

Hasted's Kent

East Barming in 1798

Edward Hasted, *The history and topographical survey of the county of Kent*, second edition, volume 4 (Canterbury, 1798), pages 383–92

EAST BARMING.

CALLED in antient records, Bermelinge, lies the next parish to East Farleigh, on the opposite or northern side of the river Medway.

THE PARISH of East Barming lies on high ground, declining southward to the valley, through which the river Medway flows, being its southern boundary. It is situated opposite to East Farleigh, than which it has a far less rustic and more ornamented appearance.

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The soil like that is a fertile loam, slightly covering the quarry rock, from under which several small springs gush out, and run precipitately in tinkling rills into the Medway; it is enriched too with frequent hop and fruit plantations; the fields are in general larger, and surrounded with continued rows of lofty elms and large spreading oaks, which contribute greatly to the pleasantness of the place. The situation of it, as well as of the neighbouring parishes, from Maidstone as far as Mereworth, is exceedingly beautiful, the river Medway meandering its silver stream in the valley beneath, throughout the greatest part of the extent of them; the fertility of soil, the thinness of air, the rich variety of prospect, adorned by a continued range of capital seats, with their parks and plantations, form altogether an assemblage of objects, in which nature and art appear to have lavished their choicest endeavours, to form a scene teeming with whatever can make it desirable both for pleasure and profit.

The high road from Maidstone to Tunbridge crosses the upper part of the parish of East Barming, over a beautiful, though small plain, called Barming-heath, part of which is in Maidstone parish, a little distance below which is a modern, and rather elegant seat, built by John Whitaker, gent. second son of Mr. Tho. Whitaker, of Trottesclive, since whose death it has come to his nephew, Thomas Whitaker, esq. of Watringbury; but Mr. William Rolfe resides in it. Farther on is the village of Barming, in which is a pleasant seat, called the Homestall, built about the year 1720, by Mr. James Allen, whose heirs are now entitled to the fee simple of it; but by the foreclosure of a mortgage term, the possession of it became vested in Arthur Harris, esq. who kept his shrievalty here in 1746; his brother Thomas resided likewise here, and dying unmarried in 1769, gave this seat to Mrs. Mary Dorman for life; remainder to Mr. John Mumford,

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of Sutton-at-Hone, whom he made heir to the bulk of his fortune; she now possesses and resides in it. A small distance from hence is the seat of Hall-place; hence the ground rises to the coppice woods, part of which lie within this parish, and adjoin to a much larger tract northward. About a quarter of a mile on the other side of the road is the church, standing by itself among a grove of elms, the slight delicate white spire of which rising above the foilage of the grove, affords a pleasing prospect to the neighbouring country. From the above road the village extends south-

ward down the declivity of the hill, almost to the river, over which there is a wooden bridge, built at the expence of the commissioners of the navigation. It is called St. Helen's bridge, from its contiguity to that manor, situated at a very small distance from it; about a mile from the village, close to the eastern boundary of the parish, adjoining to that of Maidenstone, on the declivity of the hill, leading down to East Farleigh bridge, is the parsonage, lately almost rebuilt by the present rector, the Rev. Mark Noble, who resides in it, and by his judicious management and improvements has made this benefice, perhaps one of the most desirable in the diocese.

A few years ago several Roman urns, pieces of armour, and skeletons, were dug up within the bounds of this parish; the latter were no doubt belonging to those who fell in the skirmish between the Royalists and Oliverians at Farleigh bridge, in 1648; and the former serves to shew, that the Roman highway, a different one from the larger one of the Watling-street, and directing its course towards Oldborough, in Ightham, led near this place, of which more will be noticed hereafter.

THERE GROWS on Barming heath, the plant, *Chamaemelum odoratissimum repens flore simplici*, common camomile, in great plenty; and *verbascum album vulgare* five thapsus barbatus communis, great mul-

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lein, or hightaper, more plentifully, and of a larger size than I have met with elsewhere.

