



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

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

## THE EARLY DERINGS

PHILIP H. BLAKE

The only branch of the ancient Kent family of Dering known to survive at the present day is that headed by John Charles Dering, D.Sc., of Broadway, near Weymouth, and descended through Lenham and Egerton from John, of Egerton, a younger brother of Sir Edward's, the first baronet's, grandfather Richard, both being sons of John Dering of Pluckley, and Margaret Brent, of Charing. Thus, no male issue of the Surrenden family is known to survive below John Dering, of Surrenden, (*d.* 8 September, 1517), and Julian, daughter of William Darell, of Calehill, in Little Chart, grandparents of the aforesaid John. It so happens that it is from this point downwards that the pedigree is clear so far as is known, but upwards it has had the diligent attention of Sir Edward, baronet and antiquary, who produced a pedigree in which four of the first eight generations have no surnames and all eight are beyond credibility despite some dates.<sup>1</sup> What satisfaction a man of Sir Edward's undoubted abilities could derive from such self-deception is hard to understand, because he was a careful observer and the records of his church monuments and Kentish armory reveal a talent for drawing that is quite exceptional. His *Kentish Armory*, consisting of drawings of 1,251 shields of arms, generally with crests, is an impressive performance. As a genealogist and local historian he might be described as the seventeenth-century Plantagenet-Harrison on a small scale.

Up to about 100 years ago, Sir Edward's Saxon pedigree was accepted without question, but since then it has been generally condemned, though none of its detractors has made any attempt to do better. It is the aim of this paper to show that a descent on authentic records back to the mid-thirteenth century, ought to be possible and, in so doing, to draw attention to evidence consistently overlooked that shows the existence of the name in Dengemarsh very soon after the

<sup>1</sup> W. Berry, *Kent Pedigrees* (1830), 397.

Norman Conquest. It is generally conceded, and correctly, that Westbrooke, in Lydd, was the ancient Dering seat, although there were two others in the marsh, namely, *Derings marsh Place* and *Derings Droff*, or Drove.<sup>2</sup> It may be assumed, therefore, that any Dering of these parts who is mentioned was a member of the family later of Pluckley, and, if described particularly as of Lydd, was not improbably the head of it. On these assumptions a reasonable family succession from the mid-thirteenth century has been deduced. It is now the turn of modern scholars – and others – to question and criticise. They can dispute the construction put on the facts, but they cannot dispute their authenticity.

For the building of Battle Abbey in the early twelfth century 'a goodly number of men were brought out of neighbouring counties and were allotted dwelling places around the circuit of the Abbey.' No. 35, the fourth messuage near the parish church on the west (on one side of the street) 'that of Aelfric de Denge mareis is free, except only that it makes summons of the land of the said Aelfric in Dengemareis, when it ought to do summons'. Also near the parish church of St. Mary on the west comes the messuage of Dering, held by a rent of 7*d.* per annum and labour, and the tenth messuage from the gate of the abbey on the north side was held by Dering Pionius on the same terms.<sup>3</sup>

About 150 years pass before the name appears in Kent in John Dering, who is a witness to a grant by Avice, one of the three daughters of William le Wyse, of Bilsington, and others of 2*s.* 6*d.* per annum to the Prior and Convent of Bilsington, which is dated between 1256 and 1262.<sup>4</sup>

Fifty years later Richard Dering occurs in the Kent Feet of Fines in a fine dated 12th November, 1311, by which he and Richard de Chelsfield (Chelesfeud) grant two messuages, 120 acres of land, 8*d.* rent and a rent of four hens, with appurtenances, in Minster and Thanet to Thomas Poueyn and Margaret his wife and the heirs of Thomas by her, failing whom to Baldwin Pas and Joanna his wife and the heirs of Joanna.<sup>5</sup> This was, presumably, the same Richard Dering who, in 1314, granted to the Abbot and Convent of Battle in free, pure and everlasting alms 3½ acres of land in Dengemarsch in the parish of Lydd, which was then in their tenure. For this Richard received 10 marks sterling. The boundaries of the land are given.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> E. Hasted, *History of Kent*, VIII, 434.

