

Wed, 21 Dec 2005

From: Chris Hughes, Kent, England
Subject: Roper Properties

I have just updated my listing of the properties that the Ropers owned around Kent and London in the C16-18, and thought I might as well send you a copy. Just to remind you, my purpose was to attempt to identify why they bought so much property along the North Kent coastal plain, and also which family members lived where.

Properties owned by the Roper family.

An inquisition after the death of John Roper [snr] in 1488/89 (Rot. Escheator anno 5 Henry VIII) confirmed that he owned, among other properties, the manors of Chestfield, Botiller's (Boteler's) Court, and Cluse in Whitstable [ref. 2 v8 p522]. Hasted also records that he owned Brenley Court at Boughton-in-Blean.

By the time of the will of John Roper {2} in 1523 [7], the family owned many properties around Kent and in London. He specifically mentions the following:

- Chestfield
- Lands and tenements in Hakynton & St Stephen's (Canterbury)
- Brambiltighe (Hakington)
- Saint Dunstans, including various lands and tenements,
- Lodge, with all other lands and tenements in Lynsted
- Kingsdowne
- Norton (nr Lynsted),
- Dodington,
- East Greenwich, London
- Candelwick Street, London.
- Well Hall (Eltham)
- Esthorne Manor (Eltham)
- Modingham [Motingham?],
- Lee [Leigh?],
- Cheselherst,
- Kydbroke,
- Charlton,
- Woolwich,
- Bexley,

He also left money for the churches of Holy Cross, Westgate; St Bride's, London; Eltham; Swaclyf; Cosme & Damien in the Blean; Whitstable; Herne; Stourmouth; Preston near Wyngam; Ryver near Dover; Ewell and St Stephen's, Canterbury.

Of the above properties and others identified elsewhere, further background has been established for the following:

Saint Dunstans, Westgate, Canterbury (*see separate detailed report*)

All that remains of the old family home is the 'Roper Gateway' facing onto Westgate Street, supposedly built for William Roper. In addition to the Manor opposite the church in Westgate, John Roper also appears to have owned property purchased from the late Rycharde Filpottes and the late Elizabeth Loveryke. The church of St Dunstan contains a Chantry Chapel dedicated to the Roper family, and originally built in 1402 for John, son of Ralph Roper, by Ralph, his son Edmund and one John Rolling [ref 56] and last used for burial in 1741. The existing chapel was built in 1524 (by John Roper?) [ref 52] and is constructed of bricks 6.5 x 12 x 25 cm. in English bond.

Manor of Easthorne and Mansion of Well Hall, Eltham

(see map in Hasted v.1 p.339)

Behind Eltham Palace lay the Manor of Wellhall, which was in the possession of John Tattersall and [on his death in 1447?] passed to his daughter Margery who married John Roper {2} of Swacliffe. Half a mile to the north of the parish church of St John the Baptist, at the west end of Eltham, lay an old and beautiful mansion called Well Hall.

The Manor of Wellhall became the main residence for this branch of the Roper family during the life of John {2}, and a new building appears to have been constructed for his son William in 1524. He maintained his support for the church and is recorded as Patron of St John's Church, Eltham from around 1568 to 1576 [ref.41]. Well Hall had a large rose garden as well as a moat and was approached, like the palace, by a charming stone bridge, which still exists today.

Margaret is believed [35] to have lived here at various times from the time of the execution of Anne Boleyn (1522) until her death. Her father, Thomas More, visited from his home in Chelsea on a number of occasions. Her last days here were not happy however: not only was her father executed by Henry VIII in 1535, but the king, in a fit of fury, demolished her father's house in Chelsea and reduced her family to poverty. It is said that she was often seen, a sad little figure moving like a shadow in her garden, tending her roses, watching her birds and bees, greeting her friends and receiving messengers on horseback from Greenwich. Margaret's garden is still there, a public garden used by locals.

Apart from Margaret's garden and the stone bridge, the only building remaining today is a Tudor Barn, outside the extant moat, which must have been the servant's quarters in William and Margaret's time (see photos). It currently has a pub/restaurant downstairs and an art gallery upstairs.

