

THE 1672 MAP OF SELSEY BILL.

BY EDWARD HERON-ALLEN F.R.S.

WILLIAM WEEKES' "True Plot and Content of all and Singular the Land lying or being within the Mannor of Selsey" had been lost to sight, and had become legendary, for more than two hundred and fifty years when, in 1925, at the end of a chain of fantastic coincidences, I discovered it in the shop of a furniture dealer in Chichester. There has been from time immemorial preserved by the Clayton family at High House, a map ($13\frac{1}{2}$ by $15\frac{1}{2}$ ins. square), drawn in pen and ink, and coloured by hand, in the north-west corner of which is the title: "Sketch of the Island of Selsey in the County of Sussex taken from a Survey made in 1672."

This map has always been somewhat jealously guarded, but the present owner, Mr. James Clayton, allowed the sometime Rector of Selsey, the Rev. J. Cavis-Brown, to publish a photographic facsimile of it (Chichester, Ch. Knight, 1906) disfigured with notes in his own handwriting, referring to numbers which he had sprinkled about it, and to which he had added lines indicating the progressive recession of the coast line as it was in 1820 and 1905. This was prepared for the use and information of the Royal Commission upon Coast Erosion, the members of which visited Selsey in 1906, and whose First Report (Vol. I., Pt. 1) was issued in 1907.¹

I issued a reprint of this Map, as "sophisticated"

¹ This Commission was the direct outcome of two Reports upon Coast Erosion presented to the British Association (Section C. Geology) (i) Ipswich 1895, and (ii) Southport 1903. The latter contained a useful map showing the eroded coast-lines.

by Cavis-Brown, as a folding plate to my book, *Selsey Bill Historic and Prehistoric* (1911), but neither Cavis-Brown nor myself were ever able to discover anything about the original "survey" referred to in the title of the map, as copied. This title, Mr. O. S. G. Crawford, F.S.A., of the Ordnance Survey tells me, seems, by its style, to date the Clayton copied map about 1720-30, at which time it must have been drawn for purposes of easy reference, from the original, which, excepting on that occasion, has, apparently, never been seen since it was made in 1672.

In Vol. LXVII. (1926) of the *S.A.C.* I recorded the finding of the original Map, and I promised a fuller description of it for the 1927 volume of *S.A.C.*, but a constant succession of scientific and other work has hitherto prevented the fulfilment of that promise. Mr. O. S. G. Crawford had visited Selsey in 1925 and had managed with my assistance to carry off James Clayton's "copy," and he then had a full-sized photograph made of it. I received the disastrous news of the accidental smashing of the negative, before any prints had been made from it, by the same post which brought me a clue to the whereabouts of the original Map, which I need hardly say I immediately followed up, and thus came into possession of it. It had come to light in the clearing out of accumulated papers and rubbish from the garret of an old-established solicitor's office in Chichester, in November, 1925, and was at once reported to me. It is drawn by hand (and coloured) on a sheet five feet square, formed by the sewing together of five oddly-shaped "skins" of vellum, $\frac{1}{32}$ of an inch in thickness. The Sea and Pagham Harbour—showing the "arm" extending to the sea on the west side of the Bill, which converted Selsey into an island at high tide—are coloured green. The map itself is practically a local directory giving the names of the fields and their tenants, and, what is most important, the coast line of 1672. A title-panel on the map reads as follows:

The | Trve Plot and Content of | all and Singular the Lands lying

or being within the Mannor of Selsey | in the County of Sussex as it is now Butted and Bounded with the maine Sea on the | East and South pts thereof and the fery (*sic*) on the North and West parte thereof together | With the Commons or Wasts of the sd Mannor belonging to the Right Wor | full. Sr. Willm. | Morley, Knight of the Bath, and also the true Plot of Certaine other Pcels. of Land | Which is intermingled within the Lands of the aforesaid Mannor belonging to | Or holden of Mr. Bernard, of Petworth and others, All which said Mannor | of Selsey was surveyed with the help and by the consent of the tennants | belonging to the said Mannor in the Yeare of our Lord God 1672 | By me Willm. Weekes.

