

## KENNINGHALL.

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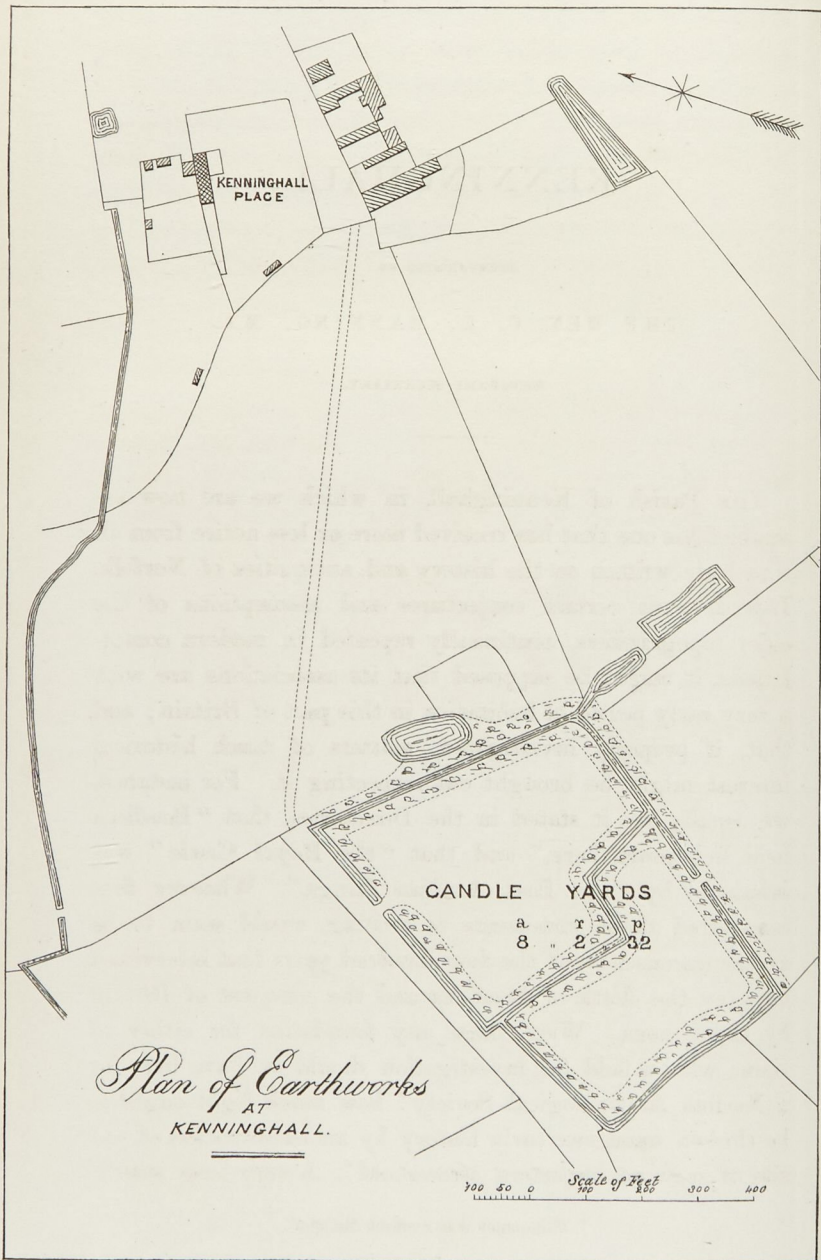
THE REV. C. R. MANNING, M.A.,

HONORARY SECRETARY.

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THE Parish of Kenninghall, in which we are now assembled,<sup>1</sup> is one that has received more or less notice from all who have written on the history and antiquities of Norfolk. Indeed, from certain conjectures and assumptions of the older topographers, continually repeated in modern compilations, it might be supposed that its associations are with a very early period of habitation in this part of Britain; and that, if properly investigated, matters of much historical interest might be brought out respecting it. For instance, we usually see it stated in the Directories, that "Boadicea held her court here," and that "the Royal Castle" was inhabited by "the East Anglian Kings." Whoever first committed these statements to writing, would seem to be rather unconscious of the four hundred years that intervened between the death of Boadicea and the conquest of Britain by the Saxons. Were there any foundation for either of them, what a field for investigation should we have here for a Norfolk Archæological Society! how much light ought to be thrown upon our early history by an examination of the site of such an important stronghold! A very long search,

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read on the spot.



