

Pirton.

PIRTON is a village and parish about three miles north-west of Hitchin. It is bounded on the north and west by the County of Bedford; on the south by Offley and Hitchin; and on the east by Ickleford. In Oughton Bottom, in the south-east part of the parish, is a detached piece of land, containing about forty acres, which belongs to the parish of Shitlington, or Shillington, in the County of Bedford. The soil is chalk, on which, notwithstanding its unpromising appearance, large quantities of grain are produced. The area of the parish is 2,561 acres, and the population, at the census taken in 1871, was 1081 persons.

Pieces of Roman pottery (mostly burial urns), and a few coins, are from time to time found at or near the surface of the soil, but fragments of articles of domestic use are of rare occurrence. In January, 1835, a labourer working in a field on Pirton Hill, called Dane's Shot, turned up with his spade a fragment of a small jar. "His curiosity being excited, he dug deeper in the soil, which is of a white clayey nature, when, at about twelve inches from the surface, a skeleton, in a very perfect condition, was exposed to view. Further search having been made, twenty-seven more were found, with many Roman jars of moderate size, of a dull, black, brittle clay, but which on examination were found only to contain burnt bones and ashes. The bodies seem to have been hastily placed in the ground, there being no order observed. . . . The land appears for a space of thirty feet wide by seventy or eighty feet long to be crowded with bodies. No coins have as yet been brought to light, but a curiously ornamented brass armlet and some buckles and twisted pins were found near one of the skeletons." I cannot learn what became of the objects which were found.

County Press,
14 Feb., 1835.

A large mound, known as Toot Hill, adjoining the south-western boundary of the churchyard, is said to have been the site of a castle built by a member of the family of de Limesy. No trace of the castle now remains, but in a field at the eastern foot of the mound, called Bury Field, the foundations of extensive buildings can still be traced. The present irregular surface of the field has been caused by digging up the old walls for the sake of the materials. A moat, which at intervals can still be distinctly traced, of an irregular elliptical plan, formerly inclosed the castle, church, and Bury Field.

THE MANOR.

The following account of the manor is contained in Domesday Book:—

Ralph de Limesy himself holds Peritone. It was rated at ten hides. Arable land is twenty carucates. In demesne are two hides, and there are six carucates there. There are twenty-four villanes, with a priest and twenty-nine bordars, having twelve carucates, and two may yet be made. There is one English knight and one socman with four cottagers. There are four mills worth 73s. 4d. In the land of the Englishman and socman, that is in two hides, live one villane and eight cottagers.

Lib. Domes.,
fol. 138, No.
xxiii.

Meadow land ten carucates. There are ten bondmen. Pasture for the cattle of the vill. Pannage for five hundred hogs. Rent of pasture and wood ten shillings. The total value is £20: when received, £22: in the time of King Edward (the Confessor), £25. Archbishop Stigand held this manor, and there were two socmen there, who still remain: they were not able to sell. The above is in the Half Hundred of Hiz.

It is evident, from the foregoing account, that in Saxon times Pirton was a place of some importance. There were four mills, probably at or near Oughton Head, and the population must have exceeded 200 persons. A considerable portion of the soil was cultivated, while extensive tracts of woodland must still have remained to afford pannage for 500 hogs.

Ralph de Limesi, who held this manor during the reign of William I., was possessed of considerable estates in this and other counties. He founded the Priory at Hertford, which was a cell to the Abbey of St. Alban, and endowed it out of the manor of Pirton with two hides and a half of land, a mill, the church, all his tithes, and certain rights of pasture and pannage. By his wife, Hawise, who gave certain land of her dowry to the Priory, he had issue two sons: Alan, who succeeded him in his estates; and Robert, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. From Alan de Limesi, this and other manors came to his son Gerard, who by Amicia, his wife, had surviving issue John, Alianore, and Basilia. John married Alice, daughter of Robert de Harcourt, by whom he had an only son, Hugh, who died without issue, about the year 1190, whereupon the vast estates of de Limesi came to his aunts, Alianore, wife of David de Lindesei, and Basilia, wife of Hugh de Odingsells.

MANOR OF LINDESEI, OR LINSEY; OTHERWISE PINKNEY; OTHERWISE CLINTON.