THE MANOR of East Barming was given by king William the conqueror to Richard de Tonebrege, the eldest son of Gislebert earl of Brion, in Normandy, the son of Geffry, natural son of Richard, the first of that name, duke of Normandy, whence he bore the name of Richard Fitz Gilbert at his coming hither; he was one of the principal persons who came into England with duke William, to whom he gave great assistance in that memorable battle, in which he obtained the crown of this realm. He had for that service, and in respect of his near alliance to him in blood, great advancements in honour, and large possessions both in Normandy and England, bestowed upon him; among the latter he possessed thirty-eight lordships in Surry, thirty-five in Essex, three in Cambridgeshire, three in Kent, one in Middlesex, one in Wiltshire, one in Devonshire, ninety-five in Suffolk, and thirteen burgages in Ipswich, of which Clare was one, besides others in other counties; accordingly, in the survey of Domesday, taken about the year 1080, being the 15th of the Conqueror's reign, this estate is thus entered under the title of, Terra Ricardi F. Gisleb'ti, the land of Richard, the son of Gislebert.

In Medestan hundred the same Richard (de Tonebrige) holds Bermelinge. Alret held it of king Edward (the Confessor) and then and now it was and is taxed at one suling. The arable land is four carucates. In demesne there are two carucates and five villeins, with eight borderers, having five carucates. There are thirteen servants, and one mill of five shillings, and four acres of meadow. Wood for the pannage of ten hogs. In the

time of king Edward it was worth four pounds, and afterwards 100 shillings, now four pounds.

/s Dugdale's Baronetage, vol. i. p. 206, 207.

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This Richard Fitz Gilbert, at the latter end of the Conqueror's reign, was usually called Rich. de Tonebrige, as well from his possessing that town and castle, as from his residence there; and his descendants took the name of Clare, from the like reason of their possessing that honour, and were afterwards earls of Clare, and of Gloucester and Hertford. Of this family, as chief lords of the fee, Barming was afterwards held in moieties by Fulk Peyforer and Roger de Kent, each of whom held their part of the honour of Clare.

In the reign of king Edward II. the heirs of Lora Peyforer and those of Roger de Kent, being Thomas de Barmeling and Wm. de Kent, held these moieties as above mentioned; and in the 20th year of the next reign of king Edward III. John Fitz Jacob, Thomas and John de Kent, held these moieties of this estate, in East Barmeling, of the earl of Gloucester.

THE FORMER OF THESE MOIETIES, held by the family of Peyforer, seems to have comprised the MANOR of EAST BARMING, and to have been given afterwards to the Benedictine nunnery of St. Helen's, in Bishopsgate street, London, whence it acquired the name of ST. HELEN'S, alias East Barming manor, by the former of which only it is now called; with the above priory this manor remained till its dissolution, in king Henry VIII.'s reign, when it was surrendered into the king's hands, who, in his 35th year, granted his manor, called St. Elen's, among other premises, to Richard Callohill, to hold in capite by knights service, who that year sold it to Gabriel Calldham, freemason, of London; and he next year sold it to Tho. Reve, whose grandson of the same name, in the 4th year of queen Elizabeth, levied a fine of it, and then passed it away by sale to Mr. Stephen Pearse, who some years afterwards alienated it to Sir Robert Brett,

/t Philipott, p. 67. Speed. Tan. Not. Mon. Rot. Esch. ejus ann. pt. 14. Mr. Petyt Fœdary of Kent his book.

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on whose death, without surviving issue, in 1620, this manor came by will to Robert Lynd, esq. who bore for his arms, Argent a cross ingrailed gules; and he sold it to Sir Oliver Boteler, of Teston, in whose descendants it continued down to Sir Philip Boteler, bart. who died in 1772, s. p. and by will gave one moiety of his estates to Mrs. Elizabeth Bouverie, of Chart Sutton; and the other moiety to Elizabeth viscountess dowager Folkestone, and Wm. Bouverie, earl of Radnor; and on a partition afterwards made between them, this manor was allotted to lady Folkestone, who died in 1782, on which it came to her only son, the Hon. Philip Bouverie, who has since taken the name of Pusey, and he is the present owner of it.