<sup>3</sup> (Ed.) M.A. Lower, *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, (1851), 12; 16.

<sup>4</sup> (Ed.) N. Neilson, *The Cartulary and Terrier of the Priory of Bilsington, Kent*, (1928), 103, no. Oxford 53.

<sup>5</sup> *Arch Cant.*, xi (1877), 346, no. 190.

<sup>6</sup> (Eds.) M. Holman and G. Marvin, *Abstracts of English Records*, privately printed, Boston, Mass. (1929), 233.

Since the Derings of Westbrooke, in Lydd, were the only family of the name in Kent to possess land in any significant quantity, it seems safe to conclude that the foregoing Richards not only belonged to it and are identical, but could have been, also, the son and heir of John, the Bilsington witness. The same territorial consideration could well apply to the next Dering to have been found, namely, Thomas Dering, who is described simply as 'of Kent' in a suit in the Court of Common Pleas about 1353-54.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, the details of this action have not been traced, but it seems possible to regard Thomas as Richard's successor, though in that case he must have died very soon after, because another Richard comes close on his heels. It was late in 1357 that Richard Dering was attorney of the Abbot of Battle against William atte Welle, of Wye, in a dispute over property at Wye.<sup>8</sup> It might appear at first sight that the foregoing Richards were the same man, but in 1311 the first of them must have been at least 21 years old, and probably more, so that by 1357 he would have been around 70, surely, in his day, rather too old to be an active attorney-at-law.

The attorney had apparently died by 1385 and been succeeded by John Dering, who is recorded in the Kent Feet of Fines of that year as having been party to a transfer of land in Lydd. He is surely the father of 'Thomas Dering of Dengemarsh near Lydd' who heads the earliest recorded pedigree of the family, which is that compiled by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms, at the Visitation of Kent in 1592. The version printed by the Harleian Society (vol. LXII, 75) has been collated with the original by Mr P. Ll. Gwynn-Jones, Lancaster Herald, who reports that 'they are in agreement apart from a few minor variations in spelling. The only additional information concerns Richard Dering, who is described as a monk in the printed version. In the original he is described as "a monk there" '.

This pedigree is substantially the same as that recorded by John Philipot, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant, Marshal and Deputy to William Camden, and printed in *Arch. Cant.*, x (1876), 327, except that Cooke gives details of five more children of Richard and Agnes (Eyton). In neither pedigree is Thomas provided with a wife, but in the sumptuous, illuminated genealogy of the family prepared by Sir William Woods, Clarenceux, and dated 1838, for Cholmeley Charles William Dering, he is assigned one in 'Cecilia, daughter of Richard Lascelles, Esq.,' but, inasmuch as this genealogy begins with manifestly false parents for

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 163, quoting De Banco Roll 28-30 Ed. III.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 164, quoting De Banco Roll, 31 Ed. III, m. 374/1 - Michaelmas 31 Ed. III.

Thomas, namely, Edward, son of Sir John Dering, kt., and Mary, daughter of Beauchamp of Holt, we need give no credence to Cecilia.

The difficulties presented to the compilers of the desired Dering ancestry by the undeniable reality of Thomas, and the consequent need to account for him somehow, are overcome in *Kentish Pedigrees*<sup>9</sup> by making him, not the grandson of Sir John, but of one Richard Dering and Cassandra, his wife, who are made the parents of Sir John Dering of Westbrooke, *d.* 38 Ed. III (1364), with wife Dame Joyce, daughter of William (-). Thomas is marked down as the younger of two probable sons, the elder of whom is Edward, living 38 Ed. III (1364). Thomas is said to be living 12 R. II (1388), with wife Alexandra, daughter and heir of Edmund de Clyderowe. The son and heir is shown as the third son, Richard Dering of Hayton, Lieutenant of Dover Castle, 21 R. II (1397) and buried in Lydd church, with wife Joan, sister of Sir Arnold St. Leger. These are made the parents of John, who married Christine Haute.

