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THE RECTORY OF COWDEN.

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THE ADVOWSON.

IN the reign of Edward III. the advowson of Cowden was in the hands of Sir Hugh de Audley, and, as will be seen by the list of Rectors, he exercised the right of presentation on several occasions.

It is not quite clear how the advowson became the property of Sir Hugh, but it may have formed part of the possessions of the De Clares, and, like Tunbridge Castle and Manor, have come to him in right of his wife Margaret, daughter of Gilbert Clare, last Earl of Gloucester. The Priory at Tunbridge, in the church of which Sir Hugh was buried in 1347, was founded in the reign of Henry I. by Richard de Clare, Earl of Hertford, and dedicated in honour of St. Mary Magdalen; if therefore the advowson of Cowden formed part of their property we have a probable reason for the similar dedication of the parish church there.

Sir Hugh de Audley had but one child, Margaret, and she marrying Ralph de Stafford carried the castle of Tunbridge and other possessions, including the manor of Chipsted, the manor of Ockham, and the advowson of Cowden, into that family. (See John de Keylmarsh, Rector in 1333.)

Sir Ralph de Stafford was in 1351 created Earl of Stafford. Amongst many other military services he led the English van at Cressy, and he was one of the foundation Knights of the Garter. He died in 1372, having in 1349 presented John de Alshbawe to Cowden.

His grandson, Edmund, married Ann daughter of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, and was killed

in 1403 at the Battle of Shrewsbury, when he was succeeded as Earl of Stafford by his son Humphrey, who is the next Patron mentioned in the list, as presenting John Woderton to the benefice in 1427. In right of his mother he was considered Earl of Buckingham; in 1420 he was created Count of Perche in Normandy, and in 1444 was further advanced as Duke of Buckingham. (See Rectors John Cowper and John Turvey.) He was killed at Northampton in 1460, fighting for the Lancastrians. He married Ann daughter of Ralph Nevill, Earl of Westmoreland, and she in 1461 presented Thomas Kelbye to Cowden.

On 10 December 1515 this ill-fated family exercised their right in this Rectory for the last time, when Edward, third Duke of Buckingham, and great-grandson of the above, presented Richard Chapman. Five years later, in 1520, the Duke was charged with aspiring to the throne, and was tried and executed, all his estates being confiscated. The Crown presented the next two Rectors in 1542 and 1549. In the fourth year of Edward VI. the advowson was granted to Ralph Fane, according to Hasted, but it must have again come to the Crown on his attainder, and in 1566 Philip Harrison is stated to have been presented by John Thomas, gent.

Hasted also states that in the seventh year of James I. the advowson became the property of Sir Robert Sidney, afterwards Earl of Leicester, but there is some discrepancy in the date, as in 1598 Sir Robert Sidney had presented William Dixon, and it is probable that the Sidneys became patrons at the same time that Penshurst was conferred upon them. The advowson remained in the hands of the Sidneys until the death of the last Earl of Leicester in 1742, when it was vested in Sir Brownlow Sherard and William Perry, Esq., but finally came to Sir Brownlow Sherard, whose widow bequeathed it to Anne widow of Sir William Yonge, K.B. In 1770 it was sold to Thomas Harvey of Tunbridge, Esq., and has since remained in that family.

THE RECTORS OF COWDEN.

- NICHOLAS COLEPEPER, Rector on 21 June 1322. (Register of Hamo de Hethe, folios 56^b, 57^a, 99^b.)
- JOHN DE HETHERINGTON, Clerk, admitted Rector 23 Oct. 1328. (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fol. 127^a.) Admitted to Deacon's Orders 8 April 1329. (Fol. 128^a.)
- ROGER DE KEYNES, admitted 14 July 1330. He was Rector of Stowe, Diocese of Lincoln, and exchanged with John de Hetherington. (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fol. 133^b.)
- WILLIAM DE RETFORD, Clerk, admitted 8 June 1331 on the resignation of Roger de Keynes. Patron: Sir Hugh D'Audele. (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fol. 145^a.)
- JOHN DE KEYLMARSH, Priest, admitted 22 Nov. 1333. Patron: Sir Hugh de Audele. (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fol. 151^a.) According to the same Register (fol. 162^b) he was also Chaplain of the Perpetual Chantry at Ockham, Lincoln Diocese, Rector of Estone, Diocese of Carlisle, and of Chepstede, Diocese of Winchester, to which last he was instituted 30 Jan. 1332-3 on the presentation of Sir Hugh de Audele, but resigned the next year, as above, on being presented to Cowden. (Manning and Bray's *Surrey*, vol. ii., page 249.)
- PETER COLSWEYNE, Deacon, admitted 2 May 1334. Patron: Sir Hugh de Audele. (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fol. 161^a.)
- NICHOLAS DE HOGHTON, Priest, admitted 14 July 1336. Patron: Sir Hugh de Audele, Knt. (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fol. 166^b.)
- SIMON DE KEILMARSH, Priest, admitted 25 Dec. 1336 on the resignation of Nicholas de Hoghton. Patron as before. (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fol. 168^b.)
- JOHN DE ALSHBAWE, Priest, admitted 12 July 1349. Patron: Ralf de Stafford pro hac vice. Mandate to Rector of Ashurst to induct. (Reg. Hamo de Hethe, fol. 249^a.)
- STEPHEN RANDULPH, Priest, Rector of Snodland, exchanged with the foregoing, and was admitted Rector 26 Dec. 1359. (Reg. Joh. de Scapeya, fols. 299^a, 301^b.) He was previously Rector of Trottescliff, to which he was instituted in 1355.
- ROGER GENNOWE, died 1427.
- JOHN WODERTON, admitted 30 June 1427 on the death of Roger Gennowe. Patron: Humphrey, Earl of Stafford. (Reg. J. Langdon, fol. 80^a.) Rector 29 Oct. 1437. (Act. Cur. Cons. 1436—1443, fols. 30^a, 30^b, 84^a.)

