



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

BRIEFS IN ST. LEONARD'S AND ST. GEORGE'S PARISHES
IN DEAL IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH
CENTURIES.

BY W. P. D. STEBBING, F.S.A.

A PAPER on this subject appeared in Vol. XIV of *Arch. Cant.* (1882) under the title "Briefs in the Parish of Cranbrook". It was compiled by W. Tarbutt. These licences, properly known as Church-briefs or King's Letters, were issued out of Chancery to Churchwardens specifically for damage or loss by fire to churches but, as we know, were sent round for other purposes. There seem to have been two types. The Rev. Nicolas Carter at St. George's notes that some appeals were granted to be collected through Great Britain while others only "in Cities, Boroughs and Market Towns and not elsewhere". There must have been a great revival in their issue after Charles II came to the throne. Pepys indignantly noted in 1661, after the fourteenth successive appeal at St. Olave's, Hart Street, "To church where we observe the trade of briefs is come now up to so constant a course every Sunday that we resolve to give no more to them." Their issue was regulated by a Statute in 1704, but when we find that 565 are entered in St. George's Register between August, 1717 and October, 1773, there can be no doubt that, as in the present-day case of too many Flag Days, parishioners often refused to lighten their purses; especially when two Briefs might be published on one Sunday. In one of these cases at St. George's the boxes rattled under people's noses collected 6½d. and 1s., in a second 6d. and nothing, and this was possibly after the Parish Clerk had stood at the door as the congregation left, saying: "Please remember the Brief." The boxes are referred to by both Cowper and Southey and, as the century wore on in St. George's Parish, their appearance had become so distasteful to the burgesses that in 96 cases nothing was collected in church; in the ninety-seventh only ¼d. And many of the appeals were doubtless genuine.

At St. Leonard's the Briefs are entered among the Churchwardens' Accounts in the seventeenth century upright parchment-bound volume measuring 15 in. by 6 in. It was kept closed originally by two ties. A torn flyleaf shows the words London, printed for Roger Norttens, and the signature Tho: Knorler Gent. In MS. also appear the words Canterburie April 1637 and Canterbury April 18 1637. The Briefs are entered at the beginning of the back of the book, and are followed by two other entries which are transcribed below.

The earliest Brief is entered separately among these Accounts for the year 1657, and was an appeal for a fire in Leicestershire. The loss was

assessed at £2,190 but the sum collected by one of the churchwardens and a Collector of the Poor is not given. To this minute is added: "It is Inordered that the Churchwardens are to Ingross all Collections By Letters pattuns iin the Church Booke".

1665 Apr 30th Collected then upon a brief for Grantham the sum of six shill^{ss}: and three pence farthing whereof nine pence farthing in brass money¹

Tho: Walker dept [deputy] receiver

June: 4th: Collected then upon a brief for Gisborough y^e sum of 9^s—9^d: whereof 2 [shillings in farthings

Jno Hawksley dep^t receiver

June 25th. Collected etc for Broughin the sum of 6^s: & 6 pence whereof 2^s: & 3 pence in farthings

Jn^o Hawksley dep^t. receiver

July: 23rd: Collected etc. for John Wraylott near coltchester the sum of 6 [shill^{ss}: & 6 pence whereof one [shilling in farthings.

Ja: Smith dep^t receiver

Die eodem Collected etc. to Rob^t: Ensdell the sum of 6 [shillings whereof one [shill^{ss}: in farthings

Jn^o pope dep'. receiver

Augst: 20th: Collected etc. for Jn^o. Heale the sum of 8 [shillings and 7 pence whereof 13 pence in farthings

Jn^o: Hawksley dep^t: receiver

Collected etc. for y^e repair of y^e parish church of Clun in the countie of Salop: y^e sum of 5^s: 4^d:

Jn^o Mosman dep^t: receiver

Collected etc. for the town of Hartlepoole for the repair of the f^d Harbour: y^e sum of 4^s:

John Mosman dep^t: receiver

1667 May 5th: Collected etc. for Jn^o Ojborne the sum of 14^s: 1^d: 1^{ob}: whereof 2^{sh}: & 11^{ds} in farthings

Jn^o: Iborne ffrank Borman Rec^{rs}:

