

**South End Farm : Court Mount<sup>1</sup>**

This is one of three 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed properties in Birchington, excluding All Saints Church. Its present name is Court Mount, a name given to it at the beginning of the 20th century. Under this name, its listing in the Grade II schedule states that it is:

“An L-shaped building. [It is more like a ‘T’]

The front is late 18<sup>th</sup> century to early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The rear wing is timber-framed.

The front elevation is two storeys, part brown brick and part red brick.

Tiled roof. Eaves cornice. String course.

Four sashes with cambered head linings, three of which are three-light.

Door-case with pilasters and projecting cornice.

Six-panelled door, the top two panels cut away and glazed.

Two stone ball finials on brick piers [outside the front door].

Right side extension of two storeys in red brick, no longer with bay window.

Rear wing has a 16<sup>th</sup> century to 17<sup>th</sup> century beamed ceiling and inglenook  
fireplace.”

The original name for the farm was South End Farm, for obvious reasons. During the first half of the 1600’s, Thomas Kirby owned and occupied it and on his tombstone in All Saints Church it states:

“Here lieth interred the body of Thomas Kirby, of Southend, who departed this life the first day of Mar. Anno Dni 1651 and in the 78<sup>th</sup> yeare of his age. He married Joan, ye daughter of Richard Simons, of Tilmestone: and by her had issue 5 sonns and one daughter, of whom the 2 youngest sonns Paul and

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix No. 32

Thomas are yet surviving.”

On a separate stone is an inscription to his wife, which reads:

“Heer lieth interred the body of Ione, the daughter of Richard Simons, of  
Tilmanstone, late the wife of Thomas Kirby of Southend, who departed this  
life the 82 yeare of her age, June 13<sup>th</sup> Ano. Domi 1656.”

When an inspection of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century wing of the farmhouse was made recently, the description of ‘inglenook’ for the fireplace is not a strictly accurate. This part of the building is like a semi-basement now, although it was at ground level originally. The fireplace is large, but has no seating spaces on either side. The bridge between the two sides is formed by a slightly arched series of stones set up on end, but with no supporting bressummer.

On Thomas Hill’s map of 1688, South End farmhouse is shown as a substantial dwelling, surrounded by an orchard.<sup>2</sup> The map was drawn for the sale of Church Hill Farm to John Bridges, a wealthy local landowner. South End Farm stood then, (as it does now) on the junction of the main highway to Canterbury and a narrow lane leading down towards Acol (‘Way to Accoll or Vil of wood’ on Hill’s map). The bounds of this particular part of South End Farm are delineated very precisely, as both its N.E. and S.E. boundaries butt onto John Bridges newly acquired farm.

Judging by its structure and also by its presence on Thomas Hill’s map, it appears to be one of the later medieval buildings, but the farm itself could well have been in existence in early Medieval times.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendices Nos. 13 and 64