It has now been presented to, and is preserved in the Office of the Ordnance Survey at Southampton.

With the assistance of Miss Elsie Keary (now Mrs. Fuller) and Mr. Vyvyan Holland, both expert paleographers, I made a list, which follows below, of all the field-names and tenancies recorded on the map. We examined each main-road in turn, and registered the whole of the information afforded on either side of it by the laborious industry of the original surveyor, William Weekes, concerning the fields and tenements abutting upon the roads, and their "hinterlands," extending to the shore all round the Bill.

It will be observed that the numeration of the plots, where it occurs, is confusing in the extreme, ordinary figures being interspersed with Greek letters. There must have existed in the seventeenth century a "Terrier," or Key to these figures, doubtless for the guidance of the Steward of the Manor, but the chances of this document ever coming to light, are, to say the least of it, exceedingly remote. The writing on the map is often almost illegible, but we have considered all doubtful names carefully, and we believe our interpretations to be for the most part correct. It is common knowledge that until the nineteenth century the spelling of names was liable to almost infinite phonetic variation. The seventeenth century documents to which I refer below, bristle with such variations, but they do not present serious difficulty to anyone at all accustomed to deciphering muniments of title.

MAIN ROAD, EAST SIDE.

- H.1. Sir Henry Peckham Glibe,
 a. Poe.
 W.7. Tho. Whit. Dean Ct.
 ff.a3. John ffarington Senior.
 β. Wid Millard.
 (Corner.)
 ff.ag. John Alen.
 γ. William Latter, cop.
 10. Mr. Cumber Free.
 Dδ. Jo. Downer.
 The Lower Upway.
 Mead.
 ε. Orchard.
 The Mead.
 Will. Woodland Cop.
 Will. Man Cop.

MAIN ROAD, WEST SIDE.

- σ. ?(o) Churchland.
 π. The Wid Waliston (?).
 ρ. Mr. Sparke free cop.
 B.2. Lease.
 9. Tho. Whit. free.
 σ. John Humphrey Dean.
 τ. Wid Stent free.
 9. Mr. Cumb(er) free.
 ff.12. Jo. ffarington Senior
 Dea(n) Cr.
 B16. Mr. Barnerd Least of the
 Dean Cr. 21 yrs.
 ffa.11. Mr. ffarington free.
 υ. Tho. Shepard. Least of
 the Dean Cr. 60 yer.

(Here is the Road to Chichester.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. S. — Turner Cot. | 1.2.3. John Downer free. |
| 2. Rich. Poe Cot. | φ. Paliners. |
| 3. Tho. Sturt Cot. | Upper Upway. |
| 4. Will Dearling Cot. | Nic Guy. |
| 5. Jo Woodlands Cot. | T. Shepard. |
| 6. Mr. Rout Cot. | R. Poe. |
| 7. Tho. Whit. Cot. | Tho. Whit. |
| ζ. Jo. Baker Cop. | w.f.g.h.(?) |
| 8. Hea Croft. | Tho. Shepard. |
| | i.K.L.14.(?) |
| | Rich Poe. |
| | Poe. |

(Here is East Road.)

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 10. Rob. Michell Cop. | Poe. |
| 11. Pet. Stent Cot. | Rob. Michel. |
| 12. Tho. Sturt. | χ. Wid. Man. |
| η. Mr. Wilsons. | J. Woodland Cop. |
| 13. Will. Man. | Russell. |
| θ. Tho. Man. | (Here is Paddock Lane.) |
| κ. Mr. Cumber. | Bar-hold. |
| (Lane.) | Will Marsh Cop. |
| λ. Wid Smith Life. | Jo Easter Cop. |
| μ. Mr. Cox Cop. | p. (?) |
| 1 & 2. Wid Kerby. | Mr. Russell Cop. |
| υ. Wid. Hobb. | Jo. Easter. |
| | Mr. Cumber. |
| | Mr. Wilson. |
| | 3. Wid Kerby. |

EAST ROAD, NORTH.

