

Warblington

Its Castle and Its Church



Warblington church circa 1920

Historical Notes of a Parish in South Hampshire
by W. B. Norris and C. O. Minchin

Havant History Booklet No. 62

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The Yew tree in the churchyard is believed to be over 1,500-years-old



Margaret Pole,
Countess of Salisbury



The Oak north porch circa 1920

This history was originally published in 1920.

It has been scanned and reprinted as part of the series of booklets on the history of the Borough of Havant.

Ralph Cousins
January 2016

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A Short History of Emsworth and Warblington
by A. J. C. Reger

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Preface

Much of the material embodied in this little history of Warblington has been taken from a book called *The Hundred of Bosmere* (comprising the Parishes of Havant, Warblington, and Hayling Island). Original copies are now very scarce [it has been re-printed and is also available to read on the web]. It was published in 1817 by the Havant Press, and, though anonymous, is well-known to have been written by Mr Walter Butler, Solicitor, of Havant, who combined a profound knowledge of the records of this part of the County of Hampshire with much patience in research. We have to express our thanks to the proprietors of the *Hampshire Telegraph* and the *Portsmouth Times* for permission to use several extracts from articles on the County which appeared in those papers some years since; and to Mrs Jewell, of Emsworth, in this Parish, for information which her great age and most retentive memory have enabled her, most kindly, to place at our service.

W. B. Norris, C. O. Minchin

Warblington, Hampshire
February, 1920

Warblington, Hampshire, In the Early Ages

Though those great voyagers the Carthaginians had visited Britain for centuries before the Christian Era, none of their records relating to the Island have come down to us except a few notes at second hand, so that its real history begins with Caesar's invasion 55 B.C. Its actual conquest by the Romans began about 100 years after his day and was completed in about a century more.

We have only fragmentary and imperfect accounts of the state of Britain at the time of Caesar's invasion, but we do know enough to give some general idea. The inhabitants at that time were for the most part rude savages, very primitive and barbarous; split up into a number of tribes, some large and some small, in a perpetual state of war among themselves, living mostly by the chase, with very little knowledge of agriculture, no arts, and only a little barter by way of commerce. Not very long before, the south-eastern and southern part of Britain had been invaded from across the seas by much more civilized tribes from the countries we now call France and Belgium, who had introduced corn growing and superior breeds of horses and cattle. They had a sort of coinage and they kept up commercial intercourse with the countries from which they had come.

At that time, and for centuries after, there was an immense and in many places impenetrable forest which stretched from the Weald of Kent across the Weald of Sussex and much of the present county of Surrey, and joined up with the lesser woods of Hampshire. The chalk downs of course were open pasture, and the low-lying marshy lands on the coast, as well as the small islands, were probably mostly covered by rough coppices and scrubby thickets. The natives had herds of small cattle, many of them belonging to a species which has

long become extinct and, they had large goats and apparently flocks of small sheep when they could protect them from the wolves. The native breed of horses was small and rough; too small to bear a man, though they could draw the chariots which were used in war as well as in peace. Wild beast abounded. The woods were full of deer (including one species of great size), wild boars, and wolves; and on the rivers, certainly in the north of the island and possibly in the south, there were beavers as there are now in Canada. Beverley in Yorkshire takes its name from the beavers that lived in the stream there.

The Romans were great road makers, and one of their first tasks as soon as they conquered fresh territory was to drive fine roads across it, generally in straight lines from one military post to another.

The tribe which had invaded and settled in Hampshire, and thence to the westward, were called the Belgae, and from them the original town on the site of the present Winchester was called Venta Belgarum by the Romans. Next to this tribe was one called the Regni, who seem to have dwelt mostly in the openings or clearings of the great forest; while along the strip of low-lying land upon this part of the coast there was a, small scattered clan called the Senones, who were an offshoot of a large tribe who lived on the banks of the Seine, which still commemorates their name.

At the head of Portsmouth Harbour, where Portchester now stands, the Romans had their principal sea port of the South Coast called Portus Adurni, and they called the large open harbour Portus Magnus – the Great Port.

One of the great Roman roads led from Portus Magnus to Chichester, then called Regnum, being in the territory of the Regni tribe, and there can be little doubt it lay on or very near the line followed by the

present main road which now passes at the end of Church Lane and leads from Portsmouth to Chichester. After passing Regnum (Chichester) the road did not go on direct to London, probably because the forest was impracticable, but crossed the river somewhere near Arundel and went to Anderida, a large important place on the coast, believed to have been near Pevensey in Sussex, and thence turned north to London, with a halt about halfway in the thick of the forest. Chichester was not, apparently, a Roman garrison town, but merely a settlement of ironworkers who were of such importance that they had a guild or sort of trade union of their own and an important temple as their headquarters. Some rich Roman had a villa at Rowland's Castle in this parish, where coins of the later emperors have been found, and doubtless there were other villas and fortified houses along the road though their sites have not been traced, except perhaps at Prinsted in Sussex, about a mile from the old staked ford at Hermitage, where the bridge now stands.

[At the time of writing this history the authors were unaware of the Roman Palace at Fishbourne or the Roman villa, farmhouse and other buildings in the field between the Emsworth Road and Warblington Castle.]

It has often been wondered why there are no traces of Christian tombs or inscriptions found among the Roman remains which have been dug up at so many places all over the kingdom. It must be remembered, however, that for some time after the Apostolic Age the Christians would not take arms or serve the empire in any military capacity; and, moreover, the early Christians came from the slums and ghettos of Rome and other great cities and were not of the class from whom the Roman armies were recruited. The two legions of regulars (the second and the sixth) which remained quartered in Britain at the time of the first Christian Emperors would probably be either Spaniards or hardy

Sabine and Oscan peasants from the backbone of Italy where Christianity did not take root till long after it had become quite popular in the cities; and as for the other garrisons of irregular troops, they were men from the outlying barbarous districts of the great Empire, who carried the worship of their own tribal gods into Britain, but had never had an opportunity of hearing the Gospel. The legends of Joseph of Arimathea, of St Alban, and of the Empress Helena and the like may be dismissed as monkish fables of much later date.

When the Romans retired from Britain, and left the wretched natives of this depopulated island to fend for themselves, they were overwhelmed, and except in the extreme west, were soon subdued by invading hosts of Angles, Jutes and Saxons.

The Jutes, who came from what is now Denmark, appear to have taken South Hampshire, but Sussex was taken by a tribe who founded the small kingdom of the South Saxons. This was so completely cut off from the rest of England by the great forest that though there was an Irish hermit with a few companions at Bosham, the people remained heathens after all others were converted to the Gospel, until a Bishop of York, Wilfrid, on his way from Gaul, was shipwrecked on this coast and established a missionary monastery and a missionary bishop at Selsey island, not very far from here. Selsey was the bishop's see for Sussex, until it was submerged by the waters, and then the see was transferred to Chichester. Warblington, therefore, was about on the boundary line between the Jutes and the South Saxons, and the place was so called because it was the *tun* or settlement of a family called the Warblings or children of Warble or Wearbel. Who he was, or who they were, we do not know.

In the last days of the Saxon Kings of England, Earl Godwin, the greatest man in the Kingdom and its real master, for the King, Edward

the Confessor, though pious and virtuous was a feeble creature, held this part of the coast as an appanage, and his valiant son Harold, the last of the Saxon monarchs, had his home at Bosham; and tapestry pictures of Harold and his household feasting in the manor house there and embarking in his ship in Bosham creek, are extant to this day at Bayeux in Normandy.

The three parishes of Havant, Hayling and Warblington make up the Hundred of Bosmere. Possibly the Bos was the old name of this part of Chichester harbour, so Bosmere would mean the lake or water of the Bos, and Bosham the village on the Bos, or as has been suggested it may have been the settlement of a pirate or adventurer called Basa, or Boson.

There is in Warblington, and quite near the church, a low sandy field projecting into the marshy channel, which still bears the name of Conigar Point. Now this word Conigar, which means a rabbit-warren, is pure Celtic and is found with the same, meaning in all four provinces in Ireland. Unless, therefore, the name was more recently imported, which is most improbable, we know from this that the primitive inhabitants were Celts, who spoke a language closely similar to, if not identical with, the ancient Irish dialect, and so the name of this little out-of-the-way piece of land embalms a fragment of the earliest history of this island.

Lords of the Manor of Warblington

A few years after the conquest of England by William the Norman, he caused a survey of the kingdom to be made. This was called The Domesday Book, and it enumerated all the Manors, with the rents paid, the areas of the lands held, and even such details as salterns and mills. In this book the Manors of Bourne (now Westbourne) and

Warblington are thrown together and stated to be held by Roger de Monte Gomeri (Montgomery), and also that Earl Godwin had held them. Godwin however had died a few years before Edward the Confessor and it is possible that the King had granted Warblington to Montgomery, as he seems to have had other manors in the neighbourhood before the conquest. Montgomery, who was Earl of Shrewsbury and Earl of Arundel, had a great many manors, most of which he put in the hands of mesne tenants. In the list of Sergeanties in the reign of Henry II, Willemus de Warblynton appears, and in 1231 Henry III granted Warblington, with the hamlets of Empsworth, Estney (apparently Eastney on Hayling Island), and Watlington to Matthew FitzHerbert, one of the barons who had been faithful to King John, Henry's father. The FitzHerberts seem to have held the manor till the time of Edward II, when two females, the last as is thought of that family, Isabella Bardolph and Phillis de Eastney, were co-parceners. It then reverted to the Crown, and in 1309 it was granted to Ralph de Monthermer, Earl of Gloucester (who had married the King's sister), and from him passed to his son-in-law, William de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, who was the head of the family of Montague, in which it seems to have remained till the death of Thomas Montague in 1428, except for a short period after 1400 when it was forfeited to the Crown on the attainder of John de Montague. Thomas left an only daughter, Alice, who married Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick and Salisbury, called the King-maker. A lease of the manor was granted to them. Margaret, Countess of Salisbury and wife of Sir Richard Pole, K.G., was the grand-daughter of this Alice, and Warblington Manor was granted to her in 1514.