May 26th: Collected etc. for Will: Mum y^e sum of 8 [shillings and 3 pence whereof 1 [shilling and 10 pence in farthings

Tho May dep^t: receiver

July 7th: Collected etc. for Hinxton y^e sum of 4 [shill^{ss} & 6 pence whereof 18 pence in brafs money

ffran: Norman dep^t. receiver

¹ These were probably Traders' Tokens, as an official coinage of copper farthings was not issued till 1672.

die eodem Collected etc. for Weymouth y^o sum of 4^{sh}. &
6: pence half peny whereof 13 pence 1^{ob}: in brass money¹
ffran Norman dep^t. receiv^r.

ffeb^r: 9th: Collected etc. for Bishops Clift y^o sum of
4 ^{shill} & 6 pence whereof 6 in brass money
ffran Norman dep^t. receiv^r.

die eodem Collected etc. for poole the sum of 4 ^{shill}ss.
& 3 pence whereof 8 pence in brass money
ffran Norman dep^t. receiv^r.

1688 May 31st: Collected etc. for Bradninch y^o sum of 8
^{shill}: and 9 pence whereof 3 ^{shill}: & 9 pence in farthings
Hen: Smith dep^t receiv^r.

1668/9 ffebr: 14th: Collected etc. for Cliff in Kent the sum
of 12 ^{shill}ss: & 6 pence whereof 8 groats in farthings
Hen: Taffell dep^t. receiv^r:

(In 1676 9s. was collected at Cranbrook for Cliff.)

Apr^l: 3^d: 1670 Collected for the acco^t of 3 Dover men
Captives the sum of 2^l: 11^{sh}: 9^d: whereof 9^{sh}: in brass

June: 19th: Collected for the acco^t. of a brief for Michael
ffowler of great Chart the sum eight ^{shill}ss & 7 pence
farth^s. whereof 4^{sh}. & 7^d. farth^s. in brass money

(5s. 2d. was collected for this man at Cranbrook.)

Augst. 21: 1670 Collected for the acco^t. of a brief for
Isleham in y^o Countie of Cambridge the sum of twelve
^{shillings} whereof there is 3 ^{shill}ss. in farthings

(8s. was collected at Cranbrook.)

Sept^r: 11th. Collected etc. for the redemption of Captives
out of Salley the sum of 2^l & 2^{sh} whereof 4 ^{shill}ss: in brass
money.

Decem^r: 25: 1670

Collected then in the Church of Strangers unknown and
supposed to have contributed before in the place of their
abode as to the brief for Captives

| £ | s. | d. |
|----|----|----|
| 00 | 13 | 9 |

(Follows a list of local contributors to the Brief.)

| | li | s | d |
|---|----|----|----|
| Jan: 3 ^d : | | | |
| Capt Jn ^o : Titus | 00 | 10 | 00 |
| Mr Edmund Ibbot Minister | 00 | 10 | 00 |
| Mr Jn ^o : Clark deputy pilot | 00 | 05 | 00 |
| Mrs Bennison | 00 | 02 | 06 |
| [Name erased.] | | | |

¹ ? 12 pence halfpenny.

| | li | s | d |
|---------------------------|----|-----|-----|
| Rich ^d : Walls | 00 | —01 | —00 |
| Tho: Scarlet senr pilot | 00 | —01 | —00 |
| W ^m : pittock | 00 | —01 | —00 |

Following are 50 names including 10 pilots, Ben: Hulk and Tho: Mumbray. 6d. is the smallest sum paid.

Jan: 4th: List of 53 names including 3 pilots. Other people of some local importance are Elizth: Pittock widdow, Jn^o: Taverner, Geo: Hulck and Jn^o: Nyles Corp^l. The largest contribution in this list was 5s.

Jan: 5. List of 105 names including 6 pilots with "Rich^d: Smith—Vinkner, W^m: Hulck, Mr. Balteshazzar ft Michell Jun^r, Tryphenee Diaper, Mary de Mafters widd^w: and Constant Woodman, widd^w:" 5s. again was the largest sum.

