

PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM SANCROFT.  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, 1677-1691.



Photograph of the original Crayon drawing of Archbishop Sancroft by Edward Lutterell, which was formerly in the Lambeth Palace Collection. It was engraved by H. Meyer in 1820. This portrait is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

# Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History.

---

## THE FAMILY OF WILLIAM SANCROFT, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

By CHARLES BOYCE, V.D.

Suffolk has been the birthplace of many notable men, some distinguished for their culture and benevolence, others renowned for their adventures and fame in war, but it is unlikely that many of them passed through greater vicissitudes of fortune than those which mark the career of that remarkable divine, who filled the chair of St. Augustine at Canterbury during the stirring time of the Revolution of 1688, William Sancroft.

We are not concerned here with the personal history of William Sancroft, it is fully described in the Dictionary of National Biography and in the Life of Sancroft by G. D'Oyley, published in 1821, and further comment is unnecessary. The object of this paper is to collect and record all that is known relating to the early history of his family.

The genealogy of the family of de Sandcroft—and this is the form in which it was originally written—is involved in much obscurity. Surnames were anciently given from particular circumstances connected with the individual; sometimes they were derived from the place of his birth, whilst in other cases they had reference to some personal peculiarity. Suckling, in his History of Suffolk, quotes Blomfield, the historian of Norfolk, as asserting that the ancestors of Archbishop Sancroft of Fressingfield derived their name from the village of South Elmham, otherwise called Sandcroft in East Suffolk, though Dr. D'Oyley in his history of

that primate does not notice the circumstance. There seems but little doubt that the eponymic founder of the family took his name from his birth place, where his father was seized of land. The question arises, by whom was the territorial name first assumed.

There is a parish in the Union of Wangford in the east division of the County of Suffolk which bears the three names, South Elmham, Sandcroft and St. Cross. It was here that the ancestors of William Sancroft held lands and resided for many generations. The Archbishop omitted the letter d from Sandcroft, the spelling by which the parish and family were originally recorded.

For a moment let us hark back to the latter two place names of this parish, Sandcroft and St. Cross. The study of place names of English parishes and villages is an extremely interesting and fascinating one, from their association in many instances with the families of those who held lands in the neighbourhood, in the early days after the Norman Conquest. But here we have to do with an unusual combination of words, viz., "Saint" with an inanimate object "Cross." What was the origin of this strange name and what its significance? Does it mean Holy Cross or is it a corruption of Sandcroft? It seems most probable that St. Cross is a corruption of Sandcroft, and that the old fs was read into the ft in Sandcroft. This is the opinion of the Rev. P. H. Turnbulle, the Rector of St. Cross, who says, "The Terriers" for this parish dated 1820 and later call it St. Cross, adding "otherwise Sancroft." It has no connection with the Holy Cross. The Registers of the Church which go back to 1558 designate the Church as St. George Sancrofte.

For ten years Robert de Sandcroft was Patron of this Parish viz., from 1319 till 1329. In Suckling's History of Suffolk we find the following list of Rectors with the name of the Patron.



EX LIBRIS  
OF  
ARCHBISHOP SANCROFT.

1319. William de Hardichishull. Patron, Robert de Sandcroft.

1319. Petrus le Munk. ———

1329. Robert de Ebor. Id.

1329. Olio. fil. Jois Humfrey. Id.

The following is extracted from an ancient terrier of the parish, undated, for which the writer is indebted to the Rev. P. H. Turnbulle. "Be it remembered that Robert de Sancroft holds of the Bishop of the same Lordship two messuages 260 acres of land, 40 acres of wood, 25 acres of meadow and pasture and the advowson of the Church of St. George (i.e., St. Cross Ch.) to which belong one messuage and 30 acres of land of which the said church was endowed by the ancestor of the said Robert."