On the death of Hugh de Limesi without issue, one half of the manor of Pirton came to David de Lindesei, in right of Alianore, his wife. He died about the year 1220, leaving issue David and Gerard, who both died childless, and Alice, wife of Henry de Pinkney, son of Robert de Pincheni, one of the barons who took up arms against King John. Henry de Pinkney died in 1254, leaving Henry his son and heir, then twenty-six years of age, who, on the 22nd July, in the same year, received livery of his father's lands, and granted this manor to William de Odingsells, son of Hugh de Odingsells, above mentioned.* William de Odingsells was succeeded by his son, also named William, on whose death the following Inquisition was taken:—

Inquisition taken at Pirtone on Monday the morrow of the Feast of the Holy Trinity, in the year of the reign of King Edward (I.), the twenty-third, before the King's escheator, on the oath of Godfrey de la Ryvere, Roger de Cranemere, and others, who say that William de Oddingseles was seised in fee in the vill of Pyrtone on the day on which he died of 1 messuage worth per annum xij*d.*, 200 acres arable land worth per acre iiij*d.*, 10 acres meadow worth per acre ijs., 10 acres pasture worth per acre xij*d.*, services of tenants worth per annum xxs., 10 acres wood worth per acre iiij*d.*, rents of assize worth per annum cs., pleas and perquisitions of court worth per annum xxs., half a water mill worth per annum xs. And they say that the aforesaid tenements are held of Robert de Pynkeny by homage, and that Edmund de Oddingseles is his son and heir, and of the age of twenty-two years and upwards, and that the total annual value *in omnibus existibus* is xij*li.*, xjs.—*Inq. post mortem*, 23 *Ed. I.*, No. 130.

* The Hugh de Odingsells whom Clutterbuck, in his pedigree of the family (vol. iii. p. 119), states to be the son of Basilia de Limesi, should be her husband. It is an evident oversight on the part of the painstaking historian, for he quotes the very authority which disproves his statement—*Rot. fin.* 23 *Hen. III. mem.* 6. The entry in the original is:—*Rex cepit homagium Gerardi de Odigeselles de terris quas idem Hugo [de Odingsells] tenuit de rege in capite de hereditate Basilie uxoris sue matris predicti Gerardi.*

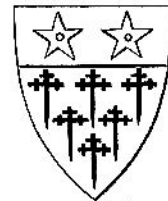
See Hund. of
Odsey, p. 16.
Dug. Mon.
Ang. Vol. iii.
p. 431.

Rot. fin. 33 *H.*
III. m. 16.
Inq. p. mort.
38 *Hen. III.*
No. 27.
Rot. fin. 38 *H.*
III. m. 4.
Chauncy, page
412.

Edmund de Odingsells died without issue, and his estates were divided among his sisters, Alice, Ida, Margaret, and Ela.* This manor came to Alice, wife of Maurice de Caunton, ^{Inq. p. mort. 15 Ed. II. No. 4.} on whose death, in 1322, this manor, described as the half manor of Pirton, came to her son David de Caunton, then of the age of twenty-two years. The history of the manor at this period is amply set forth in the following Inquisition:—

Inquisition taken at Hicchen before Henry Garnet, the King's escheator for the Counties of Essex and Hertford, on Tuesday after the quindena of Easter, in the 17th year of the reign of King Edward III., on the oath of William de Halewell, Richard Baker, John Paratte, Thomas de Ampthull, Eustace ate Wode, Robert de Eure, Richard le Monck, John Giles, Nicholas de Restlynge, and others, who say that half the Manor of Pirton [*i.e.* this Manor of Lindsey] is held of the King by the service of a pair of gilt spurs and payment at the view of franc-pledge of Altonesheved [qy. Oughton Head] by the Sheriff of Hertford, of 2s. 6d. per annum: which manor came into the hands of Edward, late King of England, grandfather of the present King, as his escheat by forfeiture of Henry de Pinkeneye,† who held of the said King in capite. . . And they say that half of the said manor is held of the now King by the aforesaid service, and that David de Caunton, Knt., enfeofed of the said half Adam de Overton, parson of the church of Ibestoke, and Henry de Sedington, parson of the church of Eshhetesford, and to their heirs. And the said Adam and Henry granted the aforesaid moiety to the said David and Joan his wife, and the heirs of their bodies, with remainder to William de Clinton, Earl of Huntingdon, and his heirs. The said David is dead, and the said Joan is now married to Laurence de Aiete. And they say that the value of the half manor with appurtenances is ten pounds per annum.—*Inq. post mortem*, 17 Ed. III. No. 15, 2nd Nos.