Jan: 9th: 100 names including 4 pilots, 2 bakers and 2 carpenters. Several entries are of a man and his wife; James Costen is entered with his two daughters; Ann and Mary Bushell subscribe as sisters, and there is a man, his son and his grandson. M^r John Gookin Gentle^m gives 10s., as does Tho: ffassome & his wife. Elizth: Samfon is "of London". The list is closed by Daniel Smith pish Clerk. Unusual names are Paretree and Isabella Merry wether.

Jan: 10th Upper Deale. 48 names here, with several of the gentry with the prefix Mr., M^r: Jn^o: Jenkin & his wife Mary, M^r: Tho: Knowler, M^r: Geo: Knowler, M^{rs} Martha Rust, M^{rs}: Mary and M^{rs} Susan Jenkin, M^{rs}: Gage widd^w: & her daught^{rs}., M^{rs} Mary and M^{rs}: Sarah Hobday Jun^r, M^r: Jn^o: May & his wife Sarah and M^r: pet^r: Bridger. The first and last give 10s. Jn^o: Mocket and pet^r: Graunt are in this list. An unusual spelling for the name Cecily is Sicilie.

Jan: 11th: 60 names in this final list with four pilots. M^r: Edw^d: Smith—searcher, M^r: Stones—churchwarden, Cap^t: Jn^o poole, and M^r: Hen: Knighte give 5s. each. Four contributors are described as servants, and one as spinster. The names Diggers and Scruggs, with Cawill and Woodriffe, appear for the first time. Seven names from the end Tho: Stone, the churchwarden, signs. The list is closed by the signatures of John Jenkin, Will^m: Horne and John Culmer.

The Brief appealed for £30,000.

"Received of M^r Edmund Ibbott Rect^r of Deale the sum of Twentie Eight pounds seven shillings upon the brief for the redemption of the Captives in Argier to be delivered to M^r. Martin Hirst of Canterbury according to my Lords Grace of Canterbury his appointment

I say Rec^d by me Henry Ullock Rec^t of Mongham
January y^e 16th: 70: "

Cranbrook raised £14 1s. 10d. towards the above sum.

"We the Parishioners of Deale whose names are under written do acknowledge Mr Henry Gerard to be opprest in his poor A[se]m^t and are willing to abate him 10^s pr A[se]m^t: w^{ch}: before amounte to 1[£]: 10^s Dated y^e 8th of May 1696 "

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Will Boys Deputy | Arthur Wallinger |
| Tho Horne } churchwardens | Richard Neale |
| James Neale } churchwardens | Abra: A ^H Hudson |
| Dudley St Leger | Edward Hosellwood |
| Tob. Bowles | Richard Ciss |
| Gab Millison | William Whithhead |
| Jeffery Saffery | John Pickle |
| Will Ockman | Thomas ffox |
| John Pye | Will Birch |
| Tho : Pye | John Bone |
| Sam ⁿ fflasham | Jn ^o + Smith |
| Jos : Lane | Geo Hulk |
| Jos : Nicholl | Antho Bowes |
| Rob' Hughes | John Carter |
| Cha : Whiing (a "t" left out) | Will Mumbray |
| John Lee | John Middleton |
| Tho : Brothers | Henry ^{tr} Parsons |
| Robert Jefry | his mark |
| John Wildes | John Scarlett |
| John Mount Travers | W ^m ^{tr} Snoad |
| Robert Wood | his mark |
| Ed ^v ^{tr} Soles | Seemery Banes |
| his mark | William Cobb |
| John Underdown | Dan ⁿ Denne |

"Wee Whose names are under written Parishioners of Deale do allow to reimburst Mr Boys Deputy as also other Ensuing Deputyes their Incident Charges Dated y^e 8th of May 1696 And (erased) y^e Sd reimbirstment to be allowed out of y^e Poor Assesm^{ts}: not exceeding y^e Sum of eight Pounds Part whereof is towards y^e Treating y^e Gover^r. of Dover Castle

(Signed) Henry Gerard Rector "

and thirty parishioners, all of whose names occur in the previous list.

