

Wye Historical Society



All Saints church, Boughton Aluph

Newsletter February 2021

Society Matters

AGM March 31st. 2021

We would normally hold our AGM at our March meeting and elect a committee that night to serve for the following year, however, for obvious reasons, we will not be able to do that. This year there will be voting forms in the March newsletter and you will be able to respond by email, telephone, or letter so that constitutionally business can continue as normal.

Chairman, Treasurer and We4b manager have all agreed to stand again but Cilla, our Secretary would like to stand down, so we are looking for a new Secretary, Cilla has kindly agreed to induct a new volunteer into the secretarial duties

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cilla for her valuable work, she has helped me greatly undertake the role of Chairman in the non-meeting situation we have found ourselves in over the past 12 months.

If you wish to nominate someone for a committee position, or would like to volunteer as Secretary please contact me at timb164@btinternet.com or telephone 01233 811776

At the time of publication, we are awaiting information on the relaxation of lockdown and there is a possibility that Society meetings could re-start in Autumn 2021, in which case the August/September newsletter will update you on the elected committee and the proposed programme for 2021/22

In the meantime, those of you who would like to catch up with Wye local history might be interested in our book sale

Brook – A village in Kent	£8	The College of Wye	£4
Hinxhill	£3	Lady Joanna Thornhill	£4
Window on the Church of England	£4	Wye Parish Church	£4

Wye Heritage

Our past shapes our future

Wye Heritage continues to add blogpost to their new website www.wyeheritage.org.uk The latest is all about the historic visit of her Majesty Queen Elisabeth the Queen Mother to Wye and Wye College in June 1980. When she received the Fellowship of the College of St Martin and St Gregory, (Wye College), in the year in which the nation celebrated her 80th Birthday.

Whilst the Heritage Centre remains closed, committee members are regularly and individually visiting the Laten School to empty the dehumidifier, vital to keep the documents dry; and to keep the surfaces dusted and polished. At the same time archiving, cataloguing and document scanning by members working from home.

Whatever Happened to the Church Bells?

The sad story of the All Saints, Boughton Aluph, bells

(source - Love's Guide to The Church Bells of Kent www.lovesguide.com and from notes and correspondence of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell PCC provided by Reverend David Cawley)

All Saints church, Boughton Aluph (Cover picture), described by Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher in October 1952, as 'a special treasure among all the lovely churches of Kent', has a prominent central tower which once housed ancient bells. Sadly, the All-Saints' bells are long gone, sold with the pews in the nineteen fifties to pay for essential structural repair work to the building. In Fig. 1, taken perhaps around 1900, you can still see the ropes hanging from the great tower although by then the bells had not been rung for years. Nonetheless the bells were well documented, being of great historical significance.



Fig.1 All Saints Church, looking down the nave to the bell tower

Formerly five bells hung in the tower for full circle ringing. The earliest date from the 16th Century with additional bells added in 17th and 18th Centuries. The frame was a three-bell frame with the second and treble added on the south side with their gudgeons* in the south wall.

Details of the bells present in the tower up to 1952 are given in the Table below.

Details of the five bells which originally hung in the tower up to 1952

Bell	Approx. weight (cwt)	Diameter (ins)	Note	Date	Founder	Inscriptions
Treble	4.5	28.5	C#	1653	William Hatch of Hatch Foundry, Ulcombe, Maidstone	William Hatch made me RB CW 1653
2nd	5	29	B	1652	William Hatch of Hatch Foundry, Ulcombe, Maidstone	William Hatch made me EK CW 1652
3rd	7.25	35	A#	c. 1510	William Culverden of London	Sancte Paule Ora Pro Nobis
4th	8.25 or 9.25	37	G#	1702	Richard Phelps of Whitechapel Bell Foundry	Tho. Speed CH Warden 1702 R Phelps FECIT
Tenor	11.75 or 13.25	40.5	F#	c. 1540	William Oldfield of Canterbury	DVLCIS SISTO MELIS VOCOR CAMPANA GABRIELIS

- Gudgeon: a metal pivot

The earliest record of a bell is 1510 with a tenor of 4 cast in 1540. In 1552 there is a record of 4 bells in the tower. In 1552-3 the bells were augmented to 5 with two new bells from William Hatch. In 1702 the 4th of 5 bells was recast by Richard Phelps and in 1757 there is a record of 5 bells in the tower. The bells were last rung in 1880.

