928) of the greater part of the records¹ of the Archdeaconry and Consistory Courts from the chamber over the Christ Church gateway to the Library of the Dean and Chapter seems to offer a suitable opportunity of publishing some account of the collection with a rough inventory indicating the various classes into which the documents have now been sorted and the kind of information they contain.

The Visitation-books which begin in 1499 constitute by far the most important part of the collection. The entries in these and in the other Court books were made in Latin down to the year 1732 when English takes the place of Latin.

In an Appendix I have printed in full a few miscellaneous documents amongst the stray papers which seemed to be of especial interest. The earliest of these is a Bull of Pope Julius II, dated 4 Nov., 1507, granting certain privileges to Roger Darley, rector of the church of St. James in Dover, "otherwise called the chapel of Rutbye." The leaden *bull* has gone, but the slits for the tags by which it was once attached show that this is the original document and not a copy.

Leland, in his Itinerary [Pt. vii. p. 128] writing of Dover says "The town is divided into VI parishes, whereof III be under the rofe of St. Marteyn's in the heart of the town. The other three stand abroad of the which one is called St. James of Rudby, or more like, Rodeby *a statione navium*."

¹ The Transcripts of the Parish Registers and Tithe Maps are still over the gateway and in the keeping of the Deputy Registrar of the Diocese.

The two letters relating to the distribution of the revised Prayer Book in 1662 [Appendix B and C.] possess a certain interest at the present time, though possibly a melancholy one to those who hoped to witness the distribution of another Revised Prayer Book.

The letter from King Charles II to Archbishop Sheldon [Appendix D] asking for a loan from the clergy, for the purpose of raising troop to repel a possible invasion of the country is dated 21 June, 1667—three weeks later the Dutch fleet sailed up the Medway and burnt several of the King's ships lying off Chatham. On receipt of the letter the Archbishop wrote to his Commissary at Canterbury bidding him bring the matter of the loan before the clergy of the diocese, "especially the dignified and richer sort."

INVENTORY.

ARCHDEACON'S COURT.

Act Books. 1639, 1640 and 1743 to 1758.

Account Book of the Receiver for the Archdeacon, 1505-1517.

Assessment Books.

1. Deal, for repairing the Church and rebuilding the steeple. 1686.
2. Charlton by Dover 1706-1735.
3. Thurnham, from 1668 (in very bad condition).
4. ——— Churchwarden's Accounts, 1668-1715 (in bad condition).

Formulae, Precedents & Notes of Legal proceedings.

Mandates to Induct Bishops, 19th cent.

Fees and Salaries of Officials & returns made to the Secretary of State between 1846 & 1851.

Papers in suits, 16th and 17th cents., (a large collection but without index).

Proceedings before Surrogates, 1670 and 1686.

Procuracion Books 1603-1625 and 19th cent.

* * * * *

Bull (Papal) of Julius II granting privileges to the Church of St. James, Dover, *alias capella de Rutbye*. (See Appendix A.)

Certificate of Character, for persons who were desirous of obtaining a licence for exercising the office of Apothecary, Surgeon, Schoolmaster, Midwife, or Parish Clerk.

(Many of these certificates are very quaintly worded, for specimens see Appendix. I have made a list of these certificates arranged alphabetically under parishes.)

Chapels, Non-Conformist, which were certified in the Consistory Court in the years 1838 and 1844.

—— Registered, for Marriages, 1843-4.

Churchwarden's Declarations 1836-1851.

Church Goods, see Inventories.

Consecration. Forms of Prayer for consecrating Churches and Churchyards 1852.

Confirmations. Notices of, sent to parishes, 1758.

Citations issued to the Clergy of the Deaneries of Canterbury, Charing, Sandwich and Lympne. Names given, late 17th & 18th cents.

Consistory Court. Proceedings 1695-1702. Fee-Book 1669 and 1758 to 1765.

Convocation, Precepts & Elections 18th & 19th cents.

Excommunication Books. 8 Vols. extending from 1597 to 1684 (a gap between 1641 and 1662). Also papers relating to the same 1675 to 1763.

Faculties, and Petitions for Faculties.

A list of these—arranged alphabetically under parishes—has been made.

