

KINGSHAM, NEAR CHICHESTER.

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THE site of the pre-Roman earthwork which still surrounds the city of Chichester was determined by a striking curve of the River Lavant, which afforded considerable protection. Within living memory a branch of the stream flowed south from the city into the basin of the canal, and there can be little doubt that this was spanned by the Stockbridge, which gave its name to the ancient Saxon settlement, in whose hundred Chichester stands.

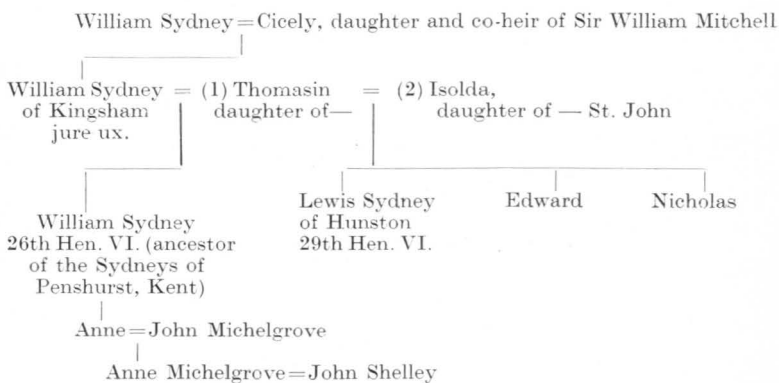
Stockbridge was clearly deserted, as the Saxon population moved within the Romano-British defences, but Kingsham still remains, the only old house within its limits. The existing pronunciation seems invariably King-sham, but there can be no manner of doubt that it is properly King's hame, and a very high degree of probability can be claimed that this was the place of residence of the ancient south Saxon kings. The known history of the house is summarised by James Dallaway (*History of West Sussex*, 1815, Vol. I., pp. 194-5), who derived his information from the *Burrell MSS.*

For centuries the place was held in capite of the crown by the petit serjeanty of presenting to the King as often as he should come a skein of thread for his cross-bow.¹ "In 1276, the fourth of his reign, King Edward the First remained here for some time, as proved by the

¹ Rot. Pat. 5 Edw. III. and 2 Hen. V. m. 19. "Quod manerium de Kingsham tenetur de Rege in capite, per servitium reddendi inde Dno. Regi unum fusillum fili pro balista Dni. Regis, quando venerit per quamdam venellam quæ vocatur Godelane ad itinerandum super mare australe, pro omnibus servitiis."

dates of his letters, patents, etc.² In the 10th Edward II it was demised to William le Taverner. Among the first who held of the crown were the Barons St. John, and by marriage it passed to the family of Sydney, to whom it was confirmed by King Henry the Fifth, in the second year of his reign. The Shelleys, of Michelgrove, had been long possessed, previously to a private act of Parliament having been obtained, by which it was enfranchised, and sold to Joseph Randall, gent., by Sir John Shelley, bart. By his will it was devised to William Dearling, Esq., the present proprietor.”

Dallaway gives in the margin a coloured shield of the Sydney arms, and in a footnote the following skeleton table³ to illustrate the passing of Kingsham by marriage to the Sydneys from the St. Johns, and subsequently to the Shelleys.



D. G. C. Elwes, F.S.A. (*Castles, Mansions and Manors of West Sussex*, 1876, p. 24, note, under Barnham), mentions the fact that the will of William Sydney, whose second wife was Isolda St. John, is dated 1450.

² This statement appears to be untrue.—ED.

³ This pedigree is entirely incorrect. The name of the first William Sydney's wife is unknown. William of Kingsham married (1) Cicely, daughter of John Michelgrove, by whom he had a son William, apparently the father of Anne; (2) Isabel St. John, by whom he had another son William, who inherited Kingsham (cf. *Feet of Fines*, No. 3073) and had a son Humphrey; (3) Thomasin Barrington, widow of William Lundesford, by whom he had four sons, of whom Nicholas was the ancestor of the Sydneys of Penshurst: see *Archæologia*, lxxv, 252.—ED.