An air of verisimilitude is given to all this by the dates, but, inasmuch as dates are given to such persons as 'Deringus filius Wimundi Fitz-Dering', they may be questioned. A Clitherow, however, seems a good wife for Thomas Dering, since a family of that name was at Ash-next-Wingham at the end of the fourteenth century.

Thomas must have died early in the fifteenth century and certainly before 1418, for in that year his son and successor, John, enfeoffed John Haute of Pluckley, John Mayhewe, clerk, John Thomas and Robert Jon of Lyde and Thomas ffryght of Hothfield of all lands, tenements, rents and services due, with all and singular their appurtenances, in the towns of Lyde, Mydle and Dengemersshe for the term of their lives. Dated Lyde the feast day of Simion and Jude Apostles (28 October), 6 Hen. V (1418). Witnesses: Henry Malmayn, John Seyntleger, John Geoffray, John Malgar and others.<sup>10</sup> This John Dering is described as 'of Westbrooke, Esq.', afterwards in right of his wife of Surrenden',<sup>11</sup> being the first of the family to be identified particularly with Westbrooke rather than with the more general Lydd, in the parish of which town it lies a short distance along the road to Old Romney. He married Christine, one of the two daughters and co-heirs of the aforesaid John Haute.<sup>12</sup> The settlement of the Surrenden estate on Christine and her husband would appear to be the subject of the grant dated 10 June 3 Hen. V (1425) by John Haute, Esq., to his daughter Christine, wife of John Dering, and Elizabeth Haute of a tenement once

<sup>9</sup> British Library, Add. MS. 5534, ff. 23-35.

<sup>10</sup> Deed penes Mr Vernon Harris, Pluckley.

<sup>11</sup> *Kentish Pedigrees*, Add. MS. 5534 ff. 23-35.

<sup>12</sup> Cooke, *loc. cit.*

John Surrenden's in Pluckley and Little Chart.<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth, who was half sister to Christine and unmarried, died within ten years of the death of her father, who was dead by 1431<sup>14</sup> and thus left two coheirs, the other being his daughter Alice, wife of William Goldwell, of Godinton in Great Chart. On Elizabeth's death the whole property would have vested in Christine and John Dering. John himself died in the year of his father-in-law's grant and by 12 February 5 Hen. VI (1427) Christine had married Reynold Dryland.<sup>15</sup> She died shortly after 28 September, 1473, the date of her will, and was buried in the south porch of Pluckley church next to her father.<sup>16</sup> Her husband Dering was buried in the south chancel of the church. Besides one daughter, Joan, wife of William Pettit, of Shalmsford, near Chilham, they had an only son, Richard.

Richard, his father John Dering's sole heir, married twice. His first wife is generally stated to have been Isabel, daughter of Henry Barton, or Bertyn, of Benenden, to whom Sir William Woods<sup>17</sup> assigns arms of *gules, six scallops, three, two and one, or*. She is probably correctly recorded as being the mother of his son John, a priest, who cannot be identified with the Marshal of Christ Church, Canterbury, who was not John, as Woods names him, but James,<sup>18</sup> the son of Richard's second wife, Agnes, daughter of Eyton, of Shropshire, who was the mother of his son and heir, John (married Julian Darell) and his other children.

Philipot,<sup>19</sup> in the words of the immortal Hercule Poirot, is all at the seaside on the foregoing. He gives Richard only one wife, Agnes Eton, by whom he has one son John, the husband of Julian Darell. The deficiencies in Philipot's pedigree down to this generation will be immediately apparent when compared with Cooke's. From this stage onwards there is no material difference between the two accounts.

#### THE DERING ARMS

Robert Cooke, Clarenceux, not only compiled the first independent pedigree of Dering at the Visitation of Kent in 1592, but he also

<sup>13</sup> W.G. Davis, *The Ancestry of Mary Isaac*, Portland, Me. (1955), 126, quoting Harl. MS. 5481, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Feudal Aids, III, 69.

<sup>15</sup> Davis, *op. cit.*, 127.

<sup>16</sup> Canterbury Archdeaconry 3/425.