After the execution of Margaret in 1541, FitzWilliam, Earl of Southampton, was appointed steward of her manors, including Warblington, and on his death without issue in 1543 it was again in the crown. In 1551 it was entailed on Sir Richard Cotton, Comptroller

of the King's Household, and it remained in that family till the death of William Cotton, without issue, in 1736, when it passed to his nephew, Thomas Panton.

Important historical personages who owned or were connected with Warblington Manor

The history of this little manor and parish touches at many points the history of England at large. To begin with Earl Godwin, a grand historical figure in the last years of the Saxon Monarchy, or as Dean Hook says in his life of Archbishop Stigand: "*the leader of the united English people, one of the greatest men this country has ever produced*". Godwin, a Saxon by birth, had learned the arts of war and of government under Knut, the Danish King, and when he attained power himself he used it to weld the Saxons and the Danes of England into one compact nation. As Earl of the West Saxons and General of the armies of Edward the Confessor, who had married his daughter and treated her very badly, he had unequalled power and immense wealth which he used to the utmost of his great ability in patriotic defence of his country against Norman and papal encroachments. Among his numerous manors Warblington was one, and though probably he had no nearer house than Bosham, he must surely have loosed his hounds against the deer and boars of our woods and his falcons against the herons and wild ducks of the Bosmere. His son, Harold, last Saxon King of England, lived at his manor house at Bosham almost within sight of Warblington, and according to the pictures of the Bayeux tapestry started from there on that disastrous voyage to Normandy which led to his alleged renunciation of his rights of succession to the throne of England.

Roger de Montgomery, whom William made Earl of Arundel and to whom he granted many Manors in Sussex and Hampshire, is described

by Freeman as '*literally the foremost of the Conquerors of England*'. He is said to have commanded the right wing at the Battle of Hastings, and afterwards, when he obtained the Earldom of Shrewsbury, he conquered a large part of Wales and gave his name to the county of Montgomery.

Ralph de Monthermer, Earl of Gloucester, the son-in-law of Edward I, had been one of his generals in the Scottish war which was the leading episode of his reign, and he was one of the most powerful nobles of his day. The next historical personage connected with Warblington is the Thomas de Montague, whose death at the siege of Orleans in 1428 is so affectingly commemorated by Shakespeare. John de Montague, the Lollard, of whom we shall hear more presently, was concerned in a plot to restore Richard II and was beheaded in 1400, when his estates were held forfeit to the crown. John de Montague, Earl of Salisbury, is one of the characters in Shakespeare's Richard II, and his death is mentioned in Act V.

(Bolingbroke speaks):

*"The latest news we hear
Is that the rebels have consumed with fire
Our town of Cicester in Gloucestershire,
But whether they be ta'en or slain we hear not.*

(Enter Northumberland)

Welcome, my lord! what is the news? "

(Northumberland):

*"First, to thy sacred state wish I all happiness;
The next news is—I have to London sent
The heads of Salisbury, Spencer, Scrope and Kent."*

The lands were afterwards re-granted to the above mentioned Thomas, who was too young to have been implicated in his father's treason. His daughter, Alice, married Richard Neville, called the 'King-maker', Earl of Warwick, and brought him the Earldom of Salisbury as her dowry. The King-maker is a familiar figure to all readers of Shakespeare or of the histories of the War of the Roses. Isabel, the daughter of Richard Neville and Alice of Salisbury, married George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence, Earl of Warwick and Salisbury, who was murdered in the Tower in 1477.

Margaret of Salisbury, the Last of the Plantagenets

The daughter of George of Clarence and Isabel Neville was Margaret, Countess of Salisbury and wife of Sir Richard de la Pole, who was a Knight of the Garter, a very unusual distinction for a commoner. This lady, who after the death of her brother the Earl of Warwick, was executed by Henry VII in 1409, was the last representative of the Plantagenets and stood very near the throne, lived for some years before her death at Warblington Castle, and it may have been she who built the great house as we find it described a few years after her death. Here Henry VIII came in 1525, but the Countess herself was at that time absent in Wales with the Princess Mary, to whom she was governess, and so devotedly attached that when the King, after his marriage to Anne Boleyn, called upon her to give up Mary's jewels and retire from her office of governess she refused, declaring that she would still follow and serve the Princess at her own expense. Up to that time she had been in favour with the King who had again come to Warblington and been entertained by her in 1526, but some years afterwards the King, whose overbearing character would brook no opposition, was enraged by the publication of a book by her son, Reginald, written at Rome and entitled *De Unitate Ecclesiastica* (Concerning the Unity of the Church), dead against Henry's grand idea

of the supremacy of the Crown over the Church in England. This he regarded as an act of treason and he determined, as he told the French ambassador, to destroy the whole of the Pole family. Margaret's eldest son, Lord Montague, was condemned and beheaded, though both he and his mother had written to Reginald in strong terms of reproof. The letters were evidently meant to be read by the King and the Council and it may be doubted whether they sincerely represented the actual opinions of the writers. In any case it is evident that they had not the effect of clearing the character of the Countess and her family, for her sons, Lord Montague and Geoffrey, were arrested at once; and a certain Gervase Tyndall, a spy on the Countess's household at Warblington, appeared before Thomas Cromwell at Lewes. Gervase reported a number of circumstances about the escape some years before of John Helyar, her Chaplain, and Rector of Warblington, and also about clandestine messages sent abroad, presumably to her son, Reginald the Cardinal. FitzWilliam, Earl of Southampton, a creature of Cromwell's, and Goodrich, Bishop of Ely, were sent in the Autumn of 1538 to examine the Countess, and they questioned her all day from forenoon till almost night, but could not elicit any incriminating admission. Two letters written by FitzWilliam at the time show the haughty spirit and dauntless courage of this aged lady. Writing from the Manor of Warblington on the 13 November 1538, late at night, to the Lord Privy Seal, he says that he:

'Went in hande with her, but altho' he entreated her in both sorts, sometyme doulx and milde and now roughly and asperly, she would disclose nothing. Wee suppose that there hath not been seen or herd a woman so earnest, so manlique in continuance (countenance), and so fierce as well in gesture as in words her sonnes have not made her privy to the bottom and pitt of their stomaks, or else is she the most errant Traytresse that ever lived.'

Her House at Warblington was searched but no treasonable papers were found. She was, however, taken away from her home and at first confined at FitzWilliam's house at Cowdray; afterwards in the Tower of London, where she met her death like her father, her brother, and her son before her. In the Priory Church at Christchurch is the beautiful Chantry which she built for her burial place, and there her motto, *Spes mea in Deo est (My Hope is in God)*, may still be read, but her body does not rest there but in the little cemetery of St Peter ad Vincula within the precinct of the Tower, the resting place of many noble victims of royal tyranny, than which, as Macaulay said, *'there is no sadder place on earth'*.

It was this lady, the Last of the Plantagenets, who, when led out for execution, on Tower Hill in 1541, declined to lay her head on the block, saying that: *'this head never committed treason, and if you will have it you must take it as you can'*. She was held down by force, and while the executioner did his office, exclaimed: *'Blessed are they who suffer for righteousness sake'*. These circumstances, as long as English History lasts, cannot fail to be remembered in Warblington parish, from the local association of that noble lady with this place.

Her enemy, FitzWilliam, was rewarded with the stewardship of her estates, including Warblington, but he died without issue in 1543, two years after his victim. When her son Reginald (who had received the Hat in 1536) heard of the death of his mother he exclaimed:

'Now I am the son of a martyr. This then is the King's reward for her education of his daughter. But be of good cheer! We have one Patron more in Heaven.'

Cardinal Pole

This Reginald does not appear to have ever lived at Warblington, though he probably visited his mother there. He was born at Stourton Castle, Staffordshire, in 1500 and educated by the Carthusians of Sheen (Henry V foundation), and at Magdalen College, Oxford, took Deacon's orders at 16, and was afterwards a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, then recently founded by Bishop Fox of Winchester; and he held several benefices including the Deanery of Exeter. In 1581, Henry, who wished for his support in the matter of the divorce from Katherine, offered him the Archbishopric of York, vacant by Wolsey's death, but he refused and went off to Rome, where he remained till the accession of Mary. On the death of Paul III he came very near being elected Pope, and on the accession of Mary he was sent to her as Apostolic Legate, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1556 (on the death of Cranmer at the stake), and died in 1558 on the day after his cousin and mistress Queen Mary, to whom it was at one time proposed to marry him. This may seem surprising for a Cardinal, but a Cardinal was not necessarily in those times in priest's orders (the great Leo X was not priested until after his election), and anyhow there was always the dispensing power which could be executed in cases of grave political need. Pole was rather moderate in matters purely dogmatic, but he was a devoted supporter of the See of Rome - as has been said: *'he was all for the Pope without popery, whereas Henry VIII was for popery without the Pope'*. He was a man of mild and studious character and might be admired had he not through weakness allowed himself to be driven by the Pope Paul and led by the cruel Bonner and the extreme Catholic party into the persecution of the reformers which sullied his fame and the Queen's.

