

## THE CHURCH AND PARISH OF CHESHAM BOIS, BUCKS.

*With some Special Observations on "Chrysoms."*

BY CHARLES HAROLD EVELYN WHITE, F.S.A., VICAR  
OF CHRIST CHURCH, CHESHAM.

It is now many centuries ago since the first settlers in Buckinghamshire found a home among its lofty hills, and built for themselves rude occupations beneath the shadow of the forest trees.

In a valley surrounded by the woodland, covering an extensive tract of moor and marshy ground, runs an unobtrusive stream, known to us as the "Chess," and to which locality the early inhabitants gave the name of "Cestreham." This, at all events, is the precise rendering of the place-name which has come down to us through that remarkable survey of the eleventh century, the Domesday Book, and which, as far as I am aware, furnishes us with the earliest known reference to the township. Although, as I am ready to acknowledge, we must not attach too great an importance to the orthography of place-names as given in Domesday, seeing that those who compiled the account were but imperfectly acquainted with our language and customs, yet I am strongly inclined to regard "Cestreham" as the correct form of the word, if not, indeed, the original designation by which the place was known.

It is usually taken for granted that Chesham derives its name from the water-course which passes through the district, dignified by its high-sounding title, "the river Chess," and which, running into the Colne, at length empties itself into the Thames. It appears to me extremely improbable that the name "Chesham" should have had any such origin. The "Chess" was probably never otherwise regarded than as a brook, and could scarcely be deemed of sufficient importance to give a name to the place. The Rev. Charles Lowndes, who, in his paper on "Chesham," published in *THE RECORDS* (Vol. II., p. 51), adopts the theory that Chesham owes its name to the stream, and points to examples which he

regards as analogous, instancing Trentham on the Trent, Rotherham on the Rother, and Cheltenham on the Chilt. But not only are each of these so obviously and unmistakably true derivations as to be incapable of any other application, but the rivers mentioned are in themselves of so important a character as quite to account for a transference of their names to the places on their banks. Mr. Lowndes further alludes to the word "Ches," or "Ces," as very possibly the equivalent for "a diverging point or centre from whence anything separates," and further says, "As several valleys diverge at the junction of the two principal streams . . . this may very probably be the etymon of the word." In this connection it may be observed that Mr. Robert Ferguson, in his "River-Names of Europe," mentions the "Cestrus" as a river in Asia Minor, which may possibly derive its name from the Sanscrit verb, "gain"—to go, and here there may be traced some affinity between the river-names. I am far from attributing any of these meanings to the Chesham stream, believing, as I do, that we must look for its derivation either (1) to the name as given in the Domesday Book to the town itself, or (2), remotely to a now well-nigh obsolete word which very clearly describes the physical surroundings of the place, and which I have the satisfaction of being able to say is here suggested, as I believe, for the first time.

(1) The name "Cestreham" points to the town as it existed at the time of, and previous to, the Norman Conquest, when the settlement was probably fairly extensive, and when to guard against the predatory incursions of freebooters, a fortress was raised, or perhaps advantage was taken of a natural fortress, such an one as may be said to abound in this district of hillsides and thickly-wooded retreats. The name is built up of two words of Latin and Saxon origin—a by no means infrequent combination—"Cestre," a castle or camp, and "ham," a very common place-name ending, meaning a community.\* Whether during

---

\* A very similar place-name is to be found in Chesterton, Co. Oxford, through which parish the great Roman road, Watling Street, formerly ran. In ancient writings (*temp.* Edw. III. 1 & 2), the place is spelt "Cestretton."

the days of British, Roman, or Saxon occupation the supposed castle or fortress came into use, it is impossible to say.\* It may have formed a British stronghold, and been the chosen camp of the aboriginal inhabitants; considering the antiquity of the name and the absence of early records, it is quite possible for all traces of its ancient origin to have faded away. At all events, the attractions of so desirable a spot, with an abundant water supply and facilities for hunting and cultivating the soil of an extensive tract of country, protected by the hills and a belt of forest trees, would be a strong inducement for a branch of the great Celtic family to settle.

It is well to bear in mind that the early use of the word "Cestreham" is not confined to the "Domesday" writing. In the year 1221, "Cestreham" is mentioned in a Charter of compromise, when the Canons of Dunstable yielded the Vicarage to the Abbey of Wooburn. Again, in the Taxation of Pope Nicholas (A.D. 1291), the benefice of "Cestreham" possessed lands and rents, fruits, flocks and herds, to the amount of £2 12s. 4d. Henry III. made a grant by Charter to Hugh de Vere, Lord of the Manor, of a weekly market at *Cestreham*; and in the same king's reign we find an Abbot of the Convent at Leicester, known as Alan de *Cestreham*, presumably a native of Chesham.†

But I am glad to be able to point (2) to an interesting derivation, which has not, to my knowledge, been previously advanced. A range of small hills which intersect the moors of Bradfield (Yorks) somewhat after the manner of the hills that stretch across the Chesham (Waterside) moor, is known as the *Chess*,‡ the meaning of the verb "Chess" "being to arrange in order, or pile up." Such a natural barrier as a range of hills having an expanse of boggy ground at its base, would afford considerable protection against an invading foe, and

---

\* Mr. Fuller, of Germains, Chesham, has in his possession a British gold coin of a date anterior to the Christian era, which was found some distance above his residence on the rising ground overlooking the valley.

† One of the two mediæties of the benefice of (Great) Chesham, or, properly speaking, one of the two Vicarages (the ancient church of Chesham Wooburn having long since become extinct) with the Rectorial Manor, were appropriated to the Convent of St. Mary, Leicester, during the reign of Henry II., and so remained until the dissolution.

‡ In the vulgar dialect called "Chest," e.g., "Howden Chest."

prove in time of danger an excellent fortress. Nothing is more likely than for the "cestre," or camp, to have become corrupted into the more easy form of expression supplied by the word "Chess," or, as in the local dialect, "Chest."\* Seeing that the word "Chesham" occurs in *Taxatio Papæ Nicholai*, wherein "Cestreham" also appears, I think it not unlikely that the former came into use some time during the thirteenth century, and has ever since continued.

Some time after the Norman Conquest, Cestreham or Chesham appears to have been divided into three manors, of which Chesham Bois was one. This Manor was held by the family of De Bosco, or De Bois, in the reign of King John. If, as some are inclined to argue, the place derives its additional name of Bois from De Bosco, it must be remembered that the title can only have been gained from some place. The Norman-French addition of Bois, signifying "wood," was made, as may be easily understood, by reason of this part of the wider Chesham standing in its thickly-wooded portion, and to distinguish it from Chesham (Leicester and Woburn), which together formed Chesham Town, or Great Chesham. "Bois" is almost universally pronounced in the neighbourhood "Boies" or "Boyce," sometimes written "Boys," "Boies" being the Anglo-Norman spelling.

In the County of Essex there is a *Theydon Bois*, where, in the year 1166, one William de Bosco, who probably came from Flanders, held a knight's fee, and gave the Church there to the Priory of St. Bartholomew, West Smithfield. Some attempt has lately been made to detach from the word "Bois" the generally accepted meaning as derived from the French, because, as it is said, at the time of the Norman Conquest the French tongue had not reached England, and consequently it must be looked for in the Saxon use. It is even suggested that "bosze" (which signifies borough, castle, or city), as sounded by our ancestors, gives the probable meaning,

---

\* The name by which the famous game of *Chess* is known to us, has never been, I believe, satisfactorily accounted for, neither am I able to find that its derivation has ever been sought in the not unlikely direction I have indicated. Again, an impregnable line of defence, such as chess players are familiar with, may perchance find its counterpart in a range of small but redoubtable hills—a "chess"; or again, the "rook" or "Castle" may afford a clue to the name "chess," derived from "cestre."

the word having become corrupted both in sound and in its mode of spelling. Upon the whole, the conditions of life at Theydon Bois were not, I suppose, very dissimilar to those found here, but the meaning which I am inclined to attach to the word "Chesham" would preclude me from accepting the latter explanation of the word "Bois;" otherwise, I think something might be said in its favour, although, to my thinking, it would be far from conclusive.

