

The following is extracted from
The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset

John Hutchins, 1698-1773

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THE LIBERTY OF GILLINGHAM

This liberty always belonged to the lords of the manor for which a coroner is elected

The tything of Gillingham-Major, or the Town Tything, is composed of the town of Gillingham, Bugly, Langham and Huntingford. It includes also the forest, and is of large extent.

The law-silver is collected in this tything only from 24 estates, according to an ancient roll. They pay 2d. each, and are all obliged to find a tything man in their turns. The inhabitants are mostly copyholders who hold their lands in fee simple by copy of court roll, and owe suit and service to the court. But some hold by other tenures. There are some freeholders that are not either of Milton, Preston, Mageston or Ham, but within the manor of Gillingham, and part of this tything, who pay at the death the best horse, with bridle and saddle as an herriot to the lord.

The Town of Gillingham is one of the largest parishes in this county, and by a survey has been found to be 41 miles in circumference, and, by geometrical computation, to contain 64,000 acres. It lies in the most northern extremity of the county, near the borders of Wiltshire and Somerset, four miles N.W. from Shaftsbury. Dr. Skinner derives the name of this place, from the Anglo-Saxon 'Gyllan,' to make a noise like a rapid torrent, perhaps the nature of this river, or the rustling of the leaves in the forest in windy weather. This being a deeply enclosed country, it consists chiefly of pasture for grazing, and the dairies: weaving of linen is the only manufacture carried on here. Two fairs are held here, on September 1, O.S. and on Trinity Monday.

The first mention we find of this place is in the Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1016, on account of the battle fought between Edward Ironside and Canute, at Peonna, or Penn, c. Somerset, near Gillinga, or Gillingham. This action happened so near this place, that some less exact historians stile it 'The Battle of Gillingham,' in which the Danes were entirely defeated. The pursuit probably extended into this parish, where is a gate still called Slaughter Gate. Here are very remarkable pits, where the field of battle is supposed to have been: they are very numerous and regular, made for offence and defence; some for the main body, some for the advanced guards. Tradition says they were made by Canute, which is confirmed by an old Ms. in the hands of Mr. Biggen, one of the lords of the manor. Cenwal king of

Wessex, 356 years before (A.D. 658) fought the Britons at Peonne, a place fatal to that people, and the Danes as Mr. Camden observes. Malmsbury mentions a council held at Gillingham 1041, in which Edward the Confessor was chosen king. It was really a grand council of the realm: but the generality of our historians place it with more probability at London, or in the environs thereof.

In Domesday Book, this place, surveyed in seven parcels, viz. *Gelingeham*, was the king's land, and surveyed with Dorecestre, Fortitone, Sutone and Frome. The church of St. Mary Creneburn, held *Ingelingeham*. It consisted of two carucates, once worth 60s. now worth 20s. This land Hugh received of the king's farm, and gave it to that church. Turstin, son of Rolf, held Gelingeham of the king. It consisted of four carucates, worth 60s. Eduunis, one of the king's thains held one virgate of land in Gelingeham: it consisted of half a carucate worth 6s. Edward the hunter held half a virgate of land in Gelingeham: it consisted of three bovats, worth 30d. William the Conqueror gave the church of Gillingham to the abbey of Shaftesbury, for the hide of land in Kingston, on which he built Wareham castle.

The manor of the town, or Gillingham Major, the principal manor: This belonged to the crown for several ages before and after the Conquest. **12, 13 John**, Hugo de Nevil tenant of the king's demesne held Gillingham, *ad firmam*. **6 H. III.** the men of Gillingham, had a charter for pasture without the park; and **12 H. III.** of a wood and pasture for their beasts. **14 H. III.** a tallage was assessed in the counties of Dorset and Somerset, and the sheriff accounted for £10 at which this place was tallaged. **18 H. III.** the men of Gillingham had a charter to have ingress for their beasts to the water of Lyden, but no pasture in the park, or out-wood, or in the land of R. de Mertlegh. **27 E. I. 1299.** this manor with the barton, and 24s rent *de perprestura*, with the forest, to the value of £24 was assigned inter alia to Queen Margaret for her dower. King Henry VI settled it on Q. Margaret, for her jointure, and excluded all persons who claimed any jurisdiction within it, by a perambulation to which the abbess and convent of Shaston subscribed, and finding the peculiar jurisdiction of Gillingham to belong to that monastery, he gave the vicarage to it, and annexed the peculiar jurisdiction to the manor, and granted both to the queen. **1 E. IV.** the custody of this manor, herbage of the forest, and park, and the barton, was committed to John Audley de Audley, and John Carent for 20 years: the same year the premises, with a fishery etc., and the hundreds of Redlane, Whiteway, and Brownsel, were committed to John Lilborn, etc., for ten years. **9 H. VIII.** by the computus of Thomas Thornhull, the king's receiver for Dorset and Somerset, he received of John Apowel, bailiff of Gillingham, £67. 2s. 8d. *de exitu officii sui* and £13 19s. 11¼d. for the perquisites of court, for the last year: he charges 53s. 4d. for the annual fee paid to William lord Stourton, seneschal of Gillingham. **32 H. VIII.** this barony, manor, forest, chase, and park, were granted to queen Catherine Howard, being part of the possessions of queen Jane. **34 H. VIII.** it was demised to Robert Dirdoe: and **35 H. VIII.** granted for life to queen Catherine Parr. **1 and 2 Phil & Mary.** the seite of the manor and lands here were demised to Robert Dirdoe for 21 years, after the lease, t. H VIII. was expired, at the rent of £10 15s. 6d. **22 Eliz.** the premises were demised for 21 years to Nicholas

Yaitswairt. **1 Jac. 1.** The manor was granted to queen Anne for her jointure. **17 Jac. I.** the manor, forest, grange etc., were granted to Charles, prince of Wales. **4 Car. I.** the seite of this manor, the demesne lands, and pasture, winter pasture, and common, in Cumber Mead, a pasture called Eeneley, or Garnleigh Grove, were granted to Humphry Chambers, etc. **7. Car. I.** 1632. the manor, park, several rents, and lands here and in Motcomb, Lockburn, and Newbury in the forest, were granted to Thomas lord Bruce, baron of Kinloss, and earl of Elgin, who about 1661, conveyed it to sir Edward Nichols, kt, one of the principal secretaries of state: for by a court roll, 19 March 1660, the earl was then lord; and by another, 6 April 1661, sir Edward Nicholas, secretary of state. His son sir John Nicholas, knight of the Bath, succeeded, whose descendant, John Nicholas, esq., dying 1742, his daughter Penelope, married Richard Riggs, esq., who possesses her purparty.

