

Suffolk Institute of Archæology and Natural History.

EDWARDSTONE : ITS CHURCH AND PRIORY.

Edwardstone, as its name implies, was a Saxon settlement which was standing in the days when Danish monarchs ruled over England. It was the "tun" or enclosure of an Aedward; the final syllable has no reference to a local monolith or stone such as was to be seen formerly at the adjacent village of Boxford, and, likewise at other villages of Suffolk.

But we have no record of Edwardstone and its history in those early and troublous times. True it is, that in a chronicle of the Berkshire Monastery of Abingdon are words to this effect; that in the time of the Danes the monastery was deprived of many possessions, and much wealth, but that Abbot Faricius, both by prayers and by purchase, recovered many of these lost lands from Henry I. The chronicle continues, "there was in Suffolk the Church of Edwardstone in which the Abbot placed two monks, whom Walkelin afterwards removed and settled at Colne. Then Hubert de Montchesney conceded and confirmed to the Church of Colne the Church of Edwardstone, with all its appurtenances, in order to support two monks who were to pray for the souls of the said Hubert and his descendents." The chronicle, does not, however, assert that Edwardstone Church had ever belonged to the Abingdon monks before Hubert's gift was made to the Abbey. B

Before reviewing the nature of this gift, it will be well to consider what was the state of this Saxon "tun" when it fell into the hands of a Norman lord after the Battle of Hastings. Edwardstone is situated in the double Hundred of Babergh, not far from the heath which gave its name to the Hundred. It consisted in Saxon days of one extensive manor occupying an area of more than four carrucates, i.e., as much land as it would require the use of four ploughs to cultivate in a year. The last Saxon lord was Godwin, the son of Alfer, who also held a manor of half the extent at Chilton in the same Hundred. His vassals, including freemen, villains, bordars, and serfs, numbered thirty-two. At his hall he kept two riding-horses; he had herds which fed among his pastures and in his woods. The church which was then standing had thirty acres of free land. The freemen held sixty acres, and sent their corn to be ground at the winter-mill of Godwin.

It may be that Godwin accompanied Harold to Hastings, for all his estates were given to Hubert de Montchesney to hold under Robert Malet. The status of the manor does not appear to have suffered by the change of lords, for there remained the same number of households, viz., thirty-two, although the number of bordars or cottagers was increased, and the number of villains and serfs was lessened. The same unaltered condition in the number of households was to be seen throughout the Hundred, in which there were 1,352 households in Edward the Confessor's reign, and 1,358 in the year 1086. Two hundred years later the manor, including £8 yearly from the Earl Marshal for Staver-ton, Bromeswell, and Eyke, was held by William de Montchensey of his own inheritance of the Earl of Cornwall, by Knight's service, suit at the Earl's court of Eye, and two shillings and twopence halfpenny three times

every two years 'for guard of the Castle of Eye. It was the head or *caput* of the Barony which William de Montchensey held. The Barony of the manors of Staverton, Bromeswell, Eyke, Wyffarston, and Stansted, and certain tenements in Goldingham and Halstead, Holeton, and Brantham, for all of which he owed to the said Earl the service of twelve knight's fees. The value of a single knight's fee was £20. The vast wealth of Warrenne, the son of Hubert de Montchensey, obtained for him the name of the "English Croesus."

There was a strong friendship existing between the first Hubert de Montchensey and Aubrey de Vere, whose son, Walter, held the manor at Chilton, formerly owned by Godwin, son of Alfer. Upon the occasion of a serious illness, Walter de Vere was attended by Faricius, Abbot of Abingdon, as his physician. On his son's recovery Aubrey de Vere endowed the Benedictine Abbey of Abingdon with large estates. Moved also by friendship with Abbot Faricius, Hubert de Montchensey gave to the same monastery the Church of Edwardstone, to which deed of gift Aubrey de Vere the younger was a witness. In 15 Henry I. the deed was confirmed by the King to the following effect: the place was always to serve for and to be used as a monastic cell, and no chaplain could be appointed to serve within the church without the permission of the monks who resided there. With the church were given the lands and tithes which by right belonged to the same, two acres of land lying alongside the church; and two parts of the tithes of Staverton and of Stanstead, the tithes of the rents of the mills and woods, and pannage for the monks' swine, together with the tithe of the rents of the turbage at Staverton.