When Elizabeth succeeded on the death of Mary there arose the difficulty of who was to consecrate her at her coronation. Pole was

dead and Canterbury was vacant as were several other sees by reason of the plague which was raging. Heath, Archbishop of York, refused on the ground of her claim to supremacy, and so did most of the other bishops, until at last Oglethorpe of Carlisle consented, borrowing for the purpose the vestments of Bonner. At the Coronation Mass, which was celebrated in the old form, Elizabeth communicated but is reported not to have received the Cup. Probably this was the last time that she did not communicate in both kinds. On the occasion of Mary's funeral, Elizabeth, being present, had to listen to a most offensive sermon by White, Bishop of Winchester, who, besides other unpleasant remarks, told the congregation that Mary (by renouncing supremacy) '*had chosen the better part*', but that Elizabeth was to be obeyed, for '*melior est canis vivus leone mortuo*' (a living dog is better than a dead lion). Elizabeth put him in the Tower but spared his life, which was more than her father would have done in like case.

We shall hear presently of Raffe Smalpage, Rector of Warblington, who had been Chaplain to the Lord Chancellor. Apparently the Chancellor, referred to was Thomas Wriotesley, Earl of Southampton; and though only remotely connected with Warblington, a little sketch of the history of that family may be of some interest. The first of them to attain distinction was William, the Garter-King-at-Arms, whose armorial coat is still used (according to Boutell's Heraldry) by the College of Arms. His son, Thomas, was a lawyer and a man of affairs, who was Clerk to the Signet when Thomas Cromwell discovered him and found him very useful in the complicated business of clearing out the monasteries; and like many of those concerned he obtained a grant of valuable monastic property, getting as his share the house and lands at Titchfield, Hampshire, which had been one of the Houses of the Premonstrants, a very wealthy order of White Canons founded by Norbert about 1120 at Premontre near Paris. This Thomas was then created Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield and he

afterwards was Lord Chancellor, and took off his robes (so the story says) in order to leave his arms free to turn the rack on Anne Askew, a young and handsome woman of good family, who was tortured and afterwards burned for nonconformity. Thomas died in 1553 and was succeeded by his son Henry, who died 1581, and was succeeded by another Henry, the 3rd Earl. This is the person to whom Shakespeare dedicated his *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and his *Lucrece* in 1594. He was a patron of literature and of the poets and was with Essex in the latter's rebellion, when he escaped death very narrowly, but was imprisoned in the Tower until released by James in 1603. In after years he had much to do with the condemnation and disgrace of Bacon, on whom he thus was enabled to wreak a tardy vengeance for Bacon's mean betrayal of his brother-in-law Essex twenty years before. His son Thomas, the 4th and last Earl of that family was a trusted adviser of Charles II, and is often mentioned by Pepys, who noted in his diary under date 5 February, 1660 (old style),

'Into the Hall and there saw my Lord Treasurer (E. of Southampton) sworn – saw also the heads of Cromwell, Bradshaw and Ireton, set up at further end of the Hall.'

November 19th, 1663: *"My Lord Treasurer was found in his bed-chamber being laid up of the goute. I find him a vary ready man and certainly a brave subject, to the King."*

May 16th 1667: *'To my Lord Treasurer's where I find the porter crying and suspected it was that my Lord is dead; and, poor Lord, we find that he was dead just now. There is a good man gone; and I pray God that the Treasury may not be worse by the hand it shall now be put into.'*

May 19th: *'Great talk of the good end that my Lord Treasurer made; closing his eyes and wetting his mouth, and bidding adieu with I be greatest content and freedom in the world; and is said to die with the cleanest hands that ever any Lord Treasurer did.'*

George Cotton the Recusant

In Queen Elizabeth's reign all who were absentees from their Parish Church on Sundays and holydays were liable to a fine. At first this was 12d. (5p) but in 1581 the penalty was raised to £20 a month and, according to Cardinal Gasquet who has analysed the Hampshire Rolls, George Cotton was actually mulcted in £260 a year from 1587 to 1607, so that he would have paid up sums equivalent to £50,000 of our money. This seems very dreadful, but it is now well known that heavy fines, though actually levied, were sometimes by a collusive arrangement assigned by the Treasury to a friend or relative of the delinquent, so that in whole or part they might find their way back In his pocket. We know that this happened in Bacon's case and as George Cotton must have been more or less a *persona grata*, for he entertained the Queen here in 1586, it is quite conceivable that he was not allowed In suffer very severely. Whatever their sufferings may have been the Cottons remained steadfastly loyal, and suffered for their loyalty by the ruin of their beautiful castle at the hands of the Parliamentarians.

Among the royal visits to Warblington those of Henry VIII in 1525 and 1526 have been already mentioned. As to the latter visit, there is a letter of FitzWilliam to Cardinal Wolsey dated from Guildford 26 July 1526, in which he says:

The King intended to have stopped at Stanstyd and Southwike, but as that parish is infected with Plague, he will go to Warblington, a house of My Lady of Salisbury, two miles distant. Thence he will go to Portchester Castle and the next day to Winchester.

In a later letter of 18th August, 1526, from FitzWilliam to Wolsey.

When the King was at Warblington he heard from Lord Suffolk that one of his servants had died of Plague at Woodstock, upon which the tour he was making was altered so as to avoid Woodstock.

King Edward VI waiting in 1552, when he was 14-years-old, says:

'We went to Halvenaker (Hannaker. a pretty house besides Chichester. From thence we went to Warblington, a faire house of Sir Richard Cotton.'

Queen Elizabeth's visit to unlucky George Cotton must have been a costly one for him, for on such occasions she was attended by a swarm of rapacious courtiers who drank the cellars dry, killed off the deer if there was a park, destroyed furniture, occasionally it would seem stole plate, and made themselves a nuisance generally. Even the very rich Earl of Bedford writes to Walsingham:

I trust your Lordship will have in remembrance to provide and help that her Majesty's tarrying be not above two nights and a day.

On another occasion, after being most royally and hospitably received by a gentleman in Suffolk, she found out that he was in secret a papist, so he was thereupon, as a reward for his hospitality, committed to the prison at Norwich and narrowly escaped death from gaol fever.

This visit of Queen Elizabeth is the last royal visit recorded until we come to that of another queen, her late Majesty Victoria of gracious memory, who in February, 1842, when on her way to the Isle of Wight from Arundel Castle, was met at the Hermitage Bridge in this parish by the great Duke of Wellington, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, and other notables, and welcomed by them on entering the County.

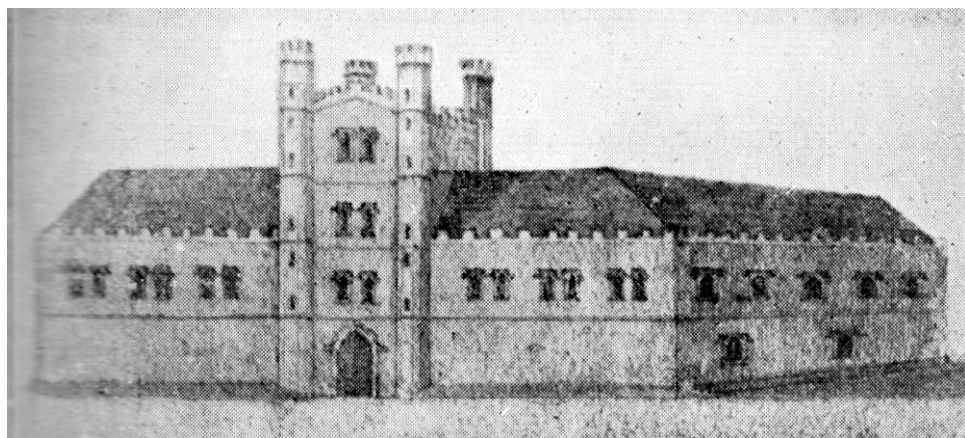
Warblington Castle

In Roman times there may have been an outpost here to guard the ford, but as there was no quarry stone available on the spot, it would consist of only a low substructure of bricks with a timbered upper part and of only one storey. If there was a house in Saxon days it would be wholly of timber beams in a district where wood was so plentiful and stone so scarce. In the reign of Stephen, when the whole of England was overrun by small contending by small contending armies, every petty baron built a castle without asking for any legal permission, and when Henry II succeeded he proceeded to destroy hundreds of these little fortresses. As for the great earls of Salisbury who held the manor in later days they were very great nobles who had better places to live at than Warblington though the idea of a manor presupposes some sort of court where tenants might do service and pay their dues, it does not imply any large or imposing building; a small hunting-box where the lord might lodge for a few days while beating the woods would satisfy all his requirements.

Margaret of Salisbury is the first person of whom we hear definitely as having an important house at Warblington, and it was probably she who built the great castle. She certainly dwelt there habitually in her later years and we may picture her walking with her household to the old Church and entering by that beautiful timbered porch which even in her day was at least 150-years-old.

