

A CONCISE

History of Amersham

REPRINTED FROM

T. H. King's Family Almanack,

1887.



PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY

E. THOS. KING,

Chemist and Printer,

THE 'AMERSHAM PHARMACY,'
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HISTORY OF AMERSHAM.

OF Amersham we have no certain record prior to the Norman Conquest, though Brown Willis calls it a "Saxon Town," while local traditions point to conflicts with the Danes in its neighbourhood. At the time of the Domesday Survey, it comprised no less than six manors, the chief of which previously belonging to Edith, Queen of Edward the Confessor, was then held by Geoffrey de Mandeville, who also held half a hide of land in Amersham (or as it was then called Elmondesham) belonging to the manor of Ferneham (Farnham Royal) of which in the words of the survey: "He dis-seised Bertram de Verdun, whilst he was abroad in the King's service."

Another manor, formerly belonging to Alwin, a vassal of Queen Edith's, was held by Roger, under Odo, the powerful Bishop of Bayeux. A third by Alman, of the Earl of Moreton. A fourth by Vluiet, of Hugh de Bolebec. A fifth was held by Turstin Mantel, elsewhere called Turstin the son of Rolf, a name which seems to indicate Danish origin, and which still remains in Mantels Green

Farm, as well as in Great and Little Mantels, at Little Missenden in which parish Turstin had possessions. Lastly, one was held by Gozelin Brito. Of these Geoffrey de Mandeville's manor amounted to seven hides and a half, the rest to only half a hide each, all of them nevertheless being manors.

Since the whole $10\frac{1}{2}$ hides, allowing the rather wide margin of 120 or 150 acres to a hide, would only amount to at most 1,575 acres, while the present area of the parish is estimated at about 8,000 acres, it follows that either little more than one-eighth of the parish could then have been under cultivation, unless the boundaries of the parish have since been greatly extended, or (which seems very possible) that the hidage was founded on the value of the land, and not on the actual number of acres. It will presently appear that little more than two hundred years after this period, two-thirds of the parish were in cultivation; the latter supposition therefore seems the more probable.

Besides the cultivated ground, was woodland sufficient for keeping 470 hogs; and three mills, one of which was of the yearly value of five, and another

four shillings. The chief of these landlords, Geoffrey de Mandeville (or Magn Villa) was one of the most valiant of William's Norman followers, and was rewarded with large grants of land, lying for the most part in Essex, where was his principle seat of Walden. He was constable of the Tower of London, and founded a Benedictine Monastery at Hurley, in Berkshire. He was twice married, his wives names being respectively Athelaise and Leceline; by the former of which he had a son William who married Margaret, daughter of Eudo Dapifer (or Steward) to William the Conqueror. Their son Geoffrey married Roasia or Rohesia, daughter of Alberic de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and was created Earl of Essex, a title long held by his descendants. Espousing the cause of the Empress Maud, he received numerous privileges from her, his title and estates were confirmed with the Sherifalty of London, Middlesex and Hertfordshire, to which was added the custody of the Tower of London.

Having excited the hostility of King Stephen, he was, in 1141, seized when in attendance on him, at St. Albans, and did not regain his liberty until he had

surrendered the Tower of London, and his own castles at Walden and Plessey. Geoffrey, now having divorced his sister Beatrice from her husband Hugh Talbot and married her to William de Say, made in conjunction with the latter, inroads upon the lands of King Stephen, and of various ecclesiastics and other supporters of the Sovereign, and among other enormities despoiled the Abbey of Ramsey, driving out the Monks and selling the ornaments of the Church. Henry of Huntingdon, after relating this act of sacrilege, adds, "He was, indeed a man of great determination, but resolute in ungodliness, diligent in wordly affairs, but negligent in spiritual." The pious chronicler considers his death, which occurred soon after as a judgement for this profanation of the Abbey. "Earl Godfrey (or Geoffrey) was singled out among his followers and shot with an arrow by a common soldier. He made light of the wound, but died of it in a few days under excommunication. See here the just judgment of God, memorable through all ages! While that abbey was converted into a fortress, blood exuded from the walls of the Church and the cloister adjoining, witnessing

the divine indignation, and prognosticating the destruction of the impious. This was seen by many persons, and I observed it with my own eyes" Camden quotes from the register of the Abbey of Walden, founded by Geoffery, and by him endowed with nineteen Churches, among which was Amersham, that "he was mortally wounded in the head at a small town called Burwell, and when he was at the point to die and drawing his last breath, some Templars interposed, who covered him with the habit of their order, marking him with a red cross and afterwards took away his body to their orchard at the Old Temple, in London, where they suspended it in a leaden coffin from a tree." This it appears they did as it was not lawful to grant him Christian burial until the sentence of excommunication had been annuled, which was at length effected, principally by the intercession of the Monks of Walden, who, in consideration of this boon, of nineteen Churches, might well look with a more lenient eye on the delinquencies of the deceased than their injured brethren of Ramsey.

