

THE EARLY HISTORY OF TENTERDEN.

By *Robert Furley, F.S.A.*

I have undertaken to read a paper on "The Early History of Tenterden;" a somewhat difficult task, especially as the most ancient and learned of our Kentish topographers (Lambarde) never even mentions the place; and when speaking of the district, he states that it cannot be shown from any of our ancient chronicles that "there is remaining in the Weald of Kent any one monument of great antiquity." As this was written more than 300 years ago, I must crave your indulgence in my attempt to record the early history of this pretty country town, which has been now a member or limb of the Cinque Ports for upwards of 400 years; for I shall have but little I fear to say which is likely to attract the antiquary, beyond pointing out the marked distinction between the Weald and the rest of Kent in the early tenure of the land.

The district, as is well known to most of you, was in bygone times part of a vast forest, "bringing forth thorns and thistles unbid," the resort of wild animals, and of deer and swine, and rarely trodden by the foot of man.

Camden published his *Britannia* shortly after Lambarde wrote his *Perambulation*, and all he says of it is, "In a woody tract are Tenterden, Cranbrook, Benenden, and other neighbouring towns, wherein the cloth trade flourished in the time of Edward III."

This woody tract was one of the largest, if not the largest, of our British forests. In Cæsar's time it formed part of three kingdoms, Cantii (Kent), Regni (Sussex and Surrey), and Belgæ (Hants, Wilts, and Somerset). It had a city and station during the occupation of Britain by the Romans (the site of which has long been the subject of controversy).

The only Roman remains that have been discovered during the present century, in this locality, to my knowledge, were found by Mr. Stephen Judge while draining a field in Tenterden, near Reading Hill, and consisted of a Roman urn and coins and a quantity of ashes deposited in a bank which had evidently been raised.

One of our modern writers, Dr. Guest, says it signifies "the uninhabited district," from "an," the kingdom, and parts of the South Saxon and West Saxon kingdoms. In Saxon times, this district extended over the south-western extremity of the Kentish kingdom, and parts of the South Saxon and West Saxon kingdoms. It was in King Alfred's time,

according to the Saxon Chronicle, 120 miles or longer from east to west, and 30 miles broad.

The Limen or Rother flowed out of it, and its western confines were near Privett in Hampshire.

Many places now bear very different names from those they once bore. What is now known to us as the Weald, which signifies in Saxon a woody country or forest, was known to the Britons as Coed-Andred, Coed being the British word for wood. The Romans called it Silva-Anderida. The Saxons called it Andred, Andredsley, and Andredsweald, and it retained the name of Andred for Celtic negative particle, and "dred," a dwelling; another modern writer (the late Mr. Lewin) says Anderida signifies "the black forest," from "an," the, "dern," oak forest, and "dy," black; while a third (Mr. Edmunds) says Andred is often met with as an owner's name. The Saxons called it Andred, Andredsley, and Andredsweald, and it retained the name of Andred for centuries after the Romans abandoned Britain. In our earliest Anglo-Saxon charters, it is called sometimes Saltus-Andred (a country of wooded glades), Silva-Andred, Saltus-Communis, and Silva-Regalis. The name Andred was given to it, according to Lambarde, from its vast extent; Andred is in British "great or wonderful." All this shows what little dependence is to be placed on nomenclature.

The earliest notice of Andred in Saxon times, that I have met with, is in the eighth century, when the chronicles record that Sigebert, a deposed king of the West Saxons, having committed murder, fled into "Andred," and was there slain. During the remainder of our Anglo-Saxon history, we meet with charters containing royal grants of land in different parts of Kent, especially in its south-eastern locality, to which was attached "the use of the woods in Andred;" again "the right of pasturage and feeding of a herd of swine in the Andred's Weald;" again "Pasturage for Swine which in our Saxon tongue we call denbera;" and again, "In the woods called Andred 120 wagons of wood to support the fires for preparing Salt."

The possession to which this right of pannage attached were granted to the heads of the Church and the religious houses, as well as to the military followers of the King, called thanes, from whom it has been conjectured that Tenterden derived its name. There were three kinds of thanes, — (1) Those who served the sovereign as his attendants, and were succeeded by the Norman barons; (2) those who served under dukes, earls, and the dignitaries of the Church, who afterwards became lords of manors, with a limited jurisdiction; and a third class, composed of freeholders of an inferior degree.

We have no evidence that Andred was originally a royal forest of chase, but while Kent continued a distinct kingdom, its sovereign enjoyed a paramount control over it, including the timber and other royalties

In process of time, with an increasing population, a limit was put to the general right of pannage, and we find grants to the freemen of the laths of Limen, Wye, and Burg, now Shipway, Scray, and St. Augustine, sometimes conferred by the sovereign with the consent of "the princes and great men," at other times with the consent of "the Wittan" or councillors of the nation, and these rights at last became limited to certain defined districts called "denes," being the wooded valley of the forest yielding both covert and mast. Names were now given to them; among the earliest we trace Frittenden, Benenden, Biddenden, Surrenden, etc. These denes sometimes also bore the name of the occupier, as our modern farms have subsequently done. While these denes were all situate within the Weald, the possessions which conferred them were scattered over different parts of Kent, especially the eastern portion of it. They were approached by drof-ways, and watched over by drof-men or forest herdsmen, to whom portions were sometimes allotted for their services. These drovers soon made the Weald their permanent abode, while more enterprising men, anxious to till the soil, joined them, and paid rent for permission to grub and plough portions of them, known as danger or lefsilver. The boundaries at length became more clearly defined, and gates were set up. This state of things must have existed long anterior to the Norman Conquest, which we are now approaching.