The following appear to be of especial interest :

Canterbury St. Martins, 1764 for pulling down the rectory house “ adjoining the churchyard which is ruinous and unfit for a minister to live in.”

—— St. Mildred's for taking down the tower and selling 4 of the bells, 1832.

- Deal. Pilot's Gallery in the Church. The Pilots in 1709 claim exclusive right to the gallery of the west end of the church on the ground that "some *fifty years earlier*" they had rebuilt the gallery after it had been destroyed by the fall of the steeple.
- Dover. St. Mary's. The Fellowship of Pilots in 1744 oppose the grant of a faculty for enlarging a gallery in the church for the purpose of placing therein an organ, on the ground that the said gallery was built by the Fellowship in 1699. Further, the Pilots allege that there are about 50 pilots living in the parish; that they are oftentimes called out of church to go on board ships, and that if they be turned out of their gallery where they are accustomed to sit together, a Pilot leaving the church might disturb the congregation, &c.
- Faversham. 1734. "For taking down the old tower or steeple at the east end of the nave of the church, the pillars which support the same, and the arches dependant thereupon and also all the piers or pillars and arches of the nave, together with the roofs and flats of the said church and rebuilding the same according to a plan." The Mayor and Jurats to pay £500 towards the cost of the alterations.
- Godmersham. 1686. Bells (4) to be recast.
- Hardres Little. 1830. New Church to be built by "Tillard bequest" of £2,000.
- Herne. 1672. Petition to sell 628 lbs. of bell metal.
- Kingsdown (by Sittingbourne). 1762. For pulling down the chancel of the N side of the Church, which is much out of repair.
- Maidstone. 1843. To remove the Reading Desk and Pulpit from the west end of the nave to the east end of nave.
- Murston. 1761. A bell to be sold for Church repairs.
- Paddlesworth (undated). Petition that the sum of £11 which had been raised for buying a new bell should be spent in buying a Communion Cup there being at present only one of pewter.

Romney, New. 1718. For Pews in the south aisle and chancel for the wives of Common Councillors and Freemen.

1739. A paper stating that the Vicarage house is much out of repair, and that Mr. Mascall is willing to give £200 to build a new house. (With a ground plan.)

Sandwich, St. Clement. 1682. The parishioners petition for an order to remove the Communion Table from the middle of the chancel to the east end, since in its present position "it hath been much abused and turned to prophane uses."

Swingfield. 1769. For selling two bells towards the cost of ceiling the Church.

Sutton Valence. 1824. To pull down the Church and rebuild it.

Walmer. 1809. To purchase land for the "Barrack services."

——— 1829. For enlarging the Church (with a coloured plan).

* * * * *

Hospitals. 1666. Inquiry concerning.

Inventories of Church Goods and Lists of Benefactions.

A few were made in the year 1759, but most in 1813, 1824, 1825, 1826. (I have made a list of these arranged alphabetically under parishes.)

Also "Inventory of the Plate of the late Sir Henry Oxenden, Bart., deceased contained in a box standing in the Cathedral Church of Christ in Canterbury," in 1710.

Inhibitions & Relaxations, 17th, 18th and 19th cents.

Letter Books. First half of the 19th cent.

Letters & Receipted Bills, 18th cent. (2 bundles).

Licences, Marriage, and allegations and bonds relating thereto. 16th, 17th and 18th cents. (Printed by J. M. Cowper down to the year 1750.)

Memoranda relating to Marriage Licences 1724-1731.

—— for Curacies, and Petitions for the same. 1683-1697 and early years of 18th cent.

—— for Surgeons, Schoolmasters, &c., 1700-1726 and 1723 to 1764.

Mandates to induct to benefices 18th cent (5 bundles).

—— to induct Richard Bancroft as Abp of Canterbury.

Miscellaneous. Amongst many others the following appear worthy of mention :

Deal, a plan showing the proposed new pewing of the church. 1618.

A private Account-book kept by Simon D'Evereux, a minor canon of the Cathedral and rector of Harbledown. 1691-1730.

Canterbury St. Andrews, a plan for new pews giving some description of the old church which was demolished in 1763. [See Appendix H.]

