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## VICARS OF EASTCHURCH.

A Vicarage was endowed here, in June 1300, with 11½ acres of land and a rent of 8s. per annum. The Cistercian Abbey of Dunes in Flanders held the right of Advowson until June 1315, when it was transferred to Boxley Abbey, which was likewise of the Cistercian Order.

**WILLIAM DE WYLTON** was instituted by Archbishop Peckham (*Register*, fol. 52<sup>a</sup>) in August 1279 (17 kal. Sept.). As the Vicar in 1311 was named William, it is probable that William de Wylton held the benefice during more than thirty years. This Vicar, William, was party to a Final Concord in the 4th year of Edward II (No. 144), by which the manor of Ufton, in Tunstall, was conceded to Robert de Shirlaunde and Katherine his wife.

**GEFFREY DE FRENSTHOPE** was admitted to the benefice in July 1323.

**JOHN DE MAIDENSTONE** resigned Eastchurch in 1352, when he became Vicar of Wardone.

**ROBERT READE** succeeded Maidenstone in August 1352.

**RICHARD SHEME**, who had been chaplain to Sir Roger Northwode, was instituted to this benefice in June 1353. Nearly sixteen years later, in February 1368-9, Archbishop Langham granted to him a license to act as Penitentiary or Confessor for the Deanery of Sittingbourne (*Reg.*, 144<sup>a</sup>).

**ROBERT WARROM** is the next name of a Rector that is known to us; he exchanged this benefice for that of Sutton at Hone in 1400.

**HENRY MOLE**, Rector of Sutton in the diocese of Rochester, was instituted to Eastchurch by Archbishop Arundel on the 29th of July 1400; and held it until his death in 1424.

**BARTHOLOMEW ATTE WOODE**, a chaplain, was admitted to this benefice by Archbishop Chicheley, at Higham Ferrers, on the 26th of September 1424. He survived only two years.

**WILLIAM BROWNE** was instituted by the same Primate, at Lambeth, on the 22nd of October 1426; but in the following year he exchanged this vicarage for that of Stoke at Hoo.

**JOHN POCOCK**, Vicar of Stoke, was admitted to Eastchurch by Archbishop Chicheley on the 6th of July 1427. How long he survived we cannot ascertain.

**WILLIAM NUDDS**, after holding the benefice for some time, vacated it in 1436.

**JOHN GRYSBY**, a chaplain, was the fifth Vicar whom Archbishop Chicheley had instituted to Eastchurch. The ceremony took place at Charing on the 19th of December 1436. Grysbys died in 1446.

JOHN CLERKE succeeded Grysby, being admitted to this benefice by Archbishop Stafford, on the 28th of May 1446. There is no record of the date at which he vacated the living.

WILLIAM THORNBURY, who probably was Clerke's successor, belonged to a Faversham family entitled to bear arms (on a bend, engrailed, three roundels). His father may have been John Thornbury, who was Sheriff of Kent in 24 Henry VI. He resigned this benefice in 1453, when he was admitted to the Rectory of St. Peter's Church at Sandwich. Subsequently he became Vicar of Faversham, and so remained from about 1454 to 1476. He died in March 1480-1. During the last eight years of his life, however, he retired from all duties outside his church and lived as a recluse, or anchorite, in a cell within Faversham Church, from 1473 to 1481. He is commemorated by a handsome monumental brass, still preserved in the floor of the chancel at Faversham, which bears his effigy, at full length, beneath a canopy. The brass and its inscription are shewn in a plate at page 27 of *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. XI. His only brother Richard Thornbury was the executor of his will; a translation of which is given on page 29 of the same volume.

JOHN WILLIAM *alias* MERSHFIELD was instituted to Eastchurch in succession to Thornbury, on the 10th of October, 1453 by Archbishop Kemp.

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During many years, from 1472, no Vicars were instituted; as the Abbot of Boxley was permitted to send a Secular Chaplain, from the Abbey, to serve this Church. In January 1511-12 the Abbot John Cranbroke received from Archbishop Warham (*Reg.*, 356<sup>b</sup>) renewal of the licence.

ROBERT BROWNE was Curate here in 1551, and the two following years, as we learn from the records of the visitations of the Archdeacon of Canterbury.

DOMINUS HUGO was Curate in 1555.

THOMAS WEBB was Curate in 1580.

JOHN EADES is said to have been Minister of Eastchurch about A.D. 1640.

WILLIAM HARLEY during the Commonwealth served as Minister of Eastchurch; and to him the Parliamentary Committee charged with such duties granted £15 Gs. 3d. out of the Rectorial revenues of the parish of Milton, in June 1651.

ROBERT WILKINSON, presented by King Charles II, was instituted to the benefice by Archbishop Juxon, on the 2nd of March 1660-1.

THOMAS WHITE, likewise presented by Charles II, was admitted, by Archbishop Sheldon, on the 16th of February 1666-7.

He was a benefactor to the Church, and the Communion plate presented by him is still in use therein. He died in 1682. His Curate, *ROBERT EATON*,\* came here as early as 1672, and served the parish during fully 23 years, under four successive Vicars until 1695. Rewarded at length by promotion to the Vicarage of Leysdown, Robert Eaton died in May 1702, and was buried here at Eastchurch.