On Geoffrey's death, the date of which is somewhat uncertain, but appears to

have been A.D. 1141, he was succeeded by his three sons in turn, who all dying without issue, the estates devolved to Geoffrey Fitz Pier, in right of his wife, Beatrix, who was grand-daughter of Geoffrey de Mandeville's sister, Beatrix, wife of William de Say. This Fitz Pier, on payment of 7,000 marks, or about £4,500, an immense sum at that time obtained the earldom of Essex, taking the name of Mandeville, and enjoying the estates holden by his ancestors, among which was Amersham. The manor subsequently formed part of the dower of Christina wife of William de Mandeville, son of the above, who died 1228 and finally by the marriage of Maud, sister and heiress of William, to Humphrey de Bohun, it passed into that family. This Humphrey was Earl of Hereford, and High Constable of England, and in 1303 the representative of his line was created Earl of Essex. In 1296, on the death of Richard Lord Fitz John, the manor, with the exception of £34 and 4d. rent, was assigned to Robert de Clifford. In 1335, Humphrey de Bohun died, seised of the manor of Amersham.

In 1376, the King committed to Philip de la Vache, the custody of Amersham

and Buckland, late belonging to Edward Lord le Despencer, deceased to hold the same until his attainment of his legal age. In 1400, Lord le Despencer, Earl of Gloucester, was attained for plotting to restore Richard II. to the throne, and died seised of Amersham.

The above-mentioned Philip de la Vache was elected Knight of the Garter, temp. Richard II. and dying 1407, directs his body to be buried in the Church of St. Giles of Chalfhant.

The manor continued in the possession of the Bohuns till the death of the last of his line, Earl of Hereford and Essex, when it was divided between the representatives of his daughters. Of these Mary was wife of Henry IV. mother of Henry V. while Eleanor, the eldest daughter, had married Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, and youngest son of Edward III. Their daughter Anne married Edmund, Earl of Stafford whose son Humphrey was created Duke of Buckingham and his son Henry Stafford. Shakespeare's "Princely Buckingham," claimed the manor, on the ground of his descent from the Bohuns. On his attainder by Richard III. it lapsed to the Crown. Its possession was confirmed

by the attainder of his son, till in 1526, Henry VIII. granted it by patent to Sir John Russell in capite, by Knights service.

In 1610, James I. confirmed to Edward, Earl of Bedford, the manor and lordship of Agmondesham, *alias* Amersham *cum pertinentibus*, all of which premises were of the value of £42 per annum.

Though it would be perhaps almost impossible clearly to ascertain the present locality of the different manors specified in the Domesday survey, yet at a very early period we find mention of different manors in Amersham, the names of which still exist.

The first which appears to be distinctly mentioned is Raans. In 1235, John de Ran, or Rane, held the fourth part of a knight's fee, and paid 3s.-4d. scrutage for lands in Agmondesham. Jordanus de Raan was father of Ricardus, whose son Walter de Raan or Raans, held the manor of Raans, with other lands in Amersham. His daughter Alice married Thomas de la Grove, and their daughter and heiress Agness by marriage brought the estate to William Brudenell, of Aynho. This William had three sons, Edmund clerk of the Parliament in the

reign of Edward III., who at his death without issue in the reign of Henry IV., ordered his body to be buried in Agmondesham Church; William and Henry. This Henry by his will, 1430, left Shardeloes and other manors to his son John, with remainder to his other son Edmund, who was ancestor to those of the name seated at Shardeloes, which terminated in a daughter and heir, Elizabeth married to Thomas Cheney. From his third son, Robert descended the Brudenells of Stoke Mandeville, William, brother of Henry, by marriage with Agnes Bulstrode, obtained the manors of Hedgerly and Chalfont St. Peter. Their son Edmund (first cousin to Edmund Brudenell, of Shardeloes) was lord of Raans, Coleshill, Chalfhunt, &c., and patron of Missenden Abbey. His daughter by his first marriage was wife to Richard Waller, son of that Richard Waller who distinguished himself at Agincourt, and ancestor of the poet. He was married secondly to Phillippa Englefield by whom he had two sons, Drue and Sir Robert. He died having made his will, 1457 in which are some curious particulars relative to Amersham. He directs his body to be buried in Agmondesham Church, near