In 1115 A.D. Archbishop Ralph commended the incoming monks to the special care of Herbert, Bishop of

Norwich, their diocesan. It would seem that the object of the lord in founding this cell was to exclude secular clergy from his manorial church, and thus to follow the fashion of the day. The church continued to be served by monks of the Benedictine order; but in the time of Abbot Walkeline (1159-64) the two monks were transferred to the neighbouring cell of Colne, from which the church was evidently served, when a certain prior of Colne, William by name, among other "good things" which he did, appropriated the churches of Edwardstone and Little Waldingfield, acquiring thereby for his priory the rectorial dues, and appointing a fixed stipend for a vicar *circa* 1209 A.D.

Earl Colne Priory was founded as a cell of Abingdon, 1101-7 A.D. From a cartulary of that Priory we gather a little more information concerning the gift of the Church of Edwardstone to the Benedictine monks. William, Bishop of Norwich (1146-74), the said cartulary states, confirmed to the Church of St. Mary Colne, in accordance with the deed of Hubert, de Montchensey, the Church of Edwardstone. Among the witnesses to this confirmation were two monks, John and Gilbert. In recording the deed, the cartulary mentions the further grant of four acres of Mangarasdune, the right for the monks' pigs to wander about the lord's demesne lands wheresoever the lord's pigs were permitted to roam, and the grant of all the land of Richard de Vilers, with all its appurtenances and with all the men dwelling upon the said land. The deed was witnessed by Muriel, wife of Hubert de Montchensey, and his sons, Roger and Geoffrey. The deed was also witnessed by his son and heir, Stephen de Montchensey. This Stephen, in a charter confirming the grant, gave the limits of the right of pasturage for the monks' cattle as extending from Edwardstone Mill

as far as the wood: Hugh de Montchensey and Hubert, brother of Stephen, witnessed this charter. Colne became an independent priory in 1311 A.D. Other lands in Edwardstone granted to a religious house were given by Simon de Sudbury and John de Chertsey his brother, to the College of St. Gregory, Sudbury.

It will be seen from the Norwich Taxation of 1254 that a miserable pittance of thirteen shillings and fourpence was paid to the vicar appointed to serve the church while a sum thirteen times the amount was received by the monks of Colne as rectorial dues. Evidently the payment of the vicar needed readjustment, and a new ordination of a vicarage may have occurred before 1291, for, from the Taxation of Pope Nicholas we learn that the vicar's stipend or portion had increased to £4 13s. 4d., while that of the rector had only increased to £10. Evidently no further change was made, as John Framlingham, instituted vicar about 1453-4, owed for First Fruits £4 13s. 4d., of which he was only able to pay no more than the odd shillings and pence. The poverty of the living must have weighed increasingly upon his successors as the value of the money decreased, and it became customary to pay tithe in cash and not in kind.

The "Nonæ" Inquisitions of 1340 A.D. give us an insight into the economic details of the living. The jury then stated that the ninth part of the sheaves, wool, and lambs of the said town amounted to 105 shillings and no more, because the prior of Colne held the Church of Edwardstone to his own use; and he, together with the Vicar, held ninety-five acres of land, which they valued at 31s. 8d. per annum, i.e., fourpence an acre. The prior also held a messuage, with dovecote, curtilage, and garden, valued at ten shillings per annum. Moreover, he held two acres of meadow,

valued at fourpence per annum, six acres of pasture at ten shillings per annum, four acres of wood valued at twelve shillings per annum, the tithes of two mills at six shillings per annum. Also the tithe of milk and small tithes valued at forty shillings per annum. The four principal yearly oblations were valued at forty shillings, and the oblations on the annual feast-day were valued at thirteen shillings and fourpence.

The vicar, however, doubtless found sundry means to increase his income. In this he would find assistance from various bequests made by his parishioners. Thus on the 12th March, 1491/2, Robert Kyng, of Edwardstone, bequeathed to the church £6 13s. 4d., to a priest to sing for him in the said church £6, to buy a book 40s. ; " to the painting of the tabernacle in the said *Church of St. John* £4, and if it cost more the sum to be paid." Again on 18th July, 1496, William Kyng, who desired to be buried within the *Church of St. Mary of Edwardstone*, bequeathed 20 marks " for to paynten the Candelbeme " to his son, Robert, a tenement called Chircheyes, except a pigtle at Larchmere Crosse, which probably stood near *Larchmere Lane*, for an ' obit so long as the world lasts,' the enfeoffment thereof to be written in the Massebook of Edwardstone " ; Witnesses, Sir Thomas Tylwith, Sir John Giles, priests.

