

Richard Kilburne
A topographie or survey of the county of Kent
London
1659



A
TOPOGRAPHIE,
OR
SURVEY
OF THE
COUNTY
OF
KENT.

With some Chronological, Histori=
call, and other matters touching
the same: And the severall Parishes and
Places therein.

By Richard Kilburne of Hawk=
herst, Esquire.

Nascimur partim Patriæ.

LONDON,
Printed by Thomas Mabb for
Henry Atkinson, and are to be sold at his Shop at
Staple-Inn-gate in Holborne, 1659.

126

.....

HAWKEHERST.

In respect I finde not any description of this Parish, or
other matter concerning the same, offered to the pub=
lique, and it having been the place of my habitation for
above twenty eight years last past (Gods Providence ha=
ving also there lent me an inheritance) I though fit to
enlarge my selfe upon this place, thereby to preserve the
memory of some things which may be usefull, at least for
the Owners and Inhabitants in the same.

It lieth at the South side of the County, by a Rivulet
running into the River of Rother, about three miles and a
halfe (towards the South) distant from Cranbrook.

A small part thereof (called Haselden, viz. two houses,

and a small quantity of land to each) is in the Hundred of Shoyswell, and County of Sussex, and the residue thereof is in Kent, in the Bailiwick of the Seven Hundreds, Lath of Scray, West division of the County, and lower division of Justices in that Lath.

So much thereof as is either in the Borough of Hawkeherst, otherwise South Borough, antiently called the halfe

<catchword> Hundred

127

of Barnfield (and lately, but without ground, the whole Hundred) or in the North Borough (truly called the half Hundred) is in the Hundred of great Barnfield (where the liberty of St. Augustine claimeth over the Denss of Ockley, Cillenden and Parock, in that North Borough.)

So much thereof as is in the West Borough, is in the Hundred of Selbritten, and the liberty of the late Dean of Canterbury claimeth over the Denss of Foxhole, Little Hensell, Pipsden, Congherst, and Little Riseden in the same.

And the residue, viz. so much thereof as is in the Borough of Crothal (which is but a very small part) is in the hundred of Cranbrook.

The aforesaid Borough of Hawkherst hath a court Leet of it self (where the *Barsholder of that Borough is chosen, and the inhabitants of the same owe no service to the Court Leet holden for the Hundred of great Barnfeild, but at that Court an inhabitant of this Borough may be chosen Constable of that Hundred, and the liberty of Wye claimeth over this Borough.

*sic

This Parish was in the Deanry of Charing, and Diocess of Canterbury:

The Church standeth in the Hundred of great Barnfeild, and was called St. Laurence.

This Parish is very populous, and one of the greatest Parishes in the County (not having a Town therein) and it so appeared to be, for that antiently upon Collection of the number of Communicants in every parish in the County (onely foure Parishes in the same) viz. Maidstone Cranbrooke, Feversham, and Goudherst (all which have Townes in them) were found to have more Communicants in them than this, and the same had (within 20. years last past) at the least, 1400. Communicants, but it hath very many poor therein (the charge whereof in the year, 1653. was 209l. 9s. 3d. whereas in the year 1549.) it was but, 7s. 2d. and although the parso-

128

nage of the same be of very good yearly value, yet it hath for many years past been, and for the future will be a great cause of sadness to the place, that the allowance for the maintenance of the Minister thereof is very small, which thus happened.

The Abbot of Battel was Patron of the Church, and (till the dissolution, or surrender of that Abbey) there was always a Rector incumbent, of one of which number (viz. John Crane) a monument in brasse (mentioning the same) was till of late times, upon a faire tombe-stone, in the great Chancell of this Church, and one Henry Simons (at the time of the appropriation herein after mentioned) was Parson incumbent there, But (Trint. 30.

Hen. 8. The Abbey being surrendered to the King) he 19. Martii that year granted the Patronage and Presentation of the Rectory to Charles Brandon (Duke of Suffolk) and that King (11. December. 38. of his raigne) granted the Parsonage to the Dean, and Chapter of Christ-church Oxford, and appropriated the same thereunto (immediately after the death of the said Simons the incumbent) and appointed that the said Dean and Chapter should present an able Clarke to the Ordinary (who should be named perpetuall Vicar of this Church) and should bear all charges (except reparation of the Chancell) and should have a dwelling, 12l. 10s 10d. yearly pension, and should pay the King yearly, for his tenths, 25s. 1d. and be charged with first-fruits (which being done without the consent of the said Duke, and no act done by him therein (that appeareth, no Vicar was endowed) but the Office of Curate, was (ever since) given by the said Dean and Chapter as a Donative, and no first-fruits were paid, but onely 11s. 8d. as a stipendiary.