Tenterden, from its position, must have been, at this time, a place of some importance, yet, strange to say, we find no mention of it even in the eleventh century, nor of Tunbridge or Cranbrook. Its nomenclature affords conclusive evidence of its existence before the Conquest. Philipot, who has been followed by other writers, says it was originally written "Theinwarden," being the Thane's ward or guard in the wood or valley. Edmunds is also of opinion that it is of Anglo-Saxon origin, from "thegn" and "dene," "the nobleman's hollow." I find Tenterden first written as in the present day about the end of the sixteenth century, sometimes with the addition "alias Tentwarden."

In the Survey of Domesday there is no mention of many of the hundreds now in the centre of the Weald, and only eight places are referred to, four of which are returned with churches. Now it should be remembered that this Survey was compiled twenty years after the arrival of the Conqueror, that he might know, amongst other things, the names of his landowners, and the situation of their possessions. How then, it may be asked, does it happen that we fail to find Tenterden and Cranbrook in it? I will endeavour to give a reason. The Survey returns forty-five entire denes (some of them containing perhaps 500 acres each according to Spelman), also nine small ones and two halves, and no names are given to any of them. In this Survey the Norman term "manor" is substituted for *prædium* or possession; but in the Weald the denes represented the manors. The ecclesiastics, religious houses, and laity, who held no less than seventy manors under a newly created feudal system, held the right of pannage over the denes

in respect to these manors, to which they were appendant; there was no necessity to notice the denes further, at least so the Norman scribes might consider.

It may therefore, I think, be fairly inferred that modern Tenterden, at the time of the Conquest, only comprised denes appendant to those distant manors. *Subinfeudation soon followed; the tenure of many of them (including parts of Tenterden) was changed into lesser manors, and some of them were held by military service, such as guarding Dover Castle, etc. Those which were still preserved as denes were chiefly held by the Church and the religious houses. From the examination of the Court Rolls which I have had access to, I am of opinion that originally there were not less than thirty denes, or parts of denes, in Tenterden as it is now known to us, viz.: — Tenterden itself, Pitlesden, Heronden, Prestone, Ridgeway, Housney, Dumborne, Meusden, West Cross, Chepperegge, Reading, Igglesden, Eldershurst, Strenchden, Elarndine, Godden, Gatesden, Morgue, Boresile, Bugglesden, Saltkendine, Finchdene, Twisdene, Haldene, Little Haldene, Dovedene, Haffendene, and Brissendene. The manors to which these denes were appendant were situate, with one or two exceptions, in the eastern part of Kent, viz.: — Aldington, Boughton Malherbe, Brook, Fridd in Bethersden, Great Chart, Northbourne, Reculver, Westwell, Wye.

[*Subinfeudation: In English law, subinfeudation is the practice by which tenants, holding land under the king or other superior lord, carved out new and distinct tenures in their turn by sub-letting a part of their lands. This second level of tenants were termed "mesne lords". The lowest tenant was the freeholder, or, as he was somewhat termed, "tenant paravail". The Crown, who in theory owned all lands, was "lord paramount". (Wikipedia)]

Let us now turn to the mode by which justice was administered here. When Kent first became a kingdom, it was divided into laths (peculiar to it); those in the Weald were known as Limowart and Wiwarlet; the next division was into hundreds, and the third into boroughs (called tithings in most other counties). In the Weald we also meet with quarters, such as Haffenden Quarter.

Both hundreds and tithings were doubtless of Roman origin, but these words have so long flourished apart from their roots that, as a modern writer (Milman) states, those roots and the modes of growth therefrom have been utterly forgotten.

We first meet with Tenterden as a hundred about the twelfth century, and we find it classed with six neighbouring ones for municipal purposes, viz.: — Cranbrook, Barkley, Barnfield, Blackbourne, Rolvenden, and Selbritten. All our historians are silent respecting the origin of this union of "The Seven Hundreds," which I consider the most ancient civil institution in the Weald. The sovereign had the power not only to create hundreds, but also to change and consolidate them. I believe, from various authorities

which I must pass over, that this consolidation was brought about towards the close of the reign of the Conqueror. It was of the first importance that the laws which he had introduced for the government of other parts of the shire, should be extended to this district. His followers, especially Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and Hugh de Montfort (who had dispossessed many a Saxon of his inheritance in and about the Weald), were now interested in its tranquility. The area, though large in extent, was but sparsely inhabited, and justice was here administered by an assembly of "The Seven Hundreds" held by the sovereign, forming one court for judicial purposes, and presided over by a Norman bailiff, who had now become the substitute for the Saxon reeve [bailiff]. This court was originally held every three weeks, in the open air. A levy was made for the support of the office, which was called the Hundred Penny. The sovereign was entitled to the profits of the courts, derived from fines and amerciaments [a financial penalty]; and he exercised a military jurisdiction, through the high-constables of each hundred, and the subordinate borsholders [chief of a tithing or borough]. The seven hundreds, thus formed into a bailiwick, were charged with an annual payment of £10 towards the garniture of Dover Castle. Each of these hundreds elected its own constables and borsholders; and as they were formed and grouped long after the laths of Kent, I have always been of opinion that for centuries they were not subject to lath law, including lath silver. The hundred of Tenterden was divided into six boroughs; five being within what has since constituted the parish of Tenterden, at present known as Town, Castweasle, Boresisle, Dumbourne, and Shrubcote; the sixth was Reading in Ebony. The jurisdiction extended over murders, manslaughters, and robberies, with a power of repeal to Penenden, and thence to the sovereign. Henry II introduced the practice of hanging thieves; and a gallow was set up in Tenterden (which has still its gallows green) and in all the principal hundreds. In the thirteenth century, the powers of these local jurisdictions were materially curtailed; and judges were sent into each county, who held assizes for Kent at Canterbury and Rochester, and occasionally at Tunbridge.

