

Thomas Badeslade
Illustrations for Harris's 'History of Kent'
London
1719

For his planned 'History of Kent', John Harris commissioned a series of illustrations from Thomas Badeslade (? occ. 1719–42), an artistically inclined surveyor about whom I know very little. There is a view of <24> Rochester and Chatham, seen from the top of Strood hill; there is a bird's-eye view of <30> Tunbridge Wells from the south; Harris paid for those two himself. But most of the plates are aerial prospects of country houses, drawn in the style made popular by a Dutch artist working in England, Leonard Knyff (1650–1722). A collection of Knyff's drawings, engraved by John Kip (d. 1721), had been published by the London bookseller David Mortier (occ. 1701–22), first as 'Britannia illustrata' (1707), then (for a different clientele, I suppose) as 'Nouveau theatre de la Grande Bretagne' (1708). (Two of these plates show houses in Kent, Knole (near Sevenoaks) and Fairlawn (near Shipbourne).) Inspired by that example, Harris proposed to have drawings made of country houses in Kent. The understanding was that the owner of the house (if he chose to participate) would pay for the making of the plate, and Harris would pay for the printing. He got a good response. Badeslade produced more than thirty drawings of this type (including two of Knole, one from almost exactly the same angle as Knyff's). Most of the plates were engraved by (the same) John Kip, a smaller number by (a namesake of the author's) John Harris (? occ. 1701–36). None of them are dated. They were published with Harris's book in 1719; but the book had been long delayed, and the plates had probably been ready for several years before they were sent to be printed.

This is the complete list, as nearly as I can discover. The images available to me are not of high quality, and the credits – written in very small script – are often not distinctly legible. Sooner or later I hope to see some better images, or a copy of the book itself. In the meantime, I discover that Upcott (1818, pp. 354–7) gives a bibliographical description of Harris's 'History' which includes a detailed list of the illustrations; so I quote the credits as they were quoted by him.

<1> 'Preston Hall in Aylsford, the Seat of Sr Thomas Colepeper Bart.' – Thomas Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.

<2> 'Broome the Seat of Sr. Basill Dixwell Bart.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.

<3> 'Chilson Mannor the Seat of the Honble. William Hamilton Esqr.' – T. Badeslade del. – John Harris sc.

<4> 'Boughton Court the Seat of Sr Barnham Rider Kt.' – Thos. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.

<5> 'Wierton the Seat of Sr. Christopher Powell Bart.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.

<6> 'Chart Sutton the Seat of Sr Christopher Des Bouverie Knt.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.

<7> 'The SE Prospect of Frognal als. Frogpool the Seat of Rowland Tryon Esqr.' – T. B del. – J. H. sc.

<8> 'Chevening, the Seat of the Rt. Honble. James Stanhope Earl Stanhope, Visct Stanhope of Mahone & Baron of Elvaston, Principal Secretary of State, and one of his Majesties most Honble. Privy Councel' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.