his wife, Philippa, and leaves to the making of a new bell in the Church, £6 13s. 4d., besides 66s. 8d., given by Agnes Bonvalet; to the provosts of the Church for the maintenance of the great light before the cross, 20s., also to the maintenance of the light before St. Catherine's cross 3s. 4d.; to the poor of Amersham, £4; to the reparation of the highway to Ailesbury and Wendover, £40 towards which he wills that his gold cup his two silver basins, and his great piece of gilt plate, with the cover, and three silver candlesticks be sent to the Tower of London to be melted down. He bequeaths to his son John Chalfont, Eure (Iver), Denham and Fulham. To Edmund, Raans and Stoke; to Drue, the manor of Hugelley (Hedgerly), and lands in various places, one of which is Amersham. To Sir Robert, founder of the family of Brudenell of Dean, Earls of Cardigan, he bequeathed his lands in Horton and Stanwell.

It would seem that John and Edmund were sons by the first marriage, and died before their father, as Drue who was twentyfive years of age at his father's death, took out administration to the will in 1469, and seems to have possessed

Raans. He died in 1489,* and was buried in the north aisle of the Church, leaving a son Edmund (or Simeon according to some), whose daughter and heiress, Elizabeth, married Sir Robert Drury.

Raans afterwards came into the hands of the Proby's of whom Henerage Proby was Sheriff for Bucks and Thomas Proby was member for Amersham, 1651. It was afterwards sold by John Earl Gower to the Duke of Bedford, of whom it was purchased by the Earl of Burlington, to whose son Lord Chesham it now belongs. The present house at Raans was built by the Proby family and bears their arms over the door; ermine on a fess *gules*, a lion passant *or* crest, an ostrich's head erased *argent* ducally gorged *or*, in the beak a key of the last.

The manor of Wedon Hill formerly belonged to the Wedon family, one of whom Sir Ralf de Wedon had besides this manor other possessions in Amerham and a house standing in the Market-place. For his loyalty to the unfortunate Edward II, he was by the Queen's faction deprived of all his possessions which

* So Collins; Lipscombe places his death in 1479.

were afterwards restored to him or his sons, but only on a life tenure.*

Edward the Third granted the manor of Wedon Hill and other places belonging to Sir Ralph de Wedon, to Sir John, afterwards Lord Cobham. The King and his son the Black Prince, being reduced to great difficulties by the expenses of the French war, Sir John Cobham generously gave up the reversion of the greater part of his estates to them. The estates of Sir John Cobham passed into various hands, and the reversion of "Wedon Hill in Chilton" in particular was given to Peter de Brewes, or Broase in the 38th year of his reign. This Peter de Brewes was knighted, and, as appears by the Issue Rolls, received a pension of a hundred pounds a year from the King, "for good service in France."

The further history of Wedon Hill we have been unable to trace; it is now together with the manor of Woodrow, joined to the Shardeloes property.

The earliest distinct reference to Shardeloes seems to be in the reign of Edward III., who granted to William de Latymer a messuage and lands, called Shardeloes,

* See "Records of Bucks," Vol. I., 211.

formerly belonging to Simon de Bereford then attainted and imprisoned in the Tower, as an adherent of Queen Isabel and Mortimer. In the reign of Henry VI., Shardeloes was held by Henry Brudenell, Lord of Raans. It was afterwards the property of the Tothills, and by the marriage of Joane, eldest daughter and co-heiress of William Tothill, and one of the extraordinary number of thirty-three children it passed to Francis Drake, of Esher, whose grandson, Sir William Drake, Baronet, acquired by purchase the manor of Amersham thus uniting it to Shardeloes. He was the founder of the Amersham Almshouses, and has been by Lipscombe strangely confounded with his nephew and heir, Sir William Drake, Knight (not Baronet). This latter, says Brown Willis, "built a very neat Town Hall or Market House, which is the handsomest in the county, the building being of brick, standing on arched pillars, and embellished with freestone at the corners, with a lanthorn and clock at top." The old mansion of Shardeloes stood nearly on the site of the present one, but a little nearer on the summit of the hill. Here William Tothill received Queen Elizabeth

who is said to have afterwards presented to him portraits of herself and her chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton, still remaining here. The gardens attached to it, formed out a morass by Sir William Drake, nephew of the baronet, are highly praised by the authors of *Magna Britannia* † as the chief object of interest to Amersham.