A brief notice taken from the earliest Plea Rolls, of some of the proceedings at these courts, during the thirteenth and early part of the fourteenth centuries, including the reigns of Henry III, Edward I, and Edward II, will show how justice in matters affecting Tenterden was administered at that time, and will, I think, be of interest. Tenterden had now gradually emerged from a dene and a borough, and had become a ville or town.

From the Plea Rolls I find it was adjudged that every holder of a tenement in Tenterden was bound to do suit and service at the Hundred Court, every three weeks, when summoned by the borsholder.

Then the hundred was gildable [liable to a tax], and subject to "scot and lot," which was a customary contribution laid on all the inhabitants according to their ability. This burden appears to have been levied on all the inhabitants of the seven hundreds now

brought under "Hundred Law," but I have not met with it in the more ancient hundreds of Kent. The justice of such a payment is obvious, as portions of the district still remained unreclaimed. The hundred was relieved from this burden in the reign of Henry VI, when Tenterden was united to the Cinque Ports.

The fair at Tenterden was then held on the eve and day of the Feast of St. Mildred [July 13th]; it had been hitherto exempt from tolls, but the King's bailiff had recently exacted them and was to answer for it.

The bailiffs of the hundred of Tenterden and of the liberties of the archbishop and the prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, were accused of amercing offenders, for breaking the assize of bread and ale, instead of punishing the delinquents by pillory [a stoke] and tumbrel. Henry III had passed a statute that, if the offence was grievous, the baker should go to the pillory, and the brewer to the tumbrel [a dunking stool].

Alexander de Tenwardine and two others had been guilty of purpresture, or encroachment on the King's highway, by the erection of three shops; the jury decided that these erections were not a nuisance to the highway, and they were permitted to remain on the payment of a fee-farm rent of twelve horseshoes!

A little later, it is recorded that seven more shops had been erected in the High Street of Tenterden, worth yearly 3s. 5d., and the sheriff was directed to levy this sum for the King as lord of the seven hundreds. In the next reign these shops are again presented as a nuisance; but, as rent had been paid to the King for them, they were suffered to remain.

A common path, from the ville of Tenterden to the ville of Reding, had been wrongfully enclosed with a ditch and hedge, and another, from Reding to Woodchurch and Halden, had been also stopped, and the sheriff was ordered to "de-obstruct" them. He was also ordered to pull down a house built partly on the highway in Tenterden. A woman had sold eight butts of wine in two years, and a man had sold forty butts, contrary to the assize, and they were amerced for it.

The archbishop's bailiff Robert de Cherringe (Charing), had made an illegal distress [taking wrong doer's possessions for personal gain], and was amerced.

Ralph de la Burn, being accused of larceny, was apprehended, but escaped from the frankpledge or borough of Waren de Burwarsile, and Waren was amerced for the escape.

Certain persons were indicted for robbery and fled. They were outlawed, but being strangers and not in any borough, the hundred was not liable.

A quarrel took place in a tavern at Tenterden, and one man struck another on the head with a staff, so that he died. The offender fled, and the borough was amerced because the "hue and cry" was not raised.

A man killed another with a knife in coming from Tenterden Church.

A man killed a girl in shooting with an arrow at the Assize butt, in the borough of Bourwarsile.

A return is made that Thomas de Tenwardine held an entire knight's fee, that he was of full age, and not yet a knight. To meet the expense of a foreign war, Edward I compelled those who possessed land of the value of £20 to take up their knighthood, which bound them to attend their sovereign to the wars, at their own expense, forty days in every year. It was afterwards commuted into a money payment, called "escuage."

I have thus briefly shown how justice was administered in Tenterden six hundred years ago, the hundred and its boroughs being made responsible for the good behaviour of its inhabitants.

Let us now leave the municipal proceedings of Tenterden, and dwell for a few moments on its ecclesiastical history.

I have failed to ascertain at what period, and by whom, the first Christian church was founded in Tenterden.