There is still preserved in the parish an old Ms, which has been often copied, called The Custom of the Manor, divided into 15 heads or sections setting forth the rights of the lords and tenants. By this it appears, that the tenants claim by the court rolls, by use and prescription, that a widow ought on her husband's death to be summoned into court, and if she does not come, and claim upon that summons, the bayliff must distrain on her goods. A tenant may make a lease of 99 years in possession, and another of 60 years in reversion, and both good by the custom, under no rent. The tenant of any customary lands may surrender in court before the steward, or out of court before a tithing-man, and two or more tenants, or in any other person's name, in the place of a tything-man. The manner of admitting persons into estates, held of the manor is thus. The steward, bayliff and cryer, being met, proclamation is made for any who will be essoigned, or enter any plea to come in, while the court sits, or not to be received, and all must answer to their names at the first call. If it is by surrender out of court, the person to be admitted delivers the surrender into court, and the steward after reading the same, and examining the witnesses, admits him by the delivery of a glove. If it is not by surrender of court, the person surrendering, as well as the person to be admitted, comes into court, and the steward says to the tenants, "You are to take notice, that to this court comes A. B. who doth hold to him, and his heirs in fee, forever, according to the custom of this manor, one messuage, lying in etc." Then the person surrendering repeats after the steward, "I, A. B. do surrender and yield up into the hands of the lord of the manor, all and singular the before mentioned premises, with their appurtenances, to hold of him and his heirs in fee forever, according to the custom of the said manor; and in token thereof, I deliver this glove." He then delivers the glove to the steward, who delivers it to the person to be admitted, and repeats these words, "I do give seizin of these lands, to hold to you and your heirs, in fee, forever, according to the custom of this manor under the yearly rent of _____, and all other rents, duties and services, as are therefore due; and for the estate so held you shall give unto the lord, as a fine, the double of the year's rent, to be paid at the next account; and so you are thereof admitted tenant, and shall do unto the lord your fealty :” He then administers this oath, "You shall swear, that you will become true tenant and bear true faith unto the lord of this manor for these copyhold lands you hold, to you and your heirs: you shall pay, bear and

discharge, all such rents, duties, and services as therefore are accustomed; and in everything shall demean yourself as a true tenant, as long as you shall hold the same.” The person admitted pays to every tenant present 2d. and if admitted more than once, the like for each admission. The steward gives him a copy of his lands paying 10s. 6d. and enters the surrenders in the court book, and enrolls the same. These copyholders pay at death, or alienation, the best rother beast or horse; but if a person alienates only part of his lands, no herriot is due. They cannot grant leases for above 99 years, without the lord’s licence. A person resident within the liberty, may be sued in this court, for a debt under £40 but if he be a tenant he must first be summoned to court, and called three court days, and upon non-appearance, an attachment issues. In the field called South-field, and Colemarsh, the arable land is valued at no more than 2d. 3d. 4d. 5d. or 6d. per acre: and when the North-Field is common for all men accustomed, then the South-Field may be eared and sown, and the lands said to be meadow, and to be mown are set at 5d. or 6d. an acre: but the time when this valuation was made is not mentioned. Cumber Mead, or, as it is commonly called now, Common Mead, is a large meadow, where several persons have lands, lying intermixed with each other; it is always mowed, and they feed the grass in common. It contains 152 acres and 3 roods, of which 6 acres is glebe, belonging to the vicarage. New Mead was formerly taken from the upper part of Common Mead, on which separation, the owners or occupiers are excluded from the privilege of feeding the after-grass there.

In this book is a charter of Queen Elizabeth, exempting the town from foreign processes, writs, tolls and customs. Also, a decree of the exchequer, made by lord treasurer Cecil, setting forth that King James assured the manor, etc., to the Queen for her life, and that the lands there were held in fee simple, by copy of court roll, paying a fine certain, viz the double of one year’s rent, on every descent or surrender; which by this decree is confirmed to the tenants, having first paid into the exchequer £500 in consideration thereof.

The manor courts are held monthly by the steward, anciently in a house opposite the church acres, near the Red Lyon inn; which being partly destroyed by fire, and partly pulled down, they are now held in the house adjoining.

Church-Lands, 1293. The lands of the prior of Montacute here were valued at 11s. 6d. **22 R. II.** it was found not to the king’s detriment to grant licence to John Betteshorne, to give, for the sustenance of a chantry in the chapel of the B. V. Mary, in the church of Mere Wilts, 12 acres of land in Gillingham, held of Catherine Belvale. **2 E. VII.** lands in Gillingham and Motcomb, belonging to Berkeley’s chantry Wilts, were granted to John Thynne. In this parish were several chapels, now mostly desecrated, viz at Motcomb, E. and W. Stour, Milton under Stower, and Bogley. **28 Eliz** a toft in Gillingham parish where St. Martin’s chapel stood, was granted to Edward Read.

In the forest, which is included in the town tything, was anciently a palace, built by the Norman or Saxon kings, for their residence when they came here to hunt. It stood half a mile east from the church,

in the way from Gillingham to Shaston, near two small rivers, on a level ground, encompassed by a mote, now dry; in some places nine feet deep and 20 broad. There are traces of a rampart that appears to have been 30 feet thick, but is now little higher than the area it encloses. This area, in which the house stood, is 320 feet long, and 240 broad. The foundations are still to be seen, though not a stone of it is left. It was built in one corner of the area, about 20 feet from the rampart, in form of the letter L; the length of the body of the letter, is 166 feet by 80; the foot of the letter is 48 by 40. The area of the house contained 16,800 square feet, and the whole enclosure is 3 rood and a half, or 3 quarters and half a quarter of an acre. King Henry I seems to have resided here, for his charter to the cathedral of Lincoln of the manor of Biggleswade, A.D. 1132, is dated here. It seems to have been repaired or rebuilt by king John at the expense of the county. King Edward I spent his Christmas here about 1270.

The free-school is a large old building, near the church, with a mean house for the master, formerly a church house. The founder is unknown. By some proceedings relating to the parish lands, it appears they were anciently designed amongst other uses, for the perpetual maintaining a school-master in this town, for the instruction of youth in good literature; and by the commission for charitable uses, **40 Eliz.** it was decreed, among other things, that 20 marks yearly, of the rents of the parish lands, should be employed to maintain a school-master, to teach the children *gratis*. The election or removal of him, shall be by the foeffees, with the advice and consent of the vicar. Dr. Davenant augmented it, 1680, with £5 per annum: Mr. Christopher Estmond, 1698, with £8 per annum. This school was formerly in good repute. In the great rebellion, it was full of the sons of loyal gentlemen. Lord chancellor Clarendon had part of his education here; and it was the first preferment of Dr. Frampton, afterwards bishop of Gloucester.

Here is a workhouse, towards providing and furnishing of which, Mr. Alsop left £100 to be paid by his executors, which was done before 1739.