*Plan of Earthworks*  
 AT  
 KENNINGHALL.

CANDLE YARDS

a	r	p
8	2	32

100 50 0 50 100 150 200  
 Scale of Feet

however, into documentary evidence, and into the local topography would fail, I fear, to produce any result whatever, as far, that is, as relates to Boadicea and the British times; or as regards the residence here of East Anglian *Kings*: for that it was inhabited as a settled residence by the Saxons, there is good evidence, as I shall presently show; and the reason for this barren result, I fully believe, is that there is nothing of the sort to find out. Neither Spelman, nor Camden, nor Blomefield, make any reference to Boadicea; indeed, the scene of her chief residence would, in any case, be but a matter of conjecture; and Kenninghall was never known by any British name. Were it true, we should have expected to find here one of those lofty circular mounds which are usually believed to be camps of the British period, although that is not altogether a settled question; and British antiquities of all sorts would be abundant, whereas I am not aware that anything of importance, of this kind, has been found here.<sup>2</sup>

I think, however, I can point out from what quarter the idea has arisen. It is all owing to that most valuable but most abused branch of antiquarian pursuits, *local etymology*. Out of this prolific source of misapprehensions, Camden (or rather others who jumped to conclusions which he did not draw himself) has conjured up the figure of Boadicea holding her court here; and Blomefield, or perhaps some theorist before him, has added to the scene a line of Saxon kings, dwelling here in a palace or castle of which no stone remains. Camden says (I quote from the English edition, by Gibson,) that Kenninghall "*seems to have had the name left it by the Iceni.*"<sup>3</sup> He imagined the first syllable 'Ken' to have something to do with the British word Iken or Iceni; and this, as far as I can discover, constitutes the

<sup>2</sup> Blomefield mentions some urns near the earthworks, but of what period is unknown.

<sup>3</sup> Gibson's Camden, second edit. i. 458.

only ground for attributing a British occupation to the locality. But not a word is said here about kings or queens or courts. Then Blomefield observes that "Kenning" in Saxon signifies a King; "so that Cyning or Kenninghall signifies the King's House, and, *according to the etymology*, it hath been a seat of the East Anglian kings, who are said to have had a castle here;"<sup>4</sup> and this, he says, indeed seems true; and then proceeds to mention the earth-work at Kenninghall Place, which he thinks was the site of it. Thus we have the two ideas broached,—that of British occupation, and the Hall of the Kings; and this, I believe, is the origin of the unsubstantial notions respecting Boadicea and the East Anglian castle.

I need hardly tell the members of our Society that the name of Kenninghall is one of very common formation, and means the "hall" or stone dwelling of the Kennings, a Saxon family of that name. When our forefathers came over from Germany, and took possession of this land, they were not without patronymics; and according as different families settled in different places, the land was called after their own names. There were probably many of the Kenning family who came, or they soon increased: as we have Keningham in Mulbarton parish, Kennington in Surrey, Kent, and Berkshire. No doubt the word Cyning in Saxon is the same with our word King; but this would no more imply that all the family so called were kings than that every person nowadays of the name of King belonged to the Royal Family.

So much, therefore, for the name of the place and its imaginary association with royalty, British or Saxon. Having, I hope, cleared away a little of the obscurity which has hung over the origin of this place, I would now turn to matters of real history, and which we judge of for ourselves. Although we find no support in the name of

<sup>4</sup> Blomefield, i. 215.