The unappropriated portions of the forest belonged to the sovereign as Lord Paramount, and with them as ecclesiastical prerogative over the tithes, and the King might promote the erection of churches, endow them with tithes, and form parishes without the concurrence of the Pope or Bishop. The first church, whenever erected, had a newly created manor appendant to it, which at first could only have comprised a small part of the present parish. It no doubt stood on the site of the present one, and was made of ruder materials; we know that a church was in existence A.D. 1242, for the Plea Rolls of that date refer to it, and a priest was provided by the Abbot of St. Augustine's, to whom an annual pension was paid. Thirteen years later we have evidence that the right of patronage was in dispute. For it would appear, from the Plea Rolls of 1255, that a serious affray took place in Tenterden Church, which ended in the loss of life of one Henry de Smaleide. Two distinguished men of that day were involved in it, the great pluralist John Maunsell, Provost of Beverly, and Henry de Wingham (a man of acknowledged merits, who afterwards became Chancellor of England and Bishop of London). Maunsell had authority from the Pope to induct Henry de Wingham; but the inhabitants resisted the appointment, and assembled an armed band in the church to eject the promoters of the nominee. A conflict ensued, which terminated fatally. Henry III was appealed to, and he, by letters patent, pardoned the offenders, and directed the justices not to interfere.

This affray possibly led to the final appropriation of the church to the monastery of St. Augustine, subject to the maintenance of a perpetual vicar, which took place four years later (A.D. 1259). So, it remained until the dissolution of that monastery, when the right of advowson passed to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, with whom it still remains. The present church has been ably described by my friend, the Rev. A. J. Pearman. It is one of the four Kentish churches dedicated to St. Mildred, and one of sixteen parishes with "den" as its suffix.

The whole of the Weald of Kent had been formed into parishes by the end of the thirteenth century, which is proved by the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* granted to Edward I by Pope Nicholas IV.

I will next refer to the Hundred Roll prepared at the commencement of the reign of Edward I (A.D. 1274), being a return made to this King by a jury assembled in each hundred, who were directed to inquire into, and report on, the conduct of the sheriffs, bailiffs, etc., who were accused of defrauding the Crown and oppressing the people. The farming out, to the highest bidder, of the emoluments of civil offices led to great extortion, and was contrary to the provisions of Magna Charta, and often drove the inhabitants from their hundreds. In this Roll, Tenterden is returned as one of the Seven Hundreds, which belonged to the King, and was held by Stephen de Peneshurst, subject to the yearly payment of £10 to the castle of Dover. Roger de Benyndene was then the bailiff, and Hugh de Wy the clerk, against whom there is a long list of complaints from the good people of Tenterden and others; and his death, which is recorded shortly afterwards, must have been a great relief to them.

The right of the archbishop and the prior of Christchurch to make a warren at Appletre and Hibbene [Appledore and Ebony] is questioned. There is also a complaint that their tenants had withdrawn from the suits of the lath, and from the sheriff's tourn, to the loss of the King of thirty-six marks. "The jury know not by what warrant." These tenants were at this time the occupiers of the denes belonging to the manors of Aldington, Brook, etc. The manorial rights of the abbot of Battle are also referred to in respect of the dene of Chepperegge, belonging to the royal manor of Wye, then held by that abbey. Time will not permit me to dwell longer on these ancient records.

During the reign of Edward, I there were frequent struggles between him and his prelates and clergy. He wanted money to carry on a war against France, and demanded of his clergy a moiety of their goods, spiritual as well as temporal. The clergy mutinied, for they were then groaning under a double taxation, one imposed by the King, and the other by the Pope. Boniface issued a Bull excommunicating all rulers who should impose taxes on the Church, and all clergymen who should pay them. Edward's anger became great when they informed him that it was out of their power to pay, and he put out of the

pale of the law all who refused to contribute. A conference was appointed between the King and Archbishop Winchelsea, which took place in 1299 at Maidstone; and so determined was the King that the clergy should not escape, that on the primate's arrival in the county town the royal officers actually seized his horses. Most of the clergy at last submitted; but amongst those who still held out was "John, Vicar of the Church of Tenterden," and he, with sixteen other Kentish rectors and vicars, were excommunicated, arrested, and conveyed to the prison at Canterbury; and they only obtained their release by giving bail for their appearance.

Edward I had selected for the companion of his son (the first Prince of Wales) a handsome youth of Gascony named Piers de Gaveston. As the boys grew up, dissipation cemented the attachment. The Prince, it is said, instigated by Gaveston, broke down a bishop's fence and killed his deer. The King was resolved that the laws should be respected, regardless of the rank of the offender, and he compelled Gaveston to quit England, and prohibited the young Prince from approaching the Court for some months; so he spent a portion of his time in Kent, keeping at a respectful distance from his royal father, who had then (1305) a country seat at Newenden, and was fishing and shooting in Kent. The Prince remained for some days at Tenterden, and there wrote five or six letters to his family and friends, which have been preserved. In them he shows great anxiety to obtain the King's forgiveness. One's curiosity is aroused respecting the spot where he dwelt.

Tradition says that Pitlesden (standing on the northern side of the present High Street) once belonged to the renowned Earl Godwin, who resided there (?); and that there the Prince took up his abode. My informant was my late respected friend, Mr. Joseph Munn, to whom it had been handed down.

The necessities of the sovereign were now supplied by Aids, being assessments upon those who held of him or some inferior lord, by knight, or military service. Edward II caused a return to be made of the hundreds, and the vills or towns in them, for the purpose of a military levy. This return is called "Nomina Villarum." In it, the King's name appears as lord of the hundred of Tenterden, and the archbishop, the prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, and Sir John de Segrave, and Sir Richard de Rokesle as lords of the ville or town. The last-named persons were at this time two of the leading gentry of Kent.

I propose next to notice some of the principal estates in Tenterden and their earliest proprietors.