The name Bosco, or rather the form it takes, both here and in Essex, is a little singular; it seems likely that the termination may be traced to the known influence exercised, as we find suggested, about the time of the Norman Conquest in literary as well as other matters, by the numerous Spanish or Italian priests, but if so, it does not appear to me that any distinction can be said to have existed between person and place, as alleged.\*

In an ancient Charter (*cir.* A.D. 1200) I find "*terre de bosco.*"† In Charters of a corresponding date we meet with "*boscage*"=food which wood and trees yield for cattle; "*boscaria*"=woodhouses, etc., indeed, our word "bush" is derived from the same root.

William de Bosco, Lord of the Manor, presented William de Risemberghe (or Riseborough) to the Vicarage of the Chapel of St. Leonard of Chesham, in the year 1216—this Chapel of St. Leonard being the Church of Chesham Bois. It was something more than a chapel of ease, not being in any way dependent for its sustenance upon the neighbouring Church of St. Mary's, Chesham. It served to accommodate the few inhabitants of the outlying hamlet, and, by way of distinguishing it from the Parish Church, it may have received the designation, "Capella." As a donative, it was apparently endowed with tithes by the Convent of Leicester (*Vide Appendix*) from early times, which entitled the Incumbent to separate and distinct jurisdiction, with institution and induction. The Incumbents are in the Diocesan Registers at Lincoln occasionally denominated Chaplains, but at other times Rectors, and as a Rectory the benefice is still regarded, and to it, as such, Clerks are presented.

After the time of Henry VII. the manor passed into

---

\* Essex Field Club Transactions, 1887.

† Grant of land in Gosfield, co. Essex. *Harl. MSS.* 79d. 29; printed in *East Anglian* (Vol. III. n.s.)

the Cheyne family by the marriage of Sir Thomas Cheyne\* with Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir John Chesham, who himself seems to have inherited in the female line from the family of de Bosco, or Bois. From this time the manor continued to be one of their chief seats, and although the family had residences of some importance at Chenies, and Drayton Beauchamp, in this county, Francis Cheyne, Sheriff of Bucks during the reign of Elizabeth, is described as of "Chesham." It may, therefore, be assumed that the Bois manor-house formed the principal seat. The Cheyne line ceased on the death of William Cheyne, Lord Viscount Newhaven, without male issue, in 1728. Soon after, the property passed to John Earl Gower, and was sold by him, in the year 1735, to the Duke of Bedford, in whose house it still for the most part remains. The Duke of Bedford, while as Lord of the Manor, retaining the great tithes, has parted with the right of presentation of a Clerk to the Rectory by the sale of the advowson, together with that of (Great) Chesham, to private trustees.

The mansion and its park, which probably was of considerable extent when the Cheyne family resided in Chesham Bois, has long since disappeared. It occupied in part the site of what afterwards became known as Bois Cottage, and since as Bois House. The Rector, the Rev. Joseph Matthews, informs me that traces of the ancient buildings have from time to time been brought to light while digging in the garden, but nothing has been discovered of any importance. Intermediately the estate was in the Winslow family, and at other times it passed by marriage connections through the Brudenell, Ingleton, and Fleetwood families. The house, as it now stands, has been occupied by several families in succession. In connection with these there are several memorials in the church and churchyard, and entries in the Register books. (Pedigrees of the Cheyne and Lee families may be found in Vol. III. of the BUCKS RECORDS, p. 243.)

The parish has an acreage of between 900 and 1000 acres, somewhat more than half of which is arable land. It is chiefly remarkable for the beauty and extent of its woods, known respectively as Hodd's Wood, Bois Wood,

\* Thomas Caeyne was confined in the Tower of London as a Lollard in the year 1446.

Howlett's Wood, Beech Wood, and Blackwell Stubbs. One of the many pleasant walks, that by the Chesham (Waterside) Moor, and through Hodd's Wood, leads to the beautifully-restored little church which stands on the brow of the hill overlooking the valley.

It is dedicated to St. Leonard, one of four ancient churches in the county so named. The restoration, which was admirably conceived, and carried out in 1881, was at a cost of £1300, which included the north aisle and tower foundations, the tower itself being built three years later. The total cost of the work exceeded £2000. The restoration, it is satisfactory to state, was carried out with due regard to the spiritual necessities of the parish, and with the desirable end in view of adding to the decency and quiet dignity of Divine worship, retaining as far as possible all ancient work and interesting memorials.

The character of the structure as it previously stood has been considerably altered, chiefly owing to the building of a north aisle and the erection of a neat and handsome tower in keeping with the building. The church previously consisted of chancel and nave, with a flimsy erection at the west end about two hundred years old, which, resting upon the walls, and without foundation, served the purpose of a tower, and contained the three bells. It is said that two of the three bells were cast out of one. The first is without inscription or date; the second is inscribed—

“CHANDLER MADE ME 1705.”

The remaining bell is of pre-Reformation date, stamped with shields bearing the fleur-de-lis, and carries the inscription—

“Sancte Andrea Ora Pro Nobis.”

This bell, the original one, probably hung in a campanile by itself, the other or others coming into use at the time of the erection of the previous rickety structure, misnamed “a tower.”

The entrance to the churchyard on the south-west, is through the old chancel arch, which being low, and, moreover, surmounted by a heavy body of masonry, and cracked in several places, it was found expedient to take down and remove from the interior, and it now

occupies the position of a lych-gate. Its exposure to the severities of the weather will, it is to be feared, speedily bring about its destruction, the stone being of a very perishable nature, and now especially prone to decay.

The church is entered from the south side through the lower part of the tower, which serves the purpose of a porch, and is of lofty dimensions.

There are Early English features in the architecture of the church, of which style the triplet window at the east end is a good example. The east window contains some interesting fragments of fourteenth century stained glass, among which are to be discerned the arms of the Cheyne's (Cheyne *or* and *az.* on a fess *gu.* three Saltires of the first), and various bits of tracery and foliage, notably the "lily" of the Lee family. Some of these flowered quarries are perfect specimens.\* Over the old west door a decorated window of three lights, concealed by plaster, was brought to light, containing some stained glass, which has been reinstated elsewhere.

The nave is of the decorated order, having three good two-light windows; one (for originally there were *four*) has been removed to the west end of the north aisle; previous to the restoration, each pair was on a lower level than the other. On the splays of the windows on the south side, traces of colour may be still discerned, and on the north wall traces were discovered of the Decalogue painted in black letter characters. The arches are pointed, with plain mouldings. The doorway, together with the windows, are represented in Brandon's *Analysis of Gothic Architecture* as excellent examples.

The chancel roof, of dark stained oak, is worthy of special attention, being ornamented with painted shields, bearing the Cheyne arms, and there are carved heads, in colours, of monk and bishop respectively, on either side at the extreme east end, but for whom these corbels are intended I cannot say, or even venture to suggest names.

Within the communion rails are some interesting specimens of early encaustic tiles, which were found buried in the church, and relaid here with a too hasty hand.

---

\* Lysons, in his *Magna Britannia* (Vol. I. continuing *Buckinghamshire*) refers to the interesting character of these fourteenth century windows and the stained glass. One of these, formerly on the north side of the nave, is represented by Lysons in colours. Portions of this glass may be seen in the east window.



The handsome Pulpit is of Jacobean workmanship, of oak, and curiously carved. The old sounding-board has been ingeniously utilized to form the base of the pulpit, the whole being remarkably perfect and sound.

Other portions of the ancient woodwork are to be found in different parts of the building. The rails of the quaint old gallery, formerly at the west end,\* have been called in to complete the railing which encloses the Communion-table, while panels of the old work are used in connection with the reading-desk.

In the chancel are remains of the old oak benches, with carved "poppy-head" ends. The two chairs are made from four old bench ends taken from the gallery, and oak panelling from the chancel. The faces of the figures with which the woodwork was formerly ornamented have been destroyed, and carved oak leaves inserted.