Elizabeth, only child of David de Caunton and Joan, died without surviving issue, whereupon this manor came to Sir John Clinton, nephew and heir of the Sir William de Clinton, Earl of Huntingdon, mentioned in the Inquisition, which Sir William was son of Ida de Odingsells. On the death of Sir John Clinton, in 1397, the manor came to his third son, Edward, who died two years later seised of this manor, and sundry lands, tenements, rents, and services in the adjoining parish of Kimpton, all of which were held as of the Barony of Pynkeney. On the death of Sir Edward de Clinton, without issue, this manor came to his nephew, Sir William, son of Sir William de Clinton, his eldest brother. This Sir William the younger granted the manor to Simon Stratford, of London, William Frye, and William Grove, from whom it passed to Richard Clyderowe, of Ash, Co. Kent, and from him to Roger Clyderowe, his son, who died in 1454, leaving ^{Ib. 33 H. VI. No. 29.} Alianore, wife of John Norreys, his daughter and co-heir.



Ib. 1 Hen. IV. No. 16.

ARMS OF CLINTON.†

How long the manor remained in the family of Norreys I cannot discover; but on the 18th November, 1578, John Dyve, gentleman, received a pardon from the Crown for ^{Pat. Mich. Term. 20 and 21 Elizab.} acquiring from Edward Denny, gentleman, by Indenture dated the 10th July. preceding, the manor or lordship of Pyrton, *als.* Purton, and the advowson of the vicarage of the church. John Dyve, or Davy, could have held the manor but a short time, as during the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth it was in the possession of Samuel Marrow, of Berkswell, Co.

* See Note, page 19.

† This Henry de Pinkney was great-grandson of Henry de Pincheni and Alice de Lindesei. He was summoned to Parliament as a Baron in the 25th, 27th, and 28th of Edward I. Having no issue, he made a surrender of his lands to the King in 1301. Henry the elder, who married Alice, sister and heir of Gerard de Lindesei, made his homage for half the Barony of Limesy, and paid £50 for livery of the lands which Gerard held in capite from the King.—*Rot. fin.* 33 Hen. III. m. 9; 10 April, 1249.

‡ *Argent; six Crosses-crosslet fitché sable; 3, 2, and 1; on a Chief azure, two Mulletts or.*

Warwick ; and in the last year of the Queen's reign (14th July, 1602), Thomas Docwra died Harl. MS. 410, fol. 43, seised of this manor, which he held of the King in capite by military service, leaving Thomas his son and heir, as appears by an Inquisition taken at Hatfield on the 20th March, 2 James I. From Thomas the younger, the manor came to his son Periam, Ib. fol. 51b. who died in 1643, leaving Thomas Docwra, his son and heir.



ARMS OF DOCWRA.*

At Highdown, in this parish, about a quarter of a mile off the high road leading from Hitchin to Pirton, is a fine example of a small Elizabethan mansion, with gable ends, quaintly twisted chimneys, and white stone mullions in the spacious windows. It was built by Thomas Docwra in the year 1612, possibly on the site of a former house erected by his great-grandfather, Sir Thomas Docwra, for on one of the outbuildings is a coat of Arms of the family inscribed beneath, "Thomas Docwra, Miles, 1504." Another residence of the Docwras was a house near the church, known by the name of Old Hall, now occupied by a beer retailer. Unlike the mansion at Highdown, this house retains but few features worthy of notice. The date of its erection is recorded on a stone tablet inserted in the south wall. Successive coats of whitewash have rendered it almost illegible. All I could decipher was "Thomas Docwra . . . 1609," with the Arms of Docwra, impaling Quarterly of 4 ; I. and IV., a Chevron engrailed between three Leopards' faces, for Periam ; II., a Chevron between three (pears ?) ; III., two Bars wavy between three Billets for Hone ; with the Motto beneath, En dieu est tout.

Thomas, son of Periam Docwra, had issue an only daughter, Martha, wife of Sir Peter Warburton, of Areley, Co. Chester, Bart. In the year 1700 Thomas Docwra settled this and other estates upon his grandson, Sir George Warburton, eldest son of his daughter Martha. On the 27th February, 1727, this Sir George and Peter Warburton, his nephew, sold it to Ralph Radcliffe, of the Priory, Hitchin, Esquire, from whom it has descended to Frederick-Peter Delmé-Radcliffe, Esquire, the present owner.

Carta orig.
penes F. P.
Delmé-Rad-
cliffe, Armig.

MANOR OF PIRTON DODINGSELLS, OTHERWISE ODINGSELLS MANOR.

