



Sandhurst, Berks.

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(Continued from page 117, Vol. 19.)

In 1408 the churchwardens were ordered to repair the Church and churchyard, and we have a list of evil-doers presented by them. One of the parishioners was accused of "nigromancy," or sorcery, and the chaplain got into trouble for celebrating a secret marriage at night (in noctis tenebris) without banns or license.

Our knowledge of Sandhurst affairs for the first three hundred years of its existence is not unnaturally of the most meagre description. Names of inhabitants occur from time to time in the Feet of Fines preserved among the public records, when land changed hands, and abstracts of some of these documents are given in the appendix.

Three-quarters of the parish was, as it remained in recent times, a barren waste of heather. In the southern part, where the soil was more fertile, were the cottages of the people, each with its plot of garden, the better class ones with a small close also adjoining. It is improbable that there was ever a large manor house, but there was an ancient enclosure of two acres and a cottage on the site of Sandhurst Lodge, round which a great part of the demesne lay. The arable land was not enclosed and divided as in later times, but each inhabitant, according to his importance, would have so many acres in the three common fields. In Edward VI.'s reign they were named Church Field, Home Field, and Wydenershe|| Field respectively. In primitive days no doubt there was a common pasture near the river, besides the waste ground of the manor to the north, where animals could be turned out. By Tudor times, however, this

|| In Elizabeth's reign it is spelt "Witnesse Field."

was all in the hands of individuals, and the different closes had their own names.

As the parish was within the bounds of Windsor Forest, cattle grazing and turf cutting on the waste of the manor were subject to certain restrictions. About this something will be said later.

There was a Sandhurst mill in early days. John the Miller was witness to a deed in the reign of Edward I., and in the 17th year of the same King's reign (1289) a certain John Attegrene sold the mill and appurtenances to a man of his own name.¹ The mill apparently stood a little above Yateley bridge, where it is evident that the course of the Blackwater has been diverted in past days.

The village was taxed to supply money for the French wars, and from a much-tattered parchment preserved in the Public Record Office we get a list of parishioners who, with others in Sonning hundred, contributed a subsidy of $\frac{1}{10}$ to the King² :—

“HUNDRM DE SUNNYNG.

Villat de Sandhurst.

. . . . Bokhurst	iiii ^s	ix ^d	ob
. . . . Alisaunder		xviii ^d	
. . . . Uphall	ii ^s	iii ^d	ob
Johe Netherewell	ii ^s	viii ^d	ob
Willo atte Grove	ii ^s	iiii ^d	ob
J atte Forde		xviii ^d	
. atte Forde		xviii ^d	
. lend	ii ^s	ii ^d	
. Aylward	iii ^s	xi ^d	
Thom West		xvii ^d	ob
. atte Grove	v ^s	vi ^d	
. atte Purie	ii ^s		
. le Bulkeler	v ^s	i ^d	ob
. Attehulle	vii ^s	ii ^d	ob

sm^e xliiii^s i^d pba^r.

There were Alexanders living in the village in James I.'s reign. Grove's Farm is still known by that name, though the present house is modern. Ford's Farm is mentioned in an assessment of 1808, being now apparently represented by the farm buildings belonging to Sandhurst Lodge. The eighth name we may conjecture was that of the miller (molendinium=a mill). A Robert West lived in Finchampstead in the following reign (1327), and Allerd's Mead and

1. Feet of Fines, Berks, 17 Ed. I.

2. Lay Subsidy Roll, Berks, 73/5.

West Moor are on the Finchampstead boundary. "Purie" perhaps became "Perry," preserved in "Perry Bridge" and the adjoining field, "Perry Moor." The Bukelers were people of some importance, and held a large amount of land in Edward VI.'s reign.

In another document of rather later date* we find the names Henry de Wyfald, Adam de Benethfeld, Robert Norman, Roger Chapman, and Aylward West. Chapman's Moor and Little Chapman's retained their names at least four hundred years later.

In 1383 it was decided to send an army into Flanders in aid of the Urbanists against the French, who supported the claims of the rival Pope Clement. Pope Urban the Sixth sent his blessing and all kinds of pardons and indulgences for those who contributed towards the venture. Our only general at the time was apparently Henry Spencer, Bishop of Norwich, who had lately shown considerable energy in stamping out Wat Tyler's rebellion. He was given the command, and in a document dated at Westminster on June 25th he appointed John Chewe of Wokingham, and John Kuton of Sandhurst "his proctors, chaplains, penitentiaries, collectors and receivers of all monies bequeathed, collected, or contributed towards his crusade."†

Froissart describes how "the prelates preached up in their dioceses this expedition in the manner of a crusade; and the people of England, who were credulous enough, believed it too readily, so that none of either sex thought they should end the year happily nor have any chance of entering Paradise if they did not give handsomely to the expedition." The Bishop was at first fairly successful, but the campaign ended most ingloriously.