The present house was built in the last century, and is a handsome specimen of the architecture of that date. It is so placed on the hill as to command the view of an extensive sweep of park, showing through the beautiful trees with which it is studded.

It does not clearly appear when or under what circumstances Amersham became a borough. Dr. Brady quoted by Brown Willis, "attributes this privilege to its inhabitants being tenants in ancient demesne and tells us that Parliament men for this place are chosen by homage in the Lord's Court Baron." The first members on record were Robert le Warner (or Warrenar), and Ralphatte Grove, in 28th Edward I., A.D. 1300. After the reign of Edward II. the

† Published in 1720.

representation, along with that of Wendover, and Marlow, fell in abeyance, till in 1624 it was revived by the exertions of William Hakeville and John Hampden, in spite of the opposition of James I. who declared himself unwilling to have the number of burgesses increased, declaring he was troubled with too great a number already. From that period, till disfranchised by the Reform Bill, Amersham continued to return two members, a list of whom is given by Willis: among them occur the names of Edmund Waller, the poet, in the reign of Charles I., and the celebrated Algernon Sidney, as also the two Sir William Drakes, the uncle and the nephew, William Cheney, afterwards Lord Newhaven, and other names of note.

As early as the year 1200 there is a record of the grant of a market and fair to Amersham, at the suit of Geoffrey Fitz Piers de Mandeville and soon after another grant of a fair—probably a second annual fair.

In 1205 the King ordered Hugh de Neville to permit William Fitz John and Thomas his son to sell their woodland in Babington, and other places in

Somerset, also in Agmondesham, "unless it be under the limits of our forest." Witnessed by Robert son of Roger, at Wudestock, 12th November.

From a deed of uncertain date, it appears that Adam de la Stokke gave to Missenden Priory—founded by William de Missenden *anno* 1133—a house in Agmondesham, that namely which is in the Market Place between the house and Ralf de Querдум and the house of R. de Wedune on yearly payment of two shillings, twelve pence at Easter and twelve pence at the feast of St. Micheal. Also a mill called Brizthricke Mill.

In 1278, "the King confirmed to Walter de Agmondesham all his lands and possessions in Agmondesham, to be held by service and payment of 6s. 8d., by charter," and three years later the same Walter had right of free warren in Amersham, Chesham, Little Missenden, Woburn, Beaconsfield and Taplow.

In 1335, William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster held certain lands and tenements in Amersham probably in right of his descent from an heiress of the Mandevilles. In the previous year "the King granted to John de Moleyns in fee one toft and one carucate of land and twelve acres of

land and one pond, with all lands and tenements in Little Missenden and Amersham, in the county of Bucks, late the property of Simon de Bereford now attained for him to hold by due service," and the same year he had a grant of free warren in Amersham and Little Missenden.

By the *Inquisitio Nonarum*, taken in the fourteenth and fifteenth of Edward III., it appears that the valuation of Agmondesham in Pope Nicholas's Taxation at 66 marks was now—fifty years later—reduced to 40 marks, because about one-third of the parish was waste and uncultivated, and because twenty-two pounds of the origin value consisted of offerings, mortuaries, tithes of hay and flax (which must therefore have been cultivated in the parish), and other small tithes paid by demesne and tenant lands, and because there were no inhabitants who could not be taxed by the fifteenth. This gives some key to the condition of the parish at that time; as its inhabitants must have all been of sufficient substance to be taxed by the ninth, except in the words of Act, "the poor boraile people or other than live of their bodily travaile" who were exempted

from taxation.

In 1490, Philip Agmondesham, citizen and mercer of London, left by will to his cousin, Ralf Agmondesham, his best gown and £20; to the church of Agmondesham 20s. and wills that Margaret his wife and John his son be jointly seised in the parish of Agmondesham, except what John Bertlott late held, being of the yearly value of £4.

John Agmondesham, in 1509, leaves to Joan and Alice his two daughters, 100 marks each "to Emma my wife, my manors in Bucks to keep my son John during his non-age."