The Pulpit, which formerly stood lower down in the nave, still retains the iron stand in which the Hour-glass was formerly placed, or rather, it is inserted by a long spike in the wall at the preacher's right hand. The use of the Hour-glass in churches was an introduction of early Puritan days, when "painful" preaching was the rule, and the running sand was necessary to mark the progress of time, both in the interest of preacher and people. It continued in use for a century or more, when the great and inordinate length of the sermon appears to have considerably diminished. The silent sermon preached by the falling sand—a simile of the brief span of man's life—could not fail to be impressive and salutary, and as such we find it occasionally represented on monuments to deceased persons. The earliest references to the church hour-glass I have met with are in the churchwardens' accounts of Lambeth for the year 1579, when the sum of 1*s.* 4*d.* was paid

"ffor the fframe in which the Hower standeth,"

---

\* In Routledge's Edition of Dr. Isaac Watts' *Divine and Moral Songs* (London, 1866) are some charming engravings in illustration of the work. Song xxviii. (*For the Lord's Day Evening*—"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see"), has an illustration by R. Barnes, representing, it is said, most faithfully, the interior of Chesham Bois Church, looking west (including the old gallery, etc.), previous to its restoration.

and in the accounts of St. Matthew's, Ipswich, for 1580, we have

"paid for an hower glasse Standard . 1s. 0d."

It may be taken for granted that the cost of the stand by the Chesham Bois pulpit did not exceed this amount. Sometimes a light framework of wood appears to have been used, and even—as at St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street—the large hour-glass frame was of silver; but the more usual material was iron.

I do not remember ever to have seen the hour-glass itself remaining in the stand. During the time when the hour-glass was extensively used, the entries in church-wardens' accounts for the article appear very frequently, pointing to continual breakage, from one cause or another. Thus, in the accounts of St. Matthew's, Ipswich, I find:—

" 1591.	Itm. for an hower glass . . .	iiijd."
" 1603.	ffor an ower glasse for the Churche . . .	xd."
" 1634.	ffor an our glass . . .	8d."

Again, in St. Clement's Church, Ipswich, accounts:—

" 1621.	more layd owt for a hower glass . . .	9d."
" 1637.	Itm. payd for an hower glass . . .	8d."
" 1640.	Itm. * * for an hower glass and other things . . .	1s. 6d."

The hour-glass stand was invariably fixed to the pulpit in a position convenient for being turned—it may be supposed, always by the preacher himself—and many are the anecdotes told of the strange way in which this duty was frequently done, and the quaint modes of expression which sometimes accompanied the act. It is not unusual to find it recorded of one preacher after another that in the course of one sermon the glass was seen out three times. The earnest zeal and singular ability of the painstaking preachers that flourished during this period, judging from the examples of pulpit oratory bequeathed to us, are quite sufficient to account for these lengthy discourses, especially seeing that the audience was frequently of one and the same spirit and mind in the matter as their teachers. If the Puritan theology were somewhat severe, the matter was, as a rule, so

thoroughly good in its essential features as to prove in its presentation a sufficient compensation for any extraordinary demands upon the patience of the hearers.

There are in the church some monumental brasses of interest—one particularly so. I refer to that of a "Chrysom-child," Benedict Lee. The term "chrysom," or "chrysom-child," is derived from the ancient baptismal ceremony of anointing with an ointment called the "chrysm." Hence also the application of the term "chrysom" to the white vesture laid upon the head of the child, emblematical of purity. Various other names are given to this cloth, as "pannus chrismatis" (Theodore's *Pœnitential*), "mitra baptizatorium," etc.\* Although brasses of this character are, perhaps, not so uncommon as is generally imagined, I believe I am right in claiming for this particular brass an unique position among this class of interesting memorials. As far as my knowledge allows me to speak, this is the only brass of the kind in England upon which the word "chrysom" appears, as applied to the deceased child. The brass, a photo-lithograph of a rubbing of which is here given, represents a child in close cap and shroud, the effigy measuring  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The chrysom cloth is composed of folds of linen, stamped with a number of crosses, so ordered that the intersection on the upper and lower fourth of the body's length forms also a cross pattern.† The inscription below runs thus:—

of Rog' Lee, gentilma' here  
lyeth the son' Benedict Lee  
crysom' who<sup>s</sup> soule ihu p'do'

and measures 8 by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches. It is probably owing to the form the inscription takes, and the absence of a date, that Lipscombe, the able historian of the county, was erroneously led to regard it as imperfect. In the earliest parish register the following entry relative to the death of the child appears:—

---

\* "The face-cloth, or piece of linen put upon the head of a child newly baptis'd."—*Kersey*.

† In Lacroix's *Manners, Customs, and Dress during the Middle Ages*, the Parisian babes of the 13th and 14th centuries are represented in the arms of their nurses similarly attired.

"Benedicte Lee the sonne of Roger Lee, died in his cresome but there is sett downe" [presumably in an earlier register, the greater part of the present book being made up of transcripts], "neyther day nor yeare when he was buried. . . ."

There is no entry relating to the baptism.\*

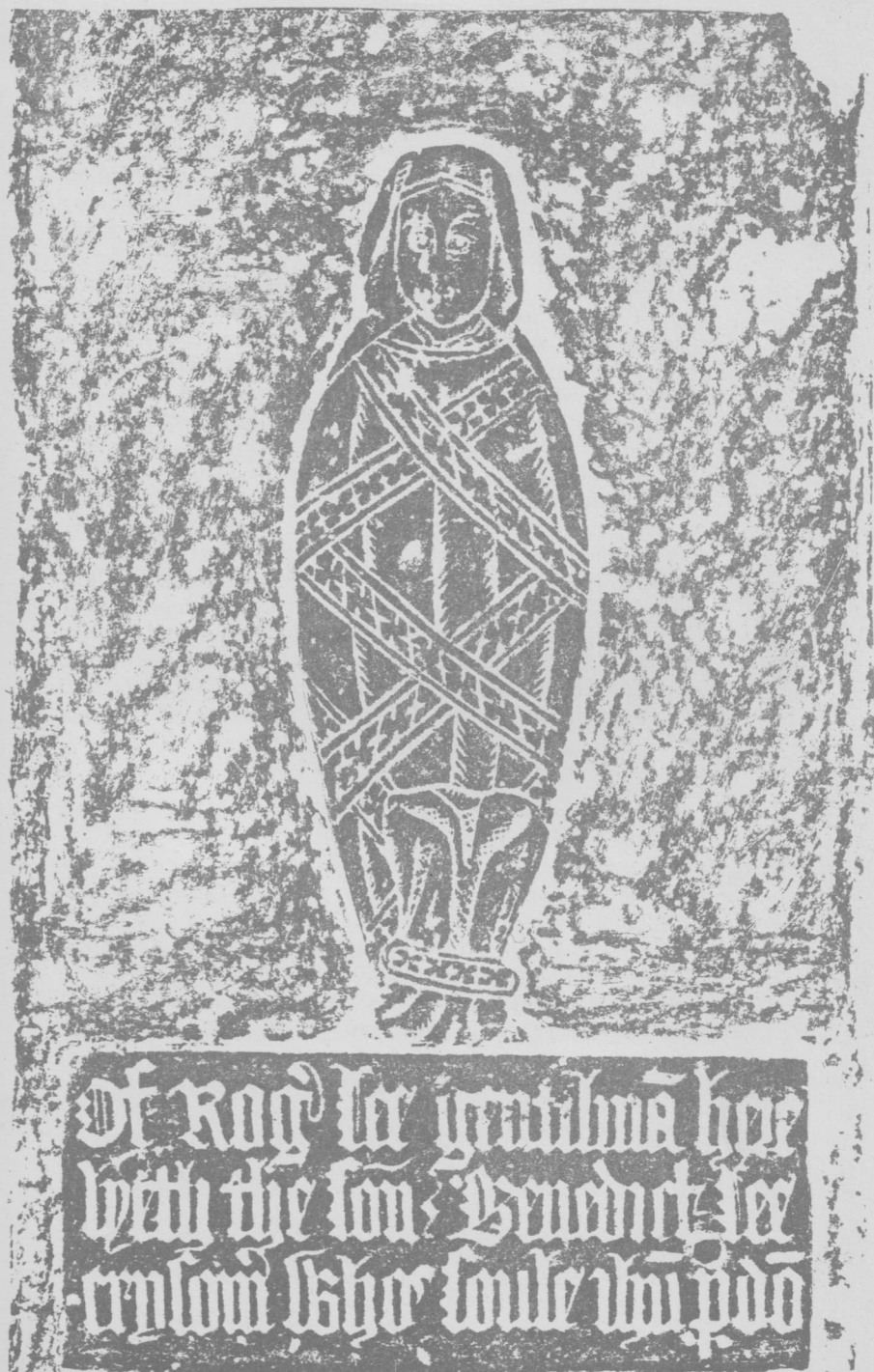
The brass which I find most closely to resemble the Chesham Bois "Chrysom-child" memorial, is an interesting one in the Church of Lavenham, Suffolk. As this brass has been too much overlooked, and the inscription inaccurately given, a brief description of it, and a correct reading of the words thereon engraven, may prove acceptable. On a large stone, the quaint and singular effigy of the child, Clopton D'Ewes, is laid in an oblique position, from 3 to 5 inches above the oblong inscription plate, having at first sight very much the appearance of a fish, placed diagonally. The folds of the vesture are more numerous than on the Chesham Bois example, and without the stamped cross pattern. The head-gear, or rather the bolstered wrap in which the face is enclosed, gives (if the illustration may be pardoned), the fulness and character of a moon at the full, more than anything else I can readily suggest. The inscription is as follows:—

