



A Tour Through Buckinghamshire.

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(Continued from page 117, Vol. 8).

Four miles E. of Newport Pagnell on the Bedfordshire border is NORTH CRAWLEY. The Church (St. Firmin, first Bishop of Amiens, said to be the only dedication in this name in England, register 1558), is a very beautiful one. The early Decorated chancel with its geometrical windows was built by Peter de Guilford, Rector, d. 1321, an inscription in Latin on the outside of the E. wall records this fact.

“Petrus Cancellum tibi dat Firmene Novellum Ut cum lauderis Deo, Petri memoreris.”

The beautiful screen with painted figures should be carefully examined. It is an excellent example of Decorated work. The font also is an old one. In the chancel is a fine brass to John Garbrand, D.D., d. 1589, a former Rector. There are also some XVII. century brasses.

Domesday Survey refers to a monastery of St. Firmin here, but nothing further can be learnt of it, and the reference is probably an error.

Two miles S. of Crawley is MOULSOE. The Church (St. Mary, register 1559) is a small Decorated building. In it is a brass with effigies of a knight and lady, supposed to be those of Sir Richard Moulsoe and his wife, about 1530. In the church-yard is the large mausoleum of the Carrington family, who bought the manor 1801.

Two miles N.E. of Crawley is ASTWOOD on the Bedford and Newport road, halfway between these two towns. The Church (St. Peter, register 1666) has a Decorated S. aisle with good windows. There are brasses to Roger Ketton 1440, and to Thomas Chimale and his wives, 1534. In the chancel are Mural tablets, one to William Loundes of Astwood Bury, Secretary of State to William

III., Anne, and George I. ; another to Daniel Cranmer 1575—1640, a nephew of Archbishop Cranmer.

Astwood Bury, a fine mansion, was pulled down in 1799. One of the manors was once held in trust for John Thurloe, Cromwell's Secretary, when he was by Act of Attainder incapable of holding any property in his own name in England.

N. of the high-road is HARDMEAD. In the Church (St. Mary, register 1556) are some monuments of the Catesby family of the XVI. century.

On the high-road, and nearer to Newport, is CHICHELEY. The manor once belonged to the Abbey at Tickford near Newport, and after the dissolution was granted by Henry VIII. to Anthony Cave, from whose family it passed by marriage to that of Chester. Anthony Cave built a mansion, in the form of a quadrangle, about 1550. During the civil wars this house, which then belonged to Sir John Chester, a distinguished royalist, was burnt and nearly destroyed. Sir Anthony Chester built the present mansion about 1715. It is of red brick faced with white stone, and stands in a large park. One of the rooms contains old wood-work, and a beam with an inscription, on which is a punning allusion to the house of Cave. These fittings belonged to Anthony Cave's house. The front is a square water tower. The Bagots succeeded the Chesters and took the name.

The Church (St. Lawrence) stands close to the house. It has a central tower. The chancel was re-built in semi-classical style in the XVIII century. It contains monuments to the Chesters whose name has been Latinized into *De castro*. One of these contains a eulogy on Archbishop Cranmer. It is that of Anthony Chester, d. 1697, who married a daughter of Samuel Cranmer of Astwood. In the aisle are brasses, some of them to Caves, and the monument of Anthony Chester.

N.W. of Newport three miles along the Northampton road are two interesting places, Gayhurst and Tyringham.

GAYHURST, which is on the left bank of the river, from which it is separated by the road, consists chiefly of the park and mansion. The original name seems to have been "Gott's Hurst," the wood of God, and it is situated close to the old settlement of Bonstye from which a move was made to the New Port.

Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, brother of the Conqueror, once held the manor. After the fall of this turbulent prelate Gayhurst passed to his tenant Ralph de Nowers, in whose family it continued for

more than 500 years, until in 1408, Joan, the heiress of the family, married Sir Robert Nevill, of Prestwold in Leicestershire. The Nevills built a portion of the existing mansion, the present south wing. This is the oldest portion of the house, but it has been re-cased. Inside are various small rooms and secret chambers with outlets from one to another or on to the roof. One of these is called "Digby's Hold."

The family of Mulso succeeded that of Nevill by the marriage of Mary, their heiress, with Thomas Mulso of Thringdon in Northamptonshire in the XVI. century William their son added to and altered the house, which now took the E. form so common at that time. The north wing of Mulso's mansion had a separate entrance, and was fitted up with State apartments, and two of the rooms on the first floor of this wing are called respectively the "Prince's Room" and the "Guard Room." Above these a long gallery runs the whole length of the wing, but it has been sub-divided into small apartments in modern days.