By 1887 J C Stahlschmidt (author of *The Church Bells of Kent*) reported the bells as being dilapidated and the treble being cracked. A report by Mears and Stainbank, of Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London, in March 1912 to the reverend J Halloran of Eastwell Rectory, stated that nothing had been done to the belfry since 1887. Also, the treble, 3rd and tenor bell were cracked and needed recasting. The 2nd and 4th bells were sound but the latter was badly out on the edge (possibly done to sharpen it) and the tone was spoilt. The report recommended recasting. In addition, the fittings and framework and belfry floor were in poor condition and if the bells were to be rung all must be renewed at an estimated cost of around £282. There is no record of any repairs carried out.

In 1940 the church tower was damaged by a firebomb. Fortunately, prompt action by the Wye Fire Service saved the church (a memorial on the wall in the church commemorates this event). In November 1947, the church was visited by F C Eeles (an expert on church buildings), who described All Saints as one of the finest churches in Kent but reported that the church was in a poor state of repair due firstly to war damage and secondly to long standing neglect. Only temporary repairs had been done to the war damage to the tower with no explanation from the vicar as to why no report on the damage had been made and no war damage compensation

applied for. Failure to carry out tasks such as roof gutter cleaning and tile replacement had allowed water into the roof resulting in the roof woodwork being in a poor state. In October 1951, a builder carrying out repairs reported that the masonry was unsafe and the church was in a much worse state than originally thought. So, in 1951 the church had to be closed due to the danger of collapse of the main tower. In December 1951, the bells were inspected by Gillett and Johnston of Croydon and they reached similar conclusions on the state of the bells and belfry (which had deteriorated further due to the war damage) as the earlier report in 1912 and stated that the only value of the bells was as scrap at £10/cwt. In January 1952, the sale of the bells to Gillett and Johnson for scrap was approved by the Canterbury Diocese advisory committee for the care of churches and the proceeds went to raise funds for the church restoration. Subsequently there was much discussion as to how this disposal of the bells had been allowed as two of the bells were pre-reformation and of great interest historically.



Fig 2. Repaired bell cradle, sadly without bells

The tenor was broken up in June 1952. Part of the tenor (the Gabriel bell) inscription band was saved by Ranald Clouston (an expert on bells) and was later presented to the Royal Museum and Art Gallery in Canterbury (Later Canterbury Heritage Centre and now The Beaney) for display in March 1994. Most of the metal of the bells was used for the augmented St. Nicholas Aberdeen carillon. Coronation bells cast as souvenirs of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II by Gillett and Johnston were said to be made from bells cast around the reign of Elizabeth I, possibly from the All-Saints tenor bell. The bell framework was repaired in 1954 although no bells have hung in it since (Fig. 2).

Angela Berrie

BRUNESFORD – A LOST VILLAGE IN THE PARISH OF WYE

The countryside on either side of the road from Wye to Naccolt has been unkindly described as a 'degraded landscape'. Visually, it is fully redeemed by the distant view of the Downs, but this description is entirely true of the countryside nearer to the road. In the Middle Ages this would have been dotted with small cottages, surrounded by little holdings of one to three acres. There would have been some larger fields, but these would have been divided into a chequer board of small strips. In several places the crofts were grouped into hamlets. Two survive, Naccolt and Withersdane, albeit changed beyond recognition. At Withersdane, how many Wye people could tell you where Agmonds, Hollands' and Bakers' Farms were? And where was the village of Bruneford that existed for 600 years only a mile from Wye?



Browning Bridge – looking towards Wye

There is just one clue on modern maps: a footbridge over the River Stour one kilometre south of Wye is called 'Browning Bridge'. The suffix 'ing', originally *ingas*, denotes in Old English a community or tribe, so, for example, Hastingleigh means 'the forest clearing of Haesta's people'. So Browning means belonging to Brown's people, or alternatively to brown people. Before there was a bridge, a ford crossed the river, which would logically have been called 'Brownsford'. There are many references to *Brunesford* in medieval manuscripts relating to the manor of Wye, spelled in a variety of ways. The earliest is *Brunesforda* in 993. It is *Brunnesford* in c. 1240 and *Brunesford* in c. 1270. In an 'extent' of Wye manor dated 1312, published by Helen Muhlfeld, entries make it clear that there is a small farming settlement with this name. For example, 'the meadow called Blikmede 4 acres, of which the Abbot and convent of Battle have the first crop and their tenants of Bronesford have rowen' (the second crop). This meadow would have been on the flood plain of the river near to the ford now replaced by Browning Bridge. In the 'survey' of the manor in c. 1450, which is the main subject of Muhlfeld's book, there are several references to Bronsforde and others to Bromsforde, which is evidently the same place. In it there were several small crofts of one to three acres in extent. The tenants would also have had parcels in large arable areas, one of which is called the 'Yoke of Bronsforde', one sixth of the arable land of the manor. The people of the manor were also divided into groups with collective responsibility for good behaviour called 'boroughs', and there was a