The castle was completed around 1520 and detailed building accounts for the years 1517/18 survive. A survey carried out in 1632 describes it as follows:

The Castle formed a quadrangle deeply moated round on every side, with an entrance from the west, over a drawbridge and beneath an arched gateway, flanked with turrets at each corner, a porter's lodge to the south, and an armoury to the north. The south quadrangle comprised the Chapel, 42 feet by 32 (13 metres by 10), and the Great Hall, 58 feet by 32 (18 metres by 10), communicating at one end with a small cellar and at the other with the buttery, kitchen, cellar and brewery, and from hence were the dishes conveyed to the buttery-hatch within the screen of the Hall. The state apartments were at the northern quadrangle, and a gallery and sleeping rooms above. The stone with which the building was faced came from the Isle of Wight, but the mouldings and ornamental parts were of the fine-grained stone of Caen in Normandy.



A pencil drawing of the Castle by the late Rev. Norris as it probably was before 1643. [It is later thought to have had only two towers]

In the time of the Cotton family, before the Civil War it is described as:

A very fair place, well-moated about, built of bricks and stones and is of great receipt, built square; in length 200 feet (61metres), with

a fair green court within, and buildings round the said court; with a fair gallery and divers chambers of great count, and four towers covered with lead, with a very great and spacious hall, parlour and great chamber, and all other houses of office necessary for such a house; with a very fair chapple within the said house, and the place covered with tiles and stones, and a very spacious garden, with pleasant walks adjoining, and near to the said place groves of trees, two orchards, and two little meadow platts containing eight acres (3.2 hectares); and a fair fish pond near the said place; barns, stables and out-houses.

Such was the castle as it stood in 1643 when the parliamentarians besieging Portsmouth (where Goring was holding for the King) and Arundel Castle perceived its strategic importance as commanding the harbours of Langstone and Emsworth and attacked it *'with 60 soldiers and 100 muskets'*. From a letter to Sir William Waller, commanding the forces before Arundel Castle, the writer says he:

'Has not yet had a reply to the message sent to Arundel Castle,' and that *'they have taken the Strong House at Warblington, which commands a pretty port and will be of good advantage.'*

The castle seems to have been then dismantled (the lead roofing went as a matter of course to make bullets) and to have fallen into ruin, some of the stones being carried off to Havant and some to Emsworth where they were used to build old walls and houses still standing in the town. The Cotton family retired to a farmhouse of theirs at Bedhampton where they remained for many years, still keeping up their connection with Warblington, for Richard Cotton was buried here in 1695, as was his young son Francis, who predeceased him. Viscount Combermere of the Cheshire family is a descendant of the Cottons of Warblington, and bears the same arms.

It will be observed that in the description of the Castle, the Chapel is stated to be 42 feet by 32 (13 metres by 10). This must have been much more than a mere oratory and it may be supposed that George Cotton, the recusant, was accompanied at his devotions by a large party of persons of his own way of thinking who would not attend the parish church though only a few yards distant.

Some Rectors of Warblington

William de Vleburigge was presented to the living in 1282 as appears from the Register Book of John, Bishop of Winchester.

In 1306, the Pope, Clement V, issued a dispensation to John de Bliburgo (another spelling of the same name), Rector of Warblington, but not in priest's orders, to hold certain specified churches, canonries and prebends in addition to the Rectory of Warblington.

In 1390 John Swyfte, alias Chandeler, who appears to have been then Rector, had a dispensation from Boniface IX,

'To hold any mutually compatible benefices of any number and kind even canonries and prebends elective dignities, etc. or offices in Cathedral, Metropolitan or Collegiate Churches, and even Episcopal and other dignities, and may exchange them, etc.'

In the taxation of Pope Nicholas the revenue of the Rectory is entered as £25 6s. 8d. (£25.33) annually. There was a Vicar also whose revenue was £4 6s. 8d. (£4.33) and also a pension of 10s. (50p) annually, annexed to the church, probably for a chantry priest.

John Helyer was Rector in the time of Margaret of Salisbury as we have seen. Ralph Smallpage, whose monument is in the chancel, died in

1558, the same year as Queen Mary and Cardinal Pole.

Mr Payne was Rector at the time of the Civil War, and was a great sufferer when Cromwell expelled such of the clergy as adhered to the Episcopal form of church government. John Harrison, 1664 (George Cotton, Esq. patron), is probably the person who supplanted him. Sebastian Pitfield, 1677 (George Cotton, Esq. patron) is the Rector whose ghost the egregious Wilkins asserted to have appeared to him.

Richard Brereton, 1669 (George Cotton, Esq. patron), was also Rector of Westbourne, where he died and was buried. He let the Warblington parsonage glebe to one Perce, a farmer, with whom the aforesaid Wilkins seems to have been on intimate terms.

Vincent Bradstone, 1721 (William Cotton, Esq. patron), died March 1740. Samuel Dugard, 1740, afterwards Vicar of Westbourne, seems to have been put in to keep the Living warm for his successor who was under age.

John Slaughter, 1752 (Thomas Panton, Esq. patron), was buried in the Chancel, 1764. Samuel Torrent, M.A., 1764 (Thomas Panton, Esq. patron), seems to have been a non-resident pluralist. John Unwin, of Took's Court, actually presented Mr Torrent to the Living.

In 1786 Mrs Anne Norris became Patroness of the Living and presented her son, William Norris, to the benefice in 1789. He died in 1827, and was succeeded as Rector by his son, also William Norris, who resigned the living in favour of his nephew, William Burrell Norris, the present Rector, in 1875.

The present Rector's Father, the late James Norris, DD, successively Scholar, Fellow, and President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, was born at Warblington Rectory in 1796.

The advowson of the Rectory and perpetual presentation to the Church was appendant to the Manor until 1764.

The Church of St Thomas of Canterbury

No record exists of the building of the original Saxon Church, and we know nothing of it except that it must have been one of the two churches in the joint manors of Warblington and Bourne (Westbourne) standing at the time when Domesday Book was compiled. We are even in ignorance to what saint it was dedicated, if to any. Nearly all the old Saxon building has been taken down or is hidden by more recent constructions, and the little now in view is part of the tower with two windows, and including some thin bricks which may possibly be Roman. The old North Porch, constructed of ship timbers which still bear the marks of the bolts, is one of the most interesting early examples of decorated woodwork in the kingdom. It is supposed to date from about 1350, and is figured in Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*.

The Church when rebuilt was dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury, then a fashionable saint, and therefore it cannot date from earlier than the last part of the 12th century. It may be mentioned that the great Church at Portsmouth, also dedicated to St Thomas, is conjecturally dated from 1180.

A distinguished antiquary with a good knowledge of the history of English Church buildings, has given the following theoretical history, based mostly on a careful study of the buildings at Warblington:

There was originally a small Saxon Church with a western tower in three stages, or perhaps this may have been a kind of porch. In the early days of the 13th century there was erected to the west of the tower a new nave (dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury) with

north and south aisles, the lower part of the tower being then removed to open up the Saxon nave, which became the chancel of the new church. Towards the end of this same century the old Saxon nave and chancel were taken down and rebuilt, with a vestry on the north side, in this prevailing style. The Church has thus a most interesting architectural history, and the 13th-century work is particularly fine.

The nave is of three bays, its eastern arch and south arcade having the same detail, while the detail of the north arcade is much plainer and not so ornate. The arches of both arcades are pointed of two orders; the north piers being composed of cylindrical shafts with moulded capitals and bases, whereas the southern piers are most beautiful examples of 13th-century work, and comprise four clustered Purbeck marble shafts, with foliated capitals and moulded bases, surrounding a central octagonal shaft. Although the two arcades are so dissimilar, it seems probable that they were erected about the same time. In the north wall is a 14th-century tomb containing the effigy, in Purbeck marble, of a lady in a long gown and wimple; and on the south side a very fine effigy of a lady in characteristic costume, lying with her arms at her sides; while at the east end of both north and south aisles are small chapels, 8 feet (2.4 metres) square, with a piscina (a stone basin with a drain for washing the sacred vessels) in each of them, and two large coffin lids with a cross set in the floor. There is a piscina with a trefoiled head on the south wall of the Sanctuary, and also one in the vestry, as well as a squint or hagioscope, giving a clear view of the altar from the inside of the vestry. The Chancel roof is modern and so is the Font.

There were originally three bells in the tower; but two of them, having been considered useless, were removed in 1800. The remaining bell, apparently dating from the 16th century, is inscribed in Gothic letters "*Sancte Pale ora pro nob.*" ("*Holy Paul pray for us.*").

In 1859, the Church was re-seated throughout with oak pews, the steeple and belfry were built in stone in place of wood, and, on the outside, the Saxon arches in the Tower, north and south, were exposed to view.

In 1893, the Chancel was re-roofed with oak in place of the worn-out old roof. The organ chamber was built on the north wall; the east window and part of the south wall, having been undermined with ivy, were rebuilt; the Chancel pews were converted into choir stalls; and the stained glass of the east window was put up in grateful memory of the late Rector, the Rev. W. Norris, who had been a munificent benefactor to the Church and Parish during his very long lifetime of 97 years all spent in Warblington Rectory, and who died in January, 1893. The stained glass of the east window, representing Our Lord in glory, Thomas Becket and William of Wykeham, is the work of Messrs James Powell, of Whitefriars.

It may be mentioned that in the great trigonometrical survey of Hampshire made between 1791 and 1794 by order of the Duke of Richmond, Warblington Church was one of the stations. The groves of magnificent elms which now surround the churchyard [no longer there having succumbed to Dutch Elm disease] had not then been planted, so the tower, though not quite so high, would be more visible from a distance than it is at present.

St Thomas of Canterbury

Whether the original Saxon Church which stood on this site was under the invocation of any particular saint, we do not know, for there is no record. Domesday Book, which gives such a full survey of Manors and Lands was not intended to be a record of Churches, and Churches are only mentioned casually in it.