A field of two acres called "Le Butt" suggests the range of an early race of Sandhurst Territorials. In the reign of Edward IV. a knowledge of the use of the bow was insisted on, and on feast days every able-bodied villager in England had to practice shooting at the mark or pay a fine.

Between Sandhurst and the adjoining parish of Yateley there was always a close connection. In later years we frequently find the same clergyman in charge of both churches. Many persons also held land in both parishes, notably the family of Atte Halle of Halle Place, Yateley, in the fourteenth century. In the fifth year of Henry V. (1417) Richard Bannister of Yateley made over fifteen acres of his Sandhurst property to trustees for the use of the poor

* Report v Hist. MSS. Comm. App.

† Cal. Pat. Rolls. 7 Ric. ii.

of Yateley and Sandhurst, a charity still shared between the two parishes.

The old church continued in use till the year 1853, when it was practically rebuilt under the direction of Mr. Street. It is described in a local paper of that date as "a barn-like structure with traces of Norman work." Fortunately sketches are preserved at the Rectory and in the British Museum which present a clearer idea of the building in which the people of Sandhurst worshipped for over six hundred and thirty years. These show it to have been a small chapel, by no means void of dignity, without aisles, having a chancel roof considerably lower than the nave, and a low boarded belfry at the west end. The walls were largely composed of the sarsen stones which are found in the district. Its general features were characteristic of the early thirteenth century, though the east window was of later date. On the north side were five single lancet windows and a door with a simple pointed arch. On the south side one of the windows had a pair of lancets, another a group of three with trefoil headed arches. The moulding of the door on this side has been copied in the present south door. In the year 1818 there was a porch to this door-way. It is stated in the Ecclesiastical Topography of Berks that the chancel arch was of Norman work. There was a fine old font which it was for some reason considered necessary to break up. The font itself was square, supported on a solid square base by a cylindrical stem and four pillars at the corners. Each face contained four stones, the corner stones being decorated with crosses and a conventional flower pattern. The design on the central ones had become erased and is not obvious in the drawing. Two of the stones at least were built into the wall of the new church, and can be seen at the west end protected by drip-stones. A much later relic of the old church may be seen in the oak beam which was built into the roof of the nave opposite the south door. It bears the inscription :—

ANO. DOM. NOS. CAR. DEI. GRAT. ANG. SCOT. FRA. ET. HIB.
REG. FID. DEFN. VICS. TER. 1647.

It was a common custom to record repairs to a church in this way. The churchwardens were warned at the Dean's Visitation twenty years before this to repair the roof and the benches ; and the inscription may mean that a new roof was put on the nave this year.

Sandhurst suffered in common with the other Berkshire churches from the spoliation during Edward VI.'s reign, when the King's ministers turned from spoiling the monasteries to the parochial

chapels and chantries. Private individuals had in some cases anticipated them in plundering the church plate. Many of these no doubt were actuated by the idea that if the church property had to go, the children of those who had given it had a better right to it than the royal treasury. At any rate commissioners were appointed in the King's name to make inventories of the church goods all over the country. These people arrived at Sandhurst on August 1st, 1552, and the following list shows what they found there.¹

All these things had disappeared by James II.'s time as a later inventory in the churchwardens' book proves.

JOHN JEBBLE² AND WILLIAM CORDREY.

CHURCHWARDENS.

Thre belles hanginge in the stepulle, a smalle bell to go before a corps, a chales percell gilte, Too coopes thone red braunched damaske wth wiers of golde, thother of grene and white sarsnet, Too vestmentes thone red braunched damaske wth golde wier, thother of red saten of burges wth gold w..... A vestment of black seye³ a vestment of grene dornex ij towelles. A crosse cloth of red ; Too banner clothes. Too crosses of brarst plate, a paire of sencers of brasse ; a paxe⁴ of brasse, A..... A holie wat^r pottle of brasse, a basin of laten⁵ ; Too littell candelstickes of brasse, Too corpora⁶.....cases thone of blew seye thother of red seye. And all the said parcelles sauflie to be kept and preserved.....

At the same time it was discovered that some pious inhabitant had in past years endowed the church with the sum of eight pence annually to provide two lamps for the services for ever. This money, which was derived out of the rents of certain lands in the parish, was appropriated by the Crown also.⁷

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1. From Money's Inventory of Church Goods in Berkshire, 1879.
 2. This should surely be Jebblett ?—G.A.K.
 3. Serge made entirely of wool.
 4. A vessel for holding the box in which the Sacrament was preserved.
 5. An alloy of copper and zinc.
 6. A cloth of white linen in which the elements were consecrated.
 7. Chantry Certificates, Berks, P.R.O.

(To be continued).