In the assessment for the musters of 1522, the rectories of Edwardstone and Little Waldingfield were valued together possibly because they were let out to farm to one and the same person. In that year the Vicar, Sir Roger Bocher, was assessed for his benefice at £6 13s. 4d. ; a Robert Kyng, clothmaker, was assessed for his moveables at £80. This was the highest assessment. Robert Kyng was probably son of the Robert Kyng already mentioned.

In the first year after the Dissolution of Colne Priory, 27-28 Hen. VIII. (1535-6), an account was rendered by William Lyone, farmer of the Rectory of Edwardstone, wherein he stated that the Rectory was let to him, his executors and assigns, by Indenture under the seal of the Priory, 12th Dec., 19 Hen. VIII. (1527), for 16 years, at £20 per annum. A further Indenture, 26th Feb., 33 Hen. VIII. (1541-2), between the King and Francis Jobson, gent., recites the lease by Robert Abell, late Prior of Earls Colne to William Lyon, of Edwardstone, husbandman, dated as above, of the parsonage of Edwardstone with all rights, glebe lands, etc., reserving to the Prior only the advowson of the vicarage of the Church of Edwardstone and Little Waldingfield (*sic*) and all wards, marriages, and reliefs. The Prior was to sustain all repairs and to allow the lessee four shillings a thousand for tiles for the parsonage ; the lessee to do all daubing, thatching, hedging, and ditching, and to pay for the carriage of materials for repairs. The farmer was to find meat and drink and horsemeat for the Prior and his steward or his servants coming to keep courts. The lease was renewed to Francis Jobson for twenty-one years.

In the last year of Elizabeth's reign a commission was held as to whether William Whittle, to whom the Queen in 1576 let the Rectory of Edwardstone, enjoyed tithes of the town of Little Waldingfield as parcel of the said Rectory. Robert Cobb, of Earls Colne, yeoman, aged 38 years, quoting from a copy of an ancient ledger of the Priory, said that Little Waldingfield was granted to the Priory by Ralph, son of Adam, and Roger de Vere, by several deeds undated, and the Church of Edwardstone was given by Hubert de Montchensey ; the other deeds showed that the Churches of Edwardstone and Little Waldingfield were distinct.

The depositions heard in the cause of Thomas Alston and William Stocke *versus* Richard Spencer, concerning tithe of hay and cheese, 18th July, 34 Elizabeth (1592) throw some light upon the local customs of the time.

Daniel Davies, of Boyton, clerk, aged 62 years, was Vicar of Edwardstone for nine years or more, and knew Balden Dyram, the then Vicar, and also "one Champon, farmer of the *Parsonage otherwise called the Prive*." (Priory). It was twenty-nine years since he was vicar.

Edmund Mundford, of Assington; aged 60 years, had known four or five vicars, and two or three farmers of the Priory. He knew tithe cheese to have been paid to Roger Butcher and to Robert Nanton when vicars, about forty years past.

Richard Skyte, of Assington, remembered only Mr. Davyes and Mr. Nicholson as vicars of Edwardstone.

Thomas Fitch, of Edwardstone, aged 79 years, knew as vicars Nutton, Fytch, Dyram, Davyes, and Nicholson. He stated that there was no other tithe due to the parsonage but tithe-corn, all other tithe was due to the vicar. There were about seven acres of glebe land belonging to the vicarage. Sorrell and Stocke, as farmers of the Priory, had received tithe of croppings of trees.

John Slade, ploughwright, of Edwardstone, aged 30 years, had known as vicars, Roger Butcher, Robert Nutton, Thomas Fytch, Baldwyn Durrant, and one Nycholson, then vicar. The vicar had always received the tithe-corn of the Manor of Bore House in Edwardstone.

A certificate for Edwardstone returned by the Archdeacon of Sudbury to articles issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury 1st August, 1603, states

the vicar, Thomas Dearslye, to have said the number of Communicants were 240, there were no recusants. The vicar had only this vicarage, a poor vicarage valued in the King's Book, at £4 13s. 4d. There was an impropriation called Edwardstone Priory endowed with the said vicarage.

The parish registers, unfortunately, do not commence earlier than the year 1645. The Registers Bills returned annually to the Registrar of the Archdeacon of Sudbury, however, give us some slight data as to the population among which 240 persons were numbered as communicants. The Edwardstone Register Bills, 1580-1600, give an annual average of 10 baptisms, 3 marriages, 5 burials, whereas the bills sent in for the years 1601-20 almost double these returns. For the year 1603 there were 23 baptisms, 3 marriages, 11 burials.

