

IV.

ON THE CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS,
AND OTHER RECORDS RELATING TO THE
PARISHES OF SEAL AND ELSTEAD, IN THE
COUNTY OF SURREY.

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THE parishes of Seal and Elstead, in this county, are but so briefly descanted upon in the history of Manning and Bray, that a few observations on some features of interest which relate to these localities, and which are derived from hitherto almost unworked sources, may not be unacceptable to the meeting now assembled. These materials consist of a valuable set of Churchwardens' accounts, and other records of these parishes, which, by the kind permission of Henry Lawes Long, Esq., in whose possession these volumes now remain, I am enabled to exhibit to this meeting, and to call attention to some of the more remarkable entries therein.

The accounts of Seal parish commence in the year 1559, the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; so that we pass over that important era in our ecclesiastical history when the Catholic Church in England rejected the authority of the bishop of Rome, and reasserted her independence and her catholicity, irrespective of any foreign diocese. Had these accounts extended farther back, we should doubtless have seen many curious

entries relative to this change; but, fortunately, I can from other sources supply the deficiency to some extent; namely, by giving the lists of the church ornaments in the time of Edward VI., both for this parish as well as for that of Elstead; the nature and occasion of which documents it will be expedient briefly to explain.

In the course of the reign of Edward VI., various commissions were issued for the purpose of taking surveys and inventories of the goods, plate, jewels, vestments, bells, and other ornaments belonging to all the churches, chapels, brotherhoods, guilds, or fraternities within the realm, in order that the same might be safely kept and placed in charge of proper persons ready to answer for the same to the Crown.

In the sixth year of his reign another commission was issued, wherein the commissioners were directed to make perfect inventories of the goods, comparing them with the former inventories, and to make inquiry by oath or otherwise of all such property as might be concealed or embezzled, and to certify their proceedings to the Privy Council. And another commission, issued shortly afterwards, gives further power for the same purpose, and specifies what ornaments are to be allowed to be retained for the administration of the holy communion: thus, in every cathedral or collegiate church, where chalices "be remayning," there were to be left one or two chalices, at the discretion of the commissioners; and in every great parish one or two chalices, and in every small parish one chalice to be left. And after leaving "the honest and comely furnytur of coverynges for the communyon table and surples or surplusses for the mynyster or mynysters in the said churches or chapells," the commissioners were directed to distribute to the poor the residue of the linen ornaments

and implements of the said churches; and they were to sell all copes, vestments, altar-cloths, and other ornaments, not appointed by the commission to be left; and also to sell to the use of the Crown, by weight, all parcels or pieces of metal, except the metal of "greatt bell saunse bells" in every of the churches.

Under these commissions returns were made for the parishes of Seal and Elstead.

I will now read the inventory for Seal Church:—

Seale pishe	}	In p'imis j chalice of Tynne foure aullte ^r clothes.
Churche		
		Itm̃ ij towell ^e .
		Itm̃ iij vestement ^e and ij aubbes.
		Itm̃ iij Coopes and ij Surplussis.
		Itm̃ iij Belles and one Sante Bell.
		Itm̃ ij Candillstick ^e .
		Itm̃ ij Sens ^{rs} .
		Itm̃ j Crosse.
		Itm̃ ij Crosse cloithes.
		Itm̃ ij Crewitt ^e .

All that lackinge of the former invitorie were stolen bie thevis when the Churche was robbid.

But we will now return to the Churchwardens' Accounts.

The first account appears to be imperfect: it is headed "The reconyng and accompt made by John Skynner to Willm̃ Cranlye for charges laide out for tymber worke for the howse before Mychelmas 1559 and from the same feaste untill Michelmas then next following;" and it contains payments to the "tymber hewers and for ther meate and drinck," two shillings; to "ye sawyers for sawinge and for ther meate & drinck," two shillings; and various payments to thatchers, for their work, and also for their meat and drink, or board, which

seems to have been always supplied to them. The thatcher was paid four shillings and sixpence for seven days' work; and three and fourpence for board during the same period; and he appears to have employed females to assist in the work, for there is a payment "for v dayes worke to his maydens xxd.;" and their board, "ijš. vjd." This account is continued until the year 1564, when it closes abruptly.