Well Hall remained a family home for many years. From 1578, Thomas Roper gave 15 shillings p.a. from one acre of land for bell ropes for the church. Much later, a descendant Edward Roper is shown as Patron of the church from around 1658 to 1726.

Ownership, along with much of their properties, passed from the family in 1723 with the death of Edward Roper. It was purchased by Sir Gregory Page in 1733 for £19,000 and was pulled down by him to be replaced by a new house, also known as Well Hall [2 vol I]. This house was damaged by fire in 1926 and subsequently demolished. In 1749 a large farm house was built, known as Park Farm.

Lynstead Lodge, near Sittingbourne [ref 23]. (see map & photos)

This property came in to the Roper family possession during the life of John Roper {3}. He had married Jane Fineux whose father Sir John Fineux owned, inter alia, the Manors of Badmangore, Lodge and Newnham. It was (and is) quite a large plot of land with a manor house at the centre and is located on the south east side of the parish [2 vol VI].

The will of John (1523) left Lynsted Lodge, near Sittingbourne, to his younger son **Christopher**. He married Elizabeth Blore, the daughter of Christopher Blore of Teynham.

Christopher is recorded [52 p313] as making a grant in 1549 of 24 acres of land in the parish of Tenham, formerly belonging to the chantry of Tenham, to Laurence Hyde of London.

Christopher and Elizabeth in turn had a son named **John** {4} who inherited this property on the death of his father in 1559. He built the family seat of Linsted Lodge in around 1599 and enclosed the park. Hasted believed that it was finally pulled down in 1829 [2, 8vol44], although it has been reported recently that parts of the old building still survive.

In spite of being catholic, John Roper 4 was popular with Queen Elizabeth and was knighted on 23 February 1588. However on her death in 1603, he helped to proclaim King James 1 of England and was made a peer for his efforts: the 1st Baron Teynham in 1616. Sir John Roper died on 30 August 1618, at the age of 84, and from him are descended the Ropers, Lords Teynham.

The Ropers also owned other property in the parish. Sir John Roper, son of Christopher, is recorded as rebuilding Bumpit in 1587 [3]. This building still exists, and is located between Lodge and the main A2 road at Teynham.

His son, Sir Christopher Roper, died on 16 April 1622, age 60 [8], leaving two sons: John Roper {5}, Lord Teynham and William Roper of Stourmouth.

One Thomas Roper on 25 April 1583, and his wife Joane in 1606, are both recorded as being buried in Lynsted [8 vol 13].

There are various memorials and plaques to the family in the South or Roper Chapel of the parish church of St Peter and St Paul, a lovely 14th cent church [23]. Most notable are the marble tomb of Sir John Roper, first Lord Teynham (died 30/8/1618), and that of Sir Christopher Roper (died 16/4/1622) and his

wife Elizabeth carved by Epiphanius Evesham [and also including one to William (died 1577)?]. There is also the unusual feature of a private, enclosed, pew for the Roper family which lies between the chapel and the nave. This was apparently so that the family could partake of services while remaining separated from the congregation (they were staunch Catholics after all!). On the wall of the chapel there is also a Pedigree of the Roper and Tyler families prepared recently by family members.

Condies (Cundies) Hall, Whitstable

This was an ancient manor of some 187 acres in the area of Whitstable owned by the Roper family from at least C16 until the death of Edward in 1723, when it became part of the estate passing down to Sir Wynne and Sir Dering [2].

The manor is believed to have been located just off Bostall (Borstal) Green, and a Manor exists on the 1872 OS map. However, a barn adjacent to Joy Lane was recognised for its mediaeval origins during planned demolition by George Reeves in the early C20. It has a fine crown post roof and it has been suggested that this is part of the original Cundies Hall. It was subsequently renovated and became known as Barn House [33]. A photo of Barn House as it appeared in 1912 is shown in 'Portrait of a Seaside Town' [24].

Rayham Farm, Whitstable

This was at one time owned by the Ropers [2 v8], and still exists.

Clowes (Cluse) Wood, parish of St Cosmus and Damien in the Bleane

This is a coppice wood at the northern end of the parish [2 v8], and there is also a Clowes Farm. It lies on the northern edge of Blean Woods, close to Chestfield and south of the parish of Swalecliffe. It possibly was bought by the Roper family at the same time as Boteler's Court.