"IMMATVRÂ MORTE NISI QVOD A DEO OPT.MAX.ITA DECRETVM  
EX MISERÂ HAC VITA EREPTVS DIE IX<sup>o</sup> IVLII, DIEBVS A N-  
TIVITATE DECEM A BAPTISMO QVATVOR CLOPTON D'E  
WES ARMIGER FILIVS ET HÆRES APPARENS SIMONDS D'EWES.  
EQVITIS AVRATI ET DOMINÆ ANNÆ CONIVGIS SVÆ FILIÆ  
VNICÆ ET HÆREDIS GVIILLMI CLOPTON MILITIS : BEATAM  
CVIVS ANIMAM FIDE MEDIIS SIBI IPSI OPTIME COGNITIS IN-  
BVTAM ÆTERNVS (VT CONFIDITVR) MISERECORDIARVM PATER  
INTER BEATVM SANCTORVM CHORVM IN CÆLIS ELOCAVIT."

It is interesting as recording the period that elapsed (1) from the birth to the baptism; (2) from the baptism (and anointing with chrysm) to the day of the child's decease, no less than for the precise and pathetic wording of the inscription. In the same church a brass to

---

\* In a Pedigree of his family, the Rev. Dr. Lee, F.S.A., of All Saint's, Lambeth, states that the child, Benedict, died in 1542, but no authority is given for the statement.



MONUMENTAL BRASS, CHRYSOM CHILD (*Benedict Lee*).

CHESHAM BOIS CHURCH, BUCKS.

Thomas Spring and Margaret his wife (A.D. 1446) represents them in winding-sheets; there is also a mural monument at Lavenham to the Coppinger family (A.D. 1622), in which one of the children is seen in swaddling-clothes. In the adjacent church of Long Melford, a "Martyn" brass represents children in swaddling clothes each beneath two of three wives.

Another "chrysom child" memorial is to be seen in the Church of St. Mary, Hornsey, Middlesex. The vesture is plain, but on the breast is a small engraved cross; and the inscription above reads—

Ihu Criste mari is Son haue  
mci o the soul of iohn Skeuington.

A somewhat similar brass exists in the Church of Stoke D'Abernon, Sussex, the inscription on which is—

Orate pro anima . . .  
qui quidem Petrus obiit  
in tenerâ ætate

but the brass is of larger dimensions than is usual in such cases.

In the Church of Worminghall, in this county, we meet with a monumental mural brass to Philip King, his wife and twelve children. The date is A.D. 1592. The effigies of man and wife appear in the centre; on either side are eleven of their children, five boys and six girls, all in the attitude of prayer. At the feet of the mother reposes on a cushion the recumbent form of a child in the chrysom. Owing to the fact that one of the other children had at the time also deceased, as appears from the inscription, it is specially interesting.\*

Examples may be found in different parts of the country, as at North Minories, Herts; Southfleet, Kent; Henfield, Sussex; Clynnog, Caernarvonshire; Stanford Rivers, Essex, etc., etc.

On a brass at Rougham, Norfolk, to the memory of

---

\* An engraving of this brass may be seen in the *BUCKS RECORDS*, Vol. V. p. 80.

two infants, John and Roger Yelverton, the children are represented in their swaddling clothes, so soon to become their winding-sheets. The inscription is simply—

**Obijt' Iohis Yelu'ton, 1505.**

**Obijt' Rogeri Yelu'ton, 1510.**

A brass in memory of Ann, the second wife of Thomas Asteley, in the Church of Blickling, Norfolk, represents the lady holding her infant twin children, similarly enveloped, she having deceased shortly after their birth. On a brass to the Clippesby family, in Clippesby Church, Norfolk, is a noteworthy representation of an infant wrapped in the winding-sheet. Beside the distinct effigies of husband and wife, with the inscriptions beneath, seven shields of arms, and the figures of three daughters, the infant son, William, is completely hidden from view by the winding-sheet tied at head and feet very closely.

At Ketteringham, co. Norfolk, a mural monument erected towards the close of the 17th century by the Right Hon. the Lady Mary Heveningham for her deceased husband, herself and two children, represents an infant child in its swaddling bands (a cross-pattern vesture, similar to that upon the child Benedict Lee and others), being carried aloft in the arms of its guardian angel. There is also an interesting brass in Aveley Church, co. Essex, to Elizabeth Bacon, an infant of thirteen weeks (date 1583).

Long after the period of the Reformation, when the anointing with chrysm had fallen into desuetude, shrouded representations of children, placed among other deceased members of the family commemorated are frequent, as on the side of altar or high tombs, etc., leading to the assumption that the intention was to represent a child dying in early infancy. Hence the error often made in describing such in parish registers, mortality bills, and elsewhere as "Chrisoms."\*

Shrouded figures on brasses are to be found in nearly

---

\* "Chrisoms, in the Bills of Mortality, are such children as die within the month of birth, because during that time they use to wear the chrisom-cloth."—*Blount*.

every county of England, not by any means confined to children; among some of the many singular examples being skeletons in shrouds, as at Sedgefield, Co. Durham; a Priest in shroud, as at Stifford, Co. Essex; husband and wife are frequent, and females alone comparatively common.

While recently at the Abbey, Great Missenden, the residence of Mrs. Carrington, walking through the corridor or hall, I chanced to see, among the many interesting and valuable pieces of stained glass which have been inserted in the windows, (mostly, as I learn, from the famous Strawberry Hill collection,) a beautiful square with a representation which bears closely on the subject of the chrysom ceremonies, concerning which little really seems to be positively known. The subject of the glass measures 7 inches by 6 inches, and represents a Bishop in full episcopal vestments, who with one hand holds the pastoral staff, while the other, gloved, is raised in the act of bestowing a blessing over a chrysom child that lay, with the proper vesture upon it, stretched upon the ground before him. In the distance is, apparently, a church and other buildings, and, what looks like a stream of water, pursues its course through the grounds. The figure of the child is exceedingly quaint; the face is particularly aged in appearance, and its gaze may be said to be directed towards the bishop. That the child is a "chrysom" is clear from the vesture. Its position on the bare ground, wrapped in its swaddling-bands, is at first sight difficult to account for, and might seem to suggest an impending interment in what may be regarded as a burial place. Not only are all the adjuncts of a funeral ceremony wanting, but the action of the bishop is more or less conclusive against any such theory. The only possible explanation, and one that approves itself to my mind, is that the representation is a scene in the child's confirmation, following immediately on the baptism, the bishop being seen in the act of bestowing his blessing. It followed, as a matter of course, that the bishop being present at or near the time of the ministration of the baptism of an infant, which included the anointing with chrysm and putting on of the chrysom, etc., would proceed to administer the further rite of confirmation. The lithograph in colours is from the traced



drawing of a careful sketch of this window, which Miss Carrington has been good enough to execute for me, and which will, I am sure, prove most acceptable, especially to liturgical students.

