

HAMPSHIRE PARISHES No. 6 - ALL SAINTS, EAST MEON By E.M. Albery.

Both its geography and its history show that East Meon was once of far greater importance than it is today. Geographically, it stands at a cross-roads, formed by the lines of the Downs leading to Salisbury Plain (centre of an ancient civilisation) and the Meon Valley, with its once much deeper river running straight down to the coast and so on to the Continent. Its history, traceable in its Bronze Age Tumuli, the Iron Age Farm at Little Butser (now working again), the head of a Romano-British statute and its Saxon charters, began long before the earliest authentic records which are of use to genealogists, and the interested local historian may study the charters &c. in Hampshire Record Office. Suffice it here to say that the present church (doubtless standing on the site of a Saxon one, of which no trace remains), was built between c.1100 and c.1150, possibly started by Bishop Walklin but finished by Bishop Henry de Blois, cousin and grandson respectively of William the Conqueror.

We are told that in the first year of his reign, King John confirmed the charters of Stephen and of Henry II granting the whole of the manor to the Bishops of Winchester. It was divided into tithings, which were divided again into copyholdings. The particulars of the tenant, the land he leased and the term of years for which it was taken, were entered in the Rolls of the Manor Court; a copy of the agreement was given to the tenant as his only evidence, hence 'Copyhold'.

East Meon copyholders were termed 'Certain or Customary'; heirs had to be related by blood. Widows could claim their late husbands' holdings for life. Provided an heir could prove his claim and he paid the 'customary' fine, he could not be denied entry.

The Court House (now in private hands), stands opposite the Church of All Saints; it is said to have been rebuilt in the 14th century. Here the Courts Baron and Leet sat several times a year, to enforce the customs of the manor and deal with offenders against its bye-laws. The Reeve, Constable and Jurors were elected from the Copyholders, as were the Tithing men, who represented their own tithings. The Court Rolls are in the Record Office at Winchester. Although the Courts had probably been held since time immemorial, the earliest existing Roll is dated 1377. A list of tithings is on the first page - Combe, Oxenbone, Ffroxdele, Langeryshe, Bordene and others. In Old English script (and Latin until 1625), they are not easy to read, but it is well worth while to try to do so, for then the people come alive; they are no longer merely names to be picked out of a list, or copied from a tombstone. For example :-

In 1618 Richard UPSDALE, after the death of his eldest son, redispotes his property, naming the members of his family.

1650, a claim to a cottage and a meadow called Causeymead - John CLEWER and John BULBEC have to show by what right they hold them.

The 'Root & Branch' Bill was passed 1648/49 - 1651 Jan. 14th "Court of Francis ALLIEN, Lord of the Manor of East Meon".

1654 Mr. Peter BETTESWORTH complains that he is still owed £460 raised by mortgage.

1721 Eight parishioners, Robt. PINKE, Stephen and Robt. STEELE, Stephen WOODMAN, William BAKER, John SILVESTER, Joseph TERRELL and Stephen TULLET are admitted to an orchard and cottage on the east of Duncombe Lane, and the Malthouse, for the use of the Poor of the Parish.

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The Rolls run through to 1752, with a few years missing here and there, and also 1719-1746. There is an Index from 1703, which gives:-

1. Date of Court
2. Name of person admitted
3. Name of person dying or surrendering
4. Date of last admission, and
5. Date next admission is due.

The Parish Registers of All Saints are also in the Record Office at Winchester. All are there, except Burials from 1850 (which is still in use, although there is a transcript in the Record Office), and Christenings 1875-1954, which is being transcribed. They are in good condition, and most years are complete.

The earliest commences in 1560; and on the first page we read :-

"Guliver PILGRIM clericus, Edward MARINER clerk, John WARTONIS scriptus, Gabrielle LANGRISH, Thomas BRIDGER churchwardens".

Below is an illegible paragraph; below that again, the record of the birth of the illegitimate son of Ysabel, sister of Tho. KING.

The first marriage is 20 Jan, William BURNELL and Joane, and the first christening and burial, 13 Feb. Ysabel, d. of John STROWDER, and 3 Feb. Elizabeth KNIGHT, wid. Plague was taking its toll; 31 burials in 1607, 57 in 1625.

In 1623, a certificate signed by the Minister, John BAKER, the Constable, Richard WINNE, Tithingman Ralf BLANCHARD, Robt. FOULE, Nicholas LONGE, Agnes PINCKE and Copyholders, was given to Robt. PINCKE and 'his ladye wife Emi', permitting them to leave the parish.