<sup>17</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Cooke, *loc. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Arch. Cant., *loc. cit.*

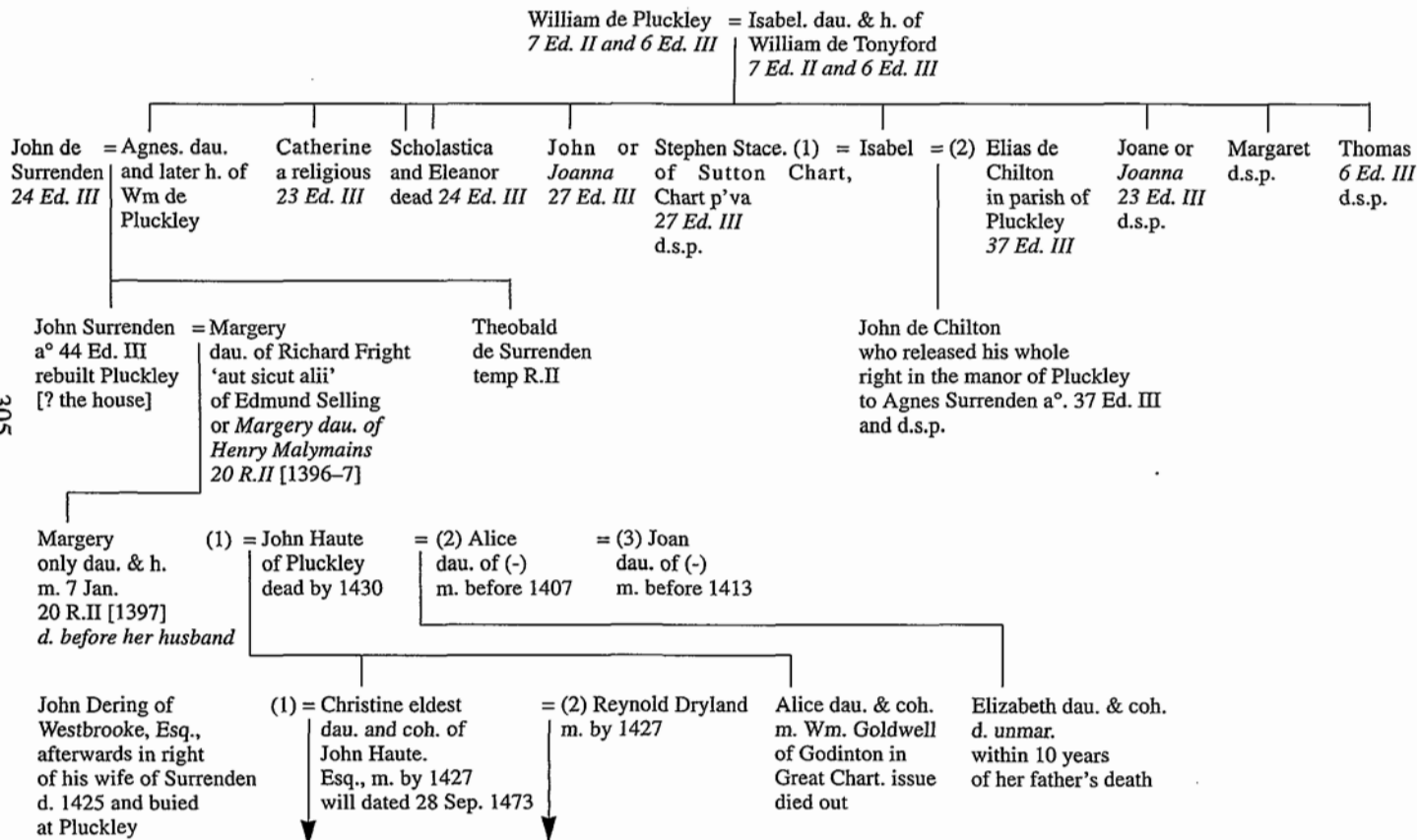
recorded the family arms as borne by the descendants of John Dering and Julian Darell on a single shield of quarterings, namely, the arms of Dering followed by those of Haute, Surrenden, a coat of *or, a saltire couped, sable*, and Bettenham. Since all but one of these coats are well known and illustrated among the Dering quarterings in *Arch. Cant.*, x (1876), 330, there is no need to blazon them here, but the fourth coat, or third quartering, in the Cooke record is a very different matter.