As a general rule, some considerable time would elapse between the unction and investiture in baptism and the subsequent confirmation of the infant, consequent on the bishop's enforced absence. In some instances this interval would be reduced to a minimum; owing to the bishop's presence in the neighbourhood. It is generally believed that the two ordinances remained practically one until the close of the 13th century. The date of the stained glass at Missenden is probably a century later. Respecting the isolation of the Chrysom child there represented, it is well to bear in mind that Bishop Cosin has a note (Works, Vol. V., p. 522) which points to the loose practice of mediæval times—not unknown as late as the 17th century—of bishops sometime confirming children in the streets, the highways, and the commons, fields, and that without any particular religious ceremony. How far this may accord with the representation in question I am, of course, unable to say; but the primitive practice of baptizing without the church building, in some open space contiguous to the church, may not have been altogether unknown at a much later period. Bede gives us a picture, in his "Life of St. Cuthbert," of the bishop passing through the rural districts, laying hands on the lately baptized, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, in other words, confirming them.\* The administration of Confirmation at the time of baptism is expressly provided for in the Sacramentaries of Gelasius and St. Gregory. In Myre's *Instructions for Parish Priests*, written probably in the 15th century (Early English Text Society), under the Sacrament of Baptism is included "Confyrmacyone,"

"That in lewde mennes menyng  
Is I—called the byspyng; "

further, he writes of the bonds to be left about the

---

\* The *Liber de Miraculis* of Thomas, Bishop of Hereford, a MS. quoted by Cowel (*v. Rodundellers*), says that he wore when riding a stole at his neck in the form of a cross, that it might be open for confirming boys that met him.



A BISHOP PRONOUNCING BENEDICTION OVER A CHRYSOM CHILD.

FROM A WINDOW AT MISSENDEN ABBEY, BUCKS,  
THE RESIDENCE OF MRS. CARRINGTON.

*(Formerly among the Strawberry Hill glass).*

necks of children who have been confirmed until the eighth day—

“But ofte sythes thou hast I-sen  
 Whenne the chylde conformed ben  
 Bondes a-bowte here neckes be lafte,  
 That from hem schule not be rafte,  
 Tyl at chyrche the eghthe day,  
 The preste hymself take him a-way.”

The child, who in the rite of confirmation was anointed with the Chrism, received a white linen band, supposed to have been placed upon the forehead “out of reverence for the chrism.” No such band, however, appears on the forehead of the child represented in the Missenden glass, or in the other examples given; indeed, the above quotations speak of the ligature, when the act of confirmation was complete, being placed “about the necke.” On the third day following the administration of the rite the bandage would be removed, the forehead washed by the priest and the fillet destroyed.

An interesting plate, representing a bishop administering the Chrism (9th century), may be seen in the *BUCKS RECORDS* (Vol. III.), in illustration of the late Rev. Warton B. Marriott’s paper on “The Vestments of the Church.” A priest, assisted by other clerics, holds the child over a huge bath-shaped vessel, filled with water; the bishop is meanwhile engaged in “the onpouring of the salutary Chrism” from a flask he holds. The child is presented by the sponsors. As an illustration it is specially interesting when placed side by side with the Great Missenden glass, as showing the difference of costume assumed by the bishop. He has no mitre, but what is described very oddly as a “square nimbus,” very truly said to represent a “strange backing \* \* \* something like the back of a chair.”

In the *Apostolical Constitutions*, as well as in the writings of St. Basil, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and others, the baptismal unguent and the anointing is referred to in unmistakable terms.

Concerning the anointing with chrysm, I would only here observe that the mixture was, in the year 1542, composed of oil compounded with cinnamon, roses,

frankinscence, etc., but later on (A.D. 1596) it was ordered to be made up of oil and balsam only, as representing, so it is said, the human nature of Christ blended with the divine. Previous to its baptism the child was anointed with this compound on the breast and between the shoulders, and after baptism on the head and brow. This particular anointing is alluded to by Pope Silvester as early as A.D. 324. The consecration of the chrism was left to bishops only, from whom the priests would, at stated times, receive it. In that extremely valuable class of ancient documents, the old inventories of church goods, there are frequent references to the vases, etc., used for holding chrism, such a vessel being called a chrismatory. An interesting example was discovered a few years since in a niche in the wall near the chancel arch of Gainsborough Church, in this county (*Proc. Soc. Ant.*, Vol. VIII., N. S., p. 430). Sometimes a receptacle at the font was appointed for holding the chrism, but rarely if ever formed a part of the font itself; generally it would take the form, in such cases, of a recess in the pier or wall against which the font was placed.\*

Before the anointing took place, the god-parents took the child and lay upon it their hands, the minister placing upon the infant a white vesture, the chrysom (*chrismale*), as a token of innocence. The cloth was retained until the chrysom child was a month old; in the event, however, of the child dying before it reached that age, and before the churching of the mother, its chrysom served as its shroud. The use of the chrism anointing having ceased, the gradual extinction, (for such indeed it proved), of the vesture bearing the once familiar term, is easily accounted for; but some profess to see even in the christening robe a survival of the old custom.

In Morant's *Essex* (Vol. I. p. 219), a custom that is said to have been observed time out of mind, is mentioned as prevailing at Dunton—viz., for a woman at her churching to give the minister a white cambric handkerchief as an offering. The custom is known to have prevailed elsewhere. It was customary, at one time, for the God-

---

\* It appears that chrism was usually consecrated close upon Easter, usually on Maunday Thursday.

parents to offer their children a Christening Shirt, with little bands and cuffs. *Stow's Chronicle*, Howe's Ed., 1631, p. 1039, quoted by Brand (*Pop. Antiq.*, Ellis Ed., Vol. VI. p. 85). The last-named writer also mentions that in a curious old book (A.D. 1554), entitled *A Short Description of Antichrist*, is the passage, "I note all their popish traditions of confirmation of yonge children with oynting of oyle and creme, and *with a ragge knitte* about the necke of the younge babe."

It is a noteworthy fact that the Prayer Book of 1549 recognized the ceremony, and at the end of the mother's "churching" the rubric of the reformed service prescribes that the woman must *offer the chrisom* and accustomed offerings, the chrysom vesture being accounted the perquisite of the church. The use to which these chrysom linens (*chrismalia*) were put is said to have been the repairing of ecclesiastical vestments, etc.

The offering of the chrysmal vesture may be referred back to so remote a period as the 13th century. (*Constitutions of Giles de Birdport*, Bishop of Sarum, A.D. 1256. *Wilkins' Concilia*, Vol. I. p. 713.)

It is surely an error to state, as generally is the case, that the name was *exclusively* "given to infants that die within a month after their birth"; indeed, this idea is the popular one. It appears to me, however, to have been a name applied indiscriminately to all baptized children, being anointed and arrayed, whether dying within the month or continuing to live. Brady, in his *Clavis Calendaria* (Vol. I. p. 317), not only alludes to this misuse of the term "chrisom," in its application to a child dying within the month after birth, but points to a common misinterpretation in limiting the term to such as remain unbaptized. It is questionable how far the custodians of parish registers are to be held accountable for using the term in the latter sense; it is quite possible this may have frequently been done. On the other hand, there is strong probability that the term had a meaning in most cases, very much akin, in spirit at least, to the ancient ordering. Instances of this may be seen in the writings of two such admirable exponents as Shakespere (*King Henry V.*, act i. sc. 3), and Bishop Jeremy Taylor (*Holy Living*), both of whom allude to chrysom children in such a way as to allow of no other interpretation, the

first to a chrysom child in its death, the latter to a child *smiling* in its chrysom.