Boteler's Court, parish of Cosmus Bleane

This was a manor in the centre of the parish [2 v8]. In the 20th year of King Edward III [1347] it was, with the manors of Chestfield and Cluse, held by knight's service by the same owners.

It is now known as Butler's Court Farm (with adjacent Wood).

Beverley Farm, parish of St Stephens, Canterbury

'In the upper part of it, near St Thomas' Hill, is Beverly Farm, a small part of which is in this parish. It was formerly the estate of the Ropers, of St Dunstan's, and now of Sir Edward Dering and Sir Rowland Wynne' [2 vol IX]. This could be the property purchased by John Roper from John Lytilcote, and formerly owned by Nicholas Sheldewich.

This farm was North-East of St Stephen's Hill, and lay partly in the parish of Hackington, and partly in the parish of St Dunstan's. It is visible on the OS map of 1872/76 but has since disappeared, as this is now the campus of the University of Kent at Canterbury (UKC).

Hakynton (Hakington), near Canterbury

John Roper's will [7] refers to land in Hakynton and St Stephen's which he purchased from John Lytilcote and also a piece of land called Brambiltighe, containing an estimated 9 acres. This may have been additional land he purchased from John Lytilcote.

There is also a reference in Arc Cant [v1p73] that the Ropers were settled here (St Stephens).

William Roper in 1548 paid 3s 6d to the Hospital for Poor Priests from land in Hakynton parish [52 p77].

Manor of Castney Court

This property, in the parish of River, near Ewell was owned by the Ropers for many years. *'John Roper died possessed of it in the 5th year of King Henry VII [1490], holding it by knight's service. His descendants owned it until the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's reign.'* [2 vol IX]

Manor of Stourmouth

Although not specifically mentioned in the will of John Roper, Jane Roper his wife was in possession of the Manor of Northcourt, Stourmouth (by her own right?). This also passed to Christopher Roper of Lynsted, and via his grandson to William Rooper of *Stourmouth* [2 vol IX].

Perry Court

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Christopher Roper sold Perry Court to William Finch of Lynsted [8vol21].

Brenley, Boughton in Blean

Part of the estate of John Roper {2}. Bequeathed to Thomas Roper and passed to Robert Eyre of Brenley (who died 12/9/1573) who had married Elizabeth Roper. She inherited Brenley from her father John Roper. [2 v9, 8 vol 22]

Farningham, near Eynsford

William Roper came into the possession of a number of properties in this area South-East of Dartford, primarily from the Isley family via Queen Mary. Sir Henry Isley had supported Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion, and paid for his treachery with his life and his property. The properties included:

- **Freningham Upper and Lower Court**
- **The Manor of Charton in Freningham**
- **Petham Place**

William's grandson Sir Anthony Roper is noted as being one of the few farmers in 1630 who had consolidated his land into one large farm [58]. Unfortunately the properties were lost by the family on his death to pay his debts. (Hasted v.2 p.515, 517, 519, 521)

Stuppington Manor, Norton nr Faversham

This manor was also one of the properties brought into the family by Jane Fineux to John Roper {3}. He gave it to his second son Christopher Roper of Badmangore, whose son Sir John Roper moved his residence to the new Lodge (Lynsted) and was created Lord Teynham. [2vol vi p408]

Nakenton (Nackington), Canterbury

In 1548 (?) William Roper paid 3s 6d for land in Nakenton to the Hospital for Poor Priests [52 p78]. However, it is possible that this is confusion with Hakynton ?

Manor of **Stodmershe?** – William Roper? [52p77]

Courtsole, Cliff. Hasted v 3

Jordan's Hall, Maidstone. Hasted v 4

Roper Properties. 16/12/05

Wed, 21 Dec 2005

From: Michael John Roper
Subject: Re: Roper Properties

Chris,

Many thanks for the information. The armigerous ROPERS appear to have also owned property in other parts of the country. So far I have identified St Winnow (Cornwall), York, Croxall (Staffordshire), and Lugwardine (Herefordshire) but there must be many more. There must be a wealth of information in various record offices, some of which may not yet be catalogued.

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