Elham. 1724/5. A Communion Cup purchased weighing 13 oz. 9 dwt. at 7s. per oz.=£4 14s. Also a Salver weighing 9 oz. 8 dwt. 12 gr. at 6s. 10d. per oz.=£3 4s. Received for the *old cup* £2 7s.

Faversham. 1689. A copy of the Town *Droits* agreed upon by the Mayor and Jurats in 1588.

Monitions, relating to non-residence (chiefly 19th cent.); and to ex-communications (17th and 18th cents.).

Oaths and Declarations.

A parchment covered book contains the declaration of 99 clergymen and schoolmasters of conformity to the liturgy of the Church of England, and of repudiation of the "Solemn League and Covenant." This was in the year 1662. In subsequent years the same declaration was made by the Clergy and Schoolmasters on their appointment to office, down to the year 1689, when another form was substituted by Act of Parliament.

—— taken and subscribed by Schoolmasters in 1714 and in many subsequent years (1) Allegiance to the King (2) Abjuration of the Pretender (3) Conformity to the liturgy of the Church of England (4) Repudiation of Transubstantiation, (with signatures).

Penances. 1665 to 1792. A specimen of a clerical penance, performed in 1667 by the vicar of Tonge is given in Appendix G.

Petitions. 1663 to 1682, also one with the autograph signatures of the Archdeacon and the Clergy of the diocese, to the House of Lords in 1845.

Presentments, 1700 to 1850, made by Churchwardens at Easter and Michaelmas. The earlier returns contain interesting information, which often throws light on the condition of the fabric of a church and its furniture during the earlier years of the eighteenth century; but later the Churchwardens appear to have been supplied with forms on which, against every article of enquiry, the words "Nothing to present" were *printed* and to these the wardens too often merely appended their signatures.

Precedent Books. 32 Volumes, 16th, 17th and 18th cents. Several of these books were transferred to the Chapter library from the District Probate Registry on the closing of that office in 1928.

These books contain much interesting matter besides Precedents and *Formulæ*.

Proctors, appointment of 16th and 17th cents.

Proceedings in the Commissary's Court 1634-6.

—— in the King's Court of the Liberty of St. Augustine's, held at a house called the "Blackhorse," 1669-1684.

—— before Surrogates 1715-1735.

*Procuration Books.*¹ 1603-1625 and 19th cent.

Sequestrations. 17th, 18th and early 19th cents.

Testamentary. Papers relating to testamentary matters 17th 18th and 19th cents. (9 bundles.)

—— Acts of Court. First half of 18th cent.

—— Renunciations of administration by Exōrs. 1630-1639.

¹ Procurations "are certain sums of money which parish priests pay yearly to the Bishop or Archdeacon *ratione visitationis*. They were anciently paid in necessary victuals for the visitor and his attendants, but afterwards turned into money." Cowell's *Law Dictionary*.

Visitation Books. A long and important series, unfortunately many of the earlier books are in very bad condition and require repair and rebinding.

The series (with certain gaps) extend from the year 1499 to 1901.

The following is a list of the earlier books (Vol. 1) 1499. (2) 1501. (3) 1505 to 1508. (4) 1514 to 1516. (5) 1520 to 1523. (6) 1538 to 1541. (7) 1541, 1555, 1556. (8) 1559. (9) 1560, 1561. (10) 1562. (11) 1567-1572. (12) 1573. (13) 1576-79. (14) 1582-1590.

Papers relating to Visitations 1822-1857.

Articles of Inquiry at Archiepiscopal Visitations, 1737, 1740, 1749, 1758, 1760.

—— issued by A^bp Sheldon to every parish, in 1676, as to the number of inhabitants, 'popish-recusants,' and dissenters from the Church, with the answers to the same. (These have been transcribed by Mr. Stuart Davis of Canterbury.)

—— 1822-1857.

Articles of Inquiry. 1792-1794, 1813, 1824.

Archiepiscopal Visitations. 1814-1827.

Memorandum book of Archdeacon Croft containing notes relating to the fabric and furniture of the Churches of the diocese in 1824.

Writs issued in the Court of the Liberty of St. Augustine's, in the 16th and 17th cents.

APPENDIX A.

A.D. 1507 Bull of Pope Julius II granting certain privileges to the Church of St. James in Dover.