Havant Borough History Booklets



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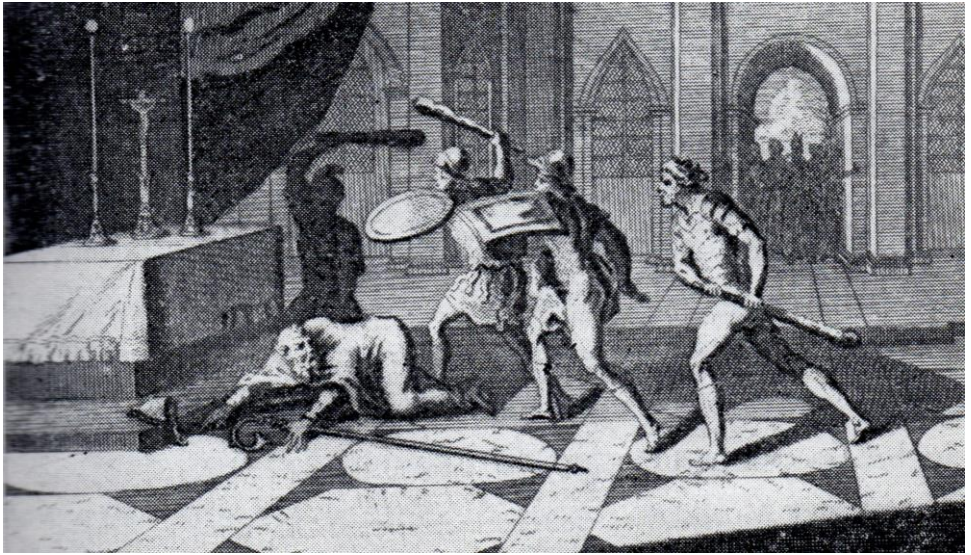
However that may be, the mediaeval Church of Warblington was dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury or St Thomas of Kent as he was sometimes called. Now, two questions at once suggest themselves. Who was St Thomas of Canterbury and why should the Church of Warblington be dedicated to him? The first of these is simply a matter of history and gives no difficulty.

About 800 years ago there was living in London a citizen of modest means called Gilbert Becket. He had one son, Thomas, a tall slender lad, very lively and extremely clever, to whom a rich and noble gentleman took a liking and so sent him to the University of Paris, which was then the fountain of learning. After his return he spent a few years at home in London and was then introduced to Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who sent him to Bologna to study Law, and afterwards employed him in various diplomatic matters for which, in spite of his hasty and overbearing character, he showed a great deal of aptitude. In order to grasp the import of his future history we must keep in mind the fact that what he had studied at Bologna was Roman civil law and the Ecclesiastical law of canons and decrees, and that he was and remained ignorant and contemptuous of the English Law under which he was called to live. He was not a priest, but merely tonsured, the head mark which showed that he was in some of the minor orders such as Acolyte, Sub-Deacon or Deacon, which in the then very corrupt state of the English Church did not stand at all in the way of Church preferment. He was at the same time Provost of Beverley, Archdeacon of Canterbury, Rector of several parishes and Canon of several cathedrals. Then he became Chancellor of England at the age of 37, a position which gave him the power of obtaining vast sums out of Church property, which power he exercised to the full, while, all the time he lived the life of a rich layman, fought in wars, hawked and hunted, and then and always ate and drank copiously.

At that time the King, Henry II, was anxious to reform the English Church, whose corruption was a scandal to Christendom and an obstacle to good and settled government in this country, and he conceived the notion that the able and determined chancellor was an instrument ready to his hand. Accordingly, in 1162, Becket was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, having received his priest's orders on the day before. Immediately thereupon he turned against the King and strove by all means, legal and illegal, to exalt the power of the Church against the King and his judges, and to claim that churchmen, merely because tonsured, though laymen in all appearances and conduct, were above the law of the land and amenable to the spiritual courts alone, which lacked both the will and the power to punish heinous offences at all adequately.

The struggle between King and Archbishop went on for eight years, with many concessions and great patience on the King's side, and repeated acts of tyranny, bad faith, and even treason on the part of Becket. At last a more than usually outrageous defiance of common right and justice made the King lose his self-command and in a hasty moment he uttered words which induced some of those about him to make a reckless attempt to take the matter into their own hands and bring the Archbishop to account. Four Knights, men of high position and large estates, not as they are often misrepresented mere vulgar bullies and swashbucklers, left the King's Court at Bayeux in Normandy and travelled to Canterbury where Becket was keeping Christmas. Then there were quarrels and violent scenes, both sides using very bad language, that of the Archbishop, who had a gift that way, being particularly coarse and provocative. From words the Knights came to blows, and though apparently their original intention was only to capture his person and take him away to the King or to a safe prison, in the course of the scuffle they struck the unarmed man with their swords and dashed out his brains on the steps which led

from the cloister to the choir of the Metropolitan Cathedral, the very hub and centre of English Christianity.



The Archbishop's Martyrdom in Canterbury Cathedral, 29 December 1170. *From Rapin's History of England edition of 1733.*

Becket dead became a greater power than Becket living. The body was hardly cold before miracles began, and this grasping, tyrannous and rebellious cleric came to be regarded as a martyr to the cause, of the Church. First the Church and See of Canterbury, then the Church in England, and then the Church in its true head Alexander III, the Pope, supported by the Kings of England and France as against the anti-pope set up by Frederick the German.

The answer to the other question cannot be given with certainty, but we know that belief in the miracles wrought by Becket and his relics was very general both in England and all over the Western World at the time when this Church was being built. It is possible that one of the Chantries or Side-chapels was especially dedicated to him and that it

was endowed with a relic. There were many such chapels at the time of the visitation by Thomas Cromwell in the reign of Henry VIII, and he dismantled them and destroyed the relics wherever he could find them.

And there was another and an appropriate reason why this Church was dedicated to the Martyr of Canterbury. Warblington lies on or close by the road which all the pilgrims from South Hampshire to Canterbury must have followed, and we know that many must have passed here year by year. As old Chaucer says, and he wrote not so very long after the Church was built:

*'from every shire's end
'Of England to Canterbury they wend,
'The holy, blissful martyr for to seek
'That them hath helped when that they were sick.'*

What then more natural than that if any felt faint by the way and lacked the strength to complete the toilsome journey through Sussex and Kent, they should turn aside here to perform the penances and make the offerings which, had they been able, would have been done at the Shrine of the Martyr in the Cathedral itself ?

Most of what we know of the history of Becket is from the book *Vita Sancti Thomae*, written by one Herbert, a monk, called "of Bosham" from the place of his birth. He seems to have been a man of substance, owning a good deal of property in the district, including it is said, for a time, the manor of Warblington. He was a faithful companion of Becket, and was his secretary, and though not actually present at his death, he left a full account of the crime taken from the mouths of Grim and other eyewitnesses.

The frequent changes of Manors in those days from one family to

another is due to the fact that under the early Norman Kings they did not pass by descent but were merely personal grants for life. Manors (unless vested in the Church, and sometimes even then) were generally held by 'Knight Service'. that is by providing a certain number of men-at-arms for the King's armies. Some were held by 'Sergeanty' (*servitium* in Latin), which involved the performance of certain services, such as acting as King's champion and being prepared to defend his title by fighting anyone who impugned it, or ferrying him over a river when he came that way. Some Sergeanties were very curious. Thomas de Warblington in the time of Edward I and Edward II held another manor by the service (besides other duties) of quartering condemned felons. A manor in Kent was held by the Sergeanty accompanying the King on his voyages to and from Normandy and holding his head when he was sea-sick!

Elizabeth D'Abrichescourt, lady of the Manor of Bedhampton in the 14th century, having gravely offended the Church, was condemned by the Archbishop of Canterbury to perform several severe penances, such as going without under-linen on frequent occasions. One of these was to go every year on foot '*to visit that glorious martyre St Thomas of Canterbury*'. If she obtained a dispensation, as doubtless she could, at a price, she may very possibly not have walked beyond Warblington. If she actually performed the penance it would have involved about a month's tramping over bad roads, a hard task for a woman who was not very young.

Pilgrims of St Thomas in the 14th Century

There is a legend that the timbers of which our beautiful North porch was constructed came from an old ship of Edward III, a great warrior King, whose reign and life ended in sorrow and shame in the year 1376. During the French Wars of Edward there was with him a young

squire called Geoffrey Chaucer, a man of great culture and extensive reading with an extraordinary memory. His career as a soldier seems to have ceased when he was taken prisoner in the disastrous retreat from Paris, but he remained attached to the court all his life, and was admitted to the friendship of that great Prince John of Gaunt, the fourth son of the King, and married one of the ladies of the Queen's household. Obtaining some rather profitable and important posts in the Civil Service (as we should say) and in Diplomacy, he seems to have had a good deal of leisure in his long life, which ended with the 14th century, in the time of Henry IV of Lancaster, King Edward III's grandson, and he devoted this leisure to literature, composing many poems and among others the book called *The Canterbury Tales*, which was the first poetical composition of any importance in the English language.

The plan of the work is that a band of pilgrims starting to ride from London to Canterbury should beguile the journey, which would take at least two days, by telling in their turn such stories as might come into their minds - whether gallant, gay, chivalrous, edifying, or merely comic, depended on the character of the teller.