Heronden (which belonged to an old family of that name, passed into the family of **Curteis**, and is now held by Mrs. Croughton, which may, I think, be classed, with Pitlesden, amongst the first of the denes which possessed family residences. More interest, however, attaches to Pitlesden already referred to, from the fact that Sir John

Dudley, afterwards Duke of Northumberland (who was attainted and beheaded in the reign of Queen Mary), inherited it (with Kenchill) in right of his wife, Jane, a daughter of Sir Edward Guldeford; and he with the license of Henry VIII conveyed it to Sir Thomas Cromwell (created Earl of Essex for his services in suppressing the religious houses, afterwards attainted and executed). He sold it to Henry VIII, and it remained in the hands of the Crown until the next reign, when it was granted to Sir John Baker, of whom I shall again speak.

On Leigh Green (which also gave the name to a dene) stood Finchden, which I am disposed to think was held by one family for a longer continuous period than any other property in Tenterden; say for more than 400 years. "Dene" appears to have been a suffix to the original name, and afterwards dropped. One of this family, William de Fynchdene, was Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (not King's Bench, as stated by Hasted) in the reign of Edward III. Elardendene, or Elarndene, was held of the manor of Frid, in Bethersden, and belonged to the Maneys of Biddenden in the fourteenth century.

The Hales family, owners of Hales Place, at one time held about one-sixth of the town; and the Guldefords were possessed of Kenchill and East Asherinden; but these families were comparatively modern owners, who flourished during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Mention of them will be made by the Rev. R. Cox Hales and Canon Jenkins. I will therefore close my account of the early owners and their estates with a reference to Light -Notinden, Gatesdene, East Asherinden, Godden, and Morgue; and I trust I shall succeed in attaching a little more interest to some of these places than they have hitherto possessed.

Light's-Notingden and East Asherinden (a forgotten name) were two small manors, and before that, denes. Our three Kentish historians, Philipot, Harris, and Hasted, all class them together, and tell us that they belonged partly to a chantry in Tenterden founded by John Light, and partly to the manor of Brook, near Wye, held by the priory of Christ Church, Canterbury, and were granted by Henry VIII, on the suppression of the chantry and priory, to his Attorney-General, Sir John Baker, of Sissinghurst, who was also the Attorney-General of Edward VI and Queen Mary. Here Philipot stops. Dr. Harris (a later writer) adds: — "This chapel or chantry of Light's, I believe was formerly a little church, and is so described in the old maps; in Dugdale's Map of Romney Marsh it is called Small Light, and now Smallhythe in Symondson's Map." While Hasted takes no notice of the chapel, and tells us that he has been unable to ascertain how long they were held by the Bakers; but that Light's-Notinden was in his day the property of Mr. Wm. Mantell, and East Asherinden then belonged to Mr. Wm. Children, who had built a house there, in which he resided.

Now as I shall have occasion to speak of another chantry, let me in a few words explain their origin.

When the taste for founding monasteries declined, chantries supplied their place. They were instituted for keeping up a succession of prayers for the prosperity of the founder while living, and the repose of his soul, and the souls of his relatives, when dead. They were usually built in, or added to, existing churches, and lands were purchased, with the license of the sovereign, for the support of the officiating priests, and other expenses of the chantry.

At the Reformation these chantries, like the religious houses, were all suppressed. Then as to Godden, Gatesdene, and Morgue, I am disposed to think that Godden and Gatesdene were one and the same place; the names having been changed with a change of owners. Godden was held of the manor of Northbourne. All traces of both Godden and Gatesdene have now disappeared. I find Gatesdene called a borough in the reign of Edward II. Hasted tells us that in his day there were some marshes called Gatesdene, "near the river between Mayhamme and Smalhide." The ownership, as I shall now show, of Gatesdene and Morgue became united, and the name Morgue alone has been preserved.

Edward III had committed the charge of the Seven Hundreds to Henry de Valoygnes (an important family at this time), whose residence was at Ripton in Ashford; and an Aid having been granted to the King to make the Black Prince a knight, Tenterden is returned for one fee in respect of lands which "Thomas de Gatesdene held at Gatesdene in Tenterden, of the manor of Beaumundestone," now called Beamstone in Westwell. Here we meet with an original dene, converted by subinfeudation into a lesser manor (the only one in Tenterden then held by knight service), and held of a distant manor granted by the Conqueror to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux; the demesne and lands of which, in the present day, form part of Eastwell Park. This supports my theory with respect to the nameless denes in the Survey of Domesday. But I must try and keep your attention fixed for the present on Gatesdene and Morgue, which I am about to connect with old St. Paul's Cathedral and Somerset House, London. In the old Cathedral, there were no less than forty-seven chantries or chapels; one of the most important stood next the north door, and was founded by Walter Sherrington, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the reign of Henry VI; and in 1454 an Inquisition was taken at Cranbrook before the King's Escheator, when it was decided that it would not be to the prejudice of the Crown to grant a license to the chaplains of this chantry to purchase the manors of Morge and Gatesdene otherwise Godden in Tenterden, held of Sir Walter Moyle of Eastwell by fealty, who held of the King. In this chantry two priests used to celebrate Divine services for the soul of the founder, and all Christian souls forever.