Kenninghall for the residence of kings, yet the etymology does imply that in Saxon times there was a substantial dwelling here, as in other Saxon places terminating in "hall." That Saxons lived here in considerable numbers has been recently proved by the discovery of their burying place. The site is a sandy field, sloping to the east and overlooking the present village, about half a mile west from the church. In digging for gravel during the past year, the workmen came upon several graves about two feet from the surface, and various antiquities were found in them. In those of males were the usual iron bosses of shields, swords, and spearheads, and bronze fibulæ; in those of females, amber and glass beads, fibulæ, buckles, &c., generally of well-known Saxon types. No urns have been found, so that cremation does not appear to have been the practise of the tribe of Saxons who settled here. Most of the articles obtained were disposed of before the spot was visited by archæologists, and some are now in the possession of Mr. Prigg, of Bury, and others of Mr. A. Marsh, of Diss. It was owing to this discovery that it was thought desirable that our Society should make an excursion in this direction to-day; and by the permission of the occupier of the land, we shall have an opportunity of making some further investigation this afternoon.<sup>5</sup>

I have already mentioned the earth-works at Kenninghall Place in this parish. They are situated at about a mile and half to the east of the village, and consist of double banks of considerable height, with a ditch between them, and enclosing a space nearly rectangular in shape, of upwards of eight acres.<sup>6</sup> What is very unusual and difficult to account for is, that this space is divided down the middle by another

<sup>5</sup> Nothing more was found on this occasion. Several good examples of fibulæ, &c., have been since obtained from the place, and are in Mr. Fitch's collection.

<sup>6</sup> Blomefield says four acres. He seems to have overlooked the portion outside the cross line of banks. The contents in the Tithe Map are 8a. 2r. 32p.

line of banks, with a ditch, not straight, but in the form of a wavy line. Blomefield says there is a mount at each corner, that at the south-east being much the largest. This appears to be a mistake, as there is nothing of the kind to be seen : on the contrary, there is a large pit or pond at the south-east corner, and some enlargement of the ditch at other corners. I am inclined to think that Blomefield must have looked at a map of the place, and, seeing lines representing hollows, took them for mounts ; but it is strange that he should not have known this, as his own residence at Fersfield is only about two miles off. There seems to me to be nothing here like the usual British earth-works : it more resembles Roman work in shape. We know, however, that the old manor-house of Kenninghall manor stood within it, and was called "East Hall," from its position to the east of the church and village. The manor, which was in the hands of the Crown in the time of Edward the Confessor and till after the Norman conquest, was granted by the Conqueror to William de Albin, together with the lordship of Buckenham, to be held by the service of being chief butler to the Kings of England on the day of their coronation ; and East Hall remained the manor-house "through all its changes," as Blomefield says, until it was pulled down by Thomas, third Duke of Norfolk, when he built a much larger house, afterwards called the Palace, about a quarter of a mile to the north-east ; and the old site has ever since been called "The Candle Yard," because the candles for the Duke's household were made there. I am therefore inclined to think that these earth-works are no older than the Norman or post-Norman period ; and that they were the defences of a fortified manor-house of that time. The easternmost half, within the cross line of banks, may have enclosed the keep and principal dwelling rooms ; while the other half may have served to protect the outhouses and cattle.

The manor remained in the Albin family about two hun-

dred years, and to this time, no doubt, we may attribute the erection of the Norman church, of which a remnant is still to be seen in the south doorway. The rectory was given to Old Buckenham Priory by William, second Earl of Arundel, who died in 1176, his father having founded that house. The manor came to the Montalt family, by marriage with the heiress of Albini, from about 1260 to 1330; and after reverting to the Crown, and passing through several other changes, recorded in Blomefield, it came through Elizabeth Fitzalan, wife of Thomas, Lord Mowbray, to the Dukes of Norfolk. Thomas Howard, third duke, "the Great Duke" as Blomefield calls him, so celebrated as a statesman in the reign of Henry VIII., and who married the Princess Anne daughter of Edward IV., was the one who pulled down the old hall, at the original site already mentioned as East Hall, and built, about the year 1525, a magnificent house a little to the north-east, afterwards known as Kenninghall Palace or Place, because, on his attainder in 1546, the estate was seized by the King and settled on the Princess Mary, afterwards Queen, who occasionally resided here. It was a very extensive and ornamental building, in the form of the letter H, surrounded by a park of seven hundred acres. When Mary succeeded to the throne, she restored the attainted Duke to his honours and estates, and he came and died here in 1554;<sup>7</sup> and the manor has since passed with that of Fersfield, the Duke of Norfolk being still the owner. It is rather remarkable that there has been no print or drawing preserved, that I can learn, of this the chief seat of the Dukes of Norfolk in the county; and very little reference to it occurs in any contemporary writings. Yet it must have been the meeting-place of many historical characters in the stirring times of Mary, Elizabeth, and James I. Mary came here when her brother Edward VI. died, July 6th, 1553, and on the 9th of July,