Julius episcopus servus servorum dei Dilecto filio Rogero Darley Rectori parochialis ecclesie sancti Iacobi Ville de Doveire, alias Capelle de Rutbye nuncupate Cantuariensi diocese Salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem. Cum a nobis petitur quod iustum est et honestum tam uigor equitatis quam ordo exigit rationis ut id per sollicitudinem officii nostri ad debitum perducatur effectum, ea propter dilecte in domino fili tuis iustis postulacionibus grato

concurrentes assensu omnes libertates et immunitates a predecessoribus nostris Romanis Pontificibus sive per privilegia vel alias indulgencias seu indulta tibi et ecclesie predicte concessas necnon libertates et exemptiones secularium exactionum a Regibus et Principibus ac aliis Xpi fidelibus tibi et dicte ecclesie rationabiliter indultas specialiter autem decimas etiam prediales primicias oblationes agros terras prata pascua agnos odos (*hædos*) pisces de marinis et dulcibus aquis percipiendi aliaque immobilia bona etiam infra limites parrochie dicte ecclesie consistencia ad dictum ecclesiam legitime spectancia sicut ea omnia iuste et pacifice possides tibi et per te eidem ecclesie apostolica auctoritate confirmamus et presentis scripti patrocinio communimus. Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostre confirmacionis et comunicacionis infringere vel in ausu temerario contraire. Siquis autem hoc attemptare presumpserit indignacionem omnipotentis Dei ac beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum eius se noverit incursum. Dat' Rome apud Sanctum Petrum anno incarnationis dominice Millesimo quingentesimo septimo, Pridie Non. Novembr' Pontificatus nostri Anno Quarto

S de (?)

A de Buccabellis

C de bibrabai

B.

25 July, 1662. Letter of Archbishop Juxon to the bishops of the southern province relating to the distribution of the revised Prayer Book. (*Copy.*)

After my hearty Commendacons. There being a convenient number of Books of Common Prayer already printed and now binding up for the use of the severall Churches and Chappells within his Ma^{ty} Kingdom of England & Dominion of Wales, Your Lo^p is hereby desired to consider how many you shall have occasion to use within your dioces, disposing to each Church and Chappell one, (for that none of these already printed can be spared to come into the hands of any private person), and to certifie the same by the next post unto Mr. Andrew Croke, Stationer, living at the signe of the Green Dragon in St. Paul's Churchyard, London, to whom order is already given to putt up for you such number of the said Books as you shall have occasion to use, and to direct & send them to such place or places within your dioces for the convenient dispersing thereof as your Lo^p by your letters under your hand shall

direct him. Thus not doubting of your Lo^p readines to forward this pious worke. I committ you to the protection of the Almighty and do remaine

Your Lo^{ps} very loving friend & Brother,

W. CANT.

Lambeth, 25 July, 1662.

C.

30 July, 1662. Richard Aldworth (? the Archbishop's chaplain) te Sir Edmund Peirce, Knt, Commissary of the Court of Canterbury, relating to the same subject as the last.

Sir

My Lord hath often enquired after you and severall tymes sent to your house to speak with you concerning the dispersing of the Books of Common prayer the care whereof in part belongs to you. By the copy of the Letter inclosed directed to the severall Bps within the Province of Cant you will see what course you are to take and the same you must follow, pray advise with yours and the Archdeacon's Registers and accordingly send Mr. Crooke word how many of the Books you shall have occasion to use for the severall churches and chappells within the Diocese of Cant: and to what places you would have your numbers directed that the service may be performed within the tyme lymitted.

Y^r humble servant,

RI. ALDORTH.

Lambeth, 30 Julii, 1662.

Addressed " For S^r Edmund Peirce Knt, Com^{ry} of the Consistory Court at Canterbury there, leave this at Mr. Hardres his house in St. George's street in Canterbury, In his absence for W^m Somner, Esq^{re} at his Reg^{ry} there.

D.

King Charles II to Archbishop Sheldon, demanding a loan from the clergy. 21st June, 1667. (Copy.)

Charles R.