- JOHN COWPER, admitted 24 Oct. 1439 on the resignation of the last. Patron: Humfrey, Earl of Buckingham, Hereford, Stafford, Northampton, and Perche. (Reg. W. Wellys, fols. 147^a, 163^b.) He was Rector 29 July 1443. (Act. Cur. Cons. 1436—1443, fol. 348^a, and ditto 1444—1468, fol. 9^b.)
- JOHN TURVEY, "ordinis Sancte Crucis," admitted 5 March 1448. Patron: Humfrey, Duke of Buckingham. (Reg. J. Lowe, fol. 217^a.) He was Rector 20 Nov. 1452, will of Alan Besche. (Lib. Test. Roffen., i., fol. 125^b.)
- ROBERT DRAPER, Rector of Baldok, Diocese of Lincoln, was admitted Rector of Cowden 8 Dec. 1456 on exchanging with John Turvey. (Reg. J. Low, fol. 228^b.) He was Rector 20 Dec. 1456, will of Robert Ludwell. (Lib. ii., fols. 67^b and 68^a.) He was nominated Dean of Malling 10 Oct. 1457. (Act. Cur. Cons. 1443—1468, fol. 335^b.)
- THOMAS KELBYE, admitted 10 Aug. 1461. Patron: Anna, Duchess of Buckingham. (Reg. J. Lowe, fol. 235^b.)
- THOMAS BAMBERY was Rector 3 Dec. 1487, as appears by the will of Richard Styll. (Lib. vi., fols. 160^a, 160^b.) Was Rector 22 Dec. 1483. (Act. Cur. Cons. 1471—1503, fol. 176^a.) Also 9 April 1500. (Ditto 1499—1501, fol. 20^a.)
- NICHOLAS SYMSON was Rector 9 Sep. 1504. (Act. Vis. Arch., fol. 7^a.) Also 1 Dec. 1511. (Act. Cur. Cons. 1511—1513, fol. 1^a.)
- NICHOLAS BUSHAWE or BRUSSALL was Rector 8 March 1511. (Act. Cur. Cons. 1511—1513, fol. 17^b.) He resigned 1515.
- RICHARD CHAPMAN, instituted 10 Dec. 1515 on the resignation of the last. Patron: Edward, Duke of Buckingham. (Reg. Spir. Roff. D., fol. 73^b.) Also Rector 12 Oct. 1523. (Act. Vis. Arch., fol. 5^b.)
- JOHN GRENE, Clerk, instituted 13 July 1542 on the death of Richard Chapman. Patron: the King. (Reg. Spir. Roff. D., fol. 213^b.)
- His will was proved on 27 March 1548; in it he styles himself "Sir John Grene, parson of Cowden." He left 6s. 8d. to the reparation of the Chancel, and 20s. "to the hey waye betwex Cowden Crosse and Edonbregge." His overseers were Mr. Wm. Levyt, Clarke, and Mr. Richard Stechebourne, gent. (Lib. xi., 52^a.)
- EDWARD SAYER was instituted 27 March 1549 on the death of John Grene. Patron: the King. (Reg. Ridley, fol. 51^b.)

His will was proved 4 Oct. 1555. The following is an extract therefrom: "Sir Edward Sayer, prest, parson of Cowden, dated 23 Jan. 1554. To be buried in the church of Cowden. To my brother Sr Dunston Sayer all my bowks. I will my tymber and bords be safely layd up within the mansion of the parson of Cowden towards the reparacions about the chauncell of the same. The rest to John Kyng of Cowden, my executor. Witnesses, Anthony Saxpes, Tho^s Breden, John Wykyng th'elder, and George Bredger."