I will close this paper by recording an incident which occurred within the church in the year 1637. During Divine Service a violent thunderstorm (or to use the local expression, a terrible tempest) broke over the church. A lad in the employ of a Mr. Edward Alston then attending service, had just brought up his master's horse for Mr. Alston to ride home, as was his custom. Some of the worshippers seeing through the open door the heavy downfall of rain, beckoned to the boy to get shelter within the porch. The porch was not large enough to shelter both boy and horse, so the latter entered the church itself. Mr. Alston, seeing the animal, mounted it within the church, and rode forth, "using at the same time some indiscreet words to the Sexton." For this act he was held punishable, and it was thought fit that he should do penance by acknowledging his fault in the said church. In delivering judgment, John Lambe, the presiding

officer of the Court, decreed that "as Mr. Alston is an auncient gentleman in years and desireth he may rather redeem his penance I. accept his offer to pay 20 marks towards the repair of St. Paul's Church, London, and he is to pay £6 13s. 4d. costs to the promoter of the suit.

APPENDIX I.

Muster Roll, 1522. In the Library of Earl of Ancaster at Grimsthorpe.

Fol. 40.	Sir Wm. Waldegrave, Kt., chief lord of the town, his lands by the year	£38 0 0
	No steward certain there.	
	The Parsonage of the said town and of Little Waldingfield appropriated to the Priory of Colne, the value thereof by year	£16 0 0
	Sir Roger Bocher, Vicar there, his benefice by year	6 13 4
	His moveables	4 0 0
	Wm. Bogeys, clothmaker, in lands, etc.	0 40 0
	In moveables	100 marks
	Ordered to find 2 harnesses, 2 bows, 2 sheaves of arrows, and hath a horse above the value of 20s.	
	Jamys Gosenoll, husbandman, in lands, etc.	0 50 0
	In moveables	30 0 0
	Ordered to find 1 harness, a bow, and a sheaf of arrows, and hath a horse, etc.	
Fol. 40b.	Robert Kyng, clothmaker, in lands, etc.	0 50 0
B	In moveables	80 0 0
	Ordered to find 3 harnesses, 2 bows, 2 sheaves of arrows and a bill.	
	John Bogays, clothmaker, in lands, etc.	0 10 0
	In moveables	40 marks
	Ordered to find 1 harness, 1 bow, 1 sheaf of arrows, and hath a horse, etc.	
	Agnes Bogeys, widow, in lands, etc.	0 40 0
	In moveables	40 marks
	Ordered to find 1 harness, 1 bow, and 1 sheaf of arrows.	

	Wm. Lyon, husbandman, in lands there	0	5	0
	In moveables'	20	0	0
	Ordered to find 1 harness and 1 bill, and hath a horse, etc.			
B	Robt. Gosenoll, husbandman, in moveables	8	0	0
	Isabell Clerk, widow, in lands, etc.	0	8	0
	In moveables (being in France and esteemed by her neighbours)	2	0	0
	Richard Rudlond, husbandman, in moveables	7	0	0
	These persons ordered to find one harness & a bill.			
Fol. 41	John Hall, labourer, in moveables	0	20	0
	John Clerk, weaver, in lands, etc.	0	20	0
B	Robert Couper, in lands, etc.	0	20	0
B B	Robert Lufkin, in moveables	0	60	0
	John Kyng, in lands, etc.	0	10	0
	In moveables	0	40	0
	Thos. Baker, shoemaker, in moveables	0	20	0
	Wm. Baker, in lands there	0	7	0
	In moveables	4	0	0
	Thos. Baker, labourer, in moveables	0	60	0
	John Hedge, in moveables	0	40	0
H.	Peter Hamont, in moveables	0	20	0
	In lands	0	4	0
H.	John Doget, weaver, in lands	0	20	0
	In moveables	0	40	0
H.	John Sherman, in moveables	0	20	0
H.	Thomas Sendell, in moveables	0	20	0
H BB	Roger Clerk, in lands	0	8	0
	In moveables	0	60	0
Fol. 41b.	Jn. Rudlond, in moveables	0	40	0
H.	H.			
H.	Ralph Rudlond, in moveables	0	40	0
B B	Thomas Huggon, in moveables	0	40	0
	Thomas Gale,	0	40	0
	Robert Dennys, in lands	0	8	0
	In moveables	0	40	0
A A	Wm. Not, in moveables,	0	20	0
	William Hodgys, in moveables	0	20	0
A	Roger Heyward, in moveables	0	20	0
	The stock of the Gildes there.	0	40	0

Able men in Person having no substance.