So, matters remained until the suppression of this and other chantries, in the first year of Edward VI, when this property was sold to Sir Miles Partriche and another, to hold *in capite* by knight service. It afterwards passed to the Colepepers, **the Curteis**, the Pomfrets,

and is now held by Mr. W. Pomfret Burra. In 1549 the chapel in St. Paul's was pulled down, with the library attached to it; and, strange to say, the materials were carried into the Strand and used in the building of that stately fabric, Somerset House.

Now, setting aside the iron fencing round the present St. Paul's, which was manufactured in the Weald, and which never ought to have been placed there, I think I have said enough to satisfy you that Gatesden and Morgue in Tenterden had quite as much, if not more, to do with old St. Paul's Cathedral and the present Somerset House, than anything that can be advanced in favour of the paradoxical tradition that "Tenterden Steeple was the cause of the Goodwin Sands." Besides the chantries already referred to, there was one in Tenterden Church called Peter Marshall's Chantry, which I don't remember to have been noticed by any of our topographers. Here certain houses and land in Tenterden and Woodchurch, including the Woolsack (I suppose the present Woolpack), were given for the use and support of a chaplain in the church, for celebrating Divine service, as well as for teaching in the Grammar School. The south chancel of the church was appropriated to the use of the school, during the last century. A fraternity also existed here, called "Our Lady's Brotherhood." There were also three obit rents; and a light rent, for two tapers before the high altar.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, an industrious, if not a wealthy, population became the inhabitants of this district. Noble oaks were felled, charcoal burnt and exported, while the application of marl [an earthly material rich in carbonite minerals], with an increase of light and air from the clearing of woods, led to a gradual improvement in the cultivation of the soil, but the roads remained as bad as ever. Like the rest of the county, Tenterden had now its acknowledged owners either of denes, or lesser manors which had been formed out of them. As, however, the timber was still often claimed by the sovereign or the religious houses, it operated prejudicially to the occupiers, who, like the inhabitants of the New Forest, took advantage of their secluded position, regardless of the law of "meum and tuum" [mine and thine]. This was carried to such an extent, that Archbishop Winchelsea, in the reign of Edward II, obtained a special commission to ascertain what timber had been wrongfully cut down, and carried away by the tenants, in no less than fifteen places, in his denes held of the manor of Aldington, which included Herendene in Tenterden, where seventy-eight oaks and beeches had been carried off. His grace's right was established, and verdicts given in his favour.

A similar claim was set up, about the same time, by the Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, in respect of the denes in Tenterden belonging to that church, and held of the manor of Appledore, Brook, and Ickham, which ended in a composition by which new yearly rents were charged, as a substitute for the timber. Still the boundaries of some of the denes were preserved, by treading them, as late as the reign of Henry VII.

Until the fourteenth century, Kent does not appear to have acquired any reputation for its wool; but Edward III having invited the industrious Flemings and others to settle in England, as weavers and clothworkers, the Weald of Kent was fixed upon for the seat of the manufacture of broadcloths. Cranbrook appears to have been its centre; and though it gave employment to many, and laid the foundation of modest fortunes, it never at any time assumed any very large proportions in this locality. The interesting paper on this subject, read by Mr. William Tarbutt at Cranbrook, in 1873, and to be found in Vol. IX of the *Archaeologia Cantiana*, renders it unnecessary for me to dwell longer upon it now; though, before I close this paper, I may have occasion to refer to the successful career of the family of Skeetes, who were at a later period engaged in this pursuit. Then, as to the manufacture of iron, I do not find any reference to furnaces in Tenterden, similar to those we meet with at Biddenden and other parts of the Weald. The grazing of Shirley Moor, and Romney Marsh, conduced, in my opinion, more to the wealth and prosperity of Tenterden than the manufacture of either iron or cloth.

This leads me to an important period of its history, viz., the severing of it from the jurisdiction of the County and its Seven Hundreds, and the transfer of it to the Cinque Ports, as a limb of Rye; this was done by Henry VI, by letters patent, which recite that the barons and trusty men of the Cinque Ports, in return for the privileges they enjoyed by charters, granted to them by former Kings of England, were bound to find fifty-nine ships at their own charges every year for fifteen days at the summons of the sovereign. That the town of Rye was one of its most ancient ports, where the entry of enemies and rebels into the kingdom of England frequently happened. That not only the property in Rye was so reduced in value, but also its inhabitants were so impoverished, that neither the town nor its barons and trusty men could find and provide their quota of such navy as they ought to do. The King therefore granted to the Mayor and Barons of Rye, and "to the inhabitants and tenants resident and not resident in the Town and Hundred of Tenterden, that they should be of one Bailiff and Commonalty of the same Town and Hundred of Tenterden, perpetual and corporate forever, and be a body corporate by the name of the Bailiff and Commonalty of Tenterden." Then follow directions for the election of the bailiff, and for the holding of courts fortnightly, according to the custom of the Cinque Ports. Also, the exemption of the inhabitants from the tolls, levies, and burdens of the shire and hundred, and from attending the Shire Courts at Penenden Heath, the Hundred Courts of the Seven Hundreds, and before Justices in Eyre and Commissioners of Sewers; and a command that the Bailiff and Commonalty according to his means, to the service of ships for the many when required so to do. And that all pleadings should be in the court before the Bailiff of Tenterden, or in the court of the Cinque Ports called Shipway.