John Warde son of Thomas Warde, of Agmondesham, 1507, wills that a priest sings for his soul, during a year, and bequeaths for his salary, ten marks.

The Reformation early took root in this part. In 1413, certain Lollards were condemned to death at Amersham and Little Missenden; while nearly a century later, "Thomas Tylesworth, in 1506, was burnt in a close called Stanley's, and his daughter, Joan Clarke forced to set fire to the pile. At the same time, about sixty professors, living in and near the town bore faggots for their penance, some of which were

enjoined to wear a faggot on their sleeve and others were branded on the cheek with the letter L, for Lollard or H, for Heretick (a new invented punishment) as marks of disgrace. The same year, one Robert's a miller of Missenden, was burnt at Buckingham, and within a year or two afterwards Thomas Barnard and James Mordon were burnt at Amersham, at one stake, at which time William Littlepage, Father Roger and Father Rever, *alias* Reve, were burnt on the cheek, which last, not long after, suffered at the stake. Thomas Chase was imprisoned in the Bishop of Lincoln's house, of Woburn, in a place called Little Ease, and when by threatenings and scoffs they could not move him to recant, they contrived to put him to death privately, and gave out that he had hanged himself, which to confirm they buried him in the highway, with a stake drove through his body, as a *felo-de-se*. John Scrivener was also burnt at Amersham, his own children being forced to set the first fire to him.

On the land called Stanley's at the back of the Churchyard and cemetery, popular tradition has assigned a spot where these victims to religious intoler-

ance suffered, and where the corn has been said not to flourish. Variously as this fact may be accounted for by natural causes, it has at least preserved the memory of the site through successive generations. The spot, under the direction of the late Mr. Marshall and other gentlemen of Amersham, was dug up, with a view to ascertain the real cause of its barrenness. It was found to be full of flints which being partially removed, the ground has since borne better than heretofore; still, however, in a dry season, showing a difference from the surrounding land. It seems almost unnecessary to remark that, granting the tradition to be true, this spot may have been originally selected for the purpose, as being a place of waste land, and from its situation on the hill, visible to the whole town.

We have no extant account of the general appearance of the Town earlier than the time of Leland, who visited it in the reign of Henry VIII. His description (with the exception of its Market day) would almost apply to its present state: "Hagmondesham *alias* Amersham, a rightly pretty market town on Fryday, of one street well built with timber,

standing in Buckinghamshire and Chilterne, 2 miles and halfe from Little Missenden. The D. of Buckingham was chiefe Lord of it, since the Kinge, now the Lord Russell by gift, whoe dwelleth at Chenies, 3 mile off by east. The paroch Church standeth by north-east toward the middle of the town, and in a Chappell an the north syde of it lyeth buried Edmund Brudenell, father to Sir Robert Brudenell, late Chiefe Justice of the Common-Pleas, and Drew Brudenell, elder brother to the said Sir Robert, and Helen his wife, daughter to—Broughton, whoe dwelt at a manor of his, £40 per annum. There cometh a brook almost from Missenden, and passeth hard by Hagmondesham, leaving it almost by full south, on the right ripe, and after running downe by the vallis of Chilterne towards Colne streame."

In 1553, July 10th, during the struggle to secure the crown to Lady Jane Grey, John Knox was at Amersham, where alluding to the disturbances of the time, he, in a sermon printed under the title of "Admonition to the faithful in England," foretold the approaching retribution from the giddy ways of the past years.

In 1603, Anne Clifford, afterwards celebrated as Countess of Dorset, Pembroke and Montgomery, thus mentions Amersham:—"The night after, my aunt of Warick, my mother, and I, as I take it, lay at Doctor Challoner's (where my aunt of Bath and uncle Russell met us, which house my grandfather of Bedford used to be much at) being in Amersom. The next day the Queene went to a gentleman's house (whose name I cannot remember) where there met her many great ladies to kiss her hands; as the Marquis of Winchester, &c." It is to be regretted that the name of this house (which was probably in this neighbourhood) should have escaped the amusing writer's memory.

