

THE PARISH OF WING.

BY REV. P. T. OUVRY.

The ancient Parish of Wing contains the town or village of Wing and the Hamlets of Ascot, Burcot, and Crafton; there was formerly a hamlet called Cotteslow, which gives the name to the hundred, but it is now only represented by the house of a farm belonging to the University of Oxford, and forming the endowment of the Bampton Lectureship. There is also a modern Hamlet between Wing and Burcot called Littleworth.

The county histories supply the information from Domesday Book and other sources concerning the several owners of the manors and lands, I propose only to mention in this paper, particulars of general interest.

Wing seems to have been a place of some importance in former days. In the year 1255 a Charter was granted to Peter de Warren by King Henry the Third, for a market every week on Thursday, and for a fair for three days at Michaelmas.

At the time of the compilation of Domesday Book, the manor of Wing was held by the Earl of Morton. In the year 1140 it was given by the Empress Maude to the Abbey of St. Nicolas at Angiers, which convent settled a cell of Benedictine Monks at Ascot.

At the dissolution of alien priories, this cell and manor was granted A. D. 1416 by Henry the Fifth to the Priory of St. Mary de la Pre, near St. Albans.

On the dissolution of the Monasteries, Henry the Eighth gave it to Cardinal Wolsey, and on his disgrace to Sir Robert Dormer, in whose family it remained till A. D. 1709, when on the death of Charles Dormer, Earl of Carnarvon, it came to his son-in-law Philip Earl of Chesterfield.

The Dormers built a house at Ascot, which was their principal residence.

In the time of Charles the First the Earl of Carnarvon added to this house a noble apartment from the plans of

Inigo Jones. This apartment was never quite finished. Since 1720 this mansion fell into decay, through the neglect of the then owner Sir William Stanhope, who about 1727 cut down the timber in the park.

In the time of Charles Dormer Earl of Carnarvon, liberal hospitality was kept up, and the bowling-green, which may still be traced in the park, was much resorted to.

The timber cut down in 1727 was very fine, and some of it was used in the construction of Fenny Stratford Chapel. The park was also well stocked with deer, some of which were occasionally turned out to be hunted in the country round about.

The manor and greater part of the land in the parish of Wing now belong to Lord Overstone. There are in the parish, two mounds marked tumuli in the Ordnance Map. The largest stands near the village on the Vicarage Farm: the smaller is at Ascot Green on the Leighton Road. The larger one is commonly called the Castle Hill, why, I cannot discover. Browne Willis says that the Church of Wing, which is very fine, seems to have been erected in 1420. G. G. Scott, Esq., who thoroughly restored it in the year 1850, says that it contains remains of Saxon work. He notices the semi-circular arcades or rather arched perforations in the walls, having plain masses of wall between them without capitals, but with a kind of impost on the sides facing the openings, formed by courses of brick overhanging one another. The chancel arch, he adds, is also semi-circular, but the arch is relieved by a projecting archivault,—a practice I do not recollect seeing in any Norman building, though very usual in work of supposed Saxon date. Other indications are also mentioned in his letter, which is printed vol. I. page 37 of the "Records of Buckinghamshire."

The Church is remarkable for its apsidal polygonal chancel, raised high above the nave and having a crypt underneath about eight feet in height from floor to ceiling, divided into three partitions, and once entered by steps from the nave; it is now, however, filled with earth and the entrance closed.

In the Church there is a handsome marble monument to Mrs. Margaret Fynes, said to be the work of Roubiliac. There are also four elaborate tombs of the Dormer family,

one formerly in the chancel, but now moved into the body of the Church, is to the memory of Anna Sophia Dormer, youngest daughter of Charles Earl of Carnarvon, who died of small pox February 2nd, 164 $\frac{1}{2}$, in the 22nd year of her age. There are also the monuments of—

Sir Robert Dormer, who died in 1552,
 Sir William Dormer his son 1575,
 Sir Robert Dormer his son.