Most Rev^d Father in God our Right trusty and right entirely Beloved Councillor wee greet you well. Where as the insolent spirit of our enemies hath prevayled soe farre with them as to make an Invasion upon this o^r Kingdome which is in continuall danger of

their attempts upon the same. Wee hold our selfe obliged to use all fitt and proper meanes both for the Repelling our said Enemies and the defence of our people, which, as it cannot be better, nor (as wee conceive) otherwise done, than by the speedy raising of a considerable Army, Soe neither can that be performed without good summes of money. Wee therefore relying upon yo^r wisdome and readiness to assist us and yo^r country in this exigent have thought fitt to recommend the effectuall consideration here of unto you, and to require yo^r utmost endeavours forthwith to dispose and quicken the Clergie and Civilians of this our Kingdome to make a Voluntary Liberall Advance of what summes of money they can afford by way of Loane towards the supply of o^r present pressing occasions in this time of publique danger, to be repayed againe out of the eleaven monthes Assessment in course, And wee are the rather induced to beleive yo^r Labours herein will be successfull because you are to deale with a sort of persons endued with discretion and ingenuity, who cannot forgett what tendernesse wee had for them, what care to protect and support them, and how much their Interest and welfare is involved in ours, But arguments and motives of this nature wee leave to yo^r prudent management and soe bid you heartily farewell, Given at o^r Court at Whitehall the 21th day of June 1667 in the Nineteenth yeare of o^r Reigne. By his Ma^{ties} Command,

WILL MORICE.

Addressed : To the most Reverend Father in God our Right Trusty and Right Entirely Beloved Councelor Gilbert Lord Arch B^p of Canterbury Primate and Metropolitane of all England.

Archbishop Sheldon to Sir Edmund Peirce, Commissary of Canterbury, on the same subject as the last, June 24, 1667,
S^r

After my hearty comendacons &c I have received from his Ma^{tie} a Letter wherein his Ma^{tie} recommends to my care, the promoting his & the Kingdomes interest, in this great tyme of danger & necessity By stirring up the Clergy & Civilians to a Voluntary and liberall Advance of what summes of money they can afford by way of Loane upon security of the eleaven monthes Assesment in course, I have sent together with this a copie of his Ma^{ties} Letters that you may fully understand the tenor & meaning of them. I doe therefore hereby desire & require of you that you forthwith call together the Clergy of my Diocese of Canterbury,

and that you deal wth the Dignified & richer sort and such as you shall thinke to bee well able in ye most effectuall manner you can encouraging them to make a speedy free and liberall Advance towards the supply of his Ma^{ties} and the Kingdomes pressing occasions in this tyme of so great insolence of our enemies by their late invasion hath brought us. I am persuaded they will not thinke much to part with some reasonable proportion at present to secure all the rest, and the rather since it is desired but upon a Loane, for which they shall have that security which is the best the Kingdome can afford, And they that come in earliest are like to have their money soonest paid them againe. I shall not doubt your care & industry in this so great affaire, and of what shall bee by you herein done & effected, I desire as speedy on account as may be, And so I bid you heartily farewell and am, S^r

Yo^r very Loving frend

Lambeth house
June 24, 1667.

GILB: CANT.

You are likewise to call before you all officialls Registers, Procters, and Officers of the Ecclesiasticall Courts within my Diocese, and to stirr up them alsoe that they bee liberall handed in this so necessary affaire according to y^e desire of his Ma^{ties} Letters.

E.

Masters of Grammar Schools who made the statutable declarations under 13th and 14th Chas. II.

Ashford, 1680, John Drake ; 1714, Richard Bate.

Benenden, 1714, John Saunders.

Canterbury, Kings School, 1661, John Paris.

———— 1663, John Culling (usher).

———— 1714, John Smith.

Cranbrook, 1671, Abraham Walker ; 1689, Tho. Crowther ;
1736, Richard Browne.

Faversham, 1677, Tho. Lees ; 1719, Stephen Bowdidge.

Folkestone, 1672, William Harman.

Goudhurst, 1661, John Cooper ; 1675, Daniel Rosewell.

Herne, 1679, Tho. Engham.

Maidstone, 1661, Michael Altham (Curate of Otham).

Sandwich, 1674, Richard Culmer ; 1689, Timothy Thomas ; 1758, John Conant ; 1804, John Smith (appointed by the Mayor and Jurats of the town on the failure of the Fellows of Lincoln Coll. Oxford to present).

