

Hasted's Kent

Allington in 1798

Edward Hasted, *The history and topographical survey of the county of Kent*, second edition, volume 4 (Canterbury, 1798), pages 448–54

ALLINGTON.

ON the opposite side of the river Medway, though about two miles higher up, from the town of Aylesford, adjoining to the eastern part of that parish, lies Allington, called in Domesday, Elentun, and in many records Alynton.

THE PARISH of Allington is very small, the soil is a loam, thinly covering the quarry rock, so prevalent in these parts; the river Medway is its eastern boundary. The castle is situated within a few yards of the river, from which it is nearly excluded by the range of trees on the bank of it. It is a venerable ruin, and though now only used as a farm house, was, in Henry VIII.'s reign, and afterwards, the habitation of the Knight's family of Wyatt, who resided in it with much reputation and splendor till their forfeiture of it for treason, in queen Mary's reign. The remains are of considerable extent, and many of its external parts are in a good state of preservation. The moat and ditch which surrounded it still exists; hence the ground rises about half a mile south-eastward up the London road, through Wrotham to Maidstone, which is about two miles distant. On the other side the road the parish continues southward about half a mile further among the coppice woods, as far as the Hermitage, formerly the chapel of St. Stephen of Longsole, mentioned before, under Aylesford parish.

There is said to have been a castle erected at this place in the time of the Saxons, which was afterwards demolished by the Danes. It afterwards came into the possession of Ulnoth, fourth son of earl Godwin, and after the conquest was part of those vast possessions with

and Leland, in his poem, *Næniæ in Mortem Tho. Viati Equitis (Senioris)* calls this place *Alaunodunum*, and *Alaunia*.

449

which William the Conqueror enriched his half brother Odo, the great bishop of Baieux, under the general title of whose lands it is thus described in the survey of Domesday:

Anschitil holds Elentun of the bishop (of Baieux). It was taxed at one suling. The arable land is three carucates. In demesne there are two, and 15 villeins, with two borderers, having one carucate and a half. There is a church, and two servants, and half a mill, and one den of 15 shillings. Wood for the pannage of eight hogs, and one acre of meadow. In the time of king Edward the Confessor it was worth one hundred shillings, when he received it 60 shillings, now 100 shillings. Uluric held it of Alnod Cilt.

This Alnod Cilt was Ulnoth, fourth son of earl Godwin, and younger brother to king Harold, who from the royalty of his kindred, had the addition of Cilt, a similar denomination to the Latin word *Clito*, with which those of royal blood were always honoured in those times.

On the bishop's disgrace, which happened about four years afterwards, this, among the rest of his possessions, was confiscated to the crown, from whence it was soon afterwards granted by the Conqueror to his kinsman, William earl of Warren, in Normandy, who

had greatly assisted him against the bishop, in the rebellion the latter had raised against him, being nephew to the countess Gunnora, the king's great grandmother, and was afterwards created, by king William Rufus, earl of Surry. He bore for his arms, Chequy, or and azure.^{/h}

Earl Warren rebuilt the castle here, and then transmitted his interest in this place to the lord Fitz Hugh, whose daughter and heir carried it in marriage to Sir Giles Allington,^{/i} one of whose descendants passed it

^{/h} Dugdale's Baronetage, vol. i. p. 73. Philipott, p. 41.

^{/i} See History of Essex, 8vo. vol. ii. p. 193.