Here are two bridges in the town, called Barnaby and Laden bridges. Two small rivulets called Laden and Shreen-Water rise near to it.

On Tuesday June 19, 1694, about three in the afternoon, a fire happened here, which, in the brief granted on that occasion, is said to have consumed in three hours 40 houses containing 54 families, with barns, stables etc. The damage was computed at £3,900.

Charles Gildon, gent. son of Richard Gildon, gent. was born and educated here, from whence he removed to Doway, in order to make a priest; but quitted the superstitions of the church of Rome, and ran into the other extreme of infidelity and deism. He was author of several poetical and deistical tracts and died 1723.

THE FOREST

... is included in the town tything, or Gillingham major, and “was heretofore part of Selwood forest, Som., and only distinguished by the names of places, as this was by Gillingham, a place of the greatest note in it.” Leland says it was in his time, “four miles in length, and a mile or thereabouts, in breadth.”

6. E. 1. it was found that the king’s men in this lordship, and the rector of the church, and their tenants, and the men of Middleton, Poerston, Windleham, Magyrston and Wyke; the tenants of the prior of Montague and of Walter de Winterborne, used to common in the covert in the forest and in the demesne wood of the king, with all their animals except hogs, sheep and goats everywhere except in the lawn of Marleigh and the park; but it was not known *quo warranto*, nor from what time.

28. E. 1. the king issued a commission to Gilbert de Knoville, John Gilberd, Humphry de Waledon and Philip Maubank, in the room of John Lovel, then sick, to make a perambulation of this forest, who with John Goffe, fee forrester of the forest, Walter Skamel and John de Bengerville, verdurers, chose R. de Rocheford, John de Milebourn and John de Salusbury, knights, Richard de la Haule, Walter, son of Walter de Wyk, John de Lewestone, Robert de Baggebere, Henry de Sta. Barba, Roger de Winterburn, John de Stoke, William de Bares, John Atta See, John de Meleplays, Peter de Bowode, John Gerneys, Thomas de Broneshulle, John Cresebien, Henry de Cattesclive, William de Blakemore and Richard de la Bere, to make this perambulation, who in the presence of Peter de Hamm, locum tenans, Hugh, le Despencer, justice of the forests on this side Trent, John Goffe, Walter Skamel and John de Bengerville, made their procession in this manner. From Barnabesbrigg to the vill of Gillingham and so by the water of Mere, to the bridge of Poulkehead, thence to the bridge of Mereford, thence to the bridge of Hungerford and so by the water to the wood of Horsington, Wiltshire; thence towards the east to la Leygh and so between the bounds of the counties of Dorset and Wiltshire to Pimperleygh and thence to Horeapeldes, thence to, thence to Fernegore and so to Soulescombe; thence by the bounds betwixt the king’s manor and those of the abbot of Wilton to near on the South; thence by the bounds betwixt the king’s manor and that of the abbess of St. Edward, to Wermeswelle and so betwixt the king’s manor to Froggemere and so by the middle of the house of Nicholas de Bradeleygh near Cokemaneston and so by the curtilage of the said Nicholas, betwixt the king’s manor and the land of John Seled, under the castle to Radewell; thence from the south part of the house of Nicholas de Goffich, between the manor of and that of the abbot of Alcestre, and Bec, to le Byttene, and so ascending by the bounds between the king’s manor and that of the abbess of Pratel to Dunclyme, thence to Blakeston between the king’s manor and that of the abbess of Shaston, and so by the water of Sete to the water of Lyden, and so by the same water to the place where it falls into the Stour and thence by the water to Barnabesbrugg. And the jurors further say that before the time of king Henry I, these were the bounds of the forest and that the villat of Stourpreaus with its woods in Brixieswode and Wabenhull:

the villat of Stour Cosin with its wood which belongs to the abbess of Shaftesbury, Magerston with its wood, the hamlet of Todebere, the villat of Burton with its wood, the villat of Hierdegrove with its wood and the wood of Cornelesham which belongs to the said abbess and all tenements belonging to the abbot of Glaston in the villat of Stoureminster, from the west part to the bridge of Neuton-castle and the wood of Canepwode which belongs to the abbot of Alcestre, were afforested after the coronation of Henry II by Alan de Nevil, then justice of the forest.

10 Eliz A regard of the forest of Gillingham was made by virtue of the queen's writ, directed to the sheriff of Dorset by the oaths of 12 regarders of the same forest, viz. Sir Henry Ashley, knight, John Lewston, Nicholas Martin, Giles Huffy, Henry Coker, Francis Uvedale, Christopher Doddington, Christopher Percy, Robert Fowkes, John Pystor, esqrs., John Alye and William Hunton, gents., who say upon their oaths, that the bounds viewed by them and contained in an exemplification of a perambulation made **28 E. 1.** shewed forth unto them, appear to extend and be as followeth: From Barnaby Bridge in the town of Gillingham, upwards as the river or water-course runneth, unto Lodburn Bridge, which of old time was called Poulvey ford; and from thence, as the same water-course, leadeth unto Powridge bridge, which of old time was called the bridge of Merford; and from thence as the same water leadeth on the N.W. side of Bengerfield unto Huntingford bridge and from thence upward as the same water leadeth unto the ground, now of Thomas Chaffins the elder, esq., called Horsington, as the bounds there goeth, between the boundaries of Wilts and Dorset unto the North end of the purpresture, now of Christopher Doddington, esq., and from thence eastward, overthwart Whithill, which was of old time called the Leighe, as the said bounds goeth, between the said counties of Wilts and Dorset, unto the north side of the old Hayes and from thence eastward in the north part of the ground of John lord Stourton, called Haselholte, all ways as the bounds goeth between the said two counties unto the oak calledmen oak, standing by Leigh Marsh, near unto Haselholte-pound, and from the said oak eastward, all ways as the bounds goeth between the said two counties unto the south end of the lane, called Barrow Street Lane, and from thence as the said bounds goeth, between the said two counties, unto the corner of Meere Park adjoining to the north side of Pymperleygh hedge, and from thence along by the hedge of the said park unto the water called Gowge Pole, of old called Horeappledore, and from thence along by the hedge of the said park, called Double hedge, in the north side of Cowridge as the bounds goeth, between the said two counties, unto Newyats bushes, which be in Wiltshire, and from thence as the said bound goeth, between the said two counties unto the northeast end of Newyats lane, and from thence as the said bounds leadeth, between the said two counties, unto the ground now of Robert Cowhede, called Wythers: thence as the said bounds leadeth, between the said two counties unto an oak called Queen's Oak, standing upon the land there, between the liberty of Gillingham and the land of Sir Henry Compton, called Hale Ground and from the said oak, as the said bounds goeth between the said two counties unto Fernegore; and from thence as the said bounds leadeth, unto Sowlescombe and from thence along the same bounds, unto the wood called Fowles wood, and from thence along the