This manor extends its jurisdiction over the whole of this parish; the antient house of it, as well as the dove cote, stood nearly at the foot of the hill near St. Helen's bridge; both have been pulled down not

many years since.

THE OTHER MOIETY of the estate of East Barming, held by John Fitz Jacob and John de Kent, seems to have passed afterwards into the family of Fremingham; for John, son of Sir Ralph de Fremingham, of Lose, died possessed of it about the 12th year of king Henry IV. and leaving no issue, he by his will gave it to certain feoffees, who, in compliance with it, next year assigned it to John Pimpe, and his heirs male, for the finding and maintaining of two chaplains, one in the monastery of Boxley, and the other in the church of East Farleigh, to celebrate for the souls of himself, his wife, and others their ancestors and relations therein mentioned. From the family of Pimpe this estate came, in king Henry VIII.'s reign, to Sir Henry Isley, who by the act of the 2d and 3d of king Edward VI. procured his lands in this county to be disgavelled.

/u See Town Malling.

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Being concerned in the rebellion raised by Sir Tho. Wyatt, in the 1st year of queen Mary, he was attainted, and his lands were confiscated to the crown, whence this estate was granted that year to Sir John Baker, the queen's attorney general, to hold in capite by knights service; w in whose descendants it continued down to Sir John Baker, bart. of Sissinghurst, of whom it seems to have been purchased in the reign of king Charles II. by Golding, who died possessed of it in 1674, and was buried in this church, bearing for his arms, A cross voided, between four lions passant guardant. His son, Mr. Henry Golding, gent. about the year 1700, alienated this estate to Nicholas Amhurst, gent. of West Barming, who died possessed of it in 1715; and his grandson, John Amhurst, esq. is the present possessor of it.

HALL-PLACE is a reputed manor in this parish, the antient mansion of which is situated at a small distance westward of the present seat, and is little more than an ordinary cottage, serving as a farm house to a small parcel of land. It formerly gave both residence and surname to a family, written in antient deeds, At-Hall, who before the end of the reign of king Edward III. had alienated their interest in the greatest part of it to one of the Colepepers, of Preston, in Aylesford, and the rest of it to Clive; and this part was by John Clive, about the 7th year of king Henry IV. likewise conveyed to Colepeper, who in the 10th year of that reign passed away the entire fee of it to Sampson Mascall, whose family was originally of Mascall's, in Brenchley, and in his descendants Hall-place continued till the latter end of queen Elizabeth's reign, when it was conveyed to Alchorne, whose ancestors were possessed of Alchorne in Rotherfield, in Sussex; in which name the fee of this estate remained at the time of king Charles II.'s restoration,

/w Rot. Esch. ejus an. pt. i. Philipott, p. 67.

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but the use and profits of it were made over, for a long series of years, to Mr. Cook, of Stepney; and

he, in 1656, alienated his interest in it to Mr. Rich. Webb, rector of this parish, who in 1667, gave it to his grandson, Richard Webb, gent. who, in 1726, conveyed it by sale to Mr. Peter Smart, who bore for his arms, Argent, a chevron between three pheons sable; about which time Christopher Smart, the poet, is said to have been born in this parish; at length, Mr. Peter Smart's widow, and their children, in 1746, passed away their interest in it to John Cale, esq. who resided here, and dying in 1777, was buried in this churchyard, having been a benefactor to the poor of this parish; and by his will he devised this, among the rest of his estates in this county, to the heirs of Tho. Prowse, esq. of Axbridge, in Somersetshire; in consequence of which his two daughters and coheirs became intitled to it; the youngest of whom married Sir John Mor=daunt, bart. of Walton, in Warwickshire, and they became possessed of this estate in undivided moieties, and in 1781, joined in the sale of it to John Amhurst, esq. of Barnjet, the present owner of it.

CHARITIES.