It is a fundamental rule in the marshalling of arms, that is, in arranging their order as quarterings, that the arms of a wife, if she is the heir or coheir of her father, follows immediately after those of her husband when inherited by the sons. But the said husband may be the son, or male descendant of a similar marriage, so that the arms of the later marriage will come after those of the earlier. It follows, therefore, that to determine how quarterings were acquired, or brought in, it is only necessary to find the marriages to heirs or coheirs among the direct male ancestors of the man whose quarterings are being sought. Conversely, the bearer of unidentified arms can be determined through the application of this principle. Although it was not always the one followed in medieval times, it was followed by the heralds, so that Cooke's arrangement may be accepted as the order in which the arms of the families he blazoned came to Richard Dering by 1592. It is important to realise that at that time Sir Edward had not been born and that Anthony, his father, who was then aged 34, is not known to have had any interest in his ancestry. Consequently, Cooke's conclusions may be taken as not having been influenced by family representations and are therefore based on record evidence.

In applying the principles enunciated above, and working back from Richard, it is found that his grandfather, Nicholas Dering of Rolvenden, married Alice, daughter and coheir of William Bettenham of Cranbrook, thus accounting for the fifth coat in Cooke's group of quarterings. The next appropriate marriage is as far back as that of John Dering, the first of Surrenden, to Christine, daughter and coheir of John Haute of Pluckley, which accounts for the Haute quartering. But the principles of quartering show that Haute brought in the two that follow, so that, to determine how, it is necessary to examine Christine's ancestry, which is shown on the accompanying pedigree, based on that in *Kentish Pedigrees*. Details in italics are from Sir Edward Dering's pedigree and those of John Haute's second and third wives and his issue are from W.G. Davis.<sup>20</sup>

It will be seen at once that it was Christine Haute's mother, Margery,

<sup>20</sup> *op. cit.*, 123-8.





who was the daughter and heir of John de Surrenden and not Joan (—), who was her father's third wife, so that the coat of arms that follows that of Haute in the quarterings must be for Surrenden. Her grandmother, whose Christian name, it appears to be agreed, was also Margery, was not the heir of coheir of her father, whether his name was Fright, Selling or Malmain. Note that both Cooke and Philipot omit this generation, which would appear to be necessary to fill an interval of about 47 years (c.24 Ed.III to 20 R.II). Her great grandmother, Agnes, however, was the daughter and eventually sole heir of William de Pluckley. In support of this fact Cooke quotes a deed of 19 May 23 Ed.III (1349), and it is evident that it is the same deed, mentioned in Dering's pedigree, that concerns William's son John (who must have d.s.p.) and his daughter Catherine, but apparently not Agnes. In the following year John de Surrenden is concerned in a deed that is obviously a consequence of the deaths of Scholastica and Eleanor, two more of William's daughters. The inescapable conclusion to be drawn from these deeds seems to be that by 1350 John de Surrenden was the husband of Agnes and that the marriage had taken place either in that year or the year before. Whichever it was, the import is that the third quartering, i.e., the fourth coat, ought to be, and in fact must be, for Pluckley.

Cooke's record and its startling implications seem to have escaped notice hitherto. They suggest that *or, a fleur de lys sable*, so long and generally accepted as the coat of Pluckley, was not, in fact, the true arms of that family. This suspicion warranted an official opinion, and that of Lancaster Herald was sought. In his view, since 'the intervening marriage of Richard Dering [i.e., between John's marriage to Christine Haute and Nicholas's to Alice Bettenham] does not appear to have been to any Eyton heiress, it seems that the saltire coupé must have been brought in by Haute and thus refers, as is surmised, to Pluckley.' In that case whose arms can the fleur de lys be?