Sutton Valence, 1661, Benjamin Nicolls ; 1681, Timothy Wilson.

Tenterden, 1661, Robert Croyley ; 1681, Robert Crutnall ; 1714, Humfrey Hammond ; 1732, Theophilus de l'Angle, clerk ; 1786, James Hall.

Wye, 1661, William Fenby ; 1684, Robert Wrentmore ; 1714, John Warham ; 1717, Tho. Turner.

F.

Certificates of character and of professional skill put in by persons desirous of obtaining a licence from the Ecclesiastical Court to practise surgery. In 1661 the following curious testimonials were presented by one Walter Coke, or Cock (the name is spelt both ways) : " I Steven Ferrall of Ulcomb doth witnes that the said Waltar Coke hath done great kuers (*cures*) for me, I being . . . ? for the parish of Holingbourn. There was pore man broke his legg all to peses (so) that the bones did ratel like a bagg of stones, and likewise a child of mine fell into a kelne (? kiln) of skoulding worter, and skoulded her arme from her hand to the shoulder . . . till her arme was so rot that the flesh fell off from the bones, and this Walter Coke did take them both in hand (*sic*) and kivered (*covered*) them in short time, which weare very great kieurs, and many other great kieurs he has done wich I cold speke of, but I hope this will give satisfackshon.

STEVEN FERRALL."

William Dan, churchwarden of Leedes, testifies that, " about 13 or 14 yeares agoe Walter Cock did a very great keuer apone one Edward Parker of Leedes his arm being a most rot off he (the said Walter) made a sofiszent (*sufficient*) kuer within 6 weekes time, which other sofechant (*sufficient*) surgenys did ask 20^{li} for the kuer. Besides this John Dan the soon (*son*) of Will. Dan being lame of his legge laye 9 weekes under the surgen's hands (who) made a question of cotting off his legge, (but) this Walter Cock made a sounde kuer of it in 5 weekes time. More, I William Dan having my hand torne to peces in my mill, insomuch that I was doubtful of losing

my hand, the said Walter Cock made it a sound keuer in a short time. Much more I can relate but I hope this will satisfy.

WILL^m DAN and JOHN DAN.

At the beginning of the 18th century apparently it was still possible for a Barber to rise to the dignity of a Barber-Surgeon by putting into the registry a certificate of his skill signed by two members of the latter profession—e.g. In 1707 John Hadd of Headcorn, barber, is certified by Peter Couchman, Barber-Surgeon, of Marden, and John Christian Senr of Biddenden “to be a person of honest life and conversation, and well skilled in breathing or opening a veine, or letting blood and such other matters as belong to a Barber-Surgeon.

G.

TONGE. A Clerical penance to be performed by the Vicar in 1667, both in his own church and in the parish church of Sittingbourne, “at each place on a Sunday in time of divine service after the second lesson for morning prayer, timely notice being given to the Churchwardens of each place, and to Mr. Jones, the Minister of Sittingbourne, after whom the said Vicar with a distinct and audible voice shall say as followeth”:

“Whereas I William Pell, Vicar of Tonge, all care and conscience of my duty and good conscience set aside, and studying only (as I was a poor man) the relief of my present wants, have given great scandal and offence, highly trespassed the law, and dishonoured my ministry, by a constant and habitual course and practice of marrying all sorts of people, both of my own and other parishes, that would hire me to do it, without either banns or licence, . . . as if my church were a lawless church and myself a lawless minister. I do now with unfeigned sorrow and contrition of heart acknowledge this my fowle offence and crime, craving pardon for it both from God and his Church, and from this congregation in particular, promising, by Gods assisting grace to endeavour an amends and satisfaction of what is past by my future unfeigned reformation.”

H.

PETITIONS. Godmersham, 1671. The parishioners petition the Court that they may be allowed to make use of the “Great Hall in the parsonage house (near our church) belonging to the

Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Canterbury, by reason of the great repairs of our Church which are now going about, for the publick service of God until the said repairs are finished."

This is signed by Wm. Brodnax, Nich. Knight, Mich. Hills, churchwarden, Tho. Pisinge, churchwarden, Simon Otway, Ric. Austen, Will. Carter and others.