same bounds unto the hill called Kigfettel, and from thence as the same bounds leadeth, unto Pyle cross. Thence as the bounds goeth, between the liberty of Gillingham and the manor of Shasbury unto the lower part of Little Down, and from thence as the said bounds leadeth between the liberty of Gillingham and the lordship of Shaston, unto the land which late was of William Warnswell called Goldesteclife: thence along the said bounds, unto the cross standing near unto the highway upon Towte Hill at the towns end of Shaston, and so descending by the said bounds, between the liberty of Gillingham and the lordship of Shaston, unto a certain pole or pitt within the lands now of William Webb, gent., which anciently was called Frogmeare; and so as the said bounds goeth on the south side of the land, now of Stephen King, sometimes the land of Nicholas Bradley, near Cokemanstone, unto a well in the highway, called Rodwell, and from thence along the bounds between the liberties of Gillingham and Alcestre, unto the land called Sexkesterye lane and along in the said lane, as the said bounds leadeth between the liberties of Gillingham and Alcestre, unto a house upon the land, now of Robert Fowkes esq., which sometimes was parcel of the possession of St. James; and so ascending towards Duncliffe along the said bounds between the liberties of Gillingham and Alcestre unto the land of Thomas Bower called Huckeshayes; and so ascending as the bounds goeth, between the liberty of Gillingham and the lordship of Stower Provouste which once was parcel of the possession of the abbey of Pratel, unto the top of Duncliffe, and so descending as the bounds goeth between the liberty of Gillingham and the lordship of the lord Henry Wriotheffy, E. of Southampton, called East Stower alias Stower Eastover, unto Blackestone which lieth on the north part of Sherborne causeway; thence by the water of Seate, as the same water-course leadeth, unto the water of Lidden, and so downwards, as the same water of Lidden falleth into the water of Stour, and from thence upwards, as the same water leadeth, unto the said bridge called Barnaby Bridge in the town of Gillingham, where this perambulation first began.

When the manor was granted to the Earl of Elgin, part of the forest lands were reserved but **1 Car. 1.** a lease was granted to Sir James Fullerton, knight (a native of Scotland, preceptor to king Charles I, who was buried in Westminster Abbey) of the herbage and pannage of the park; a parcel of waste and woodland called Woodend and Woodand, alias Hillgroves Lodge, with 505 acres of land, yearly value £25.5s., a parcel of ditto called le Cleere, or the Middle-walk, and Dimmedge or Great Lodge, containing 1153 acres, yearly value £53.13s, the waste called Launda Walk, and Launda or Morgan's Lodge, containing 750 acres, yearly value £37.10s. parcel of the demesne lands and late in the tenure of William earl of Pembroke, for 41 years paying the rents above mentioned. **3. Car. 1.** This lease was renewed for the same term, to which were added a parcel of waste land in the forest called Little Down; several small parcels of land and yearly rents in Motcomb, in the forest, leased by the late queen to Henry Hobart, knight, also lands in Lotburn and Peasemarsch there, and in Newbury, in Gillingham, in the forest; Milton Farm in Gillingham, and a rent of four bushels of wheat, payable out of the manor of Mappowder. **6 Car. 1.** The former lease was renewed for the same term. By the two first leases, the lessee was obliged to keep 400 deer for the king's recreation, but this is not mentioned in the last lease. About this time, it was deforested and the lands alienated in parcels.

5 Car. 1. Hil. Term. A report was made in the Star Chamber that the king having deforested the forest and allotted several shares to the borderers and commoners and made Sir James Fullerton farmer of his part, who enclosed, railed and fenced it; several people, sometimes a hundred, sometimes more, armed and disguised by day and night, threw down the fences, filled up the ditches three miles in length, sawed off the rails and carried away or burnt them, threatened to kill the workmen and burn their house, if they came any more to work, and bound themselves by oath to be true to, and not discover one another, to resist any that endeavoured to apprehend any of them and rescue such as should be apprehended. They assaulted two of his majesty's messengers and rescued such as they had apprehended. By a decree of the court, 30 were fined £200 each; 35, £100 each; 9, £40 each and all bound to their good behaviour for two years, and committed to the Fleet, and pay £200 damages to Sir James Fullerton; the rescuers and rescued, £30 damages to the messengers. Hoskins the colonel, Alford the captain, Cave the lieutenant and Miller the corporal of this rebellious regiment, to be set in the pillory with papers on their heads, declaring their offence. The deer were not totally destroyed till the end of the last century, when only a few stragglers were left.

14 E. 3. The abbess of Shaston had a grant of four *fumaria* (horse loads) of wood in the forest, every day of the year except Sundays.

Leland gave us the following list *Nobilium Juratorum* of this forest **E. II.**

Richard de Manneston (Knight)

Jacobus de Trow (Knight)

Ingelram Waleys (Knight)

Joannes de Perham (Knight)

William de Godemaston (Knight)

Walter de Wilton

Roger de Plumber

William de Weston

John de Fishude

Matthew Buffe or Busse

William de Camera

Thomas de Haddon

John Marcelle

Roger Anketil

William Fitz Payne

William de St. Quintin

There were anciently several officers appointed for the conservation of this forest. The bailiwick of it was usually held by some person of note, to whom certain lands hereabouts were allotted, which he