**ANTHONY WOOLRICH** was presented by Mr. Hatton Aucher (as administrator of the goods of the late Rev. Robert Aucher of Queen's College, Oxford), and was instituted on the 28th of July 1682. He died in 1684. The family of which he was a scion has long been connected with Kent, and one of its members, the Rev. H. Woolrych, is now, in 1882, the Vicar of Oare, near Faversham. Anthony Woolrich's Curate here was Robert Eaton.

**JAMES JEFFREYS**, S.T.P., brother of Chief Justice Jeffreys, was instituted on the 27th of June 1684. He was presented by seven trustees, of whom Sir Henry Palmer was the principal, and the survivor. Dr. Jeffreys employed as his Curate the same faithful Robert Eaton.

**WILLIAM MILLES** was instituted on the 3rd of January 1689-90; having been presented by the three surviving trustees of the advowson (Sir H. Palmer, Sir A. Aucher, and Sir Wm. Rooke). He also employed Robert Eaton as his Curate, here, during some years. In the year 1700, however, we find that he had brought hither another *locum tenens*, named *JOHN NICHOLLS*, who served as Curate here for at least four years. Mr. Nicholls was married, at Ospringe Church, April 8th, 1700, to Martha, daughter of the Rev. Robert Cumberland, Vicar of Chilham.

**RICHARD FORSTER**, S.T.P., who was a considerable benefactor to the parish, became Vicar in 1702; and held this benefice (together with that of Crundal) at the time of his death in 1728. He employed as his Curates, here, *CHARLES FORSTER* (1709); *GEORGE SYKES* (1713-15); *WILLIAM SPRAKELING* (1715); *FRANCIS CULL* (1716-25), who was one of the attesting witnesses of the deed by which Dr. Forster, in 1721, conveyed some land in Leysdown to the Patron of the benefice, as an endowment for religious teaching of the school children; *RICHARD RICHARDSON* (1725-27), who was buried here in October 1727; and *R. WOODCOCK* (1728), who continued to serve the cure for some time under the next incumbent likewise.

**ALEXANDER YOUNG**, S.T.B., succeeded Dr. Forster. He was instituted by Archbishop Wake, on the 8th of March 1728-9, on the presentation of Elizabeth Hey acting as the guardian of Herbert Palmer, then a minor under age. Mr. Young, who likewise held the Rectory of Wickham-

\* For the names of all the Curates mentioned here and after this period I am indebted to the researches and the kindly courtesy of my friend the Rev. R. Henry Dickson, Rector of Eastchurch.

breux, near Canterbury, died on the 21st of March 1755. In the Eastchurch register of burials, there is a memorandum that "The Rev. Mr Alex. Young, Rector, died 21st March 1755." He placed here, as his Curates, after Mr. Woodcock, *J. WOODROOFE* (1730-3); *GILBERT ALLENSON* (1737); and *JAMES ALLENSON* (1739-82), who survived Mr. Young, and served many years under his successor.

**THOMAS HEY**, S.T.P., was instituted on the 29th May 1755. He succeeded Mr. Young in the Rectory of Wickhambreux as well as in this benefice. On the death of Mrs. Bethia Cosnan (widow of Herbert Palmer) in 1789, Dr. Hey became possessed of the Wingham estates of the late Sir Thomas Palmer, and of the advowson of Eastchurch. He took up his residence at Wingham College, and he endowed the Vicarage of Wingham with £100 per annum and a house. He was third Prebendary of Rochester Cathedral from 1788 to 1809, but he did not disdain to hold also the curacy of Swingfield. Dr. Hey married Ethelreda Lynch, a daughter of the Dean of Canterbury. He sold the advowson of Eastchurch, to the Rev. Henry Barton, many years before his death, which occurred in 1809. He held the benefice of Eastchurch for fifty-four years.

Dr. Hey's Curates were (i) *JAMES ALLENSON*, who dying here, aged 65, in January, 1782, after 43 years' service in this parish, was buried in the churchyard, where his tomb, enclosed by iron railings, may still be seen; and (ii) *DAVID MARTIN*, whose wife Mary was buried here in the year 1800, aged 66. He survived Dr. Hey, and continued to serve this cure until October 1821, when he died, aged 78, and was buried here on the 30th of that month. He was Curate of Eastchurch for more than 32 years.

**HENRY BARTON** succeeded Dr. Hey in 1809. He died at Liverpool on the 26th January 1827. David Martin served here as his Curate until 1821.

**JOHN BARTON**, son of the late Vicar, held the benefice from 1827 to 1858, residing at first in a small old house which stood in the south-west angle of the churchyard. He built the existing rectory house in 1835; pulling down a blacksmith's forge and cobbler's shop to make room for it. During the same year he drew out a statement of the parochial charities, which was submitted to the Parliamentary Commissioner, sitting at the Half-way House in Minster, on the 30th of November 1835. Mr. Barton died in 1858.

**THOMAS BRIGGS DICKSON**, B.D., formerly Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, succeeded Mr. Barton in 1858. During the twelve years of his incumbency he effected many improvements; he died in 1870.

**RICHARD HENRY DICKSON**, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, succeeded his father in 1870, and is now the Rector of Eastchurch.