Mr. Colens His Croft.
Tho. Sturt His Croft.

EAST FIELDS.

W1. Thomas Whit Cop.
ff.1-6. John Farington Junior.
11. Mr. Cumber ffree.

NORTON FIELDS.

B1. Lease.
B5. Lease.
B3. ffree.

FERRY (WEST) CHICHESTER
ROAD, EAST.

1-6. Tho. Shepard His Lands
Called Dattons Cop.
1. The Ferry Lands.
2-9. Mr. Cumber ffree.
1-5. Smith ffree.
1-6. Mary Faith.
5. J. Douner.

EAST ROAD, SOUTH.

Alen Parker Cop. xr.
Wid. Stavell Her plats & lane.

NORTON FIELDS—*contd.*

B4. ffree.
B7. Lease.
B8. Barnerd Lease.
B6. Lease.
a. John Humphrey Co.
b. John Alen Dean cr.
d. Tho. Whit Dean cr.
P4. Tho. Pearly.

CHICHESTER ROAD WEST.

1-4. The Wid Stent.
6-11. John Downer.
1. Mr. Cumber ffree.
1-7. Mr. Cole.
1-4. The Wid Smith for life.
1-9. Antho. Cumton.
1-3. Tho. Shepard Cop
Barrats.
1-14. Mr. Smith.
Mose. (*on road*).

ON WHAT IS NOW THE LARGE ACRES ESTATE.

(The following holdings can be identified.)

Dean Cr. (*Large Acres*).
Parsons Croft ffree Richard Poe. (*Large Acres*).
Wid. Stavel. (*Large Acres*).
Poe. (*Shops on High St.*)
16. Ed. Man. Cot. Life (*Knap Cottage and Croft.*)
Rob Michel (*The Homestead*).
Isaac Warner Cop. (*Steeles Croft.*)
Wid. Man (*Willshires Croft*).

Paddock Lane West.

The Wid Smith }
Tho. Shiperd. } (*Faith's Croft.*)
Wid. Man Cop. }
Mr. Stamper Cop. h. } (*Faith's Croft.*)
Crablands.
Wid. Millard Cop.
Nich Cowit 30. }
Will Man. Cop. } (*Crablands Farm.*)

It had been my intention to analyse this list of names, among which one may note many that are still familiar in Selsey, such as Woodland, Shepherd, Downer, Mitchell, and so on, but when I began to re-study the vast mass of documents, both originals and copies amassed by Cavis-Brown and voluminously added to by myself in 1907-11, I realised that the task would be an overwhelming one. A selection of them is reproduced in my work on Selsey Bill, and there are few names in the above list that will not be found in the Index of Names in that volume. I may instance the Protestation Returns of 1641 (pp. 257 ff.), and the Assessments to the War Tax of 1667 (pp. 261 ff.). I possess a complete list of the inhabitants from the Court Roll of 1609, and a copy of the Hearth Tax returns of 1662 (Lay Subsidies P.R.O. 191, 411 and 414). In all these documents—especially in the Court Rolls of the seventeenth century of which Cavis-Brown had practically complete copies (now in my possession)—the whole of these names appear, and upon comparing these documents one can arrive at the correct spellings. Of perhaps especial interest is that of the Poe family, who were large land owners (copyholders) in Selsey, and who, according to local tradition, were the ancestors of Edgar Allan Poe, a branch of the family going from Selsey to Ireland, whence the great-grandfather of the Romancist and Poet migrated to Maryland, U.S.A.

I leave it to some future historian of Selsey, if such there shall be, to deal with the huge mass of material to which it was only possible merely to refer in 1911.