held by serjeancy, to be the king's fee forester and keep the forest and park at his own cost. This office in Henry III's time was enjoyed by Walter Joce, as also the lands appropriated to it. He died in **49 H. III** and from his posterity, by an heir general, it came to William de Bogley, who in Edward II's time, conveyed it to William de Hame. But the office of fee forester came afterwards to Sir Hugh Lutterel, who substituted under him, William Godwine, whose offspring flourished after in good esteem thereabout. **15 H. III** Joceus, forestarius, held lands here and the bailiwick. **15 H. III** John de Winterburne paid five marks for the custody of land, which Joceus the forester lately held in Gillingham, with the bailiwick of the park, and the custody and maritage of Joceus. **49 H. III**. Walter Joce at his death held of the king in chief one carucate of land in this manor, and kept the forest, vert and venison at his own charge: he also held two burgages in the borough of Shaston; Walter, his son and heir 19 years old. **1 E. I**. John de la Lind at his death held the bailiwick, yearly value 41s. 10d. **3 E. II**. John Goce at his death held lands in Gillingham of the king in chief, by serjeancy of being fee forester of the forest and keeper of the park of the manor, which was in the hands of queen Margaret by grant of king Edward I. viz one messuage and 137 acres of land; Amicia, wife of William Bogeley, Elizabeth, wife of John Cley, Alice, wife of John Thomson and, wife of John de Rodes, his daughters and heirs. **7 E. II**. William de Bugele or Bogeley, at his death held the bailiwick with the fees and profits. **9 E. II**. The bailiwick of the forest was alienated to William Hayme and heirs. **11 E. 2**. The custody of the forest was granted to John Haiward. **8 H. V**. John Hayme, at his death held the bailiwick of the fee forestary of the forest, by the tenure aforementioned, with the fees anciently accustomed of the said custody, to which belongs one virgate of land in Gillingham: he died **2 H. IV**. William Bydyk, and Baldwin . . . his next heirs. **9 H. IV**. William Bydyk esq., at his death and Alice his wife, held the premises. John Hayme was seised of a virgate of land here, to which belonged anciently the bailiwick of the forest and park. He, long before his death, gave it by charter to John Wyke etc, and their heirs, who conveyed to John Hayme and Isobel his wife and their heirs; remainder to John Belvale and Catherine his wife and their heirs; remainder to the right heirs of John Hayme. He, dying without issue, it came at length to John, son of William Stourton and Elizabeth his wife, daughter of John Moygne and Joan his wife, daughter of John and Catherine Belvale. In this family it continued till by the attainder of Charles lord Stourton it came to the crown. It was held by him by the same service, clear yearly value £40. There was a superior officer over this forest and park. **15 H. VI**. The custody of the king's forest and park here and of the forest of Kingswood and Fillewood, (forest Sellwood) was granted to Richard earl of Warwick. **27 H. VI**. John St. Lo esq, at his death held it, with the forest of Kingswood; the castle of Bristol and several manors and lands in Somerset and Gloucester; and the same year, Nicholas his son had licence to give it to John Talbot, knight. **1 E. IV**. Humphrey Stafford of Southwick, knight, had a grant of constablership of this forest and park. In after ages these offices seem to have been laid aside and in the room of them, a steward was constituted. **1 Car. I**. Sir James Fullerton was made steward of the forest and manor, and of the hundred and manor of Mere, for life.

N.B. There are now several estates in the forest enjoyed under grants to the earl of Elgin and Sir James Fullerton, by the heirs of Edward Nicholas esq., and of Dr. Blomer etc.

Here seems to have been a royal stud, kept for breeding horses.

Here was, in former ages, a park, which Mr. Coker says was well stored with deer. It seems generally to have passed with the manor and forest. **3 Car. I.** the herbage and pannage formerly belonging to queen Anne, was granted to William, earl of Pembroke.

HAMLETS etc

belonging to this Tything

BUGLEY (Bogley). Below Gillingham Stour entertaining a little brook that cometh from Meere, passeth between Bogley and Ham, two little obscure parishes, which nevertheless impart names to two ancient families. This was anciently the seat of William de Bogley, who gave for his arms, Azure a faltire, voided between four spearheads. Here was formerly a chapel.

BLEET FARM belongs to Bugley. Also, **KING'S MEAD**, containing about 10 acres which, if mown, pay no tithe to the impropiator.

LANGHAM (Lagenham), a farm lying 2 miles S.W. of Gillingham. **2 E. I.** it was found not to the king's detriment to grant to John de Crokeford, Eve his wife and John, their son, to give one messuage and 89 acres of land etc., in Lagenham juxta Gillingham to Thomas Marleberghe for ever. **8 E. II.** John de Mare held one messuage, one caracute of land and 40s. rent in Gillingham of the king in chief. **9 E. II.** it was found not to the king's detriment to give licence to Thomas Marleberghe, to enfeoss John de Mare and Alianor his wife in one messuage and one caracute of land in Langenham in Gillingham. **20 E. III.** John de Meyre held in Lagenham, in Rydelane hundred, one-fourth of a fee formerly held by Osbert Giffard.

GILLINGHAM MINOR or the FREE-TYTHING

This tything consists only of freehold estates, the owners or occupiers of which have their turns to find a tything-man, who owes suit to the lord's court and is called there. Ham, Magestone and Wyke were anciently manors of themselves, but now extinguished and are the lands of the owners who convey their estates like other freeholders by lease and release. Whether they have common or pasture with the lord's

tenants is much disputed, some allowing the waste to belong to the copyholders, others to the inhabitants at large.

HAM. A little obscure village near Bogley, anciently given name to a family and was the seat of William de Ham, who gave for his arms, Azure, a chevron between three demi lions rampant. His issue male failing at the time of Henry I, he left for heirs General Baldwin Thornhull and William Bedicke. The Thornhulls of Wooland, and their posterity, enjoyed it long; and **16 Eliz.** Robert Thornhull held this manor of the queen by service unknown, value 3 ls. It was at length alienated, but to whom is unknown.

MAGESTONE. Anciently a manor. **9 E. 11.** Nicholas de Moeles and Margaret his wife, held one fee here which Joan de Bohun held of Roger his brother, as did John de Moeles, **11 E. IV.** then held by Oliver Servington. **7 H. V.** Oliver Servington esq., held at his death, 2s. rent out of a burgage in Shaston, called Sadler's Place, the manor of Mageston of John Dynham, knt. four messuages in Iland, of Thomas Hody as of his manor of Kington Magna, and manors and lands in Somerset and Wiltshire: Oliver, his son and heir aet 40, who at his death, **8 H. V** held the said rent and manor of Mageston; David, his brother and heir, age 30. **35 H. VI.** David Servington, at his death, held the manors of Mageston, Edmundesham and Lidlinch, and several others in Devon, Wiltshire and Somerset. **18 H. VII,** Walter, son and heir of Edward Cervington, and **6 H. VIII.** William, son and heir of Walter, held the premises. **14 H. VIII.** William Servington held the manor of Whatley in Somerset: Nicholas, his son and heir. The Framptons of Moreton had anciently a concern here. **13 R. II.** Walter Frampton held lands in Mageston, of Nicholas Toner, by fealty, value £8. **4 E. IV.** Robert Frampton held the manor of the abbot of Wardon, by one twentieth of the fee, value £6. **17 H. VIII.** lands here and in Axtel were held of William Servington, as of his manor of Magestone, by James Frampton, yearly value £4.

WYKE (Weeke) a hamlet situated a mile N.W. from Gillingham. It heretofore gave name to a right ancient family, extinct in Mr. Coker's time whose arms were Gules, a bend Ermine cotised dancette argent. 2 E. III. Richard de Wyke and Alice his wife, held two messuages and 35 acres of land in Gillingham, of the king in chief. In process of time, it came to the Frekes of Hannington, Wiltshire, one of whom left it to his relation Thomas, eldest son of William Freke, gent of Hinton St. Mary, and he to the Revd. John Freke, son of his brother John Freke, gent of Hinton. **WYKEMARSH** a farm which belongs also to Mr. Freke. **THORNGROVE** belongs to Wykemarsh. This farm is still called Queen's Farm where was supposed to have been anciently a house for her reception.