The pilgrims were a party of thirty of all classes of society except the highest and the lowest, from the Prioress, who would doubtless be a lady of a noble and great family, and the Knight, down to the cook and the rough but honest ploughman. In the prologue to the Tales, which is a lengthy composition in itself, the poet gave a sketch of each of his characters, with their dress and equipment, the style of their manners and conversation, their habits and their avocations, and it is most remarkable, as an index to what we may call the social atmosphere of that day, to find that so many of the casually assembled party were connected with the Church. Thus we have the Prioress with her attendant nun and her priest or confessor, the grand Monk from a rich

monastery – the begging Friar vowed to poverty but revelling in all that was best and choicest to eat and drink – the Pardoner hawking false relics and dispensations for every sin in the decalogue committed or to be committed, and the poor Secular Priest, Rector of a country parish; a Clerk of Oxford, who if not already in orders would soon be, when his lay studies were completed; and a Summoner or, as we should call him, apparitor of a bishop's court, make up nine altogether, no small proportion out of thirty. The Prioress is depicted as a very refined and gentle lady, evidently a sweet old maid! – not very old either – and her suite are left colourless, except so far as we may judge from the tales related by her confessor and the nun, which are the story of Chanticleere which has been dramatised in our day, and the legend of St Cecilia. Of the others the poet has not much good to say, with one notable exception. The Monk is a man of the world and of pleasure; keeping horses and hounds and expressing open contempt for the rules of the Augustinian order to which he belonged. The begging Friar thinking of nothing but how to make himself popular, especially among the women, and to bring in grist to the mill of his monastery and keeping no company with those who had little to give *'But all with riche and sellers of victual'*.

Worse even than he are that precious pair, the Pardoner and the Summoner, full of guile and wicked meanness, using all the powers which the Church gave them to promote their foul and selfish schemes. We should be led to think that the poet had sketched these two repulsive figures in over-black colours were there not still in existence ample documentary proof to show how many base and worthless myrmidons of the Church stalked abroad in those days to prey upon the timorous and the simple. As a beautiful contrast, Chaucer gives us the character of the village priest *'the poor persone of a toun'* for the word *toun* in those days meant what we should call a country village. He is indeed one of God's poor, the brother of the simple ploughman

who rode beside him.

*Wide was his parish and houses far asonder,
But he left nought for no rain nor thunder
In sickness and in mischief to viisite
The farthest in his parish moche and lite,
(that is great or small)*

*Upon his feet, and in his hand a stave;
This noble ensample to his sheep he gave,
That first he wrought and afterwards he taught.*

*To drawen folk to heaven, with fairness,
By good ensample was his business.*

And so at the end of the poem, when all but he had told their tales in verse and he was called upon to do his share, he disclaimed any skill in time or metre, and said:

*'I will you tell a little tale in prose,
To knit up all this feast and make an end,'*

and thereupon proceeded to preach a very beautiful and very learned sermon, quoting freely from the Sacred Writ, from many of the Fathers of the Church and from several of the pagan philosophers, for as Chaucer says:

*'Rich he was of holy thought and work,
He was also a learned man, a clerk.'*

Two things in the poem are of interest. The first of them is that the inn where the pilgrims assembled was the Tabard at Southwark, a Hampshire House, for it was the town residence of the Abbot of Hyde

near Winchester, a great prelate, who held several manors in this immediate neighbourhood. The other is that the knight whose military career had been passed in various crusades, had fought in so many fields where our own officers have been fighting in these last days. Lettowe and Russia, Egypt and Syria, the deserts of Africa and the hills of Armenia are familiar to our ears as household words, and we cannot but think of Gallipoli and Salonika when we read that, *'In the Greek Sea at many a noble armee had he be'*.

Chaucer and John of Gaunt

It may be asked what is the connection between the Tales and Warblington, but really it is not far to seek. It is evident to anyone who reads the Prologue to the Tales with attention and observes the contrast as drawn by the poet between the selfish and greedy Monk and Friar and those clerical vampyres, the Pardoner and Summoner, on one side, and the saintly character of the humble Parish Priest on the other, that Chaucer's sympathies were with the Lollards who were making efforts to reform the English Church. The sympathies of Chaucer's friend and patron, John of Gaunt, were so strong that he did not shrink from standing beside the reformers when on their trial; and John de Montague, Earl of Salisbury, the Lord of Warblington manor, who was a contemporary of the poet and died in the same year, 1400, was so pronounced in his opinions that he destroyed all the images in his chapel at Shencle.

The Yew tree in Warblington churchyard

In the old churchyard and on the south side of the Church stands, quite un-propped, a grand old yew tree, 26 feet (8 metres) in circumference at five feet (1.5 metres) from the ground, which is by many considered

to be one of the finest yews in the kingdom, though it is not at all the largest in mere girth. Opinions differ as to the age of this tree and it has been suggested that it was in existence at the time of the building of the original Saxon church, whenever that was. It is of such great size that it must obviously date from long before the same epoch as the rebuilding of the Church in the 13th or 14th centuries.

A statute of Edward I shows that yews were frequently standing then in positions where they afforded shelter to churches, and this may be one of such trees. The Yew tree (*taxus baccata*) is indigenous in the British Isles as over most of Europe. It is the longest-lived of our trees, and according to the botanist De Candolle, has lived for over 2,000 years Dr Joyce, the Irish Antiquary, a very good and careful authority, states that the old yew at Aughanure, Co. Galway, *'cannot be less than 1,000-years-old'*.

At one time during the days of careless neglect of such matters, the upper part of the tree was much damaged by gunners who used to shoot at the birds that resorted to the shelter of its branches, and it presents rather a pitiful appearance in the old engraving of the Church as it appeared about 1800. Some years ago the tree was again suffering, this time from interior decay, and there were many large fissures and hollows which threatened to reduce it in time to a mere shell. In 1913, advice was asked and very kindly given by the experts at the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, and, following their instructions, the tree was drastically treated, very much in the way that a dentist does with a hollow tooth. The cavities were scraped out and cleared of decaying matter and then thoroughly disinfected with creosote, and as soon as that had been absorbed were filled with cement concrete well rammed in. The old tree now looks very healthy, it is throwing out young twigs in considerable numbers, and every autumn it bears a plentiful crop of the brilliant red berries we are all so familiar with.

The Parish Registers

Unfortunately, all the parish registers previous to 1660 have been lost, and those that remain contain nothing of interest except occasional notes that persons had been buried 'in woollen'. This records the effect of a Statute of William and Mary by which deceased persons were to be shrouded in woollen, the object being to support the wool trade, which had fallen into decay. An affidavit that this had been duly done had to be made, in default there was a fine of £50. The rule was obeyed with great reluctance as we may see from the words which the poet Pope puts into the mouth of the beautiful Mrs Oldfield, the celebrated actress, on her death-bed:

'Odious! in woollen! 'twould a saint provoke' (Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke). 'No, let a charming chintz, and Brussels lace, Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face.'

The Apparition at Warblington Parsonage

When Wilkins was Curate in 1695 (Brereton, the Rector, being non-resident), he saw an apparition of which he wrote a long account to Caswell, the mathematician, who passed it on to Dr Bentley. The ghost was alleged to be that of the Rev. S. Pitfield of whom it was said by evil tongues that he was a libertine and a murderer. From the best information, he seems on the other hand to have been a respectable character, wore his gown, amused himself inoffensively, discharged the duties of his office with great regularity and presided at his vestry meetings. According to Wilkins' tale, which is too long to quote in full, in August, 1695, a maid at the parsonage was the first person to be frightened at the appearance of '*one in a black gown walking through the room*'. The curate came from Havant where he was lodging, and sat up with Perce, the tenant, and his man, prepared to exorcise the spirit,

by reciting gibberish out of a school book on logic, but nothing happened for a couple of nights, when the ghost again appeared, to Perce and his man that time. Three nights later when the Curate, Perce and the man were all in bed, the ghost came to the bedside and drew the curtains, and then *'went about the room, whistling'*. On the Curate getting out of bed to follow it, it retreated till he got close and adjured it to say who it was and why it came;

'I put out my arm to feel it and my hand seemingly went through the body of it and felt no manner of substance till it came to the wall.'

Then it went down the gallery and disappeared. From the dress and appearance of the phantom it was recognised as representing Mr Pitfield, a former rector of the place, *'who had been dead upwards of 20 years'*. Here Mr Wilkins is a convicted liar, for Sebastian Pitfield was not presented to the living till 1677 (18 years before), and he did not die till 1690, only five years before this tale was told. A couple of months after, a man coming from Havant fair saw lights in the parsonage, and the figure of a man in a long gown, who followed him across the fields till he encountered other farmhands, when it scratched against some pales, *'made a hideous noise'* (perhaps *'like to wet fingers drawn on glass'*) and eventually disappeared.

The whole affair, discounting the exaggerations, may be set down as tricks of the smugglers who were anxious to keep the coast clear so that they might transport their contraband cargoes up Pook Lane (which runs close behind the parsonage) unwitnessed by the curious.

Another Ghost Story

A good many years ago there were two old ladies whose early years had been spent at the Warblington Castle Farm, which stands close to

the Church. They used to relate that in their girlhood, at the time when George III was King and Emsworth was famous for its festivities, there was only one hairdresser in the district, so when they were invited to go to a ball their hair had to be dressed on the day before, and they sat up all the previous night for fear of deranging it. They also said that they went to Emsworth at night with fear and trembling on account of the Ghost of Bere Block Dell, which they would have to pass. Bere Block, which still has that name, is a small coppice to the north of the road from Warblington to Emsworth. There are now several houses there, but in those days it was a very lonely spot, where there stood a small public house, the resort of smugglers, poachers, and other bad characters. It was believed that the ghost of a man who had been murdered in that house perambulated the thicket at night and it was alleged to have been seen by several. As may be supposed the smugglers did nothing to discredit this belief.