450

away, in the latter end of king Henry III.'s reign, to Sir Stephen de Penchester, constable of Dover castle, and warden of the cinque ports.^{/k} In the 8th year of king Edward I. he obtained a grant of a market weekly on the Tuesday at this manor, and a fair for three days yearly, on the vigil, the feast of St. Laurence, and the day after; and afterwards, that year, free warren in all his demesne lands within it; and next year he obtained the king's licence to erect a castle here, and to fortify and embattle it, by which it should seem, that he either rebuilt the castle here, or that it was before only some small building or fort, not esteemed of sufficient size to be called a castle; by which means this place came to be called, in several records of that time, Allington Penchester. He died without issue male, leaving two daughters his coheirs; on the partition of whose inheritance, this estate of Allington was allotted to Henry de Cobham, of Rundale, in Shorne, second son of John de Cobham, of Cobham, in this county, in right of Joane his wife, the eldest of them; and in his descendants it continued till one of them, in the beginning of king Edward IV.'s reign, alienated this manor and castle, which had been for some time from them, called Allyngton Cobham, to Rob. Brent;^{/l} and his grand son, William Brent, in the beginning of king Henry VII.'s reign, alienated them to Sir Henry Wyatt, privy counsellor to that prince, who was descended of a good family in Yorkshire.^{/m} He had been imprisoned in the Tower in the reign of Richard III. and was preserved by a cat, which fed him whilst prisoner there; for which reason he is always pictured with a cat in his arms, or beside him. On the accession of king Henry VII. he had great marks of favour shewn

^{/k} Kilburne's Survey, p. 11. See more of him under Penshurst, vol. iii. p. 231.

^{/l} Philipott, p. 41. Mr. Petit Fœdary of Kent his book.

^{/m} See his pedigree in Visit. Co. Kent, anno 1619, and more of them under Boxley.

451

him, being knighted, and made one of the privy council. In the 15th year of king Henry VIII. he procured his lands to be disgavelled, by an act passed particularly for that purpose; he resided at this castle, of which, and the manor, he died possessed in the 24th year of that reign, then held of Sir William Stoner, as of his manor of Horton Kirkby. He left an only son and heir, Sir Thomas Wyatt, born in this castle, who was

accounted a most accomplished gentleman, and well esteemed both for his learning and poetry; soon after his father's death, he was knighted, made of the privy council, and sent ambassador to the emperor, where he acquitted himself greatly to the king's satisfaction. In the 28th year of king Henry VIII.'s reign, he served the office of sheriff, and afterwards made a fair seat, as writers of that time term it, of this castle.

Anthony Wood calls him the delight of the muses and of mankind, and says, that being sent by the king towards Falmouth, in Cornwall, in the heat of summer, he was seized with a violent fever, and stopping at Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, he died and was buried there, being thirty-eight years old. Leland, in his poem, styles him incomparable, and highly celebrates his praises. He was a great favourite of Henry VIII. and by a bon mot raised the king's courage to go forwards with the Reformation, by telling him, it was a hard thing a man could not repent without the pope's leave.

On his death, which happened in the 34th year of that reign, leaving a son of his own name, who having in the 1st year of queen Mary, with other gentlemen of note in this county, raised a rebellion, on their disgust to the queen's marriage with king Philip of Spain,

See his instructions, and letters to and from him, whilst ambassador, in the British museum, Harleian MSS. No. 282.

Ath. Oxon. vol. i. p. 56.

An account of this rebellion was published in 1535, by John Proctor, in black letter. <STC 20407-8>

452

he marched with his followers to London, but was there deserted by them, upon which he surrendered himself to Sir Maurice Berkeley, who being on horseback, took Sir Thomas up behind him, and carried him to Whitehall, where he was made prisoner, and committed to the Tower; and being found guilty on his trial, was beheaded on Tower hill, his body quartered, and his head set up on a pole, which was afterwards stolen away.

On his death this castle and manor, with the advowson, became forfeited to the crown, where they continued till queen Elizabeth, in her 11th year, granted a lease of the house and manor of Allington to John Astley, esq. master of her jewels, and afterwards, by her letters patent, dated in her 26th year, granted the castle, manor, and advowson of this church, to his son, Sir John Astley, and his heirs male in tail in general, to hold by knights service, at the rent of 100l. 2s. 7d. per ann. and he having about the same time a grant of the palace at Maidstone, resided there. Soon after which the mansion of this castle, being uninhabited, fell to decay, and the park round it was disparked. Sir John Astley bore for his arms, Azure, a cinquefoil ermine; he was descended from Thomas de Astley, son and heir of Walter de Estley, who lived in the reign of king Henry III. and was baron of Astley castle, in Warwickshire. By his first wife he was ancestor of the Astleys of Pateshall, in Staffordshire, baronets; and by his second, who was heir of Constable, of Melton Constable in Norfolk; he was ancestor of those of Hill Morton and of Melton Constable, baronets, which

latter bear for their arms the same coat as the elder branch of this family, of Pateshall, with the addition of a bordure ingrailed or; of this branch of Hill Morton and Melton Constable, was Thomas Astley, esq. who

/q See Rapin, vol. ii. p. 38. Fox's Martyrs, vol. iii. p. 24, 25, 79, 81, 855.