In 1644, most of one page is illegible, and the reverse is blank.

In 1653, 7 Dec. "Memo that John EARWAKER was elected and chosen Registrar...And sworne into that office". It is signed Tho. CROP and Eli HUGHES. (Were these two Puritans ?)

1655/6, taking a whole page -

"Zealous of good works were the good men of old, good men of old.

Thomas HABIN is my name and England is my Nation,
East Meon is my dwelling place, and Christ is my Salvation."

Next come Births (NOT Christenings, from 1655-57). One could be a misplaced burial :-

1656 Oct. 9 (blank) sonne of Nicholas PINCKE unbaptised.

A note in pencil "the plague was in London 1625-1665".

Parochia Richard DOWNES, Churchwardens Will CARTLEDGE and Peter TERRELL.

1713 Feb. Stephen HABIN ye Elder, Parish Clerk (Burial)

1719 Aug. 27 Robt. s. of John FRY a Certificate man (Christening)

1768 Aug. 14 James GUY (Burial). "No affidavit within 8 days of his burial in woollen, wherefore I certified to Will PINCKE, Overseer of the Poor. (signed) Lew PARNELL."

1789 Nov. 28 Vicar BOISDAUNE (Burial)

In 1790, a tax of 3d. was imposed on all christenings and burials, except those of paupers.

1819 - a Coroner's Warrant was issued for William PINK, who died accidentally from a fall of chalk. This was on Feb. 1 and on 12th another was issued for Comfort MICKLAM, who died suddenly from natural causes.

1879 March 8 Robert SMITH, aged 90, Parish Clerk for 50 years (B)

1975 Dec. 4 Irene CHAMBERS aged 63, "who kept this Church clean and tidy with the greatest love and diligence". (B)

The floor of the Lady Chapel is paved with tombstones; the earliest legible date is 1671, the latest 1880. There is no record of when they were laid; some have been cut to fit, letters and parts of words being removed in the process. Some are more worn than others. STEELES, BAKERS, WOODMANS, PINKS, HABINS, BULBECKS, UPSDALES, ABURROWS, SILVESTERS and others are commemorated here.

There are still descendants of some of the old families living in the village, LAMBERTS, KILLES and a Miss LUFF, and possibly more I have not yet discovered. The last ABURROW died in 1958 and the last PINK in 1962.

I should like to thank our Vicar and the staff of Winchester R.O. for all their help and forbearance.

REPORTS OF PORTSMOUTH MEETINGS.

On Tuesday, 16th NOVEMBER, 1976, Col. W. VERNON-HARCOURT told us about his six years of research to establish his claim to the Baronetcy of Vernon of Kinderton. Both the present Baron and his heir presumptive have only daughters, and after them, there is only an elderly, childless cousin standing between Colonel Vernon-Harcourt (or his son) and the title. The best known of Colonel Vernon-Harcourt's ancestors is probably Sir William George Granville Harcourt (1827-1904) who, as Chencellor of the Exchequer, introduced Death Duties.

The CHRISTMAS SOCIAL on the 7th DECEMBER was again a very happy occasion. Our grateful thanks to Joyce and Jon Baker for all the hard work they put into arranging the setting and competitions, and to all the ladies who provided such elegant refreshments.

Our Chairman, GEORGE WAKELIN was the speaker at the JANUARY meeting on Monday the 10th, when he took for his subject "THE RUSSIAN ROYAL RIDDLE". Thirty years of part-time research into the claims of Anna Anderson to be the Grand Duchess Anastasia have convinced him that she is an imposter. He has met members of the Romanov family and they share his view. Mr. Wakelin explained the history of Anna Anderson and of the Romanov family, with many anecdotes regarding other European royalty and their opinions, and outlined the latest book "File on the Tsar", which, while persuading him that the Taarina and her daughters probably did not die at Cheka, nevertheless left him convinced that they did all die at a later date and in another place.

SALT LAKE CITY TRIP - SUMMER 1977

Mr. Stanley N. Marker, Lt.Col., USAF (ret), 25 Gladsdale Drive, Pinner, Middx. (ol-866 8126) is hoping to organise a 3-week trip to Brigham Young University in late July or early August. The estimated cost would be in the region of £450. Anyone interested should contact Mr. Marker direct.