As has been before stated, the entire manor of Pirton formerly belonged to the family of de Limesi, and on the death of Hugh de Limesi, the last heir male of that family, about the year 1190, the estates were divided between his aunts, Alianore, wife of David de Lindesei, and Basilia, wife of Hugh de Odingsells. This moiety of the manor came to Rot. fin. 23 H. Basilia, and after the death of herself and her husband, to their son Gerard de Odingsells, III. m. 6. who in the year 1238 performed his homage to the King for the lands which his late father Ib. 51 H. III. held in right of Basilia. On the death of Gerard, in 1265, this manor came to his son Hugh m. 4. (then under age), who obtained livery of his father's lands in 1267, and died seised of this Inq. p. mort. manor in the year 1339, leaving John de Odingsells his son and heir, then of the age of 33 Ed. I. No. 74. twenty-eight years. Emma, wife of this John de Odingsells, survived her husband, and Ib. 20 Ed. III. subsequently was married to William Corbet, who held this manor as of the Barony of No. 13. Ulverley, and died possessed of it in 1346;† whereupon it came to John de Odingsells (son

* Sable ; a Chevron engrailed argent, between three Plates, each charged with a Pallet gules.

† William Corbet does not appear to have obtained this manor in right of his wife, but by a grant from her first husband, John de Odingsells, who died in 1336. In the following year an Inquisition was taken at Hicche (Hitchin) before William Trussel, the King's escheator on this side the Trent, on Thursday next before the Feast of St. Dunstan, Bishop, in the 11th year of the reign of King Edward III., to inquire whether it would be to the hurt of the King to grant to William Corbet permission to retain the manor of Pirton which he had acquired for his life from John de Oddingseles, who held of the King in capite, with remainder after the death of Corbet to Thomas,

of his wife by her first marriage), and from him to his son and grandson, successively, both named John. On the death of the last-mentioned John, an Inquisition was taken at Hitchin on Thursday next after the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mary, by which it was found that John Dodyngsells, Chevalier, died on Tuesday next after the Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle, seised of one moiety of the manor of Piriton, called Dodingsells, of the annual value of £20, held of the King in capite; and that Edward, his son, of the age of fourteen years, was his next heir. This Edward, by Margaret, his first wife, daughter of John Cokayne, of Bury Hatley, Co. Bedford, had issue Gerard, his son and heir, who afterwards possessed the manor and died in 1493, whereupon it came to his son Edward, who, in 1513, conveyed it to Richard Dycons, or Decons.

Richard Dycons, in July, 1515, conveyed the manor of Piriton, *als.* Pirton, *als.* Odyngsellys Manor, with appurtenances in Pyriton, Iklyford, Offeley, and Ramerswike, to Roger Lupton, Provost of the College of St. Mary, Eton, near Windsor, who gave it to the College. In order to render his donation effective, he granted the estate to Richard Copeot and John Same, who obtained a License of Mortmain to bestow it on the said Roger Lupton and his successors in the College. The manor remained vested in the provosts of Eton College until the 15th February, 1800, when it was purchased by Penelope, widow of Sir Charles Farnaby-Radeliffe, from whom it has descended to Frederick-Peter Delmé-Radeliffe, of the Priory, Hitchin, Esquire.

MANOR OF THE RECTORY.

During the reign of William I., Ralph de Limesi, lord of the manor of Pirton, founded the Priory at Hertford, which was a cell to the Abbey of St. Alban, and, among other endowments, bestowed upon it two hides and a half of land in Pirton, together with a mill, the church, all his tithes, and the tithes of his men, and certain rights of pasture and pannage. His descendants made further grants of land in the parishes of Pirton and Ickleford to the Priory of Hertford, amounting in the aggregate to about 500 acres, and constituting the Manor of the Rectory of Pirton.

It remained in the possession of the Prior and Monks of Hertford until the Dissolution of Religious Houses in 1534, when it came to the Crown. In 1537 it was granted by King Henry VIII. to Anthony Denny, Groom of the Stole, and one of the gentlemen of the King's privy chamber, and Johanna, daughter of Philip Champernowne, his intended wife, whose son Edward Denny, by Indenture dated 10th July, 1578, granted it to John Dyve or Davy. His son, Sir John Dyve, who presented to the vicarage in 1612, and again in 1625, sold the manor to . . . Poulteney, who conveyed it to Thomas White.