The sub-parish of St. George's had its beginning, with its Chapel, through the great commercial and naval activity which centred in the shipping making use of the roadstead of The Downs from the latter part of the seventeenth century. Ships were becoming more seaworthy, Henry VIII's coast-defence forts were giving a certain amount of protection, and Sandwich, up a winding tidal river, was useless for vessels running for shelter, or for immediate supplies by the ships' chandlers and the bum-boat women. Hence there was a rapid increase in Deal's population on the shingle ridge and immediately behind; still seen in the many late seventeenth century brick houses in Lower Deal.¹

¹ See Dr. F. W. Hardman, "The Sea Valley of Deal", *Arch. Cant.*, L (1938) pp. 50-59.

In 1699 Deal obtained a Charter of Incorporation. With its growing importance it had been long chaffing under the overlordship of Sandwich which conducted all official business through a Deputy (*v. p.* 30). Even the vested interests of the Rector (his church was over a mile away) had to acknowledge the altered circumstances, and had to allow that a Chapel of Ease in Lower Deal was a necessity. Such a project became a public and mayoral question in 1706. However, there were many setbacks, of which finance was not the least, till the Corporation in 1712 obtained an Act "for completing a Chapel of Ease in the Lower Town of Deal, in the County of Kent, by a Duty on Water-born Coals to be brought into the said Town". This empowered the collection of a duty of 2s. a ton on such coals. (Full details are given in Laker's *History of Deal*, 1917, pp. 258-63.) The duty was to remain in force for 15 years but 1s. 6d. is still collected, although not for the benefit of the edifice or of the parish. The Chapel was completed in 1716, and dedicated and consecrated on June 16th by the Archbishop, Dr. Wake, as a "Chapel dependent upon the Parish Church of Deal".

The first "Perpetual Curate" (since 1852 St. George's has been a separate parish with its own vicar) was a William Squire. He resigned in March 1718 on collation to Reculver but must have been non-resident for some little time before as the earliest entry in the Register of Marriages and Burials (the latter only from 1737) records in the handwriting of his successor Carter that "Henry Alexander Primrose & Margaret Bowles both of Deal were married May y^o 5th. 1717 (Licence)." ¹ However, the interest of this quarto vellum-bound Register is in the following use. While on one cover appears "Deal Chapel Registers" on the other is the word "Briefs", and inside on the first leaf is written in a copy-book hand "A Register Book for Briefs published in y^o Chapel at Deal in the County of Kent; bought August y^o 1st 1717 [?1716] by

Joseph Lane
Anthony Glover } Chapel-Wardens

Nicholas Carter, Minister.

Nicholas Carter, his son-in-law Thomas Pennington, or others who eased his duties towards the end of his life—he was a pluralist—enter every Brief with the date of collection, and sign them, but when the entry states that nothing was "collected in y^o Chapel because to be collected from House to House by Minister & Churchwardens of the Parish", the amounts only appear in seven early entries. At Cranbrook on the other hand we find this information invariably given.

¹ A Thomas Daniel Primrose, D.L. of St. John's College, Oxford, was instituted Rector of South Warnborough, Hants, on March 27th, 1728, and inducted May 3rd by John Guensay, Vicar of Froyle. He was buried at St. George's in 1761, and his wife Susanna, aged 64, in 1773. In 1729 Henry Alexander owned a Brewhouse in Deal on which, with his house, he was assessed 17s. 4d. In 1732 his wife was paid £1 16s. for beer supplied to the Poor House. He was alive in 1734.

In St. Leonard's Parish, where between 1719 and 1774 there were 45½ appeals, the churchwardens charged 3s. for this method of collection.

Carter, a controversialist, and not averse to calling a spade a spade did not hide his feelings in his written utterances. In November 1720, 8s. 1d., as against St. Leonard's 3s. 9½d., was gathered towards the estimated loss of £1,609 at Shrawdine Church and Parsonage in Salop. He thus lets us into his political sympathies. "In y^e civi wars anno 1644 Shrawdine Castle was made a Garrison by y^e King's Forces & while y^e said Garrison continued there they burnt y^e greatest Part of y^e Town & demolished y^e Steeple, Chancel, & most of y^e Church together wth. y^e Parsonage House, for y^{er} Safty against y^e Rebels." In 1732 the damage at Stourbridge Church was £2,000 or so. St George's gave 1s. 11d., St. Leonard's 2s. 6d. Carter comments "This Brief was for y^e building of a new Church or Chapel of Ease in Stowerbridge in y^e Parish of Old Swinford; & not for y^e Repairing of an old one: and therefore unusual, if not unreasonable."