T. W. Horsfield (*History of Sussex*, 1835, Vol. II., p. 15) repeats part of Dallaway's account, but supplies nothing of his own. The manor of Kingsham forms a detached section of the parish of St. Pancras, from whose main portion it is separated by Rumboldswyke and the subdeanery.

Few houses retain less trace of former importance than Kingsham at the present day. It seems, however, desirable to set forth what archaeological remains are still to be found there, particularly as it has just acquired new importance from having been acquired as an experimental farm by the West Sussex County Council. It was originally surrounded by a moat, and this was almost certainly connected with the adjacent Lavant. Although it has been filled up, only the slightest traces being left, it is not a hazardous conjecture that it was square in form surrounding the present garden wall, which is the chief existing feature of the place.


We have Dallaway's authority for saying that in the early eighteenth century the house contained many spacious rooms, particularly one with a large bay window displaying in coloured glass the quarterings and marriage alliances of the Sydneys, but of all this nothing whatever survives. The garden wall, which encloses a large square space, reinforced as it once was by the moat, was evidently built, as was often the case, with some idea of defence. The lower part is of rubble stone, and may be in part mediæval, but it is largely patched with Tudor bricks; the upper part of the wall greatly resembles (though on a smaller and meaner scale) the work of Bishop Shurburne in the gardens of the Palace at Chichester, being of regular brickwork of sixteenth century character, where its original features are preserved. At intervals shallow triangular buttresses have been added, and these are carried through both sections; they extend on both sides, and are entirely of brick. There are four on the west side and one on the north. They seem to be almost contemporary.

On the south the stonework is rather more regular

than elsewhere, but the east part of this wall and much of the east side are rebuilt in modern brick. Part of the east side is formed by a farm house, which seems to date from the late eighteenth century, and preserves no ancient features.

Against the south wall on the inside has been piled a bank of earth forming a grass slope to the garden, rather similar to what is provided by the old city agger and walls in several Chichester gardens. At the two ends of this, in each case reached by an arch looking north (along the side walls), are little brick-vaulted L-shaped cellars evidently dating in their present form from the early nineteenth century. The arch at the east end is made up of late moulded stones with a similar little corbel above, very clumsily and poorly built.

The other (west) arch has a low sunk panel of seventeenth century character, but it does not seem to be in its original position. Over it is built in the central stone of a fourteenth century window having trefoiled lights. Just within the cellar here is a shallow bricked well, now filled in. The old man who was employed to do the filling told the present writer that it was full of ice-cold water, and it is locally called the Roman bath, probably a guess of some appreciative visitor which as (so frequently) got repeated till it became a "tradition."

Projecting southward from this south-west corner is a semi-circular structure, whose lower part rather resembles the Roman bastions of the city wall. It seems certainly mediæval, but its much-patched and plant-covered rubble affords no real indication of date. Its upper stage forms a summer-house with some interesting sixteenth or seventeenth century Flemish glass, Pilate's wife and the Descent from the Cross in monotone, the latter having a merchant's mark 

The north gateway is plaster work of early nineteenth century type, and the double doorway makes use of the head of an unglazed double trefoil-headed window,

which is rabbited for a shutter of wood. There are thus only the very faintest indications of the character of the mediæval mansion. If one could be sure that it were not brought from elsewhere, a capital of Sussex marble, with primitive foliage sculpture between the round shaft and square abacus, might indicate a chapel of considerable interest. It dates from about 1150, and is now preserved in a rockery with another capital of white marble, which appears to be quite modern. The twelfth century capital very closely resembles those in the Cathedral clearstorey, but it is certainly not identical.

Built into a barn is a stone with eight ribs, meeting as if the centre of a vaulted bay, but very flat, shallow, and of late date. Another barn has a large boulder with brick arch above it as if it were considered well worthy of preservation, but no local person seems to know anything about these stones.