Under the will of Thomas White, dated 5th July, 1685, his executors sold this rectory and manor in June, 1686, to Sir Anthony Deane, Knt., who from the rank of a carpenter rose to be an architect of some note, from whom it descended to his grandson, Morgan Deane,

son of John de Oddyngseles, for his life, and reversion to the said John and his heirs. The jury—John Legat, William de la Mare, John de la Ryvere, Nicholas Legat, John Giles, John Auncel, Adam de Wavendene, William Campion, and . . . de Tiryngham—found that the King would suffer no loss by allowing William Corbet to retain possession. The jury further said that the manor was held of the King in capite by one knight's fee, worth *cs.* per annum; and that the so-called manor was at some time (*aliquo tempore*) divided between four sisters [see page 17], so that the part or share of the eldest sister with the capital messuage is called the manor. (*Inq. ad quod damnum*, 11 Ed. III., No. 32, 2nd Nos.) As John de Odingsells, son of the above-mentioned John and Emma, succeeded on the death of William Corbet, it is probable that Thomas, stated in the Inquisition to be the next heir, was dead in 1346.

Inq. p. mort.
5 Hen. IV.
No. 19.

Pat. 8 Hen.
VIII. p. 2,
m. 13.

Carta orig.
penes F. P.
Delmé-Rad-
cliffe, Armig.

Dugdale's
Monast. Vol.
iii. p. 431.

Pat. 29 Hen.
VIII. pars. 2,
m. 19.

Pat. Mich.
Term, 20 and
21 Elizab.

Clutterbuck,
Vol. iii. p. 124.

by whose executors it was sold in 1736 to Robert, 2nd Lord Raymond. On his death, without issue, in 1756, the manor came under the will of his father, Robert, 1st Lord Raymond, to Beversham Filmer, Esquire, son of Sir Robert Filmer, of East Sutton, Co. Kent, Bart.

Beversham Filmer died unmarried in 1763, whereupon this estate came to his nephew, Sir John Filmer, 4th Baronet, and from him to his brothers, Sir Eversham and Sir Edmund, in succession. From Sir Edmund, the manor lineally descended to Sir John, Sir Edmund, and Sir Edmund Filmer, 7th, 8th, and 9th Baronets. On the 17th May, 1870, the manor was sold to Messrs. Paine and Brettell, of Chertsey, Co. Surrey, solicitors. By far the greater portion of the manor has since been enfranchised. The estate, consisting of the rectory farm, and 415a. 0r. 20p., was purchased at the same time by Mr. Daniel Davis, of Hexton, farmer, for the sum of £17,500.

THE CHURCH.

The Church, which is dedicated to the Blessed Mary, dates from the twelfth century, and was originally of a cruciform plan. Both the transepts have long since been demolished, and the present building consists but of a chancel and nave, separated from each other by a tower, which is supported east and west by massive Norman arches. The width between the piers of these arches is fifteen feet; but when the support afforded by the transepts was removed, it was found necessary to brick up the opening to the present width, viz. seven feet nine inches, and at a somewhat later period to shore up the tower with an unsightly brick buttress on the south side, without the church. The consequence of this narrowing the tower arches is, that the chancel can be seen only from the centre of the nave, and that the voice of the officiant at the altar is inaudible to a great number of the worshippers.

Seen from the inside, the east window is square, and divided into three lights; but on examining it outside, it will be found that it is really a fine example of Early English architecture, but that a plaster ceiling has been brought down to the spring of the arch. There is indeed scarcely a portion of the building in which the most deplorable ignorance, or parsimony, on the part of those whose duty it was to keep it in repair, is not painfully evident.

There are no monuments in the chancel, the only object of interest being a good double piscina of fourteenth century work in the south wall.

In a window on the south side of the nave is a poorly executed coat of Arms of the family of Lindsay:—*Gules; a Fess chequé argent and azure; impaling, Or; a Lion rampant azure.* CREST:—*An Ostrich proper.* MOTTO:—*Indure furth.*

A slab on the floor of the nave:—

Here lies the Remains of James Hanscombe, of Pirton Grange, Esq^r who departed this life on y^e 27th Day of Nov. 1731, aged 66. A Man of great Natural Endowments, especially remarkable for Quickness of Apprehension, Solidity of Judgment, and a Compleat Knowledge in Country Affairs; to which was joynd Uprightness of Dealing, and Sincerity in Friendship. He was of singular Service to this Neighbourhood, by his Impartial Arbitrations, and Composure of Differences; and one of the best and most successful Advocates in the Cause of Merit and Distress; as also of so peculiar and lively a Turn in Conversation as gain'd him the Esteem not only of his Intimate Acquaintance, but of Several Persons of the Highest Distinction. He married Ann, sole Daughter of John and Helena Hammond, of this Parish, by whom he had a Numerous Issue, whereof three only survive him, viz. Ann (married to Matthew Lacy, Gent.), Mary, and William.