Canterbury, St. Andrews. A petition relating to the provision of new pews in the Church of St. Andrew, Canterbury, in 1727 gives some particulars about the old church, which stood in the middle of the street, (now called the Parade,) and was demolished in 1763. It is described as "a small narrow church containing only one aisle and without any side aisles. At the West end is a gallery the seats of which are used by men and boys only, most of whom are apprentices, and men-servants, but masters of families and their sons have not sufficient room to sit, stand and kneel in time of divine service, though Mr. Cumberland, the Rector, has allowed the parishioners to sit in the Chancel . . . the number of pews in the body of the church is 15 and no more, and these are all occupied by wives, widows, and their daughters."

I.

PRESENTMENTS. (Extracts.) The churchwardens of Ospringe put in the following strange answers to certain articles of enquiry :

"We have a decent carpet of cloath for the Communion table though the same has *not ever been laid upon it in time of divine service.*"

"We have, though not a chest, a poorman's box strongly nayled up which we think surer than locks, & keyes, but we dare *trust nothing to it* having had our church . . . broken open divers times of late."

Harty. In 1637, the Churchwardens made the following charges against the curate of the parish : "Our Minister useth to weare a shorte Preist's coat but hath no gown.

We present our minister for that since Michaelmas last he hath been divers times to an alehouse in our parish (namely John Osborne's) at cards & useth sometimes to swear more than is fitt, as fame goeth.

Our afternoon sermons (which we have twice or thrice in a quarter of a year) are not turned into Catechisme by question

and answer, as is required, but usually performed as at other times."

To the first the Curate replied that "he is poor man & not yet able to buy him a gown, but weareth a short coat in performing his duty in the church & a surplice over the same, but graduate he is none."

To the second: "That he hath been at the house detected & there sometimes played at cards at Christmas time with one of his neighbours in friendly sort and some small matter, & not otherwise, and unawares an oath might fall out of his mouth, but he is heartily sorry for the same, & promises seriously hereafter to be more wary in giving occasion of offence of that kind.

MISDEMEANOUR OF A PARISH CLERK. In 1718, one Tho. Coates writes to the official of the Archdeacon complaining "that our pretended clerk and his wife washed a soping (*sic*) that is severall sorts of linen, and he & she went into the church & hung up 3 or 4 lines crosse the chancell, and hung them full of the said linen to drei & let them hang there till the next day before the alter." (The name of the parish is not given.)

CRANBROOK. A CURATE'S STIPEND IN 1702. "Mr. Charles Buck, our vicar, has a licensed curate and allows him six and twenty pounds a year salary, and so much of the Requisites as amounts to near 3 pound a year, one year with another."

J.

SUNDAY SERVICES IN COUNTRY PARISHES IN 1702.

An account how ye parishes of Luddenham, Oure (*Oare*) & Davington are at present serv'd & shall be God willing for ye future by me Jo: Sherwin.

Every Sunday thro'out ye year I go to Luddenham perform divine service & preach if it be in the fore-noon; if it be ye afternoon, & ye summer half-year, viz., from Lady day to Michs., I perform divine service, catechize & preach too; if it be in ye afternoon & ye winter half-year, viz., from Michs. to Ladyday I perform divine service and read a homily. Every other Sunday I go to Oure perform divine service & preach if it be in ye fore-noon; if it be in ye afternoon & ye summer half-year I perform divine service, catechise & preach too;

if it be in ye afternoon & ye winter half-year I perform divine service and read an homily. Every other Sunday, as at Oure, just so I do at Davington. All ye afternoon sermons I preach of my own good will & upon condition that ye respective parishioners send their children to be catechized & come themselves duly to ye H Communion, wch I warn once a moneth in one of ye three parishes, besides ye times of Christmas, Easter & Whitsuntide. The Churches lie triangular, so that ye inhabitants of each place may, if they will, with ease resort to 'em, as also know when & where I officiate by ye notice wch I do and mean to continue giving. I hope ye course laid down in both plain and satisfactory, so that I intend to pursue ye same, till different orders be appointed to.

Jo: Sherwin, Clerk.

June 29th, 1902.

Luddenham & Davington are but two little miles distant & Oure no more than one from 'em both.