'borough of Bromfford' of which a representative had to appear at each meeting of the manor court. So, as was the case with Withersdane and Naccolt, Bruneford, spelled variously, was evidently a recognised settlement within the manor of Wye.

The most significant person with a family link with Bruneford was William de Bruneford. He held land both as an owner and as a tenant during the period 1271 to 1285. He then became a monk of Battle Abbey and is almost certainly the 'Brother William of Wye' who was ordained sub-deacon in the church of South Malling, Sussex, in 1286. Very soon after this he must have been ordained priest and made Vicar of Wye. It seems likely that he was a man of deep Christian convictions, who not only entered Battle Abbey as a monk but took his vow of poverty very seriously. That he made a very substantial gift to the Abbey is suggested by an entry in the Abbey Benefactors' Roll which is preserved at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Such generosity would be noteworthy at that time, for many in his position would have transferred most of his property to relatives before taking the monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. A translation from the Latin of the entry in the benefactors' roll is given in my history of Wye Parish Church. At this time, Wye had a church first built in Saxon times and doubtless enlarged in the Norman period. According to Morris (1842), it stood on Bolt's Hill. Its graveyard extended over the land now allotments and back gardens as far as the footpath from opposite the school. A small gasworks was built on the site of the church, but the graves of the associated burial ground are often encountered.

William de Bruneford was vicar during the building of the new and very large church which developed into the present Parish Church. Building started about 1290, as shown by a closely datable jeton in the foundations of the chancel. The new church was probably dedicated on March 20, 1292, when a very grand ordination service was held there, at which the Bishop of Hereford, Thomas de Swinfield, presided with a licence from the Archbishop. Despite his distant diocese, Thomas de Swinfield probably had local connections, as his surname is thought to derive from Swingfield, near Folkestone.

Between 1431 and 1447 Archbishop Kempe was taking every opportunity to enlarge the portfolio of property with which he endowed his College. This included acquiring property in and around Bruneford. In addition to some agricultural land, this included the 'Bosco de Bronforde', 16 acres of woodland with an access lane. However, 'Bromford' is listed among the properties that were taken into royal ownership at the dissolution of Battle Abbey in 1544, which were subsequently granted by Elizabeth I to her cousin Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon. He was appointed Lord Chamberlain in 1583, and, for a time, was William Shakespeare's employer. His grandson sold the manor of Wye soon after 1628 to Sir Thomas Finch of Eastwell. These landlords consolidated many small holdings into larger farms. One of these was White House Farm, of 45 acres. The farmhouse stood on the small hillock which had been the site of Bruneford and the land extended from there to the outskirts of Wye, ending at the boundary of what is now Chequers Park. The White House is marked on early maps. Fragments of roof tiles and bricks of 16th Century shape and fabric still lie at the spot, whereas it would appear that earlier buildings were of wood and thatched.

Ownership of White House Farm descended to John Finch, who bequeathed it on his death in 1707 to the minister, churchwardens and overseers of Wye 'for the support of five of the eldest and poorest widows of the parish'. It is now vested in the Almshouse trustees. In 1760-1 there was a serious outbreak of smallpox in the parish, and in 1762 the Vestry meeting decided to establish a 'pest house', in modern terms an isolation hospital. The White House farmhouse was chosen because it was remote from any other habitation and became the Pest House at least until 1776. Sometime later, the White House was demolished, and the land is now managed as part of Harville Farm.