Rye was no doubt glad to be relieved of a portion of its burdens, by its more prosperous neighbour Tenterden. Later on (8 Henry VII), a composition was entered into between the two towns for apportioning the services to be rendered, and the payments to be made

by each. The next corporate change, at Tenterden, took place in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when that sovereign added to its importance by substituting a Mayor for a Bailiff; and from that time until the passing of the Municipal Corporation Act, its corporation under the charter of Queen Elizabeth was styled, "The Mayor, Jurats, and Commons of the Town and Hundred of Tenterden" (which included part of Ebony), John Hales being its first Mayor. The maces and seals of the Corporation should be inspected. There is a bailiff's seal (brass), also two mayor's seals (one silver and the other brass). The Corporate seal is an elaborate one, and bears the arms of the Cinque Ports, and a figure of St. Mildred with a coronet, also a shield with the family arms (as Boys supposed) of the Pitlesden family, who presented the seal to the Corporation.

The Parish Registers date from the reign of Henry VIII (1554), and appear to have been re-copied in the reign of Elizabeth (1599).

When Henry VIII became enamoured of the gay and accomplished Ann Boleyn, he paid frequent visits to Hever Castle, and on one occasion he visited Tenterden. During his reign "a marvellous, abominable, and seditious sermon" was preached in Tenterden upon one Easter Wednesday, and an information was laid by certain of the inhabitants and presented to the Privy Council, who gave directions for the arrest of the priest. This sermon was possibly against the supremacy of the King. I have been unable to trace any more about either the priest or the sermon.

On the 2nd of May, 1511, six men and four women (most of them from Tenterden) appeared before Archbishop Warham at Knole, and abjured their errors, ten in number; and later in the day two other inhabitants did the same. By way of penance, the Archbishop enjoined them to wear on their clothes, until dispensed with, the badge of a fagot [a bundle of tied twigs] in flames, and in procession at their own parish church, and in the Cathedral at Canterbury, they were directed to carry a fagot on their shoulders, as a public confession that they deserved burning.

A Free Grammar School was founded here, by an ancestor of Sir Henry Heyman, which was endowed by the Rev. William Marshall in the reign of Henry VIII, and subsequently by John Mantel. The income of these endowments is now applied towards the support of the National School.

Halden Park at this time belonged to Sir Edward Guldeford, and was enlarged by the enclosure of some adjoining lands in Tenterden. Lambarde returns it as disparked in his time.

I must say a few words about Smallhythe and its chapel, situate within the borough of Dumborne, in the southern extremity of Tenterden, near the Rother. Like Tenterden Church, we have no reliable authority as to when and by whom this chapel was built. Kilburne says it is supposed to have been founded by one Shepherde. It was possibly

erected for the accommodation of the inhabitants there, who had to keep it in repair. We are told that the upper part of the road leading from Tenterden to Smallhythe was known as Broad-Tenterden, and at one time formed the most populous part of it. This chapel was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and licensed by a faculty from Archbishop Warham (May 5, 1509), on the petition of the inhabitants, on account of the distance from the parish church, the badness of the roads, and periodical floods. In this faculty (on the eve of the Reformation), there is a grant of forty days' indulgence to all who should contribute towards the support of the chapel and chaplain. The right to present to it was at first vested in the Vicar of Tenterden, but it is now enjoyed by the householders of Dumborne. The chaplain (now incumbent) is maintained by the rent arising from a small farm, and in bygone times a room was erected over the farmhouse for his residence. There appears to have been a haven at one time at Smallhythe, for we find a precept from Edward III to the bailiff complaining that the masters and mariners of ships coming there cast the lastage of their vessels into the port, whereby the passage had become so narrow that ships could not enter. The sea came up here as late as the reign of Henry VIII; as a faculty was granted, in 1509, to bury in the ancient chapel yard at Smallhythe the bodies of those who were cast by shipwreck on the seashore.

Amongst the few records possessed by the Corporation, is a minute book, in which passing events appear to have been entered in chronological order. Here we find this entry: "6 Henry VIII [A.D. 1514-15], the which year Smalithe was burnt on the last day of July." Did the fire include the chapel, which had only been erected six years? About thirty-five years after the fire, and in the reign of Edward VI, interrogatories were issued (which may be seen amongst the papers of the Court of Augmentation) to ascertain whether this was a chapel of ease or not, its distance from Tenterden, and other particulars.

About ten witnesses were examined, and the result of their evidence may be thus summed up: -

They all agreed that it was not a chapel of ease. According to one witness, there were then sixty "houceling people" [church members who received the sacrament] in the hamlet, eighty according to another, and 100 according to a third. That there was no haven there, save only a creek of salt water, frequented only by lighters to fetch wood; though a little pinnace of the King's had been brought there to be repaired (*thus connecting Tenterden with the Cinque Ports and Royal Navy*). That mass had been said in the chapel for the last two years by one Peter Hall; and no other sacraments administered but mass, matins, even song, holy-bread, and holy-water, all which was done with the license of the vicar; that lands called chapel lands, including a mortuary-garden, had been left for the support of a priest.

Within a few months of this inquiry, I find amongst the particulars for grants, one to two brothers, Robert and John King, of London, merchant tailors, of "the late free chapel

called Smallhythe," then vacant. "The lead, lights, and advowson excepted." This sale appears to have been effected about the time the chantries were sold, but I am rather in a fog as to this. If it was, then it is obvious that a fresh trust must have been created, based on the principles of the Reformed Church. It is now a separate ecclesiastical district.