Beneath this Stone are deposited the Remains of Mr. William Hanscombe, Gent. son of James

Hanscombe, Esq., late of Pirton Grange, in this Parish, who departed this life March 25, 1773, in the 59th year of his age, leaving issue four sons and six daughters. Also, Mary his wife, who departed this life Dec. 4th, 1781, in the 53^d year of her age.

On the west wall is a small tablet thus inscribed:—

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD W^{ch} DYE IN Y^e LORD.
IANE, THE RELICT OF THOMAS DOCWRA, ESQ. & FORMERLIE
Y^e WIFE OF THOMAS, Y^e SOLE SONNE OF S^r GABRIELL POINTZ, K^t
& ONE OF Y^e DAUGHTERS AND COOHEIRES OF S^r WILL PERIAM, K^t
LORD CHEIFE BARON OF Y^e EXCHEQ: WAS IN Y^e SERVICE OF
GOD TRVLIE & ZEALOVSLIE RELIGIOVS: TO HIS MINISTERS
LIBERALL & TO Y^e POORE CHARITABLE, AND HAVING LIVED
25 YEARES A WYDOWE IN A CONTEMPLATIVE & RETIRED
COVRSE OF LIFE, SHE CHANGED HER MORTALL HABITATION
FOR A HEAVENLIE Y^e 15 OF MARCH 1645, ÆTAT: 73. HER
BODY BY HER DIRECTION WAS HERE VNDER INTERRED Wth THIS
ENSVING EPITAPH BY HERSELE COMPOSED.

I rest in hope til Christ shall come,
I feare not Death, nor day of dome,
Thovgh earth cover me
Death can not devovre me.
Christ myne and thine,
Our meeting a happie greeting,
O merrie last day, wellcome, wellcome,
Lord, I will bowe and thov shalt beate,
Deliver me from hell heate,
O Death where is thy sting,
O graue, where is thy victorie,
Thankes to my Lord Christ
They can not hurt me.

Above are two shields of Arms, thus charged:—I. *Barry of eight, gules and or*, for POYNTZ, impaling, *Gules; a Chevron engrailed between three Leopards' faces or*, for PERIAM. II. *Sable; a Chevron engrailed argent between three Plates each charged with a Pallet gules*, for DOCWRA, impaling PERIAM.

In the tower are five bells, thus inscribed:—

1. ABRAHAM BARBER C.W. JOHN BRIANT HERTFORD FECIT 1781.
2. THOMAS PRIMET CHURCHWARDEN ANNO DOM: 1763. JOSEPH EAYRE.
3. ROB. MEDKIRK, VICKER. WM. RAWBUN C.W. WM. HANSCOMBE GENT: JOS: HOW 1766. JOS: EAYRE ST. NEOTS FECIT.
4. IN 1731 THOMAS RUSSELL OF WOOTTON MADE ME. JOSEPH FARMER & EDMOND SIMPKINS CHURCHWARDENS. On the crown are two Queen Anne's halfpennies.
5. PRAISE THE LORD 1634.

The Commissioners appointed to make an Inventory of all the furniture remaining in parish churches throughout this County in the last year of King Edward VI., made the following return for Pirton:—

One chalice of silⁿ and gilte poꝝ ix oꝝ
One Cope of Crymsen vellat
One vestmente of Crymsen vellat
One other vestment of Saten of brige (Bruges)
One other vestmente of black chamblett
ij Aulter clothes and ij towelle of linnen
iiij sheets y^t did hange befor the tabernacles
A Saunce bell
iiij greate Belle in the steple

p me Edwarde Brokett

HITCHIN.

Augment. Off
Miscell. Vol.
497, Rec. Off.

THE VICARAGE.

This Vicarage is included within the Diocese of Rochester, Archdeaconry of St. Albans, and Rural Deanery of Hitchin.

This church formerly belonged to the Prior and Convent of Hertford, and was constituted into a vicarage about the year 1215 by Hugh Wells, Bishop of Lincoln. Annexed to it for its support were the Chapels of Ramordewyk or Ramerick, and Ickleford. The former has long ceased to exist, but the rectory of Ickleford remained attached to this vicarage until the resignation of the Revd. Richard Brown, in October, 1851, when the two livings were separated. They had, however, been legally divided by order of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners nearly five years before, but Mr. Brown, the then vicar and rector, was permitted to hold the joint living during his life.