In the year 1588 the accounts are resumed, and they then continue with some few interruptions to the year 1723. I purpose calling your attention to the more remarkable of the entries in these documents, as forming historical notices of these parishes deducible from no other source; and for this purpose it will be more convenient to classify the subjects as much as possible, rather than to follow the strict chronological order of the accounts themselves.

And first the bells:—

They appear to have been a continual source of expense; for in every account there is some entry relative to their repair, or that of the bell-ropes, and such-like. In 1588 there is a payment of twelve pence to "Jhon Jure for kepinge the belles;" in 1589, fourteen pence for a new bell-rope; in 1590, twelve pence for a new bell-rope and nails; in 1591, twenty-two pence for two new bell-ropes; twelve pence for ringing "when her Majestye came to Farnam;" two pence to John Turner for ringing; eight pence "in expenses upon the coronation day in drinke to the ringers;" and three pence for iron about the bells; in 1592, two pence for iron-work about the bells; and three shillings and eight pence for three new bell-ropes; in 1593, three shillings and six pence "to the carpinter for mendinge the bells three

daies worke ;” fourteen pence for “ironworke and nailes,” and ten pence “for charges at the mendinge of the bells in bread and drinke ;” in 1594, two pence “for a cleet that mended the stocke of the little bell ;” and two shillings and sixpence for three new bell-ropes, and two pence “for mending of the goodgin of y^e lyttle bell ;” seven pence “for whitt Lether at Farnam Fayre to mend the bels bandreks ;” ten pence “to a carpinter for one dayes work mending the bells against the coronation daye ;” and six pence “for breade & drinke for the ringers the coronation day at night ;” in 1596, twelve pence for a new bell-rope, and two shillings and three pence “for ringers on the coronation day iij men ix^d. a pesse ;” in 1597, fourteen pence for a new bell-rope ; four pence for mending a bell-rope, and one penny for soap to dress the bells ; in 1599, twelve pence for “thonglether” and mending the ropes ; in 1602, two shillings to ringers upon the coronation day, and two shillings and sixpence for two new ropes and a rope for the “sante” bell ; in 1603, two shillings for mending the clapper of the great bell, and five pence for drink for the ringers on the coronation day ; in 1604, sixteen pence to the smith for iron-work about the bells ; and then a somewhat strangely worded item : “Item for ringeng for the king and grese for the bell roppes, v^d. ;” Shortly after this the bells appear to have been all re-cast at Ockingham, for, in the account of 1606 we have an item—“p^d to the Bellfounder for newe castinge of the bells and all charges belonginge thereunto as smyths work and carpinters and suche like ; v^{ti}. j^s. ix^d. ;” and in 1607, “Item Laide out at Okengam when wee caried the Bells, ix^s. vj^d.,” and again eleven shillings “at Okein-game when the bell was cast ;” and ten shillings for

carrying and recarrying the bells; also “p^d to the bell-founder for mettall y^t he put into the bell xiiij^{ti}. at vjd. a pound,—vjš. vjd.”

In 1637, three shillings and sixpence “for beere for the ringers on the day of the king beginning of his Raigne;” and two shillings and six pence “Laid out for beer for the ringers on the thanksgiving day.”

In 1686, eight shillings “for beere for the ringers on crownation day.”

In 1688, eight shillings “for beer on the thanksgiving day for the birth of the yong Prince;” and seven shillings and six pence “for beer when the King and Qeene were crowned.”

In 1694, two shillings and sixpence “Layde oute uppone the ryngears when the kyng came hom.” And thus much for the expenses relating to the bells.

If we take these accounts as a correct guide, which within certain limits we are bound to do, the holy communion would appear to have been administered in this church but very few times in the year: thus, in 1588, we meet with only three entries of the expenses incurred in providing bread and wine for that purpose; viz.,—

In p ^{is} Laide out for breade and wyne at East	
for the Co ^m union	ijš. xđ.
For bread and wyne at Hallewtide	ijš. jđ.
Item for bread and wine at Candelmas and	
Shrov Sundaye for the Communion	ijš. jđ.

In 1589, provision of bread and wine is made at Easter and Hallowtide only; in 1590, at Easter alone.

In 1591 the account states the quantity of wine purchased:—

In p ^{is} for breade and wyne at Easter, a	
gallon, lackinge halfe a pynte.	ijš. viijđ.