Smuggling and Wrecking

Smuggling was at one time very rife in this district as the numerous little creeks in the harbour afforded great facilities for evading the preventive officers, and the country was traversed from south to north by plenty of bridle tracks by which the goods could easily be carried into the interior of the county on pack horses, which was the smugglers' usual method of transport. Smuggled goods could safely be brought by boat to the lonely foreshore below the church or even transported from Hayling at low tide across the old ford by Wade.

It is reported in 1800 from Cowes that the smuggling trade continued to flourish, and that at the port of Cowes in the past seven years there had been seizures of 80,000 (136,383 litres) gallons of spirits and 30,000 pounds' (13.6 tonnes) weight of tobacco and snuff. A good deal of this was probably destined for Chichester Harbour, perhaps some of

it for Warblington.

In the same year, Mr Justice Grose in charging the Grand Jury for the County, said that he knew the offence of plundering wrecks had been frequently committed to grievous extent, and he directed that the Statute 19, Geo. II, dealing with this crime should be read in the Churches four times a year at the four great festivals, according to law.

Body Snatching. The Warblington Watch Houses

Curious persons are often led to ask for what purpose the two stone huts at the north-west and south-east angles of the old churchyard were erected. This was done to provide shelter for the guardians who watched over the Churchyard on dark nights to protect bodies recently buried from being exhumed by stealth and carried off for sale to surgeons for dissection. When the schools of surgery were provided with "subjects" in a legal and regular manner, the trade of body snatching, which had often led to greater crime (as in the case of Burke and Hare) ceased to be lucrative and these watch houses were no longer required.

Sport One Hundred Years Ago

For just once Emsworth was a fashionable place when the Princess of Wales in 1803 had a bathing machine here and spent the summer in the neighbourhood. At that time the old Crown Inn was famous for the subscription balls there which were attended by all the fashionable people in the district, and also for the good dinners on the occasion of important cricket matches. Emsworth then possessed one of the strongest elevens in the whole of the country. The fame of Hambledon, which used to play All England on equal terms has carried down to our

times, but Emsworth, in its best days, used to be matched with Hambledon (which really played all the strength of the county) and did not always lose. When the celebrated Brown, who was one of the eleven Bs who played and beat England, was in the team along with White, of almost equal skill, and the Lillywhite of the first generation, and were all at their best, no lesser club than Hambledon dared face them. Brown was also a renowned player in single-wicket games, then always played for a good deal of money a side, and along with Budd, Lillywhite or White was able to take on the best two men that could be pitted against them. Afterwards, when Emsworth fell off somewhat, outside assistance used to be obtained, and the celebrated Budd of Cheriton would come here to help them, but there is no record of Budd's sisters having brought their unconquerable ladies' eleven to the Emsworth ground.

There were other sports. Bull-baiting had died out though at one time it was obligatory for any Havant butcher who killed a bull without previous baiting was liable to a fine of 6s. 8d. (33p). Cock fighting had begun to be looked on as being cruel, and after the Act of 1815, which made it illegal, was only rarely practised and on the sly. But there was plenty of foot-racing, usually on the road, in which Emsworth was interested and on which it lost or won a good deal of money.

The first match recorded was when Isaac Bibbs had so much to spare in a match of 24 hours that he left the road and went to bed for three hours. Sims, a local farmer, was backed to do 54 miles (87km) a day for six successive days, which he performed on the Portsmouth road between Emsworth and Havant and back. On the last lap he was accompanied by the Emsworth brass band and as many of the inhabitants as could go the pace. Presently a young lady of Emsworth made a bet that she would walk the two miles (3.2km) to Havant in 12½ minutes and the return journey in 13½ minutes, which task she

performed to the delight of the populace and the rage of the local clergy.

The Fisheries

Emsworth and Langstone Harbours have been plentifully stocked with oysters from time immemorial and these are even said to have been sent to Rome in the days of the Empire. No reference to this is found in the classics, as the only mention of British oysters is in one of Martial's epigrams, where he refers to those of Reculvers in Kent. The oysters of Emsworth were once sold for 2d. (1p) a hundred, but, alas, that was a very long time ago. At present a ten-shilling note (50p) would hardly be enough. In the 18th century there were bitter complaints that outsiders from Essex, Kent and elsewhere dredged the harbours to exhaustion, taking everything however small. About 1802 the Emsworth channel was created a 'several fishery', and, after many troubles and vicissitudes, these valuable and prolific beds are now vested in a company of the actual working dredgers, and worked by them on co-operative lines with very fair success. The fishery of next importance is for periwinkles, which are taken by hand from the mud of the harbours in enormous quantities, something like 1,000 cwts. (51 tonnes) being annually marketed. Mussel culture, which might be made a very lucrative industry, is wholly neglected, and there is not much fishing for white fish, though bass, mackerel, mullet, and garfish (locally called 'gore-bills') are taken in summer, and eels, plaice, flounders and dabs in winter, but in summer most of the men are away yachting and in winter they are too busy with periwinkles and oysters to have time for any other kind of fishing.

The Pavement of Warblington Chancel

The Chancel Pavement at Warblington originally consisted of small red tiles, about 6 inches (15cm) square, and inlaid with a yellow composition. It seems a reasonable conjecture that they may have been prepared for the kiln by the monks, as they were possessed of considerable ingenuity and leisure time for composing such ornaments for the pavement before the altar and sanctuary. Those decorated with armorial bearings were possibly designed as compliments to the great men who became benefactors to the several religious foundations. Many of those that possess nothing remarkable were obviously intended to be placed in fours, that number making out an ornamental figure. Others were apparently designed to form a motto, but as only three letters remain, it cannot be completed. The tiles in Warblington Chancel are of the same kind and pattern as those in Wykeham's Chantry in Winchester Cathedral. These rare and interesting 14th- or 15th-century tiles, with various devices upon them, were re-laid with Portland stone, the whole length (52ft.) of the chancel floor in 1800. As to the designs, it is somewhat difficult to make out what they originally represented. The lions and fleurs-de-lis, if regrouped in proper order, would stand for the Royal Arms as borne by Edward III, viz. England and France, quarterly. Similar arms, with a cadency (which was too minute to introduce on a tile) were borne by George, the father, and Edward, the brother, of Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, as son and grandson of the King. The most elaborate of the tiles, now sadly worn, bear a two-headed eagle, displayed, with a plain escutcheon of pretence. Though not reproduced on a shield, but merely within an ornamented circlet, this was apparently intended to represent the coat of arms of some great personage. The castles which appear on other tiles may have been taken from the arms of John of Gaunt, who after his second marriage quartered Lin Castles of Castille with his parental lions of England. But all this is conjectural.

There are two inscriptions to the Cotton Family on the Chancel floor, one to Francis Cotton, who died, aged 12, in 1687, and one to his father, Richard Cotton, of Bedhampton and Warblington, Esquire, who died in 1605, son of George Cotton, Esquire.

An incised marble tablet in the North Wall of the Chancel, representing a figure kneeling at a *prie-dieu* in trunk hose and an M.A. Gown, states that:

Before this Monument lyeth buried the Bodye of Raffe Smalpage, late Chaple. To the Right Honorable the Erie of Southampton, Lord Chauncelor of Englande, and Parson of this Church. Obiit, 6, Die Ma, Ao. Domini 1558.

It will be observed that Smalpage died the same year as Queen Mary and Cardinal Pole. The first Earl of Southampton, FitzWilliam, was Steward of the Manor of Warblington, and died without issue, as already said, in 1543. The second Earl of Southampton, succeeding the first Earl as Steward of Warblington, was Lord Chancellor Wriothsesley, who with Bishop Bonner of London racked Anne Askew in 1546. Presumably it was he as Lord Chancellor to whom Smalpage, the Rector or Parson of Warblington, was domestic chaplain.

Memorials of the Great War, 1914-18

On 1 November 1919, a brass tablet was erected in the Chancel with this inscription:

To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Gilbert Hume Norris, Captain, King's Royal Rifles, son of The Rev. William Burrell Norris, Rector of this Church, and of Constance, his wife, who died of wounds received in action in France, March 9th, 1918. Aged 31.

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori

[It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country]

Capt. Gilbert Hume Norris.

'The second son of the Rev. and Mrs. W. B. Norris, of Warblington Rectory, Havant, was educated at Cranleigh and Keble College, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1910. He obtained a temporary commission in the Regiment in February, 1915, and was posted to the 13th Battalion, being promoted Captain in August, 1916. Since the time he first went to France in June, 1915, until the time of his death, at the age of 31, Capt. Norris served continuously with the 13th Battalion and saw some of the stiffest fighting.

"He died of wounds on March 9th, 1918, received the day before, and his remains lie buried at Poperinghe Cemetery. A much-loved officer by all his comrades in arms in the 13th Battalion, whose death is greatly felt and deeply mourned.'

Obituary Notice from *King's Royal Rifle Corps Chronicle*, 1918

Captain Norris had previously to his Commission served as a Private in the 18th Battalion Royal Fusiliers. Universities and Public Schools.