Tax. Eccles.
page 27.

In the Ecclesiastical Taxation made by order of Pope Nicholas IV. in the year 1291, this vicarage was rated at £21 6s. 8d. per annum.

Bacon's Lib.
Reg. p. 519.

In the general Survey made in the year 1535, on the Dissolution of Religious Houses, this vicarage, with the rectory of Ickleford, were valued at £8 per annum.

State Papers,
Dom. Chas. I.,
Vol. 351, No.
84.

Down to the year 1851 the village of Pirton was in a most deplorable state, for there being no parsonage-house, the duties were entrusted to a curate, who was frequently absent from his charge. In the year mentioned, however, through the exertions of Ralph Lindsay, of Norwood, Esquire, F.S.A., the patron of the living, a house was erected near the church for the residence of the vicar. That there was no parsonage here as long ago as the year 1636 appears from the return of Ship-money made in that year; for the Revd. Thomas Rotheram, who was vicar of Pirton and rector of Ickleford, is assessed in the latter parish at £1 6s. 8d., while Mr. Denn, of Pirton, who was probably a non-resident curate, paid nothing. So also in 1650, when a commission was appointed by the Parliament to inquire into the state of Ecclesiastical Benefices, we find the rectory of Ickleford valued at £70 per annum, and then held by a Mr. Mould; while the vicarage of Pirton was in the possession of Lady Eleanor Douglas, who as "impropriator hath maintained a preaching minister time out of mind untill 6 months last past, & 'tis now destitute of a minister." The present vicar is the first resident Incumbent of Pirton for the last two centuries, and probably since the Reformation.

Lansd. MS.
459, fol. 105.

At the Dissolution of Monasteries the advowson of the vicarage came to the Crown. It afterwards, as will be seen by reference to the list of patrons, passed through several hands until it came by purchase to Ralph Lindsay, of Norwood, Esq., F.S.A., who settled it on his niece Mary-Jane, wife of the Revd. Richard-Neate-Duguid Brown. On her eldest son attaining his majority, it was sold under an order of the Court of Chancery to Charles Bamford, of Impington, near Cambridge, Esquire, who exchanged it, in the year 1870, with the Dean and Chapter of Ely, for the living of Impington.

VICARS.	DATE OF INSTITUTION.	PATRONS.
Roger	1218	Prior and Convent of Hertford
Richard de Wilmundele	1244	ditto
Nicholas Lavenedich	15 Oct., 1271	ditto
Roger de Beccles	13 Feby., 1272	ditto
Henry de Stansted	5 Feby., 1274	ditto
Grunbald de Mercate	4 June, 1276	ditto
Thomas de Burgh	12 Oct., 1293; on death of Grunbald de Mercate	Abbot and Convent of Thorney