- <9> 'High Street House the Seat of Henry Streatfeild, Esq;' –
T. Badeslade del.
- <10> 'Chepsted Place one of the Seats of David Polhill Esqr.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.
- <11> 'Aldington West Court the Seat of Richard Sheldon Esq.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <12> 'Smiths Hall one of the Seats of John Brewer Esq.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <13> 'Tutsham Hall the Seat of Edward Goulston Esqr.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <14> 'Goodneston, the Seat of the Honble. Sr Brook Bridges
Bart.'
- <15> 'Mount Morris the Seat of Morris Drake Morris Esqr.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.
- <16> 'Ightham Court the Seat of William James Esq. Son of Sr
Demetrius James Knt.' – J. Kip sc.
- <17> 'Knowlton Court the Seat of Sr Thomas D'Aeth Bart. &
Dame Elizabeth his Wife.' – T. B. del. – J. Kip sc.
- <18> 'The Grange and Laybourn Castle the Seats of William
Saxby Esqr.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.
- <19> 'Leeds Abby humbly inscribed to Roger Meredyth Esqr.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <20> 'The Mote, one of the Seats of the Right Honourable the
Lord Romney.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <21> 'Beachborough the Seat of William Brockman Esq.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <22> 'Oxen Hoath the Seat of Leonard Batholmew Esq.' – J. Kip
sc.
- <23> 'Pensherst the Seat of the Right Honorable John Earl of
Leicester, Viscount Lisle, Baron Sidney of Pensherst, and one of
the Lds. of his Majesties Bedchamber.' – J. Kip sc.
- <24> 'Rochester Inscrib'd to Sr. Thomas Palmer Bart & Sr. Ion.
Iennings Knt. Memrs of Parlmt for the City' – T. Badeslade del. –
J. Harris sc.
- <25> 'The West Prospect of Knole &c.' – T. Badeslade del. –
J. Harris sc.
- <26> 'The South Prospect of Knole &c.' – J. Kip sc.
- <27> 'Kippington, the Seat of Sr Charles Farnaby Knt.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <28> 'The House and Garden of Tho. Fuller M.D. at Sevenoake.'
- <29> 'Lees Court the Seat of the Rt. Honble. the Lord Sondes.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <30> 'Tunbridge Wells humbly Dedicated to Thomas Pellet M.D.'
– T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <31> 'Sundridge Place, Bore Place & Sharps Place, the Seats
of John Hyde Esq.' – J. Kip sc.
- <32> 'Ingries at Greenhith the Seat of Jonathan Smith Esq.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.
- <33> 'Waldershare the Seat of Sr. Robert Furnese Baronett.'
with the words 'in Kent' in smaller script below 'Sr.' –
T. Badeslade del. – J. Kip sc.

<34> 'Squerries at Westram in Kent.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.

<35> 'The Seat of Pendock Price Esqr. at Westram.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.

<36> 'Deane the Seat of Sr Henry Oxenden Bart.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.

One of these plates, <5> Wierton, is missing from the copy of the book available through ECCO, but that is accidental – certainly so, because this plate is referred to in the 'Additions and Emendations' at the back of the book (p. xxxiii). (It is notable, by the way, that the owner of the house, though willing to pay for a plate, was not willing to supply Harris with any information. Harris knew, from Philipott, who had owned the house in 1659; he knew who owned it at present; but he had no idea what had happened in between.)

As was commonly the case, the plates made for Harris's 'History' had an afterlife, being handed on from one publisher to another until they were worn out. Within a few years they were acquired by the bookseller Joseph Smith (occ. 1709–29); possibly he got them with the rest of Mortier's stock. They were certainly in his hands by 1724, when he included a few of them in his enlarged edition of the 'Nouveau theatre de la Grande Bretagne' (vols. 1–3 dated 1724, vol. 4 dated 1729). From Smith they passed to J. Groenewegen and N. Prevost (occ. 1727–37), who used a large number of them in their 'Supplement du nouveau theatre' (1728). (The plates used in this book had small numbers added to them, at the top right corner.) Finally they passed to Henry Chapelle (occ. 1736–62), who published the whole (or almost the whole) series as 'Thirty six different views of noblemen and gentlemen's seats, in the county of Kent'. This book (which I have not seen) is undated. ESTC suggests a date of '[1720?]', but I do not see how that can be right. The British Library catalogue has three entries for the same book, and the dates suggested are '[1750?]', '[1720]', and '[1740?]',. It seems (if the titles are correctly quoted) that the book may have been published first while Badeslade was still alive, and then reissued (with a new title page) after he was dead. Dates of c. 1740 for the first issue and c. 1750 for the second would look acceptable to me; but (as I said) I have not seen any copy of this book and do not expect my opinion to count for much.