I must hasten on; the threatened invasion during the reign of Elizabeth, first by the Roman Catholics, with the sanction of Pope Pius V, with a view to overthrow the Queen's government, and afterwards by the Spaniards, led to the mustering, arming, and training of the inhabitants of Tenterden, as a limb of the Cinque Ports, and they had to provide twenty-four men and four horses. A beacon or fire signal was hung at the top of the church, on a pole eight feet long. It resembled an iron kettle. Watchmen were stationed near it at night, while during the day a light horseman, called an hobiler, was in readiness to communicate with Cranbrook and the neighbouring stations. Muster rolls were also preserved, of the trained bands of the town and hundred.

The Corporation minute book, when recording the visit of Queen Elizabeth at Bartholomew-tide in 1571-2 to Rye, Hempsted, and Sissinghurst, makes no mention of Tenterden. Her Majesty visited the Weald on two or three occasions, since which time royal visits here have been few and far between.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, a landing of the supporters of Charles I took place at Rye (A.D.1642), and orders were issued by the Parliament to intercept and seize the horses of all "malignants" that might be found in the neighbourhood; but the great Kentish rising did not take place until 1648.

The surveys of Crown lands, and possessions of the Church, which were ordered by the Commonwealth to be made with a view to a sale, included "the Seven Hundreds" (now the property of Viscount Cranbrook), and the rectory of Tenterden, let on lease to Sir Edward Hales, Bart. Amongst the royalists whose estates at Tenterden were sequestered, and who were heavily mulct for their loyalty, were those of the Colepepers, the Guldefords, the Argalls, Sir Peter Richards, and Sir Robert Pointz.

The manors of Morgue and Godden were still held together, and had passed from an Essex family named Argall (who held at this time Kenchill) to Sir John Colepeper. The Parliamentary Commissioners sold Sir John's interest in Morgue and Godden to his relative Sir Cheney Colepeper, and an interest attaches to the notice in these Parliamentary papers of a breach of the sea, whereby 156 acres of the Morgue lands were returned as "drowned lands," since the breaking in of the sea in Wittersham level; and that in four years (1644 to 1648) the water scots in the Morgue and Gatesden lands amounted to £1025, and there was but little hope of their returning to their former value, without great care and expense. The Parliamentary Commissioners, however, declined to make any allowance for these heavy scots, and the fine was assessed at £200.

Within two months of the restoration of Charles II (19 March, 1660), Tenterden Court Hall was burnt down, and the Corporation chest with its charters and ancient documents were destroyed. An exemplification of the charters was obtained in the reign of George III.

I promised before I closed this paper to refer to the Skeets family, who were influential clothiers in Tenterden during the seventeenth century, and carried on business for three generations at Westcross. By the kindness of the widow of the late Mr. Talbot, formerly of Tenterden, I have seen the lecture he delivered and the memorandum he made respecting this family. James Skeets was Mayor of Tenterden in 1643, and on two other occasions. There are entries in old waste books showing the extent of the business he carried on. The factory business was not then known, and the making of cloth was a domestic employment. John Tylden was another influential clothier at that time in Tenterden, and carried on business as you enter Tenterden from Cranbrook. The cloth made was despatched to London, and to the neighbouring fairs. Most of the leading clothiers were also graziers; the Skeets held Morgue under the Colepepers. The leading shopkeeper at this time was Susan Butler; she was a general dealer, and had a well-stocked shop.

By the end of the eighteenth century the manufacture of iron and cloth in the Weald had ceased; the former trade was transferred to Merthyr Tydvil, Aberdare, etc., and the latter to Leeds, Bradford, etc.; and as to the land, its original and peculiar tenures had been converted or abolished.

From its earliest history we rarely meet with personal servitude in this locality, and when we do it is of the mildest form; the reason is obvious. It was first known as a forest, and it was the last portion of the shire that was brought into cultivation, and this was effected when civilization was making rapid advances, when

"Custom in Kent, encouraging the brave,
Distinguished well the brother from the slave."

The inhabitants of the Weald were amongst the earliest and foremost to expose the errors of the Romish Church, notwithstanding the sanguinary laws passed against the Lollards; and with the aid of the Flemish clothiers, they fostered the Reformation. Zeal sometimes carried them beyond discretion, for amongst the prominent leaders of Wat Tyler's rebellion were men from Tenterden and Smallhythe. Richard Owen of Tenterden was one of those who were excepted from the general pardon; and as might be expected, this district supplied its full quota of the followers of Jack Cade.

In Archbishop Laud's return to Charles I of the state of his diocese, under Tenterden he says: — "There is some refractory people here, but, by the aid of the archdeacon, I hope to keep them in order."

Though I have not nearly exhausted my subject, I fear I have exhausted your patience. I have given you, from the best materials I could collect, a hasty sketch of Tenterden in bygone times, and I have only to express my hope that modern Tenterden may be prosperous, and its inhabitants happy. A few years ago it gave a title to Charles Abbot, a native of Canterbury and Chief Justice of England, created Lord Tenterden in the year 1827; and as an incentive to the rising generation, I will conclude in the words of a late distinguished member of our Society: — "Lord Tenterden's career will prove to future generations that in England the most lowly born may attain the highest honours by the exercise of industry, application, patience, and intelligence."