453

had three wives; from the first of whom was descended Isaac, who was father of Thomas, of Melton Constable; and Jacob, created lord Astley; and from the second, John Astley, esq. master of the jewels to queen Elizabeth, who died before the middle of that reign, leaving a son, Sir John Astley, as before mentioned./r He was of the band of pensioners to queen Elizabeth, and master of the revels to kings James and Charles I. and of the privy chamber to the latter, and dying in 1639, was buried at Maidstone, without surviving issue;/s so that his three sisters became his coheirs, but this manor, castle, and advowson, with his other estates in this neighbourhood, he gave by will to his kinsman, Sir Jacob Astley, above mentioned, who was a man of great reputation for his bravery and conduct, acquired in the military service of foreign princes, and still more so for his faithful services to king Charles I. to whom he resorted in the beginning of the grand rebellion, and behaved with distinguished courage in the several battles and sharp encounters then fought, being a general of the king's forces, and governor of his garrisons of Oxford and Reading; and as a further reward, was, by letters patent, dated in the 20th year of that reign, created baron Astley, of Reading, in the county of Berks. He died at Maidstone, in 1651, and was there buried, having had five sons; Isaac, who succeeded him, as lord Astley, and in this estate, and four others, who died, s. p. and a daughter, Elizabeth, who married her kinsman, Sir Edward Astley, of Melton, as will be mentioned hereafter. Isaac, lord Astley, dying in 1662, was buried near his father, leaving his son, Jacob lord Astley, his successor, who dying, s. p. in 1688, was buried at Maidstone, and the barony became extinct, but this castle, manor, and advowson, came, among the rest of his entailed lands, to Sir Jacob

/r Dugd. Bar. vol. i. p. 668. Coll. Bar. vol. iii. p. 63, iv. 369.

/s See Dugd. History of St. Paul's Cathedral, p. 123.

454

Astley, bart. of Melton Constable, in Norfolk, descended from Thomas, the eldest brother of Jacob, the first lord Astley, and ancestor of the present baronets of that place,/t who, in the 6th year of George I. anno 1720, alienated them, with other estates in this neighbourhood, for which an act passed that year, to Sir Robert Marsham, bart. lord Romney, whose grandson, the Right Hon. Charles lord Romney is the present possessor of them.

There are no parochial charities.

ALLINGTON is situated within the ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION of the diocese of Rochester, and deanry of Malling.

The church, which is dedicated to St. Laurence, is a small mean building. In the church yard lies buried

Mr. Drayton, of Maidstone, a most ingenious person,
and an excellent botanist.

This church has always been accounted an appen=
dage to the manor, and as such is now in the patronage
of the Right Hon. Charles lord Romney. It is a
rectory, and is a discharged living in the king's books,
of the clear yearly certified value of 35l. the yearly
tenths of which are, 13s. 8d./u

CHURCH OF ALLINGTON.

PATRONS,

Or by whom presented. RECTORS.

Lords of the manor of Allington. Robert de Donam, anno 25 Ed=
ward I./w

Odo ibid./x

William Sprote, in 1422./y

Wm. Carr, A. M. about 1630./z

Edward Darby, in 1685.

John Richards, resig. in 1714.

Richard Spencer, A. M. instituted

Oct. 27, 1714.

Edward Weller, 1757.

Hon. Jacob Marsham, S. T. P.

1789. Present rector./a

/t Coll. Bar. vol. iii. p. 65.

/u Ect. Thes. p. 384.

/w Prynne's Records, vol. iii. p. 712.

/x Ibid. vol. iii. p. 571.

/y Reg. Roff. p. 156.

/z MSS. Twysden. He was presented
by the crown.

/a And prebendary of Rochester.