William Mulso's only daughter, Mary, married in 1596 Sir Everard Digby, when the latter was sixteen years of age. In five or six years Digby became a Roman Catholic and was soon mixed up in the Gunpowder Plot. Lady Digby, however, was ignorant of the plot until it had been discovered. Mass was frequently said, probably in the large room at the top of the E. wing which is called the chapel, by Father Garnet or other priests. But it may have been at Sir Everard's other house, Drystoke in Rutland, that the conspirators actually met.

Sir Everard Digby was executed for his share in the plot at the age of twenty-six, and his famous son Sir Kenelm, was consequently quite a child at the time of his Father's tragical death. At Gayhurst he spent his early manhood with his beautiful wife, Venetia Anastasia, who died of decline at the age of thirty-two. The descendants of the edible snails which Digby imported from the South of France with the object of saving her life were until a few years ago occasionally to be met with in the grounds.

Sir Kenelm gave his name to the Yew-tree walk which leads down the side of the park, passing under the road, and is known by the name of "Digby's Walk."

In 1704 two Digby heiresses sold Gayhurst to George Wrighte, son of Sir Nathan Wrighte, Lord Keeper to Queen Anne. George Wrighte built a dining-room with ball-room or drawing-room over it

on the N.W. side between the two wings. The Wrightes died out in the earlier part of the XIX. century.

The appearance of Gayhurst now, as we approach from the high-road is that of an Elizabethan Mansion with central porch, projecting wings, and mullioned windows. This is the work of William Mulso. On the left we have the oldest portion, the secret rooms and private staircases of the Nevill Mansion, alongside of which have been added some modern offices. On the right are the "State rooms" of William Mulso. Behind are the Queen Ann additions of George Wrighte.

The gardens at Gayhurst have always been attractive. William Cowper used to come over from Olney and exchange plants and seeds with the gardener, but he always avoided meeting the Master of the house, for as he says himself—"Mr. Wrighte himself is such a keen sportsman that he would doubtless find me an insipid animal, who had not the least relish for what he admires so much."

The Church (St. Peter, register 1728) is in the park, in front of the house. It occupies the site of a Mediæval Church, and was built in 1728 by George Wrighte. Sir Christopher Wren designed it, though he did not live to see it completed. It contains some large XVIII. century monuments of the Wrighte family.

The Ouse between the parks of Gayhurst and Tyringham spreads out into a lake, and a regatta is held every summer on this most attractive piece of water which is lined by the pine trees of the two parks, and broad enough to allow of the competition of *eight-oars*.

TYRINGHAM is on the right bank exactly opposite Gayhurst. The Church (St. Peter, register 1629) stands in the park near the river. It has been nearly rebuilt, but the lower part of the tower is Norman and the upper part Perpendicular. There are some brasses, amongst these one to John Tyringham and his wives, of the families of Catesby and Brudenal. This family were here in the middle of the tenth century, and a Tyringham in the XVII. century was Rector of the parish and was carried off with great violence by Parliamentary soldiers to Newport.

The old Mansion of the Tyringhams has disappeared. Their present house was built on its site about 1792.

FILGRAVE, one mile N. is now joined to Tyringham, and there is no Church. An ancient one was pulled down, 1753.

STOKE GOLDINGTON which is one and half miles N. of Gayhurst, on the Northampton Road, is consolidated with the latter parish, but has a Church (St. Peter, register 1538) which was served by

Thomas Scott the commentator as his first charge after his ordination in 1772. He served Gayhurst as well, the then Rector being sub-dean of Lincoln Cathedral, and non-resident. He also acted as tutor to young Wrighte at the Mansion, and was married to Jane Kell, Mrs. Wrighte's Maid, in Gayhurst Church in 1774.

Two miles E. of the Northampton road is RAVENSTONE. Here was a Priory of Black Canons, founded by Henry III. 1255. It was suppressed in 1525 and no remains of it exist.

The family of Finch lived at Ravenstone. Lord Chancellor Heneage Finch, Earl of Nottingham, 1621—1682, the Amri of Dryden's "Absolom and Achitophal," owned the manor, and is buried in the Church (All Saints, register 1568). There is a fine monument representing the Chancellor in his robes, erected by his son. The church itself has Norman work. On the E. side of the church-yard is buried Thomas Seaton, Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, who founded the Seatonian prize poem. In the village are alm-houses founded by the Earl of Nottingham.

Virginia Water.

By R. E. Hodder.

Completely surrounded by picturesque scenery, and away from the busy haunts of man, its origin but little known, its sylvan charms unrecorded, except by a single line in Murray, this altogether lovely calm retreat, at once the monarch's and the muse's seat, Virginia Water

"still bears the name the hapless Virgin bore,
and bathes the forest where she ranged before."

The name of this place is somewhat difficult to determine. The probability is that it received its name from the Virgin Queen having some concern there, and was so named to honour her memory.

The natural basin which now forms Virginia Water seems to have been a large swamp of several acres in extent with ponds interspersed.

In 1746 William, Duke of Cumberland, Ranger of Windsor