THOMAS HARRIS, esq. of this parish, in 1769, gave by will, 5l. per annum for fifty years, 2s. of it to be given to the poor of this parish in bread, on each Sunday in the year, excepting Easter and Whitsunday.

JOHN CALE, esq. of this parish, in 1777, gave by will the sum of 200l. in East India annuities, the interest of it to be given to the poor yearly at Christmas, in linen and bread, vested in trustees, of the annual produce of 6l.

THIS PARISH is within the ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION of the diocese of Rochester and deanry of Malling.

The church, which is dedicated to St. Margaret, is a small building, consisting of one isle and a chancel, with an elegant spire steeple. The present rector, Mr. Noble, about twelve years ago, at his own

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expence, entirely repaired and ornamented the chancel; he gave likewise a new altar and pulpit cloth, and cushion; and the parishioners, followed his example, in the repair and ornamenting of the church itself; so that from being one of the most neglected, it is become equal to most of the neighbouring churches in those respects.

Walter, bishop of Rochester, in the reign of king Stephen, confirmed to the prior and canon of Ledes the patronage of the church of Barmyng, as it was granted to them by the lords of the soil, and confirmed to them by their charters.

Gilbert, bishop of Rochester, in the reign of king Henry II. granted to the prior and canons two shillings, to be received by them yearly, as a pension from this church, saving the episcopal right of the bishop of Rochester, &c./x The patronage of the church of Barming, together with this pension, remained part of the possessions of the above mentioned priory till the dissolution of it in the reign of king Henry VIII. when it came into the king's hands. Since which, the patronage of this rectory has continued vested in the crown, but the above mentioned yearly pension

of two shillings was, by the king's dotation charter, in his 33d year, settled on his new erected dean and chapter of Rochester, who are now intitled to it.

In the 15th year of king Edward I. the church of Barmelyng was valued at twelve marcs. It is valued in the king's books at 12l. 7s. 1d. and the yearly tenths at 1l. 5s. 8½d./z The glebe land belonging to this rectory contains eighty-three acres.

/x See the confirmations of the above grants, Reg. Roff. p. 211, 214, 217. Stev. Mon. vol. i. p. 456. Ect. Thes. p. 383.

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CHURCH OF EAST BARMING.

PATRONS,

Or by whom presented. RECTORS.

Prior and canons of Leeds. Richard de St. Quintin, resigned./y
Bartholomew./z

The Crown John Sympson, ob. Ap. 1563./a

John Maplisdén, presented 1575,
obt. 1613./b

Richard Webb, 1624, obt. Oct.
20, 1667./c

Benjamin Denham, 1667, obt.
1670./d

John Styleman, 1670, ob. 1682./e

Thomas Harris, inducted 1682.

Theophilus Beck, obt. Oct. 1715./f

John Harris, A. M. obt. Sep. 7,
1719./g

James Mashbourne, A. M. obt.
Dec. 11, 1739./h

Thomas Pickering, A. M. Dec.
18, 1739, ob. Oct. 30, 1758./i

Thomas Marshall Jorden, A. M.
1758, obt. Feb. 26, 1786./k

Mark Noble, in 1786. Present
rector.

/y Before 1354 he resigned this, on an exchange with Bartholomew, for the rectory of Ofham. Reg. Roff. p. 512.

/z Reg. Roff. *ibid*.

/a He was buried here.

/b Rym. Fœd. vol. xiv. p. 743. And archdeacon of Suffolk in 1575. Vide Neve's Fasti, p. 222.

/c He seems to have been displaced by the fanatics, for one Nicholls held it at the Restoration, and was ejected by the Bartholomew act. Mr. Webb lies buried in this church.

/d Parish register.

/e Parish register.

/f Also vicar of Birling, where he was buried.

/g Afterwards D. D. He was minister of St. Mildred's, Milk-street, London, perpetual curate of Stroud, and prebendary of Rochester. He published the History of this county, in one volume, folio, and other learned

works.

/h He was vicar of Lyghe, and lies
buried in this church.

/i He lies buried in this church.

/k And rector of Iden, in Sussex, by
dispensation.