According to a book entitled "Norman People and their existing descendants," published by H. S. King in 1874, the family of de Sandcroft was derived from the Norman family of de Bosco or de Bois and reference is made to William de Bosco, an under-tenant in the hundred of Chelmsford in Essex at the Domesday Survey, and to Baldric de Bosco who was granted land in Mutford in Suffolk by Henry I. It is not known by the writer of this paper upon what authority this statement is made but it seems to be quite a reasonable supposition. There is no doubt that at the beginning of the 13th Century many members of the de Bosco family were settled in Elmham, in East Suffolk, indeed it is probable that they held the whole of the 1310 acres of land in the parish of South Elmham; the family was also extremely affluent judging from the large grants and remissions of rent made by various members at this time to the Priory of Flixton, a St. Augustan Nunnery founded here by Margery, wife of Bartholomew Creke in 1258. Flixton is situated two miles from the village of Sandcroft, and there is still an old house in the parish named Boyce Hall. The

Essex family of de Bois and another family of the same name holding much land at Fersfield in Norfolk bore the same arms, viz., ermine a cross sable and "Norman People" quotes this blazon as a proof that the arms granted to William de Sancroft and his brother Thomas in January, 1663, namely argent, on a chevron between three crosses formée gules, as many doves of the first, showing the relationship between the de Bois family and that of de Sandcroft. The only charge common to both being the cross, a very feeble basis upon which to found kinship.

The writer of the article on Archbishop Sancroft in the Dictionary of National Biography says that his family came of an old yeoman stock which had long owned lands in Suffolk but which did not obtain the right to bear arms till the grant to his brother and himself in 1663. This, however, does not appear to be correct for in the Add. MSS. 19148, p. 89, at the British Museum the arms of Sancroft during the reign of Edward IV and earlier are stated to have been argent, on a fesse between three crosses patée, as many martlets of the field. There is also a charter of date 29 Edw. I (1301) of Agnetis, who was wife of Robert de Sandcroft, Mil. i.e., a knight who would certainly have coat armour. Here surely is the blazon from which the College of Arms made the grant to the two brothers, differenced by a chevron replacing the fesse and granting doves in place of the martlets, a more suitable charge as one of them was an Archbishop.

Now to return to Baldric de Bosco, mentioned in Norman People, to whom land in the half hundred of of Mutford and Lothingland was confirmed in 1131 by Henry I. Mutford is situated about 12 miles east of South Elmham, now St. Cross Rectory. These lands descended to his only daughter Hildeburg, who married Osbert de Cailly and whose two daughters,

Petronilla and Matilda divided the same between them, the former married 1st Stephen de Longchamp and 2nd Geoffrey de Bois, and Matilda married, 1st Henry de Vere and 2nd Reginald de Bois. To Petronilla was given Lothingland and to Matilda, Mutford. In 1205 we find that these two brothers and their wives had forfeited their estates and King John had given Mutford to the son of Henry de Vere. It is known that Geoffrey de Bois had two sons, viz., Bernargarii mentioned in the charter rolls in Essex in 1199 and Benjamine referred to in Kent in 1214. Their father had also forfeited his estate in Kent. It may be that one of these two brothers was the ancestor of the family of de Bois or de Bosco in Elmham and Flixton. But there is yet another source from which this family may have derived, namely, that of Ernald de Bosco, an undertenant of lands in Suffolk and Essex at the Domesday Survey, and long resident at Assington near Sudbury and other parts of the county, and it seems significant that they still owned lands at Blundeston and Sumerleyton as late as 1509.

There is no proof that a member of the family of de Bosco from the place of his birth, changed his name to that of de Sandcroft, but it seems more than a coincidence that we find these two families so intimately connected and associated together in four parishes of East Suffolk, South Elmham, Hunnefield or Hunnersfield, Flixton and Fressingfield.

In the Feet of Fines for 1 John (1199) we find an action was taken by Robert de Bosco and Eva his wife, against Robert de Sandcroft in respect of two carucates in Elmham and Hunnersfield, claimed as dower of Eva from the gift of Barthol. de Sandcroft, late her husband. Consideration was 30 acres in Hunnefield to hold for the life of Eva at 23½d. yearly rent. Feet of Fines were nominally the finis or end of a fictitious and friendly suit, they were practically

deeds transferring land. This is the first occasion on which we find the name of de Sandcroft recorded, and here it appears in a friendly arrangement between two members of the same family. Hunnersfield is a parish adjoining South Elmham, it is now called Homersfield. The two parishes have been held for centuries conjointly by the Rector of St. George, Sandcroft, now called St. Cross.

Again at Fressingfield we find the two families associated. In 1307 Robert de Bosco held two fees here and in Sonalebeuse and in 1339 John de Sandcroft grants a rent of 100s. to John Garneys out of his lands in Fressingfield. Close Rolls. At Flixton also where we have given evidence of the generosity of the de Bosco family to the Nunnery we find covenants and bonds entered into between the de Sandcroft family and the Prioress and Nuns. Brit. Mus. Add. Mss.