Mention is often made in Parish Registers and elsewhere of chrisom-children (sometimes the child is termed a "chrisomer," a "chrissome," or a "crysom"), denoting, during the pre-Reformation period, one, who having been christened, was duly invested with the chrisom cloth and anointed. The after and more frequent application of these and other like terms, subsequent to the Reformation, can only be accounted for by the power of association. It is difficult to say the precise time when these several terms first came into use, or when they were entirely discontinued, the name having remained long after the ceremony had ceased. The earliest use of the word in any form, as applied to a child, may possibly be that derived from the Chesham Bois brass. I know of no previous use of the word, supposing the date of the child's death to be, as appears likely, A.D. 1542. In the rubrics to the Service of Administration of Public Baptism in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI., reference is made to the putting on the "white vesture commonly called the chrisom;" also to the "baptizing" and the "anointing," of the children.\*

There are several interesting memorials and monumental slabs within the church. The most important is an imposing altar tomb of black marble richly panelled and ornamented, within the Communion rails on the north side. There is no inscription on the tomb, the large slab of black marble covering it being quite plain. The only chance indication of the particular person or persons there buried is to be discovered either by means of the armorial bearings with their several quarterings within the insignia of the Order of the Garter,† or from a mural monument placed above this tomb, which resembles it in much of its workmanship and ornamentation, seems to point to the deceased there commemorated. The inscription is as follows :—

---

\* The whole subject is treated at considerable length in my paper on "CHRYSOMS," to which I may be allowed to refer the interested reader. [*East Anglian*, Vol. III. N.S.]

† The founder of the Lee family was a Knight of the Order.

XPS MIHI VITA ET MORS MIHI  
 HVMATVS HIC JACET JOHANNES CHEYNE  
 ARMIGER QUI IN TESTIMONIUM ZELI SVI  
 VERSVS DEI EVANGELIVM IN ECCLESIA DE  
 TRINGE FVNDAVIT PIVM PREDICATOREM EVAN-  
 GELI SOMPTIBOS PROPRIIS ANNOATI STIPEN-  
 DII XL<sup>LL</sup> PRO TERMINO LXXXXIX ANNORVM  
 ET IN FRATERNAM CHARITATEM VERSUS  
 PISSIMO PAVPERIS PROFESSORIS EIUSDEM  
 DONAVIT PARCEHIIS DE AYLESBURI WENDOVER,  
 BECONSFIELDE, MISSENDEN MAGNÆ, BURN-  
 HAM ET DENHAM, ANNATIM XLS DVANTE  
 DICTO TERMINO ET IN PERPETVVM, DONAVIT  
 SIMILITER PARCEHIIS DE CHESHAM, AMERS-  
 HAM, TRINGE ET DRAYTON BEAVCHAMPE  
 ET ISTÆ PARVÆ PARCEHIÆ XXs ET CHOL-  
 DESBERI XXs POSTERITATI SUE EXEMPLUM  
 ET DECUS

NON OBIIT SED ABIIT  
 NOVEBRIS I, ANNO DNI 1585.\*

An effigy formerly existed in connection with the following inscription (18½ inches by 4½ inches), now laid in the chancel :—

“ All Chrestian people gebe Thanks to the lorde for the  
 Godly dep'ture of Wenefride Doughter to the late Lorde  
 Mordant and wyfe to John Cheyne Esquier who decessed  
 the iiij<sup>th</sup> day of July in the yere of o<sup>r</sup> Lorde MCCCC  
 XXXI whose Soule we comende to Gods Infinite mercy.”

In an imposing brass, Robert Cheyne and Elizabeth his wife are commemorated by their effigies, so arranged as to lead to the conclusion that space was left for a third figure, although it is difficult to say for whom it would be intended.† The inscriptions are as follows :—

\* These several bequests were made by deed dated 1555, and the payments made out of the profits of the Moss Farm in Ashley Green hamlet, Chesham.

† Lipscombe, who gives an engraving of the brass as it now exists (Vol. III., p. 265), actually states that the figures were three in number. The engraving is reproduced in Vol. II. of the BUCKS RECORDS, p. 133.

"All Christian people gyve thanke for the godly dep'ture of Robert Cheyne Esquier who decessed the nygthe daye of December in the yere of o<sup>r</sup> lorde God a Thousand syebe hundreth fyfte too ∴ whose soule we comende to Gods infinite mercy."

"Of yor Charitie pray for the soule of Elizabeth Cheyne late the wyf of Robert Cheyne Gentilman the which Elizabeth decessed the xx day of December the yer of o<sup>r</sup> lord MCCCIII. on whose soule Ihu have mercy, ame."

In the Parish Register the year of the last entry is given as 1542, which is possibly an error on the part of the copyist, the date 1542 occurring immediately above the entry, which, as previously mentioned, is a transcript only, and not an original.

The male figure is clad in armour—namely, in a breast-plate cuirass, skirt of mail and tuiles, pauldrons, vambraces and rerebraces, the legs are encased in plate armour, the hands are gloved, broad-toed sabattons with spurs are worn, and a bascinet forms the head-gear. A sword is suspended by a transverse belt, and a dagger is placed on the other side. The lady wears a gown with girdle, and a pedimental head-dress. At the upper corners are shields with the Cheyne arms, which are repeated at the lower corners.

The Cheynes were at Iselhampstead Chenies, in this county, as early as the reign of Henry III. Subsequently the same family acquired the Manors of Chesham Bois and Drayton Beauchamp, Bucks, and Cogenho, Co. Northampton. Under the will of Dame Agnes Cheyne, widow of Sir John Cheyne, Knt., dated 20th Nov., 1494, who therein repeatedly refers to "John Cheyne of the Bois" (*vide* Browne Willis; Cole's MSS., Vol. XXXIX. pp. 38—49), the Manor of Iselhampsted Chenies passed from the Cheney family, and through the heiress of her cousin, Guy Sapcotes, eventually fell to the Russells. The Bedfordshire branch of the family sprang from the second marriage of Robert Cheyne (born *cir.* 1488, died 9 Dec., 1552.)\* The descendants of the first marriage inherited

\* The will of Robert Cheyne, described as of Chesham Bois, Bucks, is nuncupative in form.—*Tasshe P.C.C.* The will of his



the Bucks and Northants property. The line came to an end on the death, without issue, in 1728, of William, second Viscount Newhaven, in the peerage of Scotland.

In the vestry, in an oak frame, are preserved two coffin plates—one of copper, the other of white metal—both discovered while the sexton was digging in the churchyard. At the same time a small leaden box, some eight or nine inches square, was found, but properly re-interred. On one is the inscription :—

“ Mrs.  
Uphemia Norris  
Died at Neutchatel  
in Switzerland  
the 3 day of December  
1756.”

From the Register we learn that Mrs. Norris was buried August 9, 1757, some eight months after her decease, consequently her remains must have been disinterred and brought to England in the leaden box to which we have alluded. Mr. Charles Lowndes, her executor, paid the usual fee.

The other plate is inscribed :—

“ John Pittman Esquire  
late Captain in His Majesty's Navy, Obd. 8 May, 1752,  
Ætat 64.”

The hallowed spot where “the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep” contains slabs, head-stones, etc., to the memory of the past two or three generations, among which may be numbered several of those whose families still remain in the neighbourhood, and others who have quite passed away.

Previous to the extensive restoration effected in 1881–84, during the incumbency of the present Rector, the Rev. Joseph Matthews, and mainly owing to his zealous exertions, the following alterations in and about the church which come within the range of the present century may be noted.

In 1823 the west gallery was enlarged, two arches

---

father (John Cheyne of Drayton Beauchamp) appears Inquisito post mortem.—No. 18, 27 Hen. VIII. On the authority of Browne Willis, John Cheyne was buried in the Churchyard of Chesham Bois in 1496.

were opened between the chancel and the body of the church, and the pews repaired and altered. In 1839 the chancel was repaired and restored to its original colours, and the stained glass east window (the pieces forming which were collected from the smaller windows) was introduced. In 1841 a vestry was added, the body of the church was *painted* (!) and the pulpit varnished. In 1835 a seraphine was presented by the surviving pupils of the Rev. Thomas Clarke, who for twenty-seven years was Rector of Chesham Bois, dying there in 1793.\* His surviving scholars erected the tablet to his memory, which is within the chancel, and bears the following inscription:—

Sacred to the Memory of  
The Reverend THOMAS CLARKE, B.A.,  
Twenty Seven years Rector of this Parish.  
He was an able, a learned, and a holy man ;  
Always abounding in the work of the Lord  
In his Parish  
In his ministry  
And in his school,  
Wherein he trained up many,  
Whose praise has since been in all the Churches :  
He was a burning and a shining light,  
Doing the work of an Evangelist in season and out of season,  
That all might repent and be converted unto God ;  
And after a life and conversation becoming the Gospel,  
Full of zeal, and brotherly love, and clothed with humility,  
Died before many witnesses to his faith and patience,  
A blessed, although painful death,  
On the 4th of October, 1793,  
Aged 74.  
He was buried with his Family,  
Beneath the stone at the entrance  
To this his house of prayer ;  
Waiting the Resurrection of the Redeemed ;  
This monument being Erected  
From an affectionate and reverent sense of duty to his name,  
By a few of his surviving scholars  
A.D. 1831.

“Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me,  
in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”—2 TIM. i. 13.

The vault in the churchyard is covered by a slab also bearing an inscription, as follows:—

---

\* Some account of this estimable clergyman appears in “*Reminiscences of the Days of a School-boy in the last Century*” (London : Wertheim and Macintosh, 1853), the work of one of his former scholars, the late James Rumsey, Esq., M.D., of Amersham. The

In the vault beneath  
 Rest the bodies of  
 The Rev. THOMAS CLARKE,  
 Rector of this Parish and resident in it  
 In all things shewing himself a pattern of good works.  
 From 1766 to 1793.  
 Of his son and daughter,  
 Brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;  
 Thomas who died March 20, 1785, aged 25,  
 And Mary, the wife of the Rev. J. H. Swain,  
 Who died July, 1786, aged 35.  
 And of Anne, his widow,  
 Who died trusting in God,  
 And continuing in supplications and prayers  
 January 12, 1810, aged 80.  
 "O Death where is thy sting?  
 O Grave where is thy victory?"  
 1 Cor. xv. 55.

Among the remarkable men who were his pupils may be mentioned the Rev. T. T. Thomason (a devoted missionary in India), Rev. Basil Woodd, Rev. Wm. Goode, Sir Henry Blosset (Chief Justice of India), etc., etc.

During the late restoration, two coins of the reign of Charles I. were found embedded in the mortar. This discovery would mark the approximate date of the erection of the sham tower and the adjacent portions of the building which were then demolished.

The font is exceedingly plain and uninteresting, and is little more than a marble basin, supplied during the last few years in the place of one of a similar character.

The communion plate, consisting of a silver cup and paten, the former  $6\frac{1}{4}$  in. in height, and inscribed "*Chesham Bois*," is of no special interest.

The Register begins with the year 1562. The first book contains forty-one vellum leaves, 8 in. by  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in., and comprises Baptism, Marriage, and Burial entries down to the year 1719. It is entitled:—

"The Boke off Regester for all Chresteninges-Marriages-and burials-ffor Chessham-boies Made the viij.day. of June Anno dni. 1598.

Anno Regni Regine. Eli. 40."

---

frontispiece to this little book presents a view of Bois Rectory and School as they existed in Mr. Clarke's time, both long since demolished. On the cover is a vignette of the exterior of the old Church.

Beneath this title, written on the first folio, is a somewhat fanciful piece of penmanship, which it is not easy further to define. On either side of this drawing, within a square, appear the names of

“JAMES - GOSHAM - CHurch Man.

“ROBERTE - FINCHE - CHurche Man.”

The designation “church man” is singular. Although of rare occurrence, it is sometimes found in use during the 17th century. Of course, both individuals were Churchwardens. The word is to be met with in the Churchwardens’ Accounts of St. Giles’, Reading, for the year 1523 :—

“Paid for the Churchmennys labours xij*d*.”

In the interesting Churchwardens’ Accounts of Stanford, published in the *Antiquary* (Vol. XVII.), is the following :—

“1591. Itm. layde oute . . for the twoo Churchmen and one Sydemans Dinners xx*d*.”

The book of “Christenings” is further designated as :—

“A regester of the names of all sucht children as were baptised at Cheshm boyes before my commynge thither and allso after my commynge as ffounde it registered in A booke bearinge date A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1562. R. R. E. xth.”

The first entry is :—

“Henrie Cheyne the sonne of Maister John Cheyne of Cheshm boyes Esquire was baptised the vjth daye of September Anno Dni 1562.”

The entries as far as A.D. 1601 are uniformly written by one and the same hand, and are clearly copies or transcripts, as indicated.

The Marriages commence with :—

“A Regester of the names of all such as have byne maryed at boyes of my parishners as allso the names of all sucht as were married here and were no pisheners but had licences for itt owt of the Arches and some from the Commysarie.”

The first entry is :—

“Maister John Cheyne Esquire and Mistres Joice lee the daughter of Sr Anthony lee Knight, were married the xxix<sup>th</sup> day of November A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1562.”

The Burials commence :—

“A Regester of the names of all such as have byne buried at Cheshm boyes before my commynge and also of all suche as have byne buried by me synce my commynge thither A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1542.”

The first entry being that of :—

“Elizabeth Cheyne late the wife of Maister Robert Cheyne of Cheshm boyes Esquire was buried the xx<sup>th</sup> day of December A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1542.”

Among the Marriages may be found entries of the unions respectively of :—

1. “Maister Edmonde fletewoode and Mistress Elizabeth Cheyne Oct<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 1573.”
2. “Maister Willm Rowe and Mistress Anne Cheyne May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1580.”
3. “Francis Cheynne Esqr and Ana fleetwood gen. fil. Willm fleetwood Mil. maryed at Missenden magna 4<sup>o</sup> Marij A<sup>o</sup> Supra dco.”

In 1663 marriages are entered as at “boyce Chap-pell.” The following entries are of interest :—

In 1697, Richard *Hog-trough Bucket-maker* of Amersham and Susanna Webb were married.

“1744. Wm Bevan of Watford (*Smugler*) Com’ Hertford and Mary Ware from Chesham April ye 29<sup>th</sup> 1744,”

would almost lead us to regard the profession of “smugler” an honourable one. A Watford “smugler,” one would be inclined to think, must have found no ordinary difficulties in the exercise of his calling.

“1747. Jonathan Oxled (*Trooper* from Chesham) and Eleanor Ware January ye 2<sup>d</sup> (p<sup>r</sup> license).”

“William Price (*Laceman*) and Rebecca Druco from Chesham August 28<sup>th</sup> (p<sup>r</sup> license).”

The restrictions now in force with respect to the granting of marriage licenses, rendering it obligatory for the marriage to take place in the church of the parish where one of the parties shall have resided, were not formerly in existence, as appears from the heading given above, and the following, being one of many like entries :—

“Thomas Allen (Farmer) of St. Peter’s Chalfont June 27th and Scholastica Crawley of Tring parish (Spinster) aged 24 (pr license).”

The following baptismal entries are interesting :—

“Elizabeth Goshm̄ the daughter of James Goshm̄ was baptised at boyes the xij day of November at morninge prayer A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1601 (R. R. E. 43).”

“Susanna hoddessedon the daughter of John hoddessedon was paptised (*sic*) at boyes at eavening prayer the 7 day of ffebruary A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1601. R. R. E. 44.

“1622. William the sonne and heire of ffrancis Cheyne Esquir borne in London and baptized in Sepulchres Church borne I say 29<sup>o</sup> December bap. 22<sup>o</sup> Janu-  
arie.”

“1623. Ffrancis the sonne of ffrancis Cheynie Esquir born in London 18<sup>o</sup> Decembris and baptized in Sepulchres Churche 8<sup>o</sup> Januaire An<sup>o</sup> p’dco.”

“1625. Charles ye 3<sup>d</sup> sonn of ffrancis Cheynie Esquir borne at Cheshm boyes 23<sup>o</sup> Octobris betwfene 10 & 11 of ye clock in the morning & baptized 27<sup>o</sup> eod. mense.”

“1630. John the 4 sonn of ffrancis Cheynie Esquir baptized 27 day of May An<sup>o</sup> dni 1630.”

“1703. Feb. ye 22. A male Child of W<sup>m</sup> Nash Quaker was born.”

“1710. April 9. Samuel the son of Elizabeth Darbyshire, a Travelling Woman, was Baptized.”

“1716. November 1<sup>st</sup> Anthony Cato Servant to ye Right Hon’able the Lord Cheyne was baptized.”