B B	Wm. Fowler, weaver.
B	Thomas Constabill, labourer.
B B	Nicholas Baxter, weaver.
B	George Debenham.
A A	John Paykyn.
B	John Dash, labourer.
B	Richard Dylwyk.
B B	John Laye.

Fol. 42. *Foreigners' lands there.*

Sir Philip Tylney, Kt., in lands there	..	..	0 58 0
The Provost of Cambridge, in lands there	..	..	8 0 0
Dame Catherine Colman, widow, in lands there	..	..	7 0 0
Thomas Spryng, gent., in lands there	..	..	0 46 8
Wm. Rysby, in lands there	..	..	0 20 0
Richard Doget, in lands there	..	..	0 32 0
Stephen Taylor, in lands there	..	..	0 6 8
Wm. Potter, in lands there	..	..	0 10 0
Jamys Rudlond, of Little Waldyngfield	..	..	0 10 0
Rose Gardyner, of Hadley, widow, by year	..	..	0 11 8
John Facon, of Boxford, by year there	..	..	0 10 0
John Fyske, of Melford	..	..	0 10 0
Sum of all the harness	} 10 harnesses, 6 bows, 6 sheaves of		
assessed within this town	} arrows, and 4 bills.		
Sum of the double A (archers) aforesaid		2	
" " single A (archers)		1	
" " double B (billmen)		6	
" " single B (billmen)		8	
" " horses		4	

APPENDIX II.

<i>Vicars & Patrons.</i>	<i>Dates of Induction.</i>	POST REFORMATION.
5 May, 1556.	Thomas Fytche.(a)	
18 May, 1560.	Baldwin Deereham.(b)	
19 Oct., 1563.	Daniel Davyes.(h)	
17 Apr., 1574.	Thomas Nicholson.(c)	
15 Aug., 1598.	Thomas Dearslye; John Brondi. George Pretty (resigned).	
22 May, 1661.	George Pretty; Mathew, Bp. of Ely.	
22 May, 1673.	Robert Colt(d), A.M.; John Brond.	
22 Dec., 1686.	Abraham Salter (deprived); Elizabeth Brond, only daughter of Jn. Brond, deceased.	

- 22 Aug., 1690. John Eachard, A.B.; Elizabeth Brond, only daughter of Jn. Brond, deceased.
- 7 Feb., 1695. William Goff; Elizabeth Brond, only daughter of Jn. Brond, deceased.
- 31 July, 1706. John Hasby; Robert Kemp, armiger.
- 22 Dec., 1736. George Sheldon, A.B.; Wm. French, of Tottenham, S. Herts.
- 9 Mar., 1779. William Addington (resigned); Wm. Sheldon, of Southampton St., St. Paul's, Covent Garden, esq.
- 21 Jan., 1782. Thomas Preston, D.D.(e) ditto
- 17 Oct., 1800. George Francis Barlow, A.M.(g) (resigned. ditto.
- 5 Mar., 1806. William Pochin(f), A.B. Thomas Dawson, of Edwardstone Hall, esq.

(a) Vicar of Assington (1557—1559). (b) Vicar of Assington (1559—1568). (c) Vicar of Groton (1583—1612). (d) Rector of Semer (1686—1705). (e) Rector of Wrating parva (1761—1769); Rector of Polstead (1763—1781); Rector of Rougham (1769—1800). (f) Rector of Cornard parva (1843), (g) Rector of Burgh nr. Woodbridge (1843); and of Sotterley nr. Wangford, Suff. (1805—1843). (h) Of Boyton, co. Suff. (1598—).

(i) The second name refers to the patron.

APPENDIX III.

Parish Registers begin 1645.

Register Bills in Registry of Archdeacon of Sudbury at Bury St. Edmund's give the following data.

Year.	Baptisms.	Marriages.	Burials.
1582	9	3	4
1584	6	2	3
1581	8	3	2
1585	8	3	5
1588	14	1	3
1592	9	0	5
1593	9	3	4
1594	7	1	5
1595	9	1	5
1600	14	5	6
1601	12	2	4
1603	23	3	11
1606	24	5	10.
1612	8	0	6
1618	22	4	10

John Winthrop, governor of Massachusetts, born at Edwardstone, 1587.—D.N.B., lxxii., 226.