There is a curious brass in the south aisle on the floor, with some quaint verses to the memory of Thomas Cotes, porter of Ascot Hall, placed there by his friend George Hoghton, 1648.

Round the tomb of the elder Sir Robert Dormer, before the Church was repaired, were two large ancient pews with rails and balusters at the top, round which were these verses written in ancient characters.—

The Living God commanded us all, before we doe come here,
 For the bread of life to call, that our souls may live ever,
 Good souls are heaved to heaven by Salvation
 Evill souls are ploughed with Hellys damnation,
 Trust not the world, nor worldly prosperity
 Seek rather the sweetness of heavenly felicity
 Love true dealing; fly from subtilty
 Worship God, hate all cruelty
 To save thy soul seek nether for to dye
 Thou saving life to lose thy soul thereby.
 Now that you mean to depart out of this holy place
 Remember God, forgett him not, but daily call for grace
 Before thou any farther goe,
 Remember what thou hast to doe
 For the Lord commands all,
 By Prayer on his name to call
 Adorn thyself with all good things:
 Since that from God all goodness springs,
 Tho' God for him sometymes gives pain
 Yet God by sute, gives grace again
 O what a loving Lord is He that hath such care owr' us all:
 When wee were bound, He made us free from death, by Adams fall.

But this, with all the enclosed pews, was cleared away in 1850, and the original low oak seats uncovered and restored uniformly throughout the Church.

In the list of the Vicars of Wing is the celebrated Dr. William Dodd, who was executed for forging the name of his Patron the Earl of Chesterfield. There is a tradition in the village that he was taken into custody at the Cock Inn, but I find it stated in the contemporary accounts that he was certainly taken in London. Though Vicar

of Wing at the time, he never lived in Wing. An old inhabitant related to me that he had often heard his father speak of Dr. Dodd, who preached only four sermons in Wing Church, and that the text of his last sermon, which must have been preached not long before his unhappy end, was from Deut. xxviii, 65—67. "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee: and thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

The Register begins 1546, and is complete without any breaks. There is also an ancient book of the Churchwardens' accounts, containing many curious entries. It begins in the year 1527 with a list of the Church Furniture and ornaments at that date, and continues till the year 1723. When I came to Wing in 1850, I found this book without its covers and in a very dilapidated condition in an old chest in the Church. I asked the Churchwardens to have it restored, and they sent it to the British Museum Book-binder, who refixed the covers, smoothed, repaired and sized the leaves, and made it the sound and goodly volume which it now appears. It is quite perfect.

There was also at Burcot in 1764 a good house which was purchased by Mr. Fines of Lord Limerick. The family of Fines or Fienes were in some way connected with the Dormer family. One is stated to have been deputy manager of Wing Park. Mr. Fines who purchased Burcot House was a jeweller in London. Mr. Cole and Mr. Fynes Clinton had land in this and the neighbouring parish of Linslade.

The parish lies on that raised series of clays, gravel, and sand which forms the green sand formation. There are outlying portions of the Portland stone and Kimmeridge clay. A bed of this latter has lately been dug into for brick-making. The surface is a rich bed of iron sand, then about six feet of blue clay, then a thin bed of rubbly stone, underneath which is the dark blue Kimmeridge

clay. In this clay, some of the vertebræ of a large saurian reptile have been lately found, one of which, in a very perfect state, has been deposited in the museum of geology in Jermyn-street. The village is on the top of a high platform, and the streams on different sides flow in contrary directions. Some go towards Aylesbury, join the Thame and the Thames; others flow into the Ouzel and Ouze, and find their way to the east coast.

The soil is various from stiff clay to fine light loam. The land is well cultivated, and every encouragement is given to substantial improvement by the present proprietor.

There is a hospital for the maintenance of aged persons in this village, founded by Lady Dormer, and an excellent School built by the Lord of the Manor, in the place of the former very insufficient building, at which all the children of the inhabitants may receive an excellent education.

Wing, August 6th, 1862.