It may be well to say a few words on the state of Amersham and the neighbourhood at the breaking out of the Civil Wars. Hampden, the renowned opposer of the obnoxious ship money, had been, it will be remembered, active in recovering to Amersham its representation in Parliament; he was in the habit of attending the town as magistrate as appears from the indentures of apprentices bearing his signature; so that it is reasonable to suppose that many of

the inhabitants sympathised with him. As Amersham is expressly mentioned in the writ respecting the ship money, I quote a small portion of it:—"By our writ, bearing date the 4th day of August, 11th year of our reign*****we commanded the Sheriff of our County of Bucks***** the Major and Bailiffs of Chipping Wycombe *alias* Wiccombe, as also the burgesses of said borough, and the good men in the said boroughs and parish, and members of the same, and in the towns of Agmondesham, Wendover, and Great Marlow and in all other places, towns, boroughs, villages, hamlets and other places in the said county of Bucks, that you should cause to be fitted out one ship of war*****" One of the judges who delivered an opinion favourable to Hampden, in this case was Sir George Croke, uncle to Dr. Croke, the then rector of Amersham. Dr. Croke was, however, so far from joining the parliamentary side that he became Chaplain to the King after whose death he retired to Ireland and died at Carlow in 1657. Edmund Waller, who represented Amersham in three Parliaments, was nephew of Hampden, and took the same view of the question of supplies—not

however with such vehemence as irremediably to break with the Royalists.

It was during the Commonwealth times that Richard Baxter held here a dispute with certain Nonconformists from Chesham, of which he gives a description himself. The war of words raged in the church till night, and a detachment of troopers were present, whether to take part in the discussion, or to keep the peace between the belligerent parties does not clearly appear.

The condition of Amersham after the Protectorate, is graphically described by Benjamin Robertshawe, Rector in 1731. On a fly-leaf in the Register occurs this entry:—"Paul Ford was then lawfully elected Register and sworn by Francis Russell, Esq., Justice of the Peace, the 20th day of the same month (October, 1656.) To this Robertshawe has appended this remark: This Francis Russell lived at Chalfont St. Giles, on the confines of this parish. He was one of Oliver's Justices and a fit man for the times. I knew his son, a kind of noncon, who came to poverty and sold the farm. General Fleetwood lived at the Vache, and Russell on the opposite hill

and Mrs. Cromwell, Oliver's wife, and her daughter, at Woodrow high house, where afterwards lived Captain James Thomson; so the whole country was kept in awe, and became exceedingly zealous, and very fanatical, nor is the poison yet eradicated, but the Whartons are gone and the Hampdens agoing." This alludes to the Duke of Wharton, grandson of Lord Wharton, the celebrated puritan nobleman, and to John Hampden, representative of the patriot. The first, by whose death the family and title became extinct, after a most profligate and wayward career, in which he shewed himself—

A tyrant to the wife his heart approved
And rebel to the very King he loved,

had just died in great poverty at a small Convent of Bernardine Monks in Catalonia, in 1731, the very year in which this entry was written. John Hampden, whose father, after a life not dissimilar to that of Wharton, had committed suicide in 1696, died towards the middle of the last century, when the male line became extinct.

Amersham contains many old houses; indeed, if whitewash and a few modern additions and alterations were removed,

the town would not perhaps, very greatly differ from its condition when Leland visited it. The most striking and picturesque old house in the town is Little Shardeloes, now the residence of E. Mathews, Esq. It has evidently been a place of importance, and not improbably the Manor House of Amersham. It is apparently a building of different dates—in its present state nearly square, with numerous gables. The back seems to be the oldest part. In one of the rooms is a curious old lock, having a coronet, and the initials E. A. wrought on it. On the north wall of the garden is the date 1688, with the letters E. H. Probably this shows the time when the wall was built, and the house, perhaps, repaired or altered.

The house now occupied by Mr. Monk, from its position, would very well answer to the description of the house of Adam de la Stokke, given to Missenden Priory, or that belonging to Ralph de Wednne, both of which stood in the Market-place (*in foro*). It contains an old Fire-place, and the square-headed windows have large stone mullions. The house of Mr. Gibbs has been thought to have been an old hostel or inn, and contains some

windows, the wooden square-headed framework of which is ornamented with trefoil work. Bury Farm, now in the occupation of Mr. Dell, is a very old house but so modernized that there remains few or no reliques of its ancient character, except an outer doorway, having a depressed arch. Corresponding to this, in the front of the older portion of the building, was a massive door, studded with nails, but now removed.