In the Autumn of 1919, a carved oak Reredos was presented to the Church with a brass tablet recording that:

This Reredos was erected by the Rector and Parishioners in 1919 in grateful memory of the men of Warblington Parish who gave their lives for God, King, and Country during the Great War, 1914-1918:

H.W. Blathwayt.	A. Hopkins.	G. Poate.
E. Corder.	R. W. Johnson.	V. T. Rainey.
T. Carr.	E. Mears.	A. H. G. Sprigg.
I.W. R. Campbell.	C. Le Mesurier.	J. L Stephens.
L. Collis.	L. A. Mitchell.	R. T. Stokes.
H. J. Cribb.	G. H. Norris.	E. Stowe.
S. R. Crabtree.	G. G. Paine.	W. G. Trodd.
Farr-Voller	J. H. Paine.	L. Woolmer White.
W. H. Fry.	H. G. Paris.	S. Wareham.
T. Heath.	A. C. Paxton.	

To the next of kin of each of those who died in the Great War, the King has sent a Scroll of Honour, thus inscribed:

He whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who at the call of King and Country left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom.

Let those who come after see that his name be not forgotten.

I join with my grateful people in sending you this memorial of a brave life given for others in the Great War.

GEORGE, R. & I.

In January, 1920, a carved oak Altar-Hall was added to complete the memorial scheme.

ENGLAND, 1914

*I know not in this dark and fateful hour
What England is to others, but to me
She is a noble heritage, a sea
Of mighty memories, a gracious power,
A tender loving mother, a strong tower
Of refuge for the oppressed that would be free,
The bulwark of that ancient liberty
She gives to all her sons, a sacred dower.*

*Such are the thoughts of England that must stir
An English heart, and this dear land again
Her children of to-day shall live to save,
Or, if they fall, they will not fall in vain:
No life is comelier than the life she gave,
No death more splendid than to die for her.*

From *The Times* Newspaper.

*Their seed shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be
blotted out.*

*Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for
evermore.*

*The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will
shew forth their praise.*

Ecclesiasticus xlv. 12, 13, 14.

The preceding pages recording the History of Warblington Parish, were put together in the hope that every Warblington man or woman who lives here may feel proud of the ground that he or she treads on, and feel such thoughts as the Psalmist felt and expressed ages ago:

"The lot has fallen unto me in a fair ground; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Akin to our modern Poet, Kipling, in his last two verses on "Sussex," with which we conclude:

*So to the land our hearts we give
Till the sure magic strike,
And Memory, Use, and Love make live
Us and our fields alike—
That deeper than our speech and thought,
Beyond our reason's sway,
Clay of the pit whence we were wrought
Yearns to its fellow-clay.*

*God gives all men all earth to love,
But since man's heart is small,
Ordains for each one spot shall prove
Beloved over all.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
Yea, Sussex by the sea!*

The Churchyard

Warblington churchyard occupies an area of a little over an acre and was probably extended northwards in the early 19th century. It was closed in 1894 when the new urban district cemetery was constructed. There are around 630 monuments in the churchyard. All but a few date from the early 18th century through to the end of the 19th century. The earliest surviving memorial is to Thomas Till, 1707 (1).

Many of the headstones are decorated with carving, some very lavishly (especially those of the second half of the 18th century). The stock symbols are well represented and follow the general pattern of development noted in English churchyards. In the first half of the 18th century the low, thick headstones bear emblems of death (skull, bones, coffin, hour-glass, dart, down-turned torch) but here at Warblington these are often accompanied by signs of continuity and resurrection such as a leaved branch or palm, a naming heart and one example of the ring of eternity formed by a snake with its tail in its mouth.

In the course of the 18th century taller, slimmer headstones are used and these carry symbols of hope and religious emblems: crown, the clouds of heaven and sunbursts, trumpet, dove, Agnus Dei, the eye of God and the angel in the style of the Renaissance cherub. There are also rare motifs that refer to the personal character or profession of the deceased: the musical instruments and music books of Joseph Toms, 1762 (2); the crazier and mitre of Bishop Short of Adelaide, South Australia, 1883 (3) single example of a coat of arms for John Palmer, 1745 (4).

By the end of the 18th century, the emblem of the urn is becoming popular and by the first half of the 19th century it rivals the angel in popularity.

Scenes carved on monuments are much rarer than symbols but there are several of interest in the churchyard: the carving of a mother holding a baby and reading a book is devoted to Fanny Dassie who died in 1805 after childbirth, to be followed three months later by her infant son (5); there are two compositions from the Regency period depicting families mourning at a father's tomb, and there are scenes representing disasters at sea.

William Palmer's vessel went down mast first in Dublin Harbour in 1759 and this is a particularly striking scene (6). William Bean, pressed into the Navy at the age of 20, lost his life in 1758 and the explosion on board HMS *Torbay* in Portsmouth that killed him is depicted on his tombstone (7). Another fine ship appears together with seashells and a figure of a sailor on the memorial to William Cooper (8). There are also depictions of the overturning of smaller boats in Emsworth harbour in 1785 and 1796.

There are 33 Roman Catholic memorials, recognisable by the use of the conventional Latin prayer for the soul of the departed: *Requiescat in pace*, and the carving of a small Latin type cross on steps or a mound at a time before the general re-introduction of the cross as a symbol on tombstones.

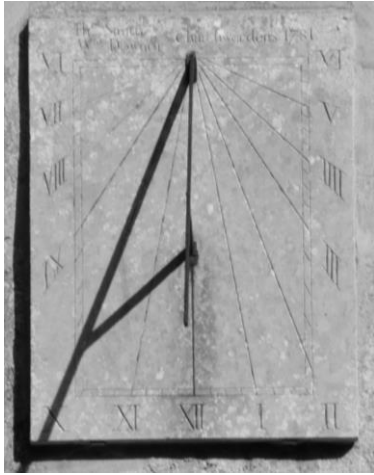
There are two Roman Catholic bishops buried in the churchyard. One is Richard Southworth who ministered for 30 years at Brockhampton Chapel and died in 1817 (9). This chapel, built in 1752 just west of Havant, and was the only such place of worship between Arundel and Southampton. The choice of this churchyard as a place of burial for Roman Catholics may have owed something to the memory of the blessed Margaret Pole, mother of Cardinal Pole and staunch Roman Catholic, who built Warblington Castle.

The three largest family groups represented in the churchyard are the Holloways (1729-1868), a major Emsworth family engaged in shipping and merchant activities and owning land and property; the Kings (1750-1884), some of whom became shipwrights in Emsworth in the 1780s and gave their name to King Street, and the Tiers (1765-1884). Descendants of all three families are believed to be still living in the district.

Very few tombstones in the churchyard can be attributed to particular masons but John Skelton, an outstanding modern sculptor and a pupil of Eric Gill signed one tombstone and may have been responsible for adjoining memorials (10). His work can also be seen in Boxgrove churchyard, near Chichester.

The numbers in brackets refer to their locations in the churchyard, which are indicated on the map available in the church.

Many of the tombstones are badly weathered and it is now very difficult to read inscriptions or clearly see carvings. Between 1996 and 1998 a team of volunteers recorded the details of every churchyard memorial. Copies of these records have been deposited locally with Portsmouth City Records Office, Havant Museum and The Emsworth Maritime and Historical Trust (Emsworth Museum).



The sundial



The Mass clock

The sundial on the south side of the Church, dated 1781, was photographed at 11.00 British Summer Time but could only show Greenwich Mean Time – 10.00. Mass clocks were built by amateurs, they weren't particularly accurate, and the gnomon was a simple peg placed in the hole in the photograph. But they served their purpose by marking out times for Mass and for Vespers.

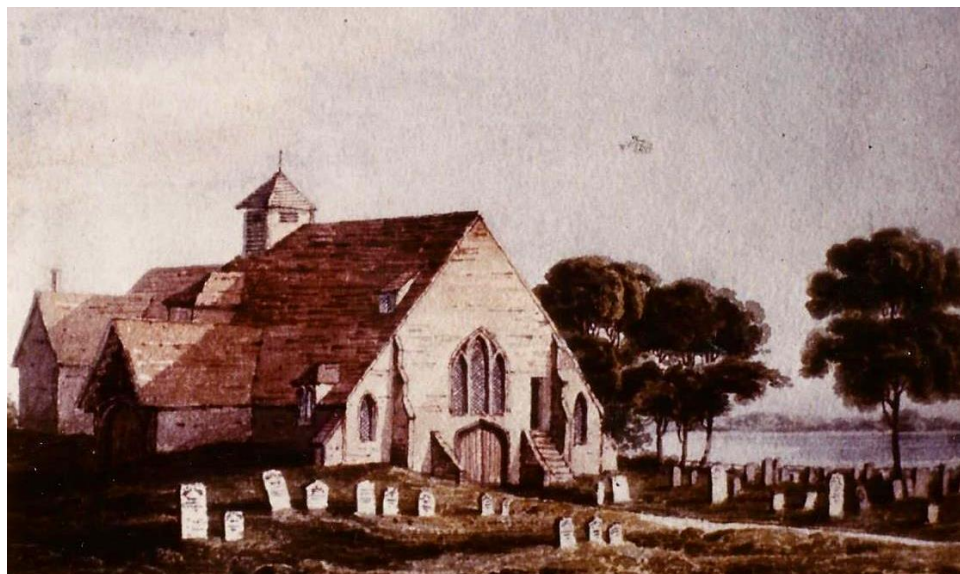


William Palmer's tombstone



The grave-watchers' huts in the churchyard





Painting of Warblington church circa 1830. *Joseph Francis Gilbert*

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