And again at Hallowtide, eighteen pence for the same purpose.

In 1592, and for several years following, the only occasions on which there appears to have been a communion are Candlemas, Easter, Midsummer, Hallowtide, and Bartholomewtide; but in the account for 1609 we find the first departure from this rule, when there is a communion on Palm Sunday; and the account for 1611 plainly denotes an improvement; and that, from some cause or other (a change of clergyman possibly), greater care than before was shewn for the more frequent and orderly administration of this sacred rite, for there was a communion on Easter Eve, and two shillings were expended for mats for the communicants, and eight shillings "for a Table Clothe and Frenge."

In 1618 the communion is again mentioned on Palm Sunday, Easter Eve, and Easter Sunday, and in 1634 Good Friday occurs, and again in 1639.

In 1639 sixteen pence was laid out for "a matt laid at the railles in the chancell."

In 1645 there is a perfect list of all the communicants within the parish that year. The number is about one hundred and thirty.

In 1590 are the following charges concerning the surplice :—

Itm̄ for sixe elles of holland to make the surplusse,	
at xxđ. the ell	xš.
For cutting of the surplusse	ijđ.
For two penyworthe of white threede.	ijđ.
Itm̄ for making of the surplusse	xijđ.

In 1602,—

Layde oute for washinge of the Communion Cloathe	
and the Surplisse	ijđ.

This item is frequently repeated in the succeeding accounts. In 1639 a new surplice was had :—

Paid for Cloth for the Surplesse and for thread	
to make it	xxxijš. vjđ.
Paid for making the Surplesse	ijš.

The festivities of Whitsuntide, which it was formerly the custom of the country people to celebrate under the name of Whitsun Ales, or as they are called in these accounts “Church Ales,” met with their due observance in this parish. From the large quantity of wine which was sometimes charged for under the head of bread and wine for the communion, it seems probable that some of it must have been expended in some other way, and that doubtless in the way of feasting and revelry on the great holidays of the Church. We find, however, among these documents, two separate accounts of the Church Ale furnished at the expense of the parish; one in 1592, the other in 1611; and as they afford minute and interesting particulars of the proceedings, I will extract them verbatim.

And first the account for 1592 :—

Charges Laide out concerning our Churchayle.

In p ⁱ mis for iij Bushells of wheatte	xiiijš.
Itē for ix Barrells of Beere	xlš.
Itē for veele and lamē.	xxijš. ixđ.
Itē for a loode of woode and the carriadg.	vš. vjđ.
Itē for spice and frutte	vijš. jđ.
Itē for Butter, Creame, and mylke	iiijš.
Itē for clettes & nailes to the smythe.	xiiijđ.
Itē for Guñe powder	iiijš.
Itē for more wheatte	viiijš. ijđ.
Itē paide to the musition for v days play	xxš.
Itē to the druñer	ijš.
Itē for more Butter & Creame	ijš. iiijđ.

Itẽ for more spice and frutte	iiijš. ijđ.
Itẽ to Goodman Shrubbs wyffe for helping all the tyme	xijđ.
Itẽ for meatt and Beere for the musitions and other helpers.	viiijš. iiijđ.

The account for 1611 enters more fully into detail:—

Charges Laide out for the Churchayle.

In p ⁱ mis for tow quart ^{rs} of malte	xlš.
Itẽ p ^d the Brewer for his worke, for hopps, wood, bere, corne, and suche like thinges	xš. ijđ.
P ^d for x Barrels of Beere.	xlš.
P ^d for one q ^r ter of wheatt	xxxiiijš. iiijđ.
P ^d for tow fatte calves	xxš. iiijđ.
P ^d for another calfe	vjš. vjđ.
P ^d for a fatt sheepe	vijš. vjđ.
P ^d for iij Lambes.	xijš.
P ^d for one fatte Lambe	vš.
P ^d for vij fatte Lambes	xxxviiijš. vjđ.
P ^d for a Lodde of woode	vš. vjđ.
P ^d Mabanke for his worke for that time . .	iiijš. vjđ.
P ^d to Turner for his worke	ijš. iiijđ.
P ^d to Mabanckes wyffe	xviiijđ.
P ^d to Shrubbs wyffe	xvđ.
P ^d to weadowe Wilkes.	viiijđ.
P ^d to Henrie Hathorne	xijđ.
P ^d to Hammon the Smithe for worke	xiiijđ.
P ^d to Richard Lowrance Lickfolds man . .	xijđ.
P ^d to musitions the first daie	vš.
P ^d to the other musitions for iiij daies	xxš.
P ^d the last daie for musicke	iiijš.
P ^d the Drume plaier	vš.
P ^d the Vice, otherwise the Foole	vš.
P ^d for puter for Riflinge	xiiijš. iiijđ.
P ^d for silke pointes and laces	xijš.
P ^d for earthen pottes and Godhods	xijđ.