The almshouses were built by Sir William Drake, Bart., 1617, and consisted of a brick building on the south side of the street, with stone window casings and doorways standing round three sides of the court; over the front door on a stone tablet are the founders arms; in chief two mullets, in base a wyvernne, his tail *nowed* in a canton the Ulster badge, crest, an arm coupee at the elbow, supporting an axe. Underneath it this inscription—

“Sir William Drake of Shardeloes in ye county of Bucks, Knight and Baronet, in the year of our Lord 1617, to the glory of God, and for the relief of six poor widows well reputed in this parish, hath built six almshouses with all conveniences to them, and a very good allowance for ever, at his own cost and charges.”

Among other charitable bequests (a

list of which is given by Lipscombe) are benefactions by William Tothill, Lord Newhaven, Dr. Challoner, &c., the last of whom founded the Grammar School.

The Church was probably founded by Geoffrey de Mandeville, no notice of a Church appearing in Domesday Book. He bestowed it upon the Abbey of Walden, which continued for some time to present to the living after the Bohuns were patrons. By the patent rolls it seems that the Abbot of Breghynok (Brecknock) claimed the advowson in the 22nd of Edward III., but no rector of their presentation appears in the list of incumbents. Two Bishops were in old times furnished by the living—W. de Marcia, presented in 1290, by Humphrey de Bohum, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells, and William Grey in 1437, afterwards High Treasurer of England, and Bishop of Ely, to which Cathedral he was a great benefactor.

The Church itself, dedicated to St. Mary, consists of a chancel, nave, celestery and aisles, transept and porch on the south side. The whole building is embatted and has been covered with plaster rough cast. There is little of the interior remaining earlier than the per-

pendicular style, except some of the piers to the nave, which appear to be late decorated. The groining of the porch has some rich bosses at the intersection of the ribs. The pillars, supporting the arches between the nave and aisles, have been cased with wood, so as to conceal their original shape.

One of the earliest monuments in the Church is a brass in the north aisle consisting of the figure of a civilian in a loose sleeved gown, and a lady in a large heart shaped head-dress, with this inscription:—.....ciacent Thomas Carbonell Armig.^r and Elizabeth ux'eique q'dem Elizabeth obiit xiiijo die Octob Ao. d'ni m^occcc et predictus Thomas obiit xxijo die Aprilis Ao. d'ni m^occcc^oxxxix^o. Quor' animab's p'picietur Deus: Am'n. A few letters of the inscription are lost from the wall covering one end of the brass plate.

We have not been able to connect the name of Carbonell with Amersham though it occurs frequently in Bucks, so early as the reigns of Henry III and Edward I. In the same aisle is a brass, the head broken off, as well as the inscription and armorial shields—supposed by Lipscombe to be that of William

Brudenell, who is said to have been buried in this Church, and to have borne the arms of Brudenell impaling Raans. He was, however according to Collins, buried in the south aisle, where no such monument now appears; the only Brudenell there being Henry, son of this William, buried there together with his wife. The dress of both figures is very similar to the Carbonells. The inscription is:—*Hic jacet Henricus Brudenell Armigr et Alianora ux' ejus filii Hugonia Preston' filii Thome Preston' Militis q'quide' Henric' obiit xxvij die Januar' Ao dni m^occcc^oxxx^o quor aiabss p'piciet' deus. Amen.*

Near the above is a figure with long flowing hair, parted down the middle, and a gown lined with ermine, reaching to the feet; by his side a female in a veil, and dress with tight sleeves, turned up with ermine at the wrists, with this inscription in old English:—*Orate pro aiab's Joh's de la Penne et Elizabeth uxoris eius filie Petri Hally armigeri pue quidem Elizabeth obiit vicesimo primo die mens Novembris Annod' ni mill' mo v^{co}xxj et id'm Joh'es obiit xxvij. die mens decebris Anno d'ni m^ov^oxxxvij Quor' aiab's p'picietur deus. Amen.*

In the same aisle (the south) is a brass effigy of a child, kneeling, richly attired; under it these two inscriptions:—*John Drake sonne of Francis Drake of Esshere in the county of Surrey, Esq, by Katherine his wife dyeing ye 2 of Aprill, in the 4 yere of his age 1623, lies here buried—*

*Had hee liv'd to bee a man,
This inch had grown but to a span,
Now is hee past all fear of paine,
'Twere sinn to wish him heere again;
Vewe but the way by wch wee come,
Thowl say hee's best that's first at home.*

Many other brasses and some stone coffins are said to be under the seats. There must have been many monuments in the north aisle, which was the burying place of the Raans, and afterwards of the Brudenells, of whom, besides those just mentioned, there were buried in Amersham Church, Edmund Brudenell and his wife, about 1425, another Edmund with Philippa his wife, about 1460, and Drue with his wife Hellen, buried 1439, in the north aisle, as appears by Leland's account; his monument bearing the arms of Brudenell impaling Englefield, and Brudenell impaling Broughton. In the chancel and mausoleum adjoining are numerous monuments to the Tothill and Drake family,

illustrating various styles during the last two centuries. And here we must specially mention the very chaste and beautiful monument to the memory of the late Mr. Drake, of Shardeloes.