Two plates which went unpublished at first (because they were intended for volume 2) can be found in one or other of these albums:

<37> 'The West Prospect of the Cathedral Church of Rochester' – T. Badeslade delin. – J. Harris sculp. – in Smith 1724, vol. 3

<38> 'Howland Great Dock near Deptford' – T. Badeslade Delint. – J. Kip Sculp. – in Groenewegen and Prevost 1728

Lastly, Richard Gough reports having seen 'A view of Bromley college, by Badeslade and Harris' (1780, p. 496*), and I find it reproduced by White (1981, pl. 22b). The title reads:

<39> 'Bromley College in Kent Founded and Endowed by Iohn Warner late Bp. of Rochester for Twenty Clergymens Widdows and a Chaplaine A.D. 1672. This Plate is Humbly inscrib'd to Lee Warner Esq. of Walsingham in the County of Norfolk 1720.' – T. Badeslade del. – J. Harris sc.

This appears to be a plate commissioned and paid for by (Dr.) Harris, intended for publication in volume 2. (The dedicatee occurs in the list of subscribers printed in volume 1.) Possibly

this plate is included in Chapelle's album; possibly that is the reason why a date of '[1720?]' has been suggested for the album; until I have seen the book I cannot say.

Since the plates would also have been sold singly, stray copies can turn up anywhere. (At the time of writing, at least six are being advertised for sale on the web, at prices of roughly £100–200 each.) I notice, for example, that four of these plates were inserted into a copy of Philipott's 'Villare Cantianum' (1776) which is now in the British Library (shelfmark 190.d.2, page images available through ECCO): <14> Goodnestone (cropped at the top), <19> Leeds Abbey, <26> Knole from the south, <31> Sundridge Place (with a spelling mistake, 'Sundridgh', in the title). This copy of the Leeds Abbey plate is a proof, differing in two large respects from the version which appears in Harris's book. First, it carries the title 'Leeds Abbey the Seat of Sr. Richd. Meredith . . .' with a space at the end (which means, I suppose, that the engraver did not know whether Sir Richard was a 'Knt.' or a 'Bart.'). Second, the gardens behind the house are very differently represented. (Instead of the long rectangular pool at the back, for instance, here there is a smaller semi-octagonal pool.) The changes made to this plate have a story behind them which we can only guess at: my guess would go like this. As Harris admits in the preface, publication of his book was long delayed. During that time, the gardens at Leeds Abbey underwent some extensive alterations; when the bill for this plate was presented to him, Sir Richard declined to pay it, because the view was already out of date. Somebody was sent to Leeds to survey the new gardens, and a portion of the plate was erased and reengraved accordingly; but Sir Richard was no more willing to pay for the alterations than he was for the original plate. In the end, Harris had to pay the bills out of his own pocket, and he took his revenge by having the title changed too, dedicating the plate to Sir Richard's younger brother. (Roger Meredith is listed among the book's subscribers; Sir Richard Meredith is not. Roger succeeded to the baronetcy on his brother's death in 1723. He died in 1738, and the title went extinct. Nothing is left of Leeds Abbey except for the pigeon house – the long building with a stepped gable shown on the right in this view. That survives (Caiger 1975), but is reported to be in a very sorry state.)

The title of the <34> Squerryes plate would, very probably, have had to be altered as well. The Earl of Jersey was the owner of this house; but in September 1718 it was leased for 21 years to Abel Alleyne. (Alleyne is in the list of Harris's subscribers; the earl is not.) A schedule of all the trees, shrubs and hedges for which the tenant was to be responsible was compiled on this occasion: Badeslade's drawing tallies almost perfectly with it (Woudstra 2003).

References

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H. Chapelle (publ.), *Thirty six different views of noblemen and gentlemen's seats, in the county of Kent, all designed upon the spot, by the late T. Badeslade, . . . and engraved by the best hands* (London, n.d.).

J. Groenewegen and N. Prevost (publ.), *Supplement du nouveau theatre de la Grande Bretagne* (London, 1728).

D. Mortier (publ.), *Britannia illustrata or views of several of the Queens palaces as also of the principal seats of the nobility and*

gentry of Great Britain curiously engraven on 80 copper plates (London, 1707).

D. Mortier (publ.), *Nouveau theatre de la Grande Bretagne: ou description exacte des palais de la reine, et des maisons les plus considerables des seigneurs & des gentilshommes de la Grande Bretagne* (London, 1708).

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