P ^d to goodwife Hardinge for butter, cheese, and creme.	vijš.
P ^d to goodwife Lickfold, for butter, cheese, and creame	vjš.
P ^d to Oliver his wiffe for beere and cakes . .	iiijš.
P ^d to goodman Michinar for haye	vjd.
P ^d to Rowland charges he laide out	xvijš. vjd.
P ^d to Richard Hardinge charges he laide outt	vjš. viijđ.

Having thus gone through these accounts under the principal heads, we will now glance at a few miscellaneous entries.

In 1591, five shillings and five pence to the painter for painting the Ten Commandments.

In 1595, six pence was paid towards a brief for one Jacomo Myleita, "an outlandish man."

In 1596, three shillings and six pence for "a newe booke of Comon Praier bought at London;" and also four pence "for a lityll Praier w^{ch} is to be redd in the churche;"¹ and four pence "for a lityll praier booke."

In 1598, fourteen pence to Harry Hathorne "for a boorde and mendinge the pulpett, one daies worke;" three shillings and six pence for a new book of homilies, and twelve pence for the head of a fox.

In 1603, five shillings were paid for a new chest for the church, also six shillings "for iij lockes for the new coffer vidlt the greatest in the middle, iijš. vjd., and the tow lesser wth nailes and hanges, ijš. vjd."

In 1605, twenty-five shillings were paid to the painters

¹ This is one out of two prayers which were set forth by authority in the year 1596; the first for the prosperous success of her Majesty's Forces and Navy; the other a "prayer of thanksgiving, and for continuance of good success to her Majesty's Forces." See Liturgies and occasional forms of prayer set forth in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, published by the Parker Society, pp. 665 and 668.

“for painting the Kinges Armes in the church, & suche like.” With regard to this practice, now happily unknown, of setting up the royal arms in churches, considerable diversity of opinion has prevailed as to its origin, some contending that it was in obedience to an express law or regulation (though this has never been produced), others that it was merely in accordance with a general custom which had grown up insensibly, and obtained many adherents in the land. It seems, however, to be the better opinion that there never was any express law enjoining the practice; but that the royal arms thus set up were always considered part of the architectural ornaments or decorations of the church, in the same manner as the cross on the chancel screen is now considered by the judges, in the case of the Knightsbridge churches to be part of the architectural ornaments. They were sometimes emblazoned in one of the painted windows. Instances have occurred of the royal arms being set up in a church before the Reformation; so that we cannot conclude, as some are inclined to do, that their exhibition in a church was an assertion of the supremacy of the crown, because that was not complete until the Reformation. In course of time, however, these insignia began to assume a more prominent position in the church, and during the last century were frequently placed over the chancel arch, almost to the overshadowing of the altar, a practice not more indecent and unbecoming in itself than characteristic of the age; for it was indicative of the proneness of the national mind to that Erastianism which was rapidly creeping over the face of the Church, and from which, after a century of lifelessness and torpor, we are only now emerging.

In 1606, twenty pence “for the bookes of Canons and

a Table for degres of marriag;” and two shillings and six pence to the glazier for glazing the church.

In 1619, two shillings were “layed out to the cunstable tourdes billding the beakon;” and in the same year “layed out for two foote and a halfe of newe glasse and two foote newe leded, and for mending of two panes at iiijđ the pane, and for xxxv. quaries, a peny a quarie, v̄š. iiijđ.”

In 1624 are these expenses:—

Itē p ^d for three yeards of Cloyth for the Cuṁunion Table and Pulpit, at iiijš. vjđ. per yeard, the some of	xš. vjđ.
Itē p ^d for the greene frindge for them	iiijš. iiijđ.
Itē p ^d for makeing them	iiijđ.