<sup>7</sup> Misprinted in Blomefield 1547.

she wrote a letter<sup>8</sup> to the Lords of the Council, dated "at our manor of Kenninghall," in which she asserts her title to the Crown, and states that she had learned from an advertisement that the King, her brother, had died on Thursday at night, last past. In the Chronicle of Queen Jane, printed by the Camden Society from the Harleian MSS., the writer says, after recording the death of Edward VI., "The 12th of July, word was brought to the Councell, being then at the Tower with the Lady Jane, that the Lady Mary was at Kenninghall Castle in Norfolk, and with her the Earle of Bath, Sir Thomas Warton sonne to the Lord Warton, Sir John Mordaunt sonne to the Lord Mordaunt, Sir William Drury, Sir John Shelton, Sir Henry Bedingfield, Master Henry Jerningham, Master John Sulierde, Master Richard Freston, Master Sergeant Morgan, Master Clement Higham of Lincolnes Inne, and divers others; and also that the Earle of Sussex, and Master Henry Ratcliffe his sonne, were comming towards her: whereupon by speedy councell it was there concluded that the Duke of Suffolk, with certain other noblemen, should goe towards the Lady Mary, to fetch her up to London."<sup>9</sup> Blomefield says, in a vague way, that Queen Elizabeth was "often here," and makes out that the Palace belonged to her. This could hardly be, if Queen Mary restored it to the Howards. Blomefield also says that Elizabeth ordered "her tenant Chapman, who then lived in Fersfield Lodge, to lay out the way now called Chapman's Entry, out of her own ground, the old way being so strait that the Queen could not conveniently pass through it, it is now (he says) disused, and is called Queen Bess's Lane, from her being scratched with the brambles in riding through it, as tradition tells us." It seems pretty evident that Elizabeth came here on her progress into Norfolk in 1578: a long contemporary account of this progress, by B. Goldingham

<sup>8</sup> Printed by Foxe, Holinshed, and Heylyn.

<sup>9</sup> Chronicle of Queen Jane, p. 3.



and Thomas Churchyard, is printed by Blomefield, iii. 317, from Stow's *Holinshed*. She visited Suffolk in great state, and on leaving Bury the Queen came here, when "the Earl of Surrey did show most sumptuous cheer, in whose park at Kenninghall were speeches well set out, and a special devise much commended; and the rest, as a number of jolly gentlemen, were no whit behind to the uttermost of their abilities, in all that might be done and devised." From hence she went on to Lady Stile's at Bracon Ash, and then to Norwich.

Dr. Nott, in his *Life of the Poet Earl of Surrey*, says, "some idea may be formed of the magnitude of the house at Kenninghall, when we find<sup>1</sup> that besides a suit of apartments for the duke and another for the duchess, there were separate apartments also for the Earl of Surrey, for the Countess of Surrey, for the children, for the master of the children, for the Duchess of Richmond, for the Lord Thomas Howard, for Mrs. Holland, for Mr. Holland, the Duke's secretary, and Mr. Adryan (Adrian Junius) the physician of the household. We meet also with Sir John Colborne's chambers, the chambers of the children of the chapel, those for the almoners, the auditor, the master of the horse, the treasurer, hunter, and the comptroller. There were, besides these, apartments in the tennis court, and in the offices." The Palace was completely taken down in the year 1650, and the materials sold. The numerous remains of ornamental brickwork in the walls and houses of the neighbouring villages are believed to be part of the spoils of this mansion. I myself possess a three-quarter portrait, perhaps by Zuccherò, of Thomas, fourth duke, beheaded in 1572, which is said to have come from the palace here. The only remains on the spot consist of a small farm house, with some pointed windows in brick, of the time of Henry VIII.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Nott has printed some Inventories, &c., from papers in the Land Revenue Office.