MILTON & PRESTON TYTHING

Milton with Preston make one tything, separate from Gillingham only in collecting their own land tax and repairing their own highways. Here are no officers, but way-wardens and a tything-man, who is

admitted at the court leet of the manor and is obliged to attend the lord's court. They take their turn from house to house for finding a tything-man and pay yearly 3s. law silver.

MILTON ON STOUR, a large hamlet situated above a mile north from Gillingham. William de Faleise held three hides in Miletone: it consisted of one carucate and a half, worth 20s. Gudmund, one of the king's thaines held Midletone. It consisted of three carucates, once worth 60s. now 30s. **22 E. 33.** Richard de Flory held in Midelton (then reckoned in Redlane hundred) half a fee of morteyn, which Thomas di Aimarle formerly held. **21 R. II.** Reginald de Brecese held at his death, one third if this manor, as tenant for term of life, by the law of England, of the inheritance of William de Brecese, his son an idiot. This inquisition was found again **3 H. VI. 22 R. II.** John de Betteshorne held at his death, the manors of Milton juxta Gillingham, and Hemelesworth and other manors in Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire: also lands in Shaston, Petrichesam, Bouker-weston, Kington, Gillingham, and the advowson of a chantry there. **7 H. V.** Elizabeth who was wife of Reginald de Brecese, held at her death, one third of the manor of the earl of Sarum; a moiety of the manor and advowsons of Berkeley juxta Frome and Elme juxta Frome and the manor and advowson of Stylgate, Somerset. She died **18 R. II.** Isabella Barnaby, younger sister of the said Elizabeth, occupied the said manors at the time of her death; William Brecese, her son and heir, an idiot age 30. **7. H. V.** Isabella Barnaby held at her death, two parts of this manor as before and four messuages in Gadmister: W. Brecese an idiot, her kinsman and heir, viz son of Elizabeth Brecese, her sister. **16 H. VI.** William de Brecese an idiot died seised of one third of this manor. This family seems to have given it to the abbey of Abbotsbury who possessed it **17 H. VI.**

35 H. VIII. this manor, parcel of Abbotsbury abbey, was granted inter alia to Sir John Leigh in exchange for lands in Kent, Surrey and Berkshire. **1 and 2 Philip and Mary**, he had licence to alienate it to Robert Dyrdo and his heirs, value £61 11s. 6d. **3 Eliz.** It was held by Robert Dyrdo at his death; William his son and heir, who had livery of his lands **13 Eliz. 24 Eliz.** it was held by William Dirdoe at his death, val. £11. In this family it continued till Henry Dirdoe esq. died 1724, without issue male and left ten daughters, his coheireesses, among whom his estate was divided. This family were Roman Catholics and had a little seat here.

Here was anciently a free chapel, but when or by whom founded and endowed is unknown. The lords of this manor were patrons of it. **2 E. VI.** It was granted with lands in Gillingham to Thomas Bell and Richard Duke.

The return to the commission 1650 was, that the impropriation belonged to Mr. Christopher Dirdoe, worth £30 per annum, to which belongs a vicarage, and chapel, now decayed, and not used, a mile distant from Gillingham, fit to be made a parish church for Milton and Preston. Mr. Dirdoe received the tythes to his own life.

CUSTODES, or RECTORS of this free chapel

PATRONS

Thomas de Albamale

Thomas Daumarle

Richard Flory

The Vicar of Gillingham

The abbot of Abbotsbury

William Hartgill, gent.

by grant of the abbot

RECTORS

Thomas de Grindeham, cl. presented 1319 but not admitted

John de Gussich, cl. inst. 2 cal. August 1319

John Haym, cl. on the resig. of Gussich, inst. 3 cal May, 1331

Thomas Haym, pbr. on the resig. of John Haym, inst. 4 id. Oct 1342

Thomas Short

Nicholas Thurmond, jun. cl. on the death of Short, inst. 30 Mar. 1391

David Whittock

Nicholas Latomer, cl. on the death of Whittock, inst. 18 January 1480

William Blynkinsop

John Lerpole, pbr. on the death of Blynkinsop, instit. 14 June 1538.

In 1553 he had a pension of £3 6s. 8d.

CHURCH-LANDS 16 Eliz. three closes of pasture in this hamlet, containing three acres, and nine acres of land belonging to the priory of Maiden Bradley were granted inter alia to Robert earl of Leicester.

CROADCOTTS and WILLIAMS, two estates in Milton, about £11 per annum, each pay no tithes to the impropiator when mowed.

PRESTON, Person, Pierston a manor, hamlet and farm. The manor was formerly divided into several tenements, held by three lives and a widowhood, paying a rent to the lord; but the lives are now run out and all the estates fallen into the hands of Mr. Edgwell, the lord. The farm consists of 200 acres of arable, 120 pasture and 130 meadow.

FREEHOLDS etc, in the parish of Gillingham. **2 E. II.** John de Brokeford had licence to feoff a messuage, 109 acres of land, and 18s. rent in Langeham juxta Gillingham, and twenty acres in Gillingham. **9 E. II.** John de Sandhull and Christian his wife held two messuages and 86 acres of land here of the king in capite of his manor of Gillingham, by service of 2s. per annum and doing suit ad curiam Bartonae of the said manor every three weeks. **20 E. III** Michaela, who was wife of John de Roades, held one messuage and 25 acres of land in Gillingham of the queen; Thomas de Roades her son and heir age 25. **26 E. III.** It was found not to the king's detriment to give licence to John de Sandhull to enfeoff 80 acres of land etc., in Gillingham to Robert de Sandhull and his heirs. **22 R. II.** John Bettesorne, at his death held lands in Gillingham, and the advowson of the chantry there; also lands in Petricheham, Shoston, Boukersweston, Kingston, Milton juxta Gillingham, Hemlesworth, and in Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. **8. E. IV.** John Scott at his death held in Gillingham 4 messuages and 210 acres of land of Richard E. of Sarum; 20s. rent in Stour Estover; 56 acres of land in Sturminster

Marshal: Will Wyning his kinsman and heir. **33, 37 Eliz.** and **16 Jac. I.**, the Moretons of Milton St. Andrew held a moiety of 5 messuages and 361 acres of land in Gillingham Beemermill and Meere; 189 acres of land Horsington in Gillingham and Milton on Stour, held of the king in capite as of his manor of Gillingham, clear yearly value £5. **9 and 10 W. III.** an act passed for vesting certain customary lands etc. in the manor of Gillingham, late the estate of Thomas Davis gentleman, deceased, in trustees, for payment of debts.

In 1645, these estates in Gillingham were sequestered:

Mr. William Thornbull's estate, valued 1641 at £30 per annum, and another at Horton.

Mr. Davenant's vicarage, worth £140 per annum.