In 1636,—

Item layd out for timber and workeman- shipp about setinge up the raille in the Chauncell	xvš. viijđ.
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A considerable proportion of the money in all these accounts was expended in charity; mostly to disabled persons, those who had met with loss by fire or by sea, poor travellers, Irish men and women, and others; but in this year (1636) we find a clerical recipient of the parish bounty, thus:—

Item gave to a ould minnistar	vjđ.
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In 1637 seven shillings were expended for seven foxes' heads, and again, in 1694, two shillings for the same purpose.

In 1639, three shillings and two pence for mending the great west window; and six shillings for glass for the new window; and “for new making the littell window, xđ.”

The same year eight pence “for an houre glasse for the Church,” according to the custom of the period.

In 1668, eleven shillings were paid “for the Ten Commandements.”

Throughout the earlier of these accounts there occurs an item which, as we proceed onwards gradually, and, at last, totally disappears; namely, that of the expense of making the transcripts of the registers for the diocesan registry. In too many parishes has it been the custom entirely to forget this most salutary and wholesome regulation, and I cannot speak too strongly of this neglect, because at the present day we are often made to feel its effects, and to suffer the loss of information which we have no other way of supplying.

Parish registers are among the most valuable records we possess; but they have in their time been treated in a manner which can only be described as most pitiable, they have been tossed about between parson, clerk, and sexton, till they have sometimes spent their last hours either in helping to singe the goose or light the fire of one of those worthies; and the transcript not being transmitted to the diocesan registry, we are now obliged to be content often to allow an historical or genealogical doubt to remain in its uncertainty, or even to relinquish a legal claim because the required evidence is lost to us for ever.

Following these churchwardens' accounts are the accounts of the overseers of the poor, under the act of the 43rd year of Queen Elizabeth; they commence in the year 1603 and contain particulars of the collection of the poor rate, and also its expenditure in its various items, many of which are curious, as entering into the minutiae of details, such as the following from the account for the year 1607:—

Itē p ^d to W ^m Michinall for thatchinge Weadowe Whealers howse	xij d.
Itē p ^d to W ^m Michinall for workinge aboute Underwoods howse	iiij s̄. viij d.
Itē to James Lickfold for poore folkes	x d.
Itē p ^d for a paire of newe shewes & lether, and mendinge shewes	iiij s̄. iiij d.
Itē for tow sherttes to Underwood.	iiij s̄. ij d.
Itē for carriadge of a lode of woodde.	xj d.
Itē for a waistcotte for Christian Hill	ij s̄. iiij d.

The name of Underwood appears on these accounts for a long time; viz., from 1607 to 1629, when he died an old man, and during that period he received relief and assistance every year, the particulars of which are all set down, so that a small history even of this obscure pauper might be written.

I will extract a few of the items;—

In 1608,—

P ^d for iiij yeardes of Rusett Cloth for apprell for Jhon Underwood	viiij s̄. viij d.
Itē for iij yeardes and iij quarters of cotten	iiij s̄. viij d.
Itē for halfe an elle of canvas.	vj d.
Itē for necessaris for his bedding	iiij s̄.
Itē for mending Underwoodes showes	iiij d.

In 1616,—

Item to Jhon Underwood for a paire of showes	iiij s̄.
Item p ^d to Jhon Eames for mendinge John Underwoddes showes	vj d.
Item for the same Underwood for iiij yeardes & a quarter at ij s̄. the yearde	ix s̄. ij d.
Item for iiij yeardes and a q ^r of cotten at xiiij d the yearde	iiij s̄. xj d. ob.
Item for an ele of canvas.	xij d.
Item for makinge this apperrell.	ij s̄.

In 1625,—

Layed out to John Underwod for a Shurt and making	ijš. vjđ.
More for a sheete and making	iiijš. ijđ.

In 1629 he makes his last appearance on the stage of life; thus,—

Item laide out for a wynding sheet for John Underwod.	2š.
Item for bread and beere at his buriall	1—
Item laid out unto Thomas Brombe for ringing a knell and makeing his grave	8đ.