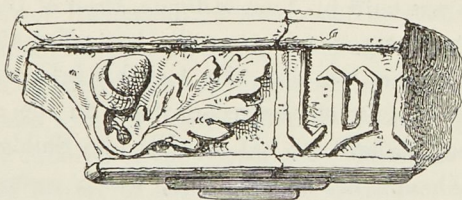
The claim of the Duke of Norfolk to be chief butler on the coronation day, in right of the manor of Kenninghall, was allowed at the coronation of James II., with the fee of a gold cup and ewer.<sup>2</sup>

Kenninghall church does not present so many objects of interest as we might have expected from the long residence here of a great family. The south doorway, already mentioned, is the only remaining part of the Norman church, and is a good specimen of the style. It is remarkable for having a sculpture of a horse half-way down the jamb, supposed to be a representation of the white horse of Hengist. This door has been engraved in the *Excursions through Norfolk*, but the horse is omitted. The next earliest parts of the church are the chancel and the single row of nave pillars, for there is only a north aisle. These are of early Decorated work, about 1270. Blomefield's statement that the chancel was built by John Millgate, Prior of Buckenham, is evidently wrong, for he was the last prior at the Dissolution, 270 years too late. He took his information from Weever, who speaks of the prior's tomb in the chancel as showing that he built it; but he calls him Shildgate, Prior of Wymondham. A recessed tomb, which seems to have taken the place of the old sedilia, may be the tomb of Prior Millgate of Buckenham, for it is very late. There is another interesting tomb on the north side of the chancel detached from the wall. It is of diminutive size, and the sides are panelled with tracery and shields, and the Purbeck marble slab has a small indent of a brass of a man in armour. Blomefield says that one of the shields had the arms of Audley quartering Touchet painted on it, and supposes it to be the one mentioned by Weever in memory of "George Lord Audley and his wife, daughter of the Earl of Bath." The date is about 1500.

<sup>2</sup> Blount's *Ancient Tenures*.

In the nave the only Decorated work, besides the pillars, is one of the clerestory windows which is a quatrefoil, and shows what the rest were. The church appears to have had considerable alterations made at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The windows are mostly of that date, and also the tower, which Blomefield says "was designed to be carried to a greater height, but was never finished, its head being shortened by the misfortunes of its founder, Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, whose crest remains on the buttresses."

The oak seats of the church are of this date, and have been very fine. Blomefield records some inscriptions which were formerly to be seen on them. The last two bays of the nave roof towards the east are also very good; and there are some fine bosses in the roof of the aisle. A small



bracket on the jamb of the chancel arch has a carving of an oak-leaf and acorn, with the letters *OAKLEY*, for some benefactor named Oakley, who is thought by Blomefield to have erected the rood-screen<sup>3</sup> and the font cover, which has been a lofty late Perpendicular one. Some remains of the lower panels of a parclose are in the aisle, with painting of a late and rough character. At the end of the aisle is a chapel, opening by an arch into the chancel; an outer doorway has the initials W. B. in the spandrils, thought to be for William Blenerhasset.

<sup>3</sup> The Rood-screen was existing when Blomefield wrote.

Other persons buried here without memorials were, Jane, wife of Charles Nevile, Earl of Westmoreland, daughter of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and sister of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk; also Elizabeth, Duchess of Norfolk, 1567, wife of Thomas, fourth duke, and daughter of Sir Francis Leybourne, and widow of Thomas, Lord D'Acre.