VICARS.	DATE OF INSTITUTION.	PATRONS.
Henry de Ikelynford		
Hugh de Periton	6 Oct., 1310 ; on death of Henry de Ikelynford	Prior and Convent of Hertford
John de Newenham	1328 (Vicar 1335. <i>Add. MS.</i> 7631, fol. 76)	ditto
John Sidestern		
Thomas Barcas	15 June, 1346 ; on death of John Sidestern	ditto
John Crust	6 Sept., 1348 ; on resig. of Thomas Barcas	ditto
John de London	13 March, 1350 ; on resig. of John Crust	ditto
John Bedelake		
Richard Baynel	4 April, 1354 ; on death of John Bedelake	ditto
Richard Lawrence	4 March, 1357 ; on resig. of Richard Baynel	ditto
John Brampton		
William de Wolritby	6 May, 1357 ; on resig. of John Brampton	Abbot and Convent of Thorney
Henry Frewe		
Henry Bride	20 May, 1366 ; on resig. of Henry Frewe	Prior and Convent of Hertford
Gilbert Umphrey		
Robert Patishull	4 Aug., 1381 ; on resig. of Gilbert Umphrey	ditto
John Stobard	23 June, 1387 ; on death of Robert Patishull	ditto
Thomas Terry	14 Feby., 1390 ; on resig. of John Stobard	ditto
Richard Lethum	29 March, 1391 ; on resig. of Thomas Terry	ditto
John Holgate	9 March, 1393 ; on resig. of Richard Lethum	ditto
John Orle	24 July, 1394 ; on resig. of John Holgate	ditto
Henry Thirnynge	18 March, 1395 ; on resig. of John Orle	ditto
John Roundell	14 Sept., 1395 ; on resig. of Henry Thirnynge	ditto
Nicholas Appleby	17 Dec., 1396 ; on resig. of John Roundell	ditto
William Chapman	27 Feby., 1405 ; on resig. of Nicholas Appleby	ditto
William Frankelyn	3 March, 1418 ; on death of William Chapman	ditto
John Chamberlayn	18 March, 1424 ;	Dean and Chapter of Lincoln
John Hoo	18 Jany., 1431	Prior and Convent of Hertford
Thomas Dette	9 April, 1440 ; on resig. of John Hoo	ditto
Edmund Walklyn		
William Molton	1 Aug., 1474 ; on death of Edmund Walklyn	ditto
Edmund Marshall	18 Sept., 1481 ; on resig. of William Molton	ditto
Richard Chirche	13 Jany., 1483 ; on resig. of Edmund Marshall	ditto
William Smyth	18 Nov., 1485 ; on resig. of Richard Chirche	ditto
John Cavard	31 Dec., 1492 ; on death of William Smyth	Executors of John Sturgeon, for this turn
John Young	29 Nov., 1503 ; on death of John Cavard	Prior and Convent of Hertford
John Jamys	12 Feby., 1505 ; on death of John Young	ditto
Henry Marshall	1 May, 1526 ; on death of John Jamys	Archbishop of York
William Scott	5 April, 1530 ; on resig. of Henry Marshall	Prior and Convent of Hertford
John Butler		
Matthew Davys	30 March, 1612 ; on death of John Butler	Sir John Dyve, Serjt.-at-Law
Thomas Welles	12 May, 1625 ; on death of Matthew Davys	ditto
Thomas Rotheram	21 May, 1629 ; on death of Thomas Welles	Sir Archibald Douglas, Knt., in right of Eleanor, his wife
John Walker	11 Feby., 1642 ; on resig. of Thomas Rotheram	William Poulton
John Savage	18 May, 1670	The King
William Goodwin	4 March, 1682 ; by cession of John Savage	Dorothy, wid. of Saml. Howe
Isaac Coleman	29 Sept., 1732 ; on death of William Goodwin	The Bishop of Lincoln, by reason of a lapse

VICARS.	DATE OF INSTITUTION.	PATRONS.
Charles Meetkerke	16 Dec., 1735 ; on resig. of Isaac Coleman	Isaac Coleman
Robert Meetkerke	24 Nov., 1748 ; on resig. of Chas. Meetkerke	James-Colt Ducarell, Esq.
Stephen Barrett	24 June, 1758 ; on death of Robt. Meetkerke	John Unwin, Esq.
John-Witherington Peers	14 Dec., 1773 ; by cession of Stephen Barrett	Charles Peers, Esq.
Thomas-Wigzell Thirlwall	21 May, 1835 ; on death of John W. Peers	Susanna Thirlwall, widow
Richard - Neate - Duguid Brown	31 March, 1847 ; on death of Tho. W. Thirlwall	Ralph Lindsay, Esq., F.S.A.
Ralph - Lindsay Lough- borough	18 Oct., 1851 ; on resig. of Richard Brown	ditto

The Registers commence, Baptisms, 1562 ; Marriages, 1560 ; and Burials, 1558 ; and seem to have been carefully kept to the present time.

CHARITIES.

JOHN HAMOND, of this parish, by his will dated 25th September, 1641, gave the sum of £100, to be invested in land, the interest of which was to be applied to apprenticing poor children belonging to this parish. On 31st May, 1652, his executors bought of Thomas Spicer, otherwise Helder, eight acres of land lying in Pirton Field. In the year 1811, when this parish was inclosed by Act of Parliament, the land was exchanged for 6a. 3r. 23p. at Punch's Cross, the annual value of which is now £16, which sum is applied according to the will of the testator.

The same John Hamond also gave two cottages in Pirton for the use of as many poor aged persons, who were to be placed therein by his sons Thomas and John, their heirs and successors. Mr. William Hanscombe, of Pirton Grange, as the representative of the Hamond family, now possesses the right of presenting poor persons as vacancies occur ; but as there are no funds for the purpose of keeping the cottages in repair, they have fallen into decay, and are now uninhabitable.