About 1970 the origin of Brunesford was pushed right back to Roman times, by material found in ditch digging on the crest of the small knoll on which the hamlet was situated. This was the filling of a rubbish pit, which was excavated by Jim Bradshaw, who was very much the local archaeologist at that time. It was described as a rubbish filled hollow, completely sealed and one metre deep, containing a tightly packed deposit of charcoal, animal bones, pottery, and small domestic items. Coins were plentiful, many barbarous imitations and some fragmentary, the dates of the identifiable ones ranging from 323 to 378 A.D. They were mostly close together, as if buried together in a bag. A well-preserved iron knife or dagger was found, (Fig. 1) 17 cm. long, with a broad, short blade. It had a long tang and two oval iron plates, thinly capped with bronze, which had supported the now decayed hilt and pommel. Similar daggers have been found in graves, mostly on the Continent, but one at Winchester. They have been considered Germanic and military. At the same depth and only 40 cm. away was a bronze belt buckle in unusually good condition. This was also of a type that was a distinctive part of military uniform. However, authoritative civilian officials also wore uniforms with similar belts, much as policemen do today. Sonia Hawkes was an archaeologist who studied and classified late Roman belt buckles. She believed that they varied in design according to the particular corps and rank of each individual, and that this was the reason why they are most often found in graves, and often in worn condition. But here was a buckle in good condition in a rubbish pit, indeed there were indications that the belt was complete when buried. Clearly there is a story here! Was an official who came to collect rents or taxes murdered? His body, whether buried or cremated, would soon be unidentifiable. But woe betide the inhabitants if his uniform, weapon, or money bag was found! So, this may have been why they were buried in a pit beneath a tightly packed mass of domestic rubbish.

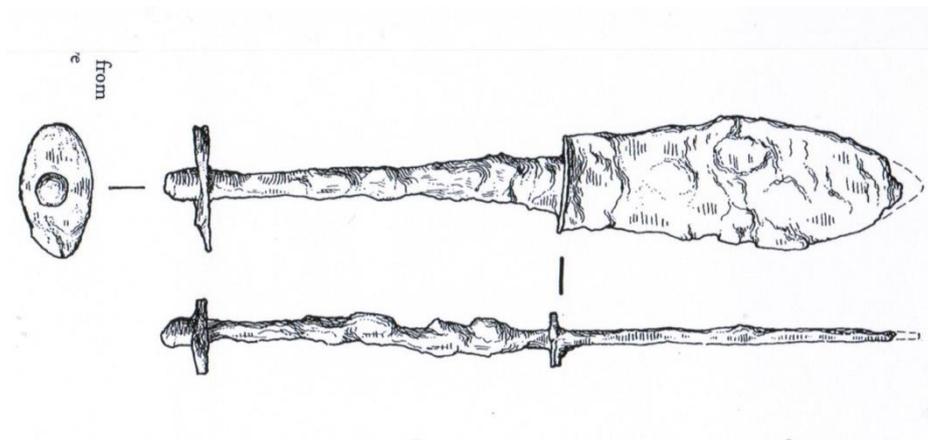


Fig 1; Roman dagger

A rubbish pit with animal bones and broken pottery suggests a nearby dwelling or small settlement, but this has never been investigated, even though Roman sites with so late a dating are uncommon. However, I have heard that a square-headed brooch of sixth century type was found near the Stour upstream from Wye, suggesting continued occupation of the area. Alongside the speculation about the activities of Jutish immigrants discussed in my previous article, one might place the thought that a name meaning 'the ford of the brown people' could arise from the weather-beaten faces of the Jutish immigrants in contrast to the pale faces of the Romanised local population with their indoor living and regular baths! So here is one good place to begin our 'Dig for History'!

Paul Burnham

The Clockmakers of Wye and District

Domestic clock making in Kent appears to have started in the seventeenth century, at which time nearly a third of the county's population lived in the towns. There were very few clockmakers in Kent at this time, due to its proximity to London, where landowners and aristocracy would go to purchase such items. As the century progressed, clockmaking was centred mainly in Canterbury and later in Ashford, Maidstone, and Rochester and by 1740, every town and larger villages had one or more clockmakers and allied trades of blacksmith, whitesmith, and gunsmith.

Clockmaking developed to meet the needs of the church, monasteries, and cathedrals, who aspired to regulate their daily routines. It is now accepted that the first mechanical clock, using weights to drive an escapement was made between 1277 and 1300, in Italy or central Europe, although some scholars would claim this for England between 1280-1300. The records of various ecclesiastical buildings including Exeter and Salisbury refer to 'horologium' from 1283 to 1306. Christchurch Cathedral, Canterbury records the installation of a new clock in 1292 at a cost of £30.