To this question a most unexpected answer has been found in the copy of the Visitation of Hampshire in the Harleian manuscripts.<sup>21</sup> Recorded there are two shields of quarterings of the Dering family. They are by no means the same; in fact, they are entirely different. The first shows those of the Hampshire family, which descended from William Dering, of Petworth, Sussex, a younger son of Richard and Agnes Eyton. The second shows those of the main line seated at Surrenden, down to the time of Sir Edward himself, for they include the quartering for the Brents of Charing, to which Sir Anthony succeeded

<sup>21</sup> British Library, Harl. MS, 1139, f.29.

in 1612 on the death of Thomas Brent of Willesborough. There can be no doubt, therefore, to which branch of the family this shield of sixteen quarterings refers. They are not only in trick, but named as follows: Dering, Criol, Bertyn, Haute, Shelving, Surrenden, Selling, Pluckley, Tonyford, Bettenham, Apulderfield, Brent, Rey, Gobyon, Berkeley and Betishorne. It should be noted that although families are included from which the Derings had no descent, e.g., Shelving, those that are certainly correctly borne are in their proper order, namely, Dering, Haute, Surrenden, Pluckley, Bettenham, Brent, Rey (or Rye), Gobyon, Berkeley and Betishorne. All are tricked in the usual and accepted form, so that it is a surprise indeed to find that the first coat, that of Dering, is the fleur de lys, and that the coat for Pluckley is the coupé saltire, which adds to the astonishment. This, however, is not the end of the story. A third shield in trick (unfortunately without a crest) is that of the canting arms of Dering, the three deer's heads, under which is written '*Insignia hac assumpta te. H6 et Hen. 7*'.

Here, surely, we see the inspiration and origin of Sir Edward's rearrangement of his family arms, which he induced Garter Segar to allow him and hence the shield of sixty quarterings illustrated in *Arch. Cant.*, x (1876), 330. By the simple expedient of transposing the arms of Pluckley and Dering and by extending the ends of the Pluckley saltire, he was able to get his adopted arms into a medieval roll of arms by simply changing the name of the real bearer of *or, a saltire sable*. He was obliged to retain the deer's heads coat, for it had been in general use throughout the family for so long.

These conclusions are supported by the fact that the sole authority for the fleur de lys arms for Pluckley seems to be Sir Edward Dering himself, added to which is Cooke's record that at the opening of the seventeenth century the deer's heads were the only known arms of Dering and not the saltire. It is unfortunate that Cooke did not note the crest, which was a coupé deer's head as in the arms, because it sometimes occurs with a ducal, or crest, coronet between the antlers. This addition suggests a desire to add an air of dignity and grandeur to the armorial bearings. It is open to this suspicion because in his volume of Kentish arms Sir Edward tricks four variations in the crest, all being for Kent branches of the family. The Pluckley line is given a deer trippant, the Charing line has the head without the coronet, the Egerton line has a coronet gules encircling the deer's neck, and the Wickins line has an encircling coronet azure. All this tinkering with a coronet seems to show that originally there was none, and in this connection it may be noted that in Sir Edward's final choice of a horse crest we get the same coronet.

The net result of this survey appears to establish that the true coat of Dering 'modern' was the deer's heads, with a crest of the head without

a coronet, as in the arms, that the arms of Pluckley were the coupé saltire, and that the fleur de lys was the discarded coat of Dering transformed into that of Pluckley.

ADDENDUM

The British Library manuscripts quoted above are described as follows: Add. MS.5534. Pedigrees and arms of families in Kent, to 1781, collected and copied by Edward Hasted, the historian of Kent.

Harley MS.1139. Copies of the 1576 Visitation of Hampshire (with additions, 1602, by William Smith, Rouge Dragon), 1566 Visitation of Berkshire, and 1574 Visitation of Bucks., etc., in an unidentified hand. (This manuscript may have been among the collection of William Shires, arms painter of Southwark, acquired by Harley's Librarian, Humfrey Wanley – see C.E. Wright, *Fontes Harleiani*, 1972, 392).

Harley MS.6138. Transcript made by Henry Lilly *al.* Lilly (c. 1589–1638), herald painter (signature f.1), of the Visitation of Kent, 1619, by John Philipot, Rouge Dragon (deputy of William Camden).