A.  
Robert Sandcroft = Alice, da. & coh. of  
14.H. 7. 1498-9. Robert Godbold of  
Fresingfield.

William Sandcroft = Alice, sister & coh. of  
20.H.8, 1528 & 26. Peter, son of Laurence  
H.8. 1534, Studhaugh, Esq.  
Lord of the Manor of  
Hempstead, etc.

Robert Sandcroft,  
drowned at Sea, in  
the expedn. of H.8.  
to Boulogne.

Francis Sandcroft = Catherine, da. of Peter  
Gooch, of St. Mar-  
garet's, Ilkeshall.

Francis of Fresingfield

William Sandcroft = Alice, da. of John  
Died 1628-9. Stokes, of Drinkstone.

William Sancroft,  
B.D., Born at Withers-  
dale. Master of  
Emanuel Coll., Camb.  
Died at Bury, Apl.,  
1637.

= Grace, da. of Robt.  
Girling, of Fresing-  
field.

John Sancroft,  
mercht., died in the  
E. Indies.

Francis Sandcroft  
17 Eliz., 1575.  
H. to his bro, Dr. Wm.  
S. Dead 1650. Will  
dat. 1 July, 1648.

=(Mary?)  
Margaret, da. and coh.  
of Thos. Boucher, of  
Wilby.

Deborah Sancroft  
= George Borret of  
Stradbrook, gent.

William Sancroft,  
6 yrs. old, 1627, dead  
s.p. 1637.

Deborah S.

Elizabeth S.  
= Jno Borret, of  
Stradbrook

Thomas Sancroft  
son & h. of Ufford Hall  
in Fresingfield. Died  
about 1681.

= Margaret, da. of  
Grenling, of  
1st husb.

2. William Sancroft,  
B.D., 2nd. son Born at  
Fresingfield. 30 Jan.  
1616/7. Archbishop of  
Canterbury. Died un-  
marr. 24 Nov., 1693.  
Burd at Fresingfield.

Alice S.

Frances S.  
dd. 9 Oct., 1707,  
aet 84  
= 1. Anthony  
Girling of Grenling  
= 2. Giles Borret  
of Stradbrook.

Mary S.  
Margaret S.

Sancroft, 2nd  
son, died unmarrd.

Francis Sancroft, Esq., = Alice, da. of  
of Ufford Hall, Ld. Dey of Mendham.  
1695, died 1709.

William Sancroft, Gt.  
Purchased lands in  
Metfield, died s.p. 1712

Thomas Sancroft, died  
unmarrd., 1746, at  
Fresingfield.

John Sancroft died,  
unmarrd., 1775, at  
Fresingfield.

William Sancroft, Esq.  
of Ufford Hall, aft'ds.  
of Exning. Will dat.  
1717, 4 Oct. Died 1720

= Catherine, da. of Sir  
Jno Cotton, Bt., of  
Landwade, died Oct.,  
1763.

Elizabeth Sancroft,  
died unmarrd.

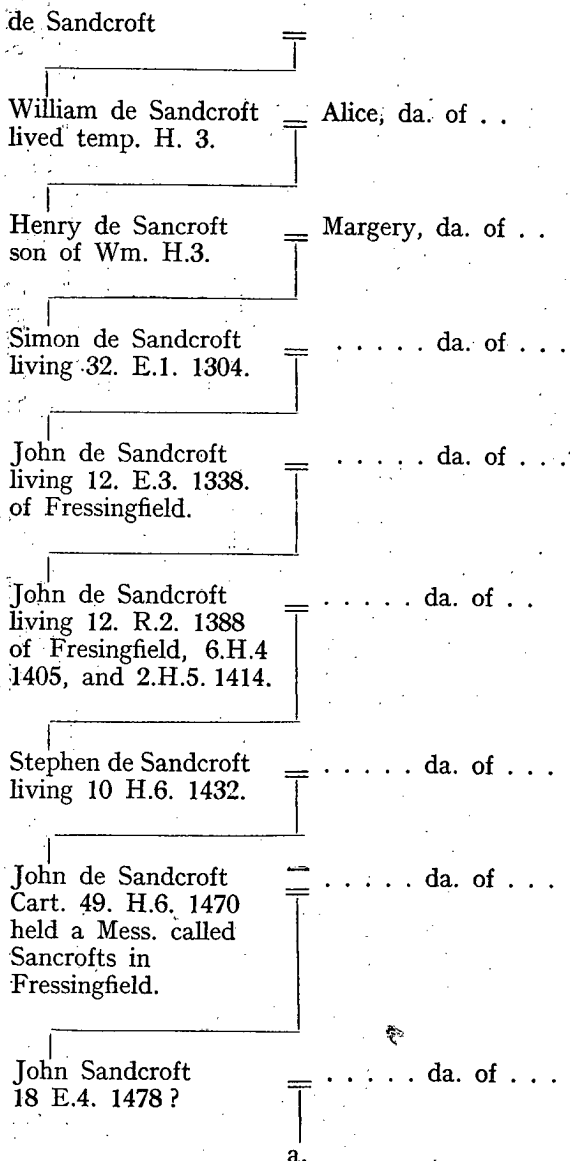
Alice Sancroft = Tho. Damant, of  
Lammas, in Norf.,  
Gent. (Died 1731,  
aged 62, bur. there).

