

BIRCHINGTON

Court case re: Thomas Rowe & Woodchurch stones! (p. 2)

1587. We present Thomas Smith of our parish for dwelling in our parish and having a wife and not living with her according to law. (Fol. 25.)

1589. We present our chancel is at reparation, and is to be repaired by Mr. Philip Brown. (Fol. 198.)
Vol. for years 1587 – 89.

1590. Anne Browne the elder, gentlewoman, for that she did openly, in the face of the whole congregation, the 15th day of August last past, presumptuously usurp and take upon her the office and duty of our minister, as the child of one John Hill of our said parish was brought to be baptized, in the signing it with the sign of the cross, contrary to the laws of this realm. (Fol. 9.)

1591. Isaac Doggett and Thomas Coleman, the churchwardens, for that they have not presented divers faults committed with the parish, and especially Mr. Browne and others for not receiving the Communion, and also have not presented divers other matters.

On 13 December 1591 they appeared before Stephen Lake, the official of the Archdeacon, and said : They had omitted to present Mr. Philip Browne for not receiving the Communion, and also for not presenting Mr. Atton, Curate there [1590-96], for not wearing the surplice in time of Divine Service, and for that he hath not signed children with the sign of the cross at such times as they were by him baptized ; and also for that the said Mr. Atton hath not observed the Book of Common Prayer as he ought to do ; that they presented such faults as they have known to be amiss within their parish, and have of late presented the said Mr. Atton for that he doth not every Sunday and Holy day wear the surplice. (Fol. 15.)

We present Mr. Atton, the Curate, for that he doth not wear the surplice every Sunday and Holy day, but many Sundays in the year he weareth the same, and especially at such times as he administered the Communion.

When on 27 July he appeared in the Court of the Archdeacon, he said he would have worn the surplice oftener than he hath done if the same had been a sufficient and decent surplice as is required, and saith he doth not refuse to wear the same. (Fol. 22.)

On the 18th January 1591-2, when George Atton appeared, he stated : That he doth observe the Book of Common Prayer in the administrations of the Sacraments and celebrating Divine Service, and that he weareth the surplice and doth sign children with the sign of the cross at such times as they are christened according to the Book of Common Prayer. (Fol. 58.)
Vol. 1591-93.

1600. We present Richard Hisedale for that he withholdeth the Church goods, refusing both to enter into bond and also to make account for the same. (Fol. 158.)
Vol. 1598-1600.

1602 We present unto the Court that the Church or Chapel of Woodchurch in Thanet, and a certain school-house adjoining thereunto, which school-house was erected heretofore for education and teaching of the young of our parish, as the fame goeth. That the said Church and school-house are much and almost altogether ruinated and defaced, and, as the common report and fame is in our parish, one Thomas Rowe of Birchington did pull and take down the school-house aforesaid, or part of them, or cause them so to be taken down and defaced of purpose, to convert the same to private uses and buildings, as the fame goeth in our parish.

On the 27th day of July, when Rowe appeared in Court, he stated : That he pulled down part of the school-house by the procurement of Mr. Henry Crispe. The workmen that were put on the work by Mr. Crispe for the pulling down of the school-house was one Thomas Rogers, now or lately abiding with Mr. Fogg of Eastry, and others of Mr. Crispe his servants.

Afterwards Rowe, being further examined said : That about three or four years ago, Mr. Crispe being then about to build a house near unto the Church or Chapel of Woodchurch, the labourers which were used then to serve the masons, being so appointed by Rowe, gathered up some good quantity of stones which fell from the walls of the said Church, and the masons employed the same stones on the building aforesaid. And he saith that some lead of the said Church was pulled off by him and one Robert Huyton of Quex, was carried by Rowe's carts, being hired thereunto, unto Mr. Crispe his house called Quex in Thanet, and there left, and some two or three loads of the old timber of the same Church was carried unto the new-built house of Mr. Crispe his at Woodchurch, and there left in the close on an heap by Rowe as Mr. Crispe willed him.*

Vol. 1602-1604

The stones from this old Church may be seen at the present day in the farm buildings that are on the other side of the road, opposite the site of Woodchurch. The parish was united to Birchington, and the old Woodchurch font is at Quex.