Mr. Richard Gilden, recusant, his estate here and at Motcomb, valued 1641 at £120 per annum.

Sir Edward Berkeley's land called Benjafield, value 1641 £120 per annum, sequestered until 1650.

Sir Edward Nicholas' annuity payable to him by lord Bruce out of the park.

Sir James Thynn's old rent of 3s. 4d. per annum.

Mr. Charles Crook's old rent of 13s. 4d. per annum.

Lord Stourton's old rents here and at Motcomb, value £30 per annum.

The CHURCH of GILLINGHAM

... is a royal peculiar in Shaston deanery. The official claims no power at East and West Stour, but in the rest of the parish has archidiaconal jurisdiction. He grants licence for marriages, probate of wills in his jurisdiction, and visits once a year. The mandate for induction of a vicar is directed to him.

This church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and is a large ancient fabric, consisting of a body and two aisles of equal height, a chancel, a chapel adjoining to it and a high tower in which are 6 musical bells, a clock and chimes. The great bell was given, as tradition says, by Thomas Butt of this parish, yeoman. The nave is 54 feet long and 22 wide, and the roof supported by 4 pillars. The chancel is 48 feet long, 21 broad and 20 high to the eaves. The N. aisle is 53 feet long and 15 broad. The S. aisle is 54 feet long and 18 broad. The tower is 63 feet high and about 15 by 14 in the inside. Here was anciently an organ but demolished in the civil wars by Waller's soldiers.

On the N. side of the chancel is a good old monument, with two cumbent effigies of Dr. Jessop and his brother. Dr. Thomas Jessop was a fellow of Merton College, admitted M.D. in 1569. He was a benefactor to that college by increasing the stipend of the portionists or postmasters. He seems to have contributed to his brother's building at the vicarage, as both their names are in the parlour at length above the wainscot and the initial capital letters of their name in the fretwork of the ceiling. John Jessop B.D., his brother, built great part of the vicarage house, viz the great parlour and rooms over it, and made an aqueduct in the garden to supply the house with water. These two gentlemen seem to have

been sons of John Jessop, rector of Chickereel and Upway, buried here April 29, 1582, who was probably descended from an ancient family of that name seated at E. Chickereel.

Other monuments of note include those of Edward Davenant and his wife Catharine; The Dirdoe family; Mrs. Frances Dirdoe; Francis Devinish and Johannes Tinney. On a wall at the W. end of the N. aisle, the Goddard family are remembered; "here are several more ancient inscriptions, but scarce legible."

In this church (perhaps in the chapel adjoining to the chancel) was anciently a chantry, styled, "The perpetual chantry at the altar of St. Katharine the virgin in the church of Gillingham." **4 E. III.** It was found not to the king's detriment, to grant licence to John de Sandhull, to give one messuage, 58 acres of land, and pasture for six oxen, and one heifer in Gillingham and Milton, to a chaplain, to celebrate divine service in the church of St. Mary de Gillingham, every day forever. There remained to the said John one messuage, 112 acres of land and 40s. rent in Gillingham, held of Isabel, queen of England, as of that manor. **22 R. II.** It was found not to the king's detriment, to grant licence to John Betteshorne to give one messuage and 85 acres of land in Gillingham and Milton, to the chaplain of the chantry of St. Catherine here. **1 E. VI.** This chantry in the church of Gillingham was valued at £6 14s. 4d. out of which were paid rents resolute of 11s.

4 & 5 E. VI. This chantry and lands in Gillingham, Milton, Cumber mead and Silton, were granted, at their petition, to the governors of the town and school of Sherborn.

In the Sarum registers is a list of 21 priests or chaplains of this chantry, from the year 1333 to 1541. They were presented by the Sandhulls, Betteshorns and the Berkleys of Beverston and their heirs. The last chantry priest was Galfrid Gyll, who, after the dissolution of the chantry enjoyed a pension of £5 per annum 1553.

Here was also a fraternity, to which belonged lands at Hannington, Wilts and Motcombe. In the chantry roll **1 E. VI.** it was valued at £4 10s., Richard Dornell, incumbent. N.B. the lands belonging to Sherborn School are still called chantry lands, and are held by three lives, and a widowhood under a reserved rent, and by copy of the foeffees of the said school, who keep a yearly court at the Chantry House, according to their custom. The lands are valued at £45 per annum. The last life has the refusal before any others : they pay at death the best beast for an herriot.

THE REGISTER. The oldest registers commence before the Reformation, or 1560, in which are some historical passages, which it were to be wished had been communicated. The most remarkable entries in later times are as follows:

Marriages

Anthony, son of William Etterick of Wimborne, esq. and Ann Davenant 1650

He was buried here May 11, 1713

Thomas Lamplugh, D.D. archdeacon of London and principal of Alban Hall
and Catherine, daughter of Edward Devenant 1663
He was afterwards Bishop of Exeter and Archbishop of York. He died 1691

Baptisms

Ralph, son of Edward Devenant, vicar, 1639
He was rector of Whitechapel, London and a great benefactor to that parish.
William, son of Anthony Etterick and Ann Devenant, counsellor at law, 1657

Burials

George Devenant, M.A. son of Edward Devenant, 1661
William, son of ditto, also M.A., 1662

The RECTORY or PREBEND

We find in Domesday Book, that William the Conqueror gave the church of St. Mary of Gellingham, with its appendage, worth 40s, to the abbey of Shaston, in lieu of one hide of land; in the manor of Kingston, in the parish of Corf Castle, then belonging to that monastery, on which he built the castle of Wareham. Hence it became a prebendal church to the abbey and was fettered as a stipend on one of the abbess's chaplains or confessors. In 1449 it was appropriated to the abbey by bishop Aiscot, and no doubt was so long before; for in the ordination of the vicarage 1319, made by bishop Mortival, it is styled the prebendal church of the abbey of Shaston, so that bishop Aiscot seems only to have confirmed a more ancient appropriation, and made some new regulations. In 1292 this rectory, with the chapels annexed, were valued at £30. **36 H. VIII** 12 November, the advowson of the rectory or prebend was granted to lord Wriothesly, and 29 April following, to John earl of Oxford, who the same year had licence to alienate it to Edward earl of Hertford, and his heirs. But **37 H. VIII** he exchanged it with the crown, for the prebend of Ramsbury, Wilts, by virtue of an act of parliament. Q. Elizabeth converted it into two prebends in the church of Salisbury, styled Gillingham Major and Minor, in the room of two alienated prebends, Ramsbury and Axford. In 1737 the appropriated tythes of Gillingham, Motcombe and E. and W. Stour, were purchased by John Fullerton, esq. The patron before the Reformation was the abbess of Shaston.