The east window was brought from a private Chapel belonging to the Garrard family at Lamer, Herts, about a century ago, the glass having been previously collected abroad. It is a very fine specimen of mediæval stained glass, representing ten of the Apostles, the faces being remarkably fine and expressive.

The Church registers extend back to 1551, and possibly if carefully examined might be found to contain various entries illustrative of the history of the place. There is also an old parish account book, beginning with the 31st year of Henry VII., which to judge from a very brief examination, seems to contain entries that might illustrate the progress of the Reformation at Amersham.

We are not aware that this town has ever produced any leading character, military or political, in English history. Fuller speaks of two or three authors born here, who were more or less celebrated in their day. John Amersham was a Monk of St. Albans, and bosom

friend of the Abbot, John Wheathamstead. Fuller says "now there was a great faction in that monastery against their Abbot, which seemeth no wonder; for the generality of Monks being lewd, lazy, and unlearned, tithes of the two parts of the Hamlet, £50 per annum. The other Beaconsfield, worth £150 per annum, whereof the other part of the said hamlet belonging the said parish is worth £20 per annum; so that the tithes of the said hamlet are worth £70 per annum. That there are in the said hamlet 40 families consisting of 200 persons, most of them living two miles from each parish Church. And that we conceive that in the said hamlet a Church were fit to be erected and endowed with the tithes thereof, the people earnestly desiring the same." Sir Henry Chauncey gives the following account: "The inhabitants have a tradition that within this hamlet stood an ancient Chappell, and there are some circumstances to confirm it, for the foundation of an old building hath been lately ploughed up in a certain field in this village and the Farm to which that belongs bears the name of Chappel Farm; without doubt this little spot of land hath in some ages

past been a place of some note, for besides those above-mentioned, some other piles of building stood there, but those demolished so long since that no man can tell what or whose they were; nor should this age have known that any such at all had been did not the rubbish and foundations remaining yet within the ground bespeak it. Of these, the most considerable is found within a wood called Brainford Wood, at the entrance in the Hamlet on Amersham side and not far from that, in a ploughed field, stood another smaller pile the foundation of which being of late years digged up, discovered very curious paving work in a manner of dice work. The common opinion is that this was a Chapel oratory, belonging to the adjacent greater structure and my author tells me that he was well acquainted with the man who some years since ploughed up a weathercock in that place, which was supposed to have stood upon the chappel; and he farther related to me that he once saw a piece of brass comb about the bigness of half-a-crown, which was also ploughed up there; but through the carelessness of him that had it, 'tis now lost."

Thus imperfectly have we traced the

history of Amersham from the earliest time downwards. The mail clad baron, with his dependants, who alternately supported or defied the King, the gallant gentleman of later times, who received his Queen at his country seat, the loyal cavalier and the stern puritan, all are alike passed away, and little is it that we can now collect about them. Yet not in vain has their history been recalled if we draw from it the lessons it offers, whether of example or warning, not unmindful too what memorials they have left behind—a Church endowed for the spiritual wants of all, or a charity founded for the temporal need of the poor. If with these feelings we look into the history of the past, we shall not find it an uninstrucive study, nor while fully conscious of, and thankfully rejoicing in, the greater advantage we enjoy, shall we view in a too censorious spirit the faults and failings of those who have gone before.



History of Amersham from the earliest times to the present day. The town of Amersham is situated on the banks of the River Great Ouse, and is one of the most fertile and beautiful parts of the county. It is a town of great antiquity, and has been the seat of a noble family for many centuries. The town is surrounded by a wall, and is a very pleasant and healthy place to live in. The town is a very important one, and is the seat of a great many of the most important trades and manufactures of the county. The town is a very beautiful one, and is a very pleasant and healthy place to live in. The town is a very important one, and is the seat of a great many of the most important trades and manufactures of the county.



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