Afterwards the said Dean, and Chapter (10. *Februai 2. and 3. of King Phillip, and Queen Mary) granted to Sir. William Peter, 8l. per. annum. out of the Parsonage (so to be employed) that the Church-Wardens of

*sic

129 <sig S>

this Parish might receive, and pay it to the Vicar) But Edward Godwin (the late Stipendiary incumbent) had of the said Dean and Chapter (for his Salary) 20l. per. annum, the profits of the Easter book (which then was of some value) some roomes in the Parsonage house (called the Vicarage roomes) a small croft (called the vicarage croft) and the herbage of the Church-yard (all which was of so inconsiderable value, that upon his being sequestred about 13. years since) no other would accept of the place, but the Parish was destitute of a minister by the space of 14. months following, and then the Parishioners were inforced (to their great charge) to provide a Minister: But (not being able to bear that charge longer) an augmentation was procured from the state (which in few years afterwards was taken away) and the former allowance left to the Minister for his maintenance, which (by reason that the Easter book is become of no value) is but 24l. per. annum. (at the most) whereupon how this Parish hath since been supplied with a Minister, and is like to be for the future) the Reader may judge.

The Church was founded by the Abbot of Battle (in the raigne of King Edw. 3.) whose armes, and his sonns are at the top of the furthest of the three North windows in the North chappell or chancell there, and the armes of the Abbey of Battle; and of Etchingham, and Pashley, two antient (and then eminent families) in the Parishes adjoining (viz Etchingham, and Tiseherst) are in glasse at the top of the first of the said three windowes, and upon the great beam, at the top of the said Chancell, was carved the armes of Congherst (a very antient family in this Parish) whose house, of that name, and inheritance in this Parish (about 100. years since) came to the family of Scot, by the mariage of Thomas Scot with Mildred (daughter and heir of Thomas Congherst) and is still remaining in that family, But the more antient seat of that family of Cong=

herst, was at a place, in this Parish (neer the County of Sussex) yet called old Congherst (which was burned by the Danes) and the Mote and manner of scituation of the house is still there extant.

In this Chappell also (in the North Windowes of the same) are the pictures in glasse, of twelve men and their wives kneeling. viz. three at the bottom of each of the said three Windowes, and three at the top of the middle of the said three windowes.

These windowes having been broken, and more especially of late, what was written under most of them is not legible, only it appeareth; that the Christian name of the first was Robert, and that the second of them was Joane, wife of the said Robert, and Simon their son, principall Founder of that Chappell, who the third was, is not legible, the fourth was Ockley, the fifth was Delmynden, the sixth was Siesley, the seventh was Cockshot, the eighth was Badcock, and the ninth was Bartilt, but who the other three were, viz. those at the top of the middle window, is not legible; By tradition, these twelve are reported to be owners of the twelve Denns, which are held of Wye, but that cannot be, for that onely seven of the said twelve, are in this Parish, and it is (as aforesaid) yet discernable, That three of them were Ockley, Cockshot and Badcock, none of which were of the said twelve Denns (though very antient inhabitants in this Parish) but I rather conceive them to be twelve principal inhabitants in this Parish, at the time of the foundation of that Church.

In the great Window of the middle Chancell, were lately the pictures (well made in glasse) of the good Kings of Israel, and of the Prophets in their times (but lately spoiled, and defaced.)

There is also in this Church, a memoriall of the interment there of the family of Boys, a family of cheif esteem in this Parish, both at present, and for severall di-

scents before, whose ancestor (about 88. years since) came into this Parish to a fair seat (neer this Church) by him purchased of Edmund Roberts (whose father John Roberts was above 100. years since) buried at the foot of the reading deske in this Church, with an effigies, and inscription of brasse upon him lately taken away.

In the South Chancell of this Church was antiently the image of the Virgin Mary, and severall tapers or lights were also in this Church (called the beam light, the paschall light, Judas candles, St. James light, and Saint Laurence light, over the North Porch of this Church, is a roome (antiently called the Treasury) wherein were and still are (laid up in a chest) severall antient writings concerning the tenants of the twelve Dens (in and neer this Parish) in Wye liberty, and concerning lands and other rights, belonging particularly to this Parish.

The Chest aforesaid had antiently three locks, and the keys of the doore of the roome, and of two of the said three locks, were kept by three Parishioners (tenants of Wye liberty) and the other key of the chest, was kept by one of the Churchwardens.