In this parish are lands called Prebend, or Parsonage Hold, held in the prebend of Gillingham and under that of the impropietors lease; their tenure much like that of the lands once belonging to the chantry, now Sherborn School.

The VICARAGE

.... was endowed 3 Id. Dec 1319, by bishop Mortival, who reciting that William de Handlo, late prebend of the prebendal church, in the monastery of Shaston, had presented William de Clyve, of Motcombe, presbyter to this vicarage, when it should be endowed, at the instance of Richard de Lufteshull, prebendary, and the said vicar : ordains that the vicar should have a house near the church of Gillingham, formerly belonging to the rector, and assigns a house at Motcombe, for the priest officiating in that chapel : and another at Estover, for the priest officiating, and constantly residing there : and another at Westover, for the priest officiating in that chapel, some days in the week. That the vicar of Gillingham should have the tythes of hay, in the king's demesne meadows, in the parish; and if changed into any other kind of agriculture, the tithes of the product – and together with the composition money accustomed, shall have the tithes of hay in all the villis of the parish, and all small tithes, and the tithes of chirkeshutes, mortuaries and the altarage. He shall have at Motcombe all small tithes, chirkeshutes and offerings at the altar : at Estover and Westover an annual pension of 2s. out of the chapel of Estover, all the small tythes and offerings at the altars of those chapels : the vicar to provide books, vestements and other ornaments, wax candles and other lights, and pay the procurations for the church and chapels to the bishop and archdeacon (to which anciently the prebendary was obliged) and all other ordinary and extraordinary burdens. Institution is given by the bishop of Bristol; the mandate for induction is directed to the official of the peculiar. On the endowment of the vicarage, the advowson of it was settled on the prebendary; but afterwards was granted to the abbess of Shaston by King Henry VII, when he settled the manor on his queen, for part of her jointure, about the time of the appropriation of the prebend, 1442. The vicar when resident keeps two curates, one at Motcomb, the other at the two Stours. The vicarage is worth, after curates are paid, £150 per annum. The patron before the Reformation, was the prebend, or rector; and since, the bishop of Salisbury, probably appointed by Queen Elizabeth, when the rectory was converted into two prebends in that cathedral.

The return to the commission, 1650, was that here were two prebends, part in Gillingham, part in Motcombe, and part in E. and W. Stour, in lease to Mr. Hooper and Cole, for their lives; out of which is reserved £54 per annum, but the true value is £400 per annum which, on the expiration of the lease, may be an addition to the Stours etc, and at present the reserved rent may be added to Gillingham. Mr. Davenant was vicar, his vicarage worth £40 per annum, which he receives, but acknowledges himself unable to discharge this service, by reason of his infirmities. Samuel Forward supplies the cure and has a salary of £20 per annum. – That Motcombe chapel, two miles from Gillingham church, was fit to be a parish church of itself. – That Milton parsonage was Mr. Christopher Dirdoe's and worth £30 per annum ; to which belongs a chapel, now decayed, distant from Gillingham church a mile, and fit to be made a parish church for Milton. Mr. Dirdoe had the tithes of Milton and Preston. That Silton, worth £100 per annum, is fit to have Bourton hamlet, four miles from Gillingham church, united to it, on account of its nearness.

RECTORS of GILLINGHAM

Henry de Blintesdon 1306
William de Hanle
Richard de Lusteshull 1318
Reymund Pelegrin 1346
John Bacon
Martin SkyrLOW 1383
John Bacon 1385
John Waltham 1385
Roger Walden 1391
Richard Maudelyn 1397/1398
Richard Stourton 1405
Edward Prentys 1437
John Stoppyndon 1446
Gilbert Kyme, M.D. 1447
John Stokys
George Hardegyil, M.A. 1466
Hugh Oldham
Christopher Twinho 1504
William Grey 1509
Robert Audley 1521

VICARS of GILLINGHAM

William Clyve of Motcombe 1318
Reginald Typul 1361
Roger Tyrell
William de Chilterne 1364
William Burton
Robert Symond 1386
John Nicol 1429
William Pole 1437
Richard Elys 1438
John Bate
Simon, bishop of Conor 1463
William Stodard 1475
Edward Moore 1527
John Rythe 1541
Richard Brisley 1546
Robert Peverel 1561
Thomas Coke 1571
John Jessop, B.D. 1579
Edward Davenant B.D. 1625
Thomas Ward D.D. 1680
John Craig 1696
William Newton 1696
John Pern M.A. 1744
John Hume M.A. 1770

In the vicarage house is a library containing near 600 volumes, given by Thomas Freke, esq., for the use of the vicars.

Here is an ancient charity called 'The Parish,' or 'Freelands,' the donor and time of the donation unknown. Its original design is said to be for the perpetual maintaining in the town a schoolmaster, for the instruction of youth, repairing the church, relieving and bringing up orphans, poor people and prisoners, and maintaining highways, causeways and bridges. It amounts, including what is paid to the schoolmaster, to £60 or £70 per annum which used formerly to be distributed by the feoffees, on a petition from necessitous people in the parish, in what proportions they judged proper. But the rents are now left in arrears with the poor tenants, and the poor injured by abuses and neglects.

From some old deeds it appears these lands were alienated or concealed, under pretence that they were given to superstitious uses. But 40 Eliz a commission of charitable uses was issued, for better settling the lands and ascertaining their uses, directed to and executed by, Sir George Trenchard, James, chancellor of Bristol, Thomas Freke, esq., etc. On which a decree was made 41 Eliz that the lands should be restored to their former uses, and vested in Thomas Jessop, William Webb, William Willoughby, Christopher Dirdoe and about eight or ten more; and that when the number of feoffees are reduced to eight, they shall choose some new ones. That the vicar, the constable of Gillingham and the constable of Motcombe, shall give their consent to anything done by the feoffees, before it shall have full effect. That lands shall be let, and accounts passed, by the persons before mentioned

There is another charity called 'The Poores Allotment,' by which the poor belonging to the manor, i.e. cottagers who had no land, had formerly a privilege under certain limitations of feeding cattle in the forest. Upon the inclosure, the lord, as a recompense for that privilege, assigned to every poor cottager a certain sum issuing out of the land in the forest let by the lord, to be paid yearly. The custom has been 13 groats, more or less; and when any poor inhabitant died it was disposed of to another. It is payable by the steward of the manor out of the rent of the said lands appropriated for that use.

Benefactions to this parish

Mr Tinney left £100 to the poor of the parish, to be disposed of according to the directions of his will.

Mrs. Frances Dirdoe who died in 1733, left £100 to the poor of Gillingham, the interest to be distributed yearly on St. Thomas' day.

Rebecca, her sister who died July 1738, left £100 to be distributed among the poor, and 10 guineas to the vicar, or him who served the cure, for a sermon to be preached yearly in July for ten years, in remembrance of her.