1606 We, the churchwardens of the said parish, do present as followeth :-

James Pierce, inhabitant, for not paying his cess, amounting to the sum of 24s. 6d. ; also Henry Archer, 46s. 8d, ; Leonard Goodson, 2s. 4d. ; Valentine Pettit, gent., and outdweller, for refusing to pay £3. 6s. 9d. ; John Couper of Monkton and Robert Crosse of St. Peter's, 41s. (Fol. 124,125.)

Vol. 1606-7.

1608 James Barnard, Cleric, Curate of Birchington in Thanet [1606-13], for that he married two couples in times prohibited without licence. (Fol. 36.)

Vol. 1608-9.

1613 We present Valentine Pettit, gent, of St. John's, and William Barbett of Minster, and Henry Archer of Monkton, for that they and every of them have effused (as formerly) to pay the assess made for the reparation of the Church or Chapel of Birchington and the Vill of Wood, subscribed unto by the hands of the parishioners of both Chapels and certified under Mr. Doctor Newman's own hand. (Fol. 7.)

Further, we present Henry Archer of Monkton, for that he hath now since the year 1602 detained and kept in his hands twelve ewes, parcel of our Church stock, for the which he was to pay yearly six shillings for the use of them, but he hath refused not only to pay the yearly rent but to restore the said twelve ewes again to the parish. (Fol. 8.)

1614 Silas Hawker, Cleric [1613-18], for serving the cure there without licence. (Fol. 95.)

Edward Harris, for refusing to pay the Clerk his wages for three whole years, due at Our Lady's day last, at sixteen pence a year. (Fol. 133.)

Thomas Trice, for working harvest work the 21st and 28th day of August last past, being Sundays.

On 4 October 1614 he appeared in Court and confessed : That on the same days he was both at morning and evening prayer, and that he did the work which he did on those days in the mornings. (Fol. 148.)

1615 Frances Ashdon and Widow Hoskin the elder, for not paying the Clerk of Birchington his wages.

Steven Knight, the servant of William Ford, for disordering himself with drink on the 16th of April 1615. (Fol. 195.)

Vol. 1613-16.

1617 That one Agnes Ellis or Hayward of that parish doth practise the art of surgery.

That one Leonard Duke of Woodchurch in Birchington, for working on St. Matthias Day and the King's Day last past. (Fol. 107.)

John Tomlin, Hamon Finch, and William Barbett, for covering up the procession lynch* from Woodchurch Wood to the highway leading from Minster to St. John's.

And we present again the same William Barbett for the procession lynch leading along the same way to St. John's. (Fol. 219.)

1617 Edmund Knight, for that his wagon and his horse went on St. Matthias Day last past, from Birchington to St. John's [Margate] in the Isle of Thanet.

On 9 March 1617-18 Knight appeared in Court, and confessed that on St. Matthias Day last past, he being from home, his servant did go abroad with his wagon without his consent, but saith that hereafter he and his servants will observe the Holy days. (Fol. 229.)

Vol. 1616-18.

1618 We have a Service-book and Bible, but no book of Homilies, our Curate preacheth weekly to us. We have such a pulpit, but an alms-chest we use none ; our collectors distribute continually as the poor do need. (Fol. 30.)

1619 We present John Twyman of St. John's in Thanet, blacksmith, for abusing himself at Birchington the 20th day of June 1619. with drunkenness, fighting, and quarrelling with every one, and in shameful ribaldry against men and women, and especially against Arnold Kopp and his mother, too shameful to be spoken, using most filthy and opprobrious speeches against the Minister

being in his study and against his wife in ribaldry, saying if he be presented for it, it was but a 3s. 4d. charge (Fol. 329.)
Vol. 1617-19.

On the 12th day of **July 1620** appeared in the Court Thomas Greenfield, Curate, for that (as it hath appeared manifestly unto the Judge of this Court) he hath made much debate and contention in the same parish of Birchington since he hath been Curate there, and made many invective and splenative sermons, abusing texts of Scripture to fit his own hands, and to gall, touch, and personate

* A linch is the strip of land that marks the boundary of the fields in open country. (Dictionary Kentish Dialect.)