In this Church also is a box fastned upon a post, and

called the Poor mans box, which antiently had four locks thereunto (the key of one of which was kept by the present Minister, the keyes of two other of them by the two Church wardens, and the key of the other by one of the Parishoners) and in this box were kept the moneys given to the use of the poor, and securities taken for moneys lent thereof by the Parish to poor Parishoners.

In this Parish (among other customes, or manners of tything) there is a custome to pay to the Parson yearly (by the acre) for Tythe of grass (cut in the lands at, or neer the Moore) and for fore-Pasture, and after-Pasture of the same, two pence; and for the like in all other places of the Parish, three half pence by the acre.

132

Also three half pence for the Tythe of every ten bushels of Apples.

For the profit of each Milch-Cow (besides the Calfe) a penny, and a halfe penny for every Calfe; all payable yearly at Easter.

And Suite being between Sir John Wildegos (Farmer of the Parsonage) and John Gibbon (Parishoner of this Parish) in the Ecclesiasticall Court, (touching this manner of Tything) Gibbon, in Michaelmas Terme 5^o. Jacobi Regis 1607. obteyned a prohibition thereupon (out of the then Kings-Bench) which was tried at the Assises holden at Rochester, upon Thursday in the second week in Lent that year, before Justice Waimsley and Justice Croke (then Judges) and the verdict passed for the said Gibbon, and in Easter Terme following judgement was given accordingly in the Kings-Bench.

The suggestion, and depositions are entred in that Court, Trin 4^o. of King James, Roll 692.

Most of the lands in this Parish are within the liberty of Wye (antiently belonging to the Abbey of Battle in Sussex) and Odo Abbot of Battle, & the Covent there, by Charter without date, granted to the owners of the said lands (by the name of his men of Hawkeherst) & their heirs, the Ville of Hawkeherst paying yearly ten Pounds, twenty Hennes, and two hundred and fifty Eggs, with divers restrictions.

But afterwards 5^o. Decemb. 14. Edw. 1. Henry, Abbot of Battle, and the Covent there, granted to them and their heirs (by the name of their tenants of Hawkeherst) all the tenements there, which they held of his fee, viz. in the Dens of Hawkeherst, Amboldessers, Delmynden, Sessele, Bertylts, Fissendenne, Markdenne, Frechele, Wynesle, Wynchinden, Chittenden, and Witheringhope; in Houses, Gardens, Lands and Woods, Plaines, Meadowes, and Pastures, Waters, and Mills, with the appurtenances (to hold freely, and in peace) paying yearly ten Pounds, twenty five Hens, and two hundred and fifty Eggs: And reserved suite to his

133

Court of Wye, from three weeks to three weeks, by two men onely, and for that the Abbot took into his hands Anglinge, which formerly was parcell of this tenancy, he by composition abated the tenants forty shillings per annum of the ten pounds, and (for the Hennes and Eggs so reserved) they compounded to pay him yearly eight shillings, and for the said suit of Court six shillings eight pence; So the moneys by them paid yearly ever since (to *to the Abbey, and the since owners of Wye) is eight

*sic

pounds fourteen shillings eight pence.

And the Tenants usually kept here a three weeks Court (called Slipmill, otherwise Moorhouse Court) for determination of matters under forty shillings, and accordingly such a Court was (in my memory) there kept, though now discontinued.

They also had power by the grant last before mentioned, to have a Reve of their own, and they had at least once in every year a Court (which was also called by the name aforesaid) where they did apportion the rent aforesaid payable to the Abbey, and chose their Reve, which Court is still there kept (usually once in the year, about Easter) but for sixty years last past, was stiled the Court Baron of the Lord, and there they presented the alterations of tenancies, and elected two Bedels to gather the rent.

3^o. Junii, 33^o. Hen. 8^o. that King granted the Royalty and Rents at Hawkeherst belonging to Wye, to Sir John Baker, and 20^o. Martii 1^o. *Elez. she granted Wye to Henry Lord Hunsdon.

*sic

Afterwards controversy arose between the tenants at Hawkeherst and Sir *Richad Baker (heire of the said Sir John) touching the validity of their former grants, and 31^o. Jan. 10^o. Eliz. the tenants obteyned a decree against the said Sir Richard, for quiet enjoying their tenements aforesaid, as formerly, and 12^o. Febr. following, the said Sir Richard released his claim to them, and after

*sic

134

suites between the heire of the said Sir John, and the heire of the said Lord Hunsdon (touching the Royalties and rent aforesaid) the said heir of Baker, 10^o. Novemb. 17^o. Jacobi Regis, granted his right in the same to the said heire of the said Lord Hunsdon, so that now the Lord of Wye is owner of the said Royalties and rent there:

This parish hath severall lands belonging thereunto, to be employed to pious uses, viz. Henry Parson, and William his sonne, 13^o. Junii 22^o. Edw. 4: conveyed (to their use for ever) a messuage and acre of land (which messuage was of late times called the Church house, and adjoyneth to the Church-yard) the rent thereof, and of the land thereunto, is employed towards reparation of the Church, and upon part of the land was erected an Almshouse (which is employed to the use of the poore of this Parish) and in the close of the said messuage, is another house, usually called the Sexton's house, the same having been, for about sixty years past, used for the habitation of the Sexton of this Parish, and these messuages and lands are enjoyed accordingly.