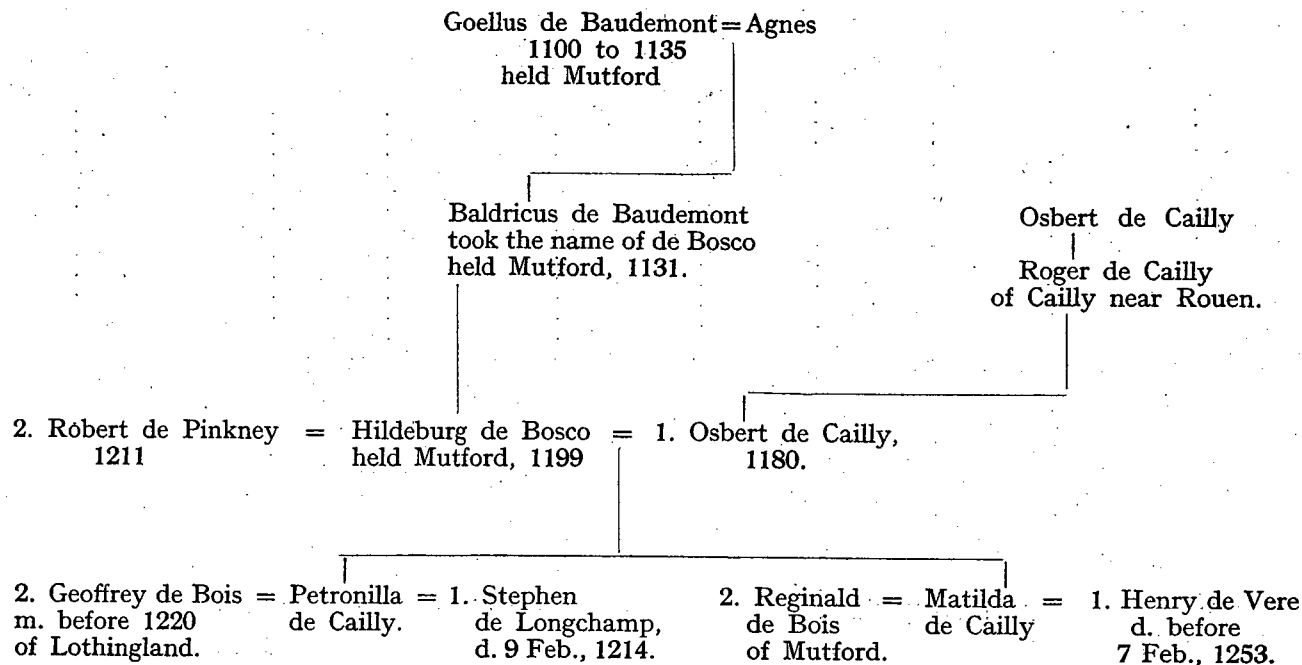
Catherine Sancroft,  
died unmarrd., 1780.

Elizabeth Sancroft = John Wogan, Esq.  
Died about 1788. of Gawdy Hall.

SANDCROFT.

Davy Coll. Vol. 72, pp. 86-88. Ad. MSS. 19148.





From Rotuli Scaccarii Normanniæ.