THOMAS MOWNSELOW or MOWSLOW was Rector 4 Nov. 1556, as appears by the will of Richard Saxpes. (Lib. xii., fol. 26^a.) He was Rector 23 March 1557. (Fol. 143^a.) Also 30 March 1558. (Fol. 191^a.) On 6 Aug. 1558. (Fol. 216^a.) And on 15 Sep. 1562. (Act. Vis. Arch., fol. 7^b.) Also 31 May 1563. (Will Reg., xiii., fol. 80.) He died 1566.

PHILIP HARRISON was instituted 18 May 1566 on the death of Thomas Mownselow. Patron: John Thomas, gent. (Reg. Epi., fol. 103^a.) He appears as Rector in the will of John Homeden 30 May 1568. (Lib. xiii., fol. 357^a.) Also 14 March 1587. (Act. Vis. Arch., fol. 10^b.) And 16 Jan. 1589. (Act. Cur. Cons. 1588—1589, fol. 434^a.)

WILLIAM DIXON, S.T.B., was instituted Rector 12 April 1598 on the death of the last. Patron: Sir Robert Sidney, "Governor of the town and port of Vluschinge in Zeland." (Reg. Epi., fol. 184^a.) He was son of Humphrey Dixon, and was a Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, 1575; B.A. 1579; M.A. 1583; B.D. 1589. (Foster's *Alumni Oxonienses*.) He was Rector 20 Sep. 1598. (Act. Vis. Arch., fol. 97^a.)

THOMAS JACKSON, M.A., instituted 13 Jan. 1601 on the death of the last. Patron as before. Rector 23 Sep. 1602. (Act. Vis. Arch., fol. 137^a.) On 30 Sep. 1611. (Act. Vis. Epi. 1611—1620, fol. 6^a.) On 3 Oct. 1614. (Fol. 18.) On 3 Sep. 1617. (Act. Vis. Epi. 1611—1617, fol. 30^a.) On 27 Sep. 1620. (Fol. 38^a.)

JOHN VALE, A.M., inducted 24 May 1626. (Reg. Epi., fol. 210^a, and in the Parish Registers.) He died in 1633.

THOMAS AYNSCOMBE, M.A., instituted 23 Oct. 1633 on the death of John Vale. Patron: Robert, Earl of Leicester. (Reg. Epi., fol. 219^b.)

He was son of John Aynscombe, gent., of Battle, Sussex, and matriculated Magdalen Hall, Oxford, 27 June 1623,

aged 17; B.A. 1626; M.A. 1628; of the Inner Temple 1623. His son Thomas matriculated 9 April 1663, aged 16, Wadham College, Oxford, and died 23 Sep. 1666, and is buried in the outer Chapel of his College. (*Vide Foster's Alumni Oxonienses.*)

His daughter Mary married Richard Knight, gent., of Cowden, and died 5 June 1674. She is buried in the Chancel, where also lie her sisters, Jane, who died 4 Nov. 1666, and Anne, who died 6 Oct. 1660.

Mary the wife of Thomas Aynscomb died 12 Jan. 1649, and is also buried in the Chancel.

Mr. Aynscombe subscribed the Declaration 18 Aug. 1662, and died in 1668. He was buried in the Chancel, where there is a stone inscribed: "Here lieth the body of Thomas Aynscombe, formerly rector of this Parish. He departed this life the 16th day of April 1668. And also Mary Knight his grandchild who departed this life the same day." (*Vide Thorpe's Reg. Roff.*)

At the Commission of Enquiry in 1650 it was returned that in Cowden there was a parsonage house with three acres of glebe land, with tithes thereunto belonging, valued at £83 per annum, Mr. Thomas Aynscombe being then the incumbent, and the Earl of Leicester patron.

THOMAS COCKMAN, A.M., instituted 8 Sep. 1668 on the death of Thomas Aynscomb. Patron: Robert, Earl of Leicester. (Reg. Spir. Roff. F., fol. 119^b.) Mandate of induction 18 May 1669.

He matriculated, 26 March 1659, Brasenose College, Oxford; B.A. 1662; incorporated at Cambridge 1666; M.A. from Peterhouse 1666.

He married Jane Weemes (licence dated 28 Oct. 1668, St. Giles in the Fields). His son John matriculated University College, Oxford, 1 April 1699, aged 18; B. and D. Med. 1715. Admitted on Charterhouse Foundation 31 July 1694. A physician at Maidstone, and died 28 Nov. 1734. Another son Thomas also at University College, Oxford, matriculated 22 Jan. 1690-91; was B. and D.D., and Rector of Trottescliff 1724 until his death 1 Feb. 1744-5. (*Vide Foster's Alumni Oxonienses.*)

Thomas Cockman was buried 27 July 1719. (Parish Registers.)