These early clocks were described as 'Turret Clocks' as they were sited in towers of one form or another and by the end of the seventeenth century most village churches and the great houses of the county were equipped with a turret clock. One such was sited at Godinton House in the mid-seventeenth century and now resides, in store, at Canterbury museum.

Clocks were first brought into the house in the form of 'Lantern Clocks', starting in London and spreading out to the provinces and in the 1620's, Kent's clockmakers, particularly in Canterbury started producing them, the earliest surviving examples being made by Richard Greenhill of Ashford in 1680, with another, by his son John made a few years later.

The Lantern Clock was the most common timekeeper in seventeenth century Kent until the invention of the verge escapement in 1675 with a pendulum to provide greater accuracy, this led to the development of the 'Longcase Clock', the earliest of which are by Richard Greenhill and Thomas Deale of Ashford, who produced fine 8-day clocks from 1680.

The cases of the clocks were often lacquered, a fashion started in Holland and imported with the migration of large numbers of craftsmen from the low countries

From Parish records it can be seen that clock making and its associated trades of case making and engraving were family run businesses and that sons of clockmakers would be apprenticed to local clockmakers in surrounding villages such as Wye and Boughton Aluph.

The clocks importance in the lives of people of the time can be understood from the inscription carved in relief on the trunk door of a longcase clock (John Cutbush, 1700.)

Master, Behold me here I stand
To tell ye hour at thy command
What is thy will 'tis my delight
To serve thee well by daye and night
Master, be wise and learn from me
To serve thy God as I serve thee



30-hour clock mechanism

Two names stand out as clockmakers in our area, Thomas Quested of Wye, and John Silke of Elmsted. They produced many clocks of a good standard, mostly in oak cases in the East Kent style, often made at the workshops of Goulden of Canterbury. It would seem that customers may have been few as Thomas Quested appears to have had a difficult spell as the following notice in the Kentish Gazette of 1-4 November 1780 indicates;-

THE ASSIGNEES of THOMAS QUESTED, of Wye, Watchmaker,

Do hereby give Notice, that they will attend at the KING'S HEAD, in Wye aforesaid, on Tuesday next, the 7th Day of November instant, at Two o'Clock in the Afternoon, in Order to make a Dividend of the Monies arising from the Sale of Mr. QUESTED's Effects; when and where the Creditors are required to attend to receive the same.

Wye, Nov.1, 1780

Perhaps his business recovered, for we find in the Kentish Gazette 13-16 March 1787.

LOST

On Thursday, the 8th of March instant,

Between Wye and Faversham,

A SILVER-WATCH; Maker's Name, John Silke, Elmsted,

Whoever has found the same, and will bring it THOMAS QUESTED, Watchmaker at Wye,

Shall receive Half-a Guinea Reward

Business was obviously a little sparse for John Silke and his son in Elmsted who to reach out to more potential customers by moving, as shown by this announcement in the Kentish Gazette of 15-19 April 1780.

JOHN SILKE and SON

From ELMSTED,

CLOCK and WATCHMAKERS,

Removed to a Shop at SANDGATE, in CHERITON, near HYTHE,

And not far from FOLKESTONE,

BEG Leave to inform all Persons, who will favour them with their Commands, that they will Make and repair all CLOCKS and WATCHES at as reasonable an Expense as possible; and hope for the Support and Encouragement of the Public, which will be gratefully acknowledged. Will wait on any Gentleman or Lady at their own Houses, if required.



Thomas Quested Long case Clock (1770)



John Silke Long case clock (1776)

The skills to make all the parts of the popular clocks were not always present locally and many clockmakers would seek parts from as far afield as Birmingham. Thus, many of the painted and engraved clock faces, although bearing the name and location of the clockmaker were brought in from specialist workshops. Some scholars, however, think that the similarity of many engravings suggest that local craftsmen supplied the clockmakers.

Kent developed its own style of clock face which remained remarkably constant for a century. In the North and in Wales it was not uncommon to see religious themes on clock faces, however in Kent the most common embellishments were a dove and vines, with or without a cornucopia as shown in the John Silke clockface below.



A Kent Clock face with engraved symbols of peace and plenty

The Industrial revolution brought in factory production and cheap imports of clock mechanisms from the USA and the continent meant that the Kent clockmaker was rarely found after 1850.

Tim Betts