In July, 1749, a Brief to aid an assessed loss of £1,177 at Berkeley Church, Glos., came under Carter's ire. Nothing was collected perhaps because he animadverted, "The Title of this Brief is—Berkeley Church whereas the Brief itself is not for y^e Church, but for y^e Tower of y^e Church, and which Stands about 40 yards from y^e Parish Church. No is there one word in y^e Brief mentioning y^e use of such Tower. Quare why then was there a Brief to rebuild such Tower?" Towards this appeal Cranbrook subscribed 3s. 2½d.

On August 1st, 1742, Carter noted that he "read in Deal chape his Majesty's Letter to y^e two Archbishops, & the Archbishop of Canterbury's Letter to his Clergy concerning a Collection to be made for y^e Use of y^e Corporation for y^e Propagation of y^e Gospel in foreign Parts". This Society had its origin in 1701.

Appeals to St. George's for relief outside this country were, in 1729, for Protestants in Copenhagen. No sum is given but St. Leonard's raised £4 6s. 4d. In 1762 help was asked to reimburse a loss of £2,733 Sterling suffered by Saarbruck Church and School; rather later the scholastic claims of the "Colledges" of Philadelphia and New York reached Deal. In 1764 the charitable were urged to help "Philippen Colony in Turkish Moldavia". They raised 7s. 3½d. An earlier appeal which reached St. Leonard's in 1739 came from "Bobi and Villar in y^e Valley of Lucerne in Piedmont". They were sufferers to the value of £2,354 by an inundation.

For the study of these Registers and Parish Books thanks are due to the Rector of Deal, the Rev. Canon E. D. Bowser, and the Vicar of St. George's, the Rev. H. W. Lea-Wilson. Also to Mr. W. E. Tate F.R.Hist.S., who has done much work on the subject. Happily at St. George's the book suffered no damage when the Victorian East window of the church was blown out. How tastes change when the

design and colouring of this stained glass was described as carried out with much taste and elegance. But 1867 was the low water mark in this branch of art.

TABULAR STATEMENT OF KENTISH BRIEFS AS ENTERED IN THE PARISH REGISTERS OR BOOKS OF ST. LEONARD'S AND ST. GEORGE'S, DEAL, AND AT CRANBROOK IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

| Date and Place. | Estimated Loss. | St. Leonard's. | St. George's. | Cranbrook. |
|---|-----------------|--|---|---|
| 1726 Folkestone Fishery | £2,376 | 2/6½ | 11/1½ | |
| 1727 Cranbrook Church | £2,376 | 9/6 (Collected from house to house) | No sum given as collected from house to house | |
| 1727 Gravesend by Fire | £21,232 | £6 2 6 (Collected as above) | " " | £5 0 6½ (No note to this) |
| 1738 Upchurch Inundation | £4,290 | 14/1 | " " | |
| 1741 Medway Oyster Dredgers Loss by frost | £10,943 | £2 12 10 (Collected as above) | " " | |
| 1743 Fishermen, etc of Faversham. Loss by frost (a late year) | £9,000 | £1 12 8 (As above) | " " | |
| 1744 Eynsford by Fire | £1,661 | 1/8 | 6/6½ | |
| 1744 Hythe Church by Fire | £1,100 | 3/8 | 8d. | |
| 1756 Newenden and June Rolvenden by a hail-storm (a wet summer) | £2,212 | £1 16 4 | No sum given. (Collected from house to house) | £2 19 3 (As above) |
| 1759 Chalk | £1,231 | | " " | 17/8 (Collected throughout the town) |
| 1763 Sittingbourne Church | £2,089 | | " " | |
| 1764 Loss by Hail in Kent | £12,798 | | " " | £5 14 0½ (No note to this) |
| 1765 Tudely Church | | | | £1 5 10 (As above) |
| 1773 Warehorne Church | £1,157 10 | 1/- (Collected as above) | No sum given. (Collected as above) | 18/2 (Collected as above) |
| 1779 West Malling Church | | | | 15/7 (As above) |