WILLIAM EGERTON, D.C.L., instituted 16 Nov. 1719 on the death of Thomas Cockman. Patron: John, Earl of Leicester. (Reg. Fra. Atterbury Epi.)

He was son of Thomas Egerton, gent., of "St Andrew's, London." Matriculated, 6 Nov. 1702, Hart Hall, Oxford, aged 19; B.C.L. from New College 1710; D.C.L. 1719. Rector of Settrington, Yorkshire, 1707; of Leigh, Kent, 1710 (which he resigned 26 Feb. 1712); of Penshurst and of All Hallows, Lombard Street, London, 1714; and of Cowden as above. Canon of Canterbury 1724; of Hereford 1726; and other preferments there. He died 26 Feb. 1737-8. (*Vide Foster's Alumni Oxonienses.*)

EDWARD HARBY, LL.B., instituted 5 Feb. 1732 on the cession of William Egerton. Patron: John, Earl of Leicester. (Reg. Jo. Wilcox Epi.) He graduated LL.B. 1724, Peterhouse College, Cambridge. He was Chaplain to the Tower of London April 1737. His wife Ann died in 1752, and in Cowden Church is a gravestone to her with this inscription:

"To the memory of Ann Harby, wife of Edward Harby, LL.B., Rector of this Parish. She died May the 3rd, 1752, in the year of her age 64. A woman whose vertues were so many and amiable as ever made her respected, esteemed, and beloved. She was always agreeable to her acquaintance, sincere to her friends, affectionate to her relations, endearing to her husband, and obedient to her Creator. A life so blameless and irreproachable, so full of true piety and benevolence, all should imitate, few can equal, none excell, which heaven hereafter will apply recompense.

"If buried worth can claim a sigh or tear,
Then, reader, may'st thou justly pay thine here."

Within the altar rails is another inscription:

"Here lyeth the body of Francis Harby late of Wapenham in the County of Northampton Esq. who died the 24th day of June 1734 aged 76 years." (*Vide Thorpe's Reg. Roff.*)

Mr. Harby died 22 May 1761, and was buried on the 27 May at Cowden.

WILLIAM LLOYD, instituted 16 Oct. 1761 on the death of Edward Harby. He died Dec. 1777, and was buried 18 Dec. at Cowden.

JOHN FRANCIS, junior, instituted Jan. 1778. Patron: Thomas Harvey, Esq. He graduated B.A. Pembroke College, Cambridge, 1771, and M.A. 1774. He resigned in 1785. The Rev. John Ramworth was Curate at this period.

THOMAS HARVEY, LL.B., instituted June 1785 on the resignation of the last. Pembroke College, Cambridge, LL.B. 1778. He died 6 July 1835 at Reigate, aged 79, and was buried at Cowden on 13th idem.

THOMAS HARVEY was instituted Rector on 30 Oct. 1835. He died 28 Jan. 1878, and was buried at Cowden on 5 Feb., aged 82.

The Rev. Alleyne James Holmes, M.A., was Curate until Oct. 1878 (subsequently Rector of Egdean, Sussex), and the Rev. Robert Gregory Webber Gardiner, B.A. Dublin, was Curate until 1880, during which time a lawsuit was progressing, and the right of presentation of the Patron and of the Archbishop lapsed. The Crown (Lord Chancellor Cairns) accordingly presented

RICHARD ABBEY TINDALL in 1880, and he was instituted in 1881. He was of Hartford Hall, Durham; L.Th. 1859; B.A. 1860; M.A. 1861. He was Curate of Brighthouse 1860; in charge of St. Gregory the Great, Canterbury, 1861 to 1865; and Rector of St. Stephen's, Manchester, 1865 to 1880, when he was preferred to Cowden as above. He died at Swanage on 22 Aug. 1890, and is buried there.

FREDERICK MARTIN BURTON, B.A., LL.D., F.S.A., son of Frederick Merryweather Burton, F.G.S., F.L.S., etc., of Highfield, Gainsborough, co. Lincoln. He graduated B.A. Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1875; LL.M. 1880; LL.D. 1887. He was Curate of St. Cross Hospital and St. Faith's, Winchester, 1881—1883, and of St. Thomas's, Newport, Isle of Wight, 1883—1890. He was instituted Rector of Cowden 22 Nov. 1890 on the death of Mr. Tindall. Patron: Captain Thomas Harvey, 69th Regiment. Elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries 9 Feb. 1893. He is Chaplain to the Lord De L'Isle and Dudley of Penshurst Place.