In 1613,—

Paid unto Besse Collenes, a pore wench . .	ixš. vđ.
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In 1627,—

Item a payer of shoese for Elizabeth Collen	ijš.
Item layd out for v yardes of graye cloth at ijš. iijđ. y ^e yarde.	xjš. iijđ.
Item for makeing of Elizabeth Collines saufergd and waste coate, w th John Underwoods stokinges.	jš. iiijđ.
Item layd out for graye cloth to make Nicholas Hountingeford a payre of hose & for lininges	iiijš. ixđ.
Layed out to Elizabeth Collen for tow elles of canves to make hir a smoke	ijš. iijđ.
More for a pare of shooes	xxijđ.
More for mending hir shooes	vjđ.

The account for 1632 is worthy of remark, as bearing a very perfect signature of the father of one whose name is always to be held in veneration and respect in this county, the illustrious John Evelyn; the remembrance of whose character, as an English gentleman of the most polished taste and the highest feeling, will ever be most dearly cherished.

Richard Evelyn, whose autograph we have here, signs this account, together with Richard Onslow, both of whom were justices of the peace.

The account for 1634 is noticeable in this respect, as containing almost the first entry relative to the expenses incurred by the overseers in maintaining those children, who, from the circumstances of their birth, were a burden to the parish; and it closes with a testimony to the prevailing superstition which, in the hour of sickness, placed its dependence on the supposed virtue of the royal touch; thus,—

To Will'm Giles for his charitie and travell to London w th Widowe Hilles children to be cured of the King's evill, by a rate for that cause made by the p'ishe, as appears under divers of their hands	ixš.
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In the account for 1635 are various other expenses concerning illegitimate children; thus,—

Layed out to the Widdow Huntingford for keeping of a base born child from the 27 of September unto the seaven and twentieth of December	0 19 6
Itē for á Coate for the bastard, being two yards	0 3 1
Item for linen for the bastard, an ell & halfe	0 1 6
For makeinge of the coate	0 0 6
For makeinge of two wasequets for the bastard	0 0 4
Layed out for makeing of linen clothes for the bastard	0 0 5

At the end of these accounts are a few proclamations for general fasts and other matters, which were directed and sent to the clergyman and churchwardens of Seal for their guidance.

I will now proceed to Elstead parish.

The following is the list of Church ornaments for this parish, taken under the before-mentioned commission of Edward the Sixth.

Elsted.

In pⁱmis j Chalice of Sill^v pcell gilt waing viij onc^e bie Extymaçon.

Itm̄ ij Coopes, the one redd Sattyn of Briddgis, and the other a Sangwyne colorid Coope of Sattyn of Bryddgis very olde.

Itm̄ a Sattyn Crosse.

Itm̄ a olde Sheyn^r of Singill Sarcenet paynted.

Itm̄ a olde Crosse bothe of Grenc Silke.

Itm̄ a aullter clothe of Lynnen.

Itm̄ iij Belles in the steple waing bie Extymaçon the best iij C., the Second bell iij C, and the third bell ij C. ʒ hundred.

Itm̄ ij Surplussis of Lynny Clothe.

All wiche is commyttyd to the custodye of² * * * *
the vjth of Octobe^r, in the vjth yere of the reign of owre Sovereigne Lord.

All that lackithe of the forme^r invitorie were stolyn bie thevis whan the Church was robbid, onely exceptt Sartyn candillstick^e of brasse; that is to wete, ij Lyttill candillstick^e and ij great candillstick^e, w^{ch} weare solld for v^š, and the money thereof bestowed upon the Repaçons of their Brydgc.

The churchwardens accounts for Elstead parish are not so numerous as those for Seal, neither do they extend over so long a period, inasmuch as they cover only about ten years; but they relate to the troublous times of Charles the First and the Commonwealth, and are, on that account, interesting.

They commence with a charge of five shillings, dated Nov. 10, 1652, for setting up the states arms; then "payd for nue casting the Belle, and for Thurteene

² Blank in original.

pound of Mettell mor then shee wayed when shee was caried away, 3*li.* 13*s.*” And lastly, we have the custom of the parish for the payment of tithes to the vicar.

We then have a summary of the collections made from Elstead parish towards the expenses of maintaining the garrison at Farnham Castle, Sir Thomas Fairfax’s army, the Scottish army, and the militia. These payments begin May 1st, 1644, and are continued to the year 1654.