Likewise Thomas Iddenden 3. Aprill 1556. willed severall messuages and lands (lying at and neer a place in this Parish called High-street) to be for ever employed for Pious uses, in that Parish (and the same being deteyned from the Parish severall years) at length, upon an inquisition taken before Commissioners for charitable uses, 12. Decemb. 14. King James, the aforesaid Will, and charitable uses were found, and the said messuages and lands (by those Commissioners 29. Aprill following) decreed to be enjoyed, and employed accordingly, the trustees, and manner of employment thereby settled, and the same are enjoyed accordingly.

Also Thomas Gibbon, 3^o. Decemb. 15^o. Eliz. granted to

trustees for ever, an annuity of forty three shillings four pence per annum, out of his messuage and three peices of land, upon Amboldesherst in that Parish, containing seven a=

135

*acres, which annuity was purchased from him by the Parishoners, to be employed towards the *maintenauce of the said Church, and the same is enjoyed and employed accordingly,

*sic

*sic

A Market (by the grant of King Edw. 1. 5. of his Raigne, to the Abbey of Battle) was antiently kept in this Parish upon every Tuesday (upon the greene at the Moore, against the mansion house now of William Boys Esquire) but (for many years past) the same hath been discontinued, yet within the memory of men lately living a Market crosse stood there, and very lately there also stood a little house (called St. Margarets cross) since quite demolished, wherein when the Market was in being, the corne unsold was usually put, and the memory of that Market is partly reteyned by the name of a place neer thereunto (yet called the Market place) and old shops there yet standing.

A fair is kept yearly in this Parish (neer the Church upon the day of St Laurence (being the tenth day of August) and was granted by the aforesaid King Edw. 1. (3. Martii. 5. of his raigne) to the Abbey of Battle, to hold for three dayes (viz. in the Vigill, day, and morrow of St. Laurence aforesaid) but the same now usually beginneth upon the aforesaid day of St. Laurence, and lasteth one day following.

There was also in this parish another fair kept yearly upon St. Valentines day (being the 14th, day of February) in the field, at the next gate beyond Moore house (at a place where lately stood a pound) but for many years past, this fair hath been discontinued.

In this Parish also antiently stood five crosses, or watch-houses, one upon Badcocks green, (called Badcocks Crosse, (long since fallen down, another in the high way, between High-gate, and High-street aforesaid, at the West corner of the turning towards Slipmill antiently called Cooks Crosse, but lately Philpots Crosse, part

136

whereof was lately standing there, another at Skelcrouch (lately standing at the turning there from the highway from Kentbridge, to Hawkherst Church) called Skelcrouch Crosse; another at High-gate aforesaid called Highgate Crosse yet standing, and the other at four Trowes (called four Trowes) otherwise Pipsden-crosse (yet also standing.

The place aforesaid called Highgate, took its name in respect, that severall gates antiently stood at severall places in this Parish to inclose the commons belonging to the aforesaid Tenants of Wye; and one of the said gates standing at this place (being upon a high hill in respect of the rest) the same was called High-Gate.

This Parish was (within memory) divided from Saleherst in Sussex, by a bridge, called Kentbridge, under which the river ran, about six rods at the Narrow entring into the way beyond the now bridge, which old bridge being taken away, and the river turned to run under the now bridge, the broad place (between the now bridge,

and that narrow place) seemeth to be in Saleherst in Sussex,
But in truth is in Hawkherst in Kent.

In the west hedge of a field (called Beacon field) neer
the highway (called Beacon lane) leading between Four
Trowes aforesaid, and Foxhole, lately stood a Beacon and
Watch house, both since down.

I beg pardon for so long insisting upon the matters in
this Parish (which I did for the reasons aforesaid) and
now further proceed as before.

<This is Kilburne's description of the place in Kent where he had
made his home. Though he included it in his survey of the county,
it is, as he admitted, out of place there. Perhaps it should rather
have been published as a separate pamphlet, but who would then
have bought it? As far as I know, this is the first time that anyone
in Kent had thought of writing the history of a single parish. – C.F.
July 2010.>