The surname *Cato*, I may mention, is elsewhere correctly given as *Cater*.\* The same applies to the name

---

\* *Cater* = *Caterer* : the one who made ready the provisions, etc

*Plater*,\* also to be found in these books, and ordinarily spelt in Chesham at this present time, as for many years past, *Plato*. The surname "Homer," although not found here to my knowledge, is a corruption of the once familiar "le Heumer" = the one who wrought in helmets for warriors. The classical associations that surround these names disappear at once amidst very ordinary surroundings.

The following is a singular entry :—

"1742. David Stone (a Beggar's child dropt) baptiz'd September ye 19th 1742."

The burial entries that follow may well be noted :—

"1592. John Carter of the fullynge myll was buried the xvth day of July A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1592."

"The wife of one that had taken the fullyng myll of Willm Carter was buried the viij day of September, A<sup>o</sup> dni 1592."

"Ales Anby a lame mayde was buried the viij day of Januarie A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1592."

"1597. The thirde day of June before the buriall of Sisley Bacheler was buried at Boyes A nurse Childe which she kepte. A<sup>o</sup> Dni 1597."

(This was a period of great mortality.)

"1603. Henry Cornbeck Minister was buried the 4th day of March An<sup>o</sup> Dni. 1603."

"1596. Danyell Tappinge fuller was buried the Tenthe daye of Januarii, A<sup>o</sup> Dni. 1596."

"1606. Robte Hearon parson of Chesh'm Boyes was buried the last day of Auguste, An<sup>o</sup> Dni 1606.

"1615. James Moore of yorksher vagarant buried 10<sup>o</sup> Decembris."

"1616. John Dell of Ameer Mill buried the vj of Aprill, An<sup>o</sup> Dni 1616."

"1619. Sr ffrancis Cheynie Kt. buried at Drayton Beauchamp 12<sup>o</sup> January, An<sup>o</sup> supr dco."

"1630. Anna the wife of ffrancis Cheynie Esquior. buried 27<sup>o</sup> die Maij, An<sup>o</sup> p'dco."

"1638. Mr. Phillip Edmonds Clerke and Rector of this

---

\* Plater = the one who originally wrought in armour plates, or, latterly, in weaving straw plait, or such like.

pish Church dyed the 17<sup>th</sup> day of March and was buried the 19<sup>th</sup> day 1638."

"Mr William Cheyne Sone of ffran. Cheyney Esq. dyed at London the 20<sup>th</sup> day of Aprill 1641 and was buried in ye chancell of Boys Church 22<sup>nd</sup> day of the same month 1641."

"Holland Brandrath Rector of this Place was buried in Boys Church the 3<sup>d</sup> day of January Anno 1641."

"1661.—Mr. John Howe minister buried the 31<sup>st</sup> of March."


In 1678 occur "the names of them y<sup>t</sup> were buried in the parish of Chesham Boys since the first day of August 1678 according or contrary to an Act of Parliament y<sup>n</sup> made Intituled an Act for burying in Woollen hereafter specified."

"1696. July y<sup>e</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> A travailing woman (her last abode not known) was buried in Woollen."

"1729. Jan. 13. The Right Honoble Frederick Manners son of his Grace John Duke of Rutland of this Parish was Buried."

"1732. Mrs Elizabeth Monckton daughter to Lord Gallway of the Kingdom of Ireland was buried in Linnen and the Law satisfied."

"1741. March the 11<sup>th</sup> The Revd Mr. William Jones Rector of this Parish was buried in Woollen."

"1741.  Mr. John Ball jun<sup>r</sup> Clerk, and Batchellor of Arts of University College, Oxon, succeeded Him, and was inducted into the Rectory &c by his Father, Mr John Ball, Vicar of Great Chesham in this County, on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1741, by virtue of an Instrument from his Grace John Duke of Bedford &c in the Presence of Walter Griffin Esq<sup>r</sup> John Batchelor, and John Shedman Inhabitants of Chesham Bois."

"1741. Anne Wife of Edward Shanks late of the Parish of St Sepulchres, London, buried May the 14<sup>th</sup> Affidavit brought in May the 14<sup>th</sup> (she was buried in the body of the Church, and two guineas paid to the Rector for the same by her Husband: he at the same time  
10s. paying to the Churchwarden for making of the Pavement good of the Place where she was buried)  
To the Clerk one Guinea."



Several of the foregoing entries are from the Second Register Book. It contains thirty-one leaves of vellum, and the last two leaves of paper have been utilized, and entries of Baptisms and Marriages made thereon. It commences May 5th, 1720, the Rev. Wm. Jones being Rector, and Wm. Lovett, Senior Churchwarden, and is brought to a conclusion in 1749.

A memorandum on the flyleaf is as follows :—

“On July ye 15th 1742. The Bishop’s visitation (viz. Dr Reynolds’) was held at Chesham-magna in Com. Bucks, and a Confirmation.

“JOH. BALL, *Senr Minister.*

“RICHARD HODSDEN }  
“TERANCH BUNN } *Churchwardens.”*

On the first leaf is a Table of Surplice Fees payable in the Parish, and in the body of the book is a copy of the Archdeacon’s Citation, dated 20th September, 1728, to the Minister and Churchwardens, a copy of a letter to the Archdeacon from the Dowager Viscountess Newhaven, widow of Charles Fleetwood, created Viscount Newhaven in 1680, respectfully claiming exemption from all visitations. A copy is given of a protest also delivered to the Archdeacon by the Incumbent and Churchwarden. This right was claimed owing to the benefice being a donative and a peculiar; the Archdeacon acknowledged the validity of the protest, and did not claim to visit and inspect as of right, “he was thereupon shown the Chapell, for so it is called.”\*

The third Register book commences in the year 1750, and finishes in 1812. Among the burial entries is the following :—

“Feb. 8, 1784. Joseph Williams a Black Poor (*sic*) was buried—Affidavit Sarah Taylor.”

There are no old Churchwarden’s books of accounts, only some that are very modern and uninteresting. The same may be said of the Overseer’s books, etc., neither can I hear of any ancient documents, or other parochial records, beyond the Terriers.

---

\* In the year 1721 the Rector’s right to nominate a Churchwarden was disputed, but without success.

As far back as the middle of the sixteenth century, the fulling and dyeing of cloth was actively carried on at the mill, to which reference is frequently made in the Registers. The fullers' business having become extinct, the mill is now used in the production of flour, etc. Several other trades are incidentally mentioned in the Registers, among them occurs the solitary allusion to a past industry—that of “laceman”—but no active business enterprise, save that alone of agriculture, was, of necessity, carried on in so small and isolated a parish.

The working class or artizan population who find employment in the shoe factories, wooden ware manufactories, etc., in the town proper, as well as in the hamlet of Waterside (or Christ Church parish), have largely increased during the last few years, and a considerable number of cottages have been erected close by the Moor in Chesham Bois parish, for their use. In the year 1806 the population stood at 135, inhabiting twenty-four houses. The census taken in 1821 shows a population of 155, and thirty-three houses; in 1841, population 218 and forty-two houses. In 1871, the population had increased to 258; and at the last census, in 1881, the population was 351, and the number of houses was eighty-seven.

The introduction of the line of railway which runs through the parish at the foot of the range of hills upon which the church stands, and which is now being vigorously pushed on towards completion by the Metropolitan Extension Company, materially changes the aspect of the parish in more senses than one, and may possibly cause an influx into the neighbourhood, so that the next census will probably record a considerable increase in the population. It is, however, to be hoped that in no case will “this little parish” lose aught of the interest which surrounds its bygone history—uneventful, it is true, but none the less causing it to be endeared to many by most pleasant associations and vivid remembrances of the past. It is not only on account of its size that it is termed *iste parvus parochia*, but, endearingly as it would seem, judging by the affectionate way in which its memories are cherished by those best acquainted with it.

## APPENDIX.

There is a "Transcriptio tempore Regis Henrici Septimi dinersarum rerum tangentium Monasterium de Pratis juxta Leicester. Ex Scriptis eiusdem Ecclesiæ Domini Latimer Roberti Brudnell Johannis Turvill Willielmi Cotton Thomæ Esulryk and aliorum." The *Nomina Villarum*, fifty-eight in number, include Chesham Leycester, in which latter is to be found:—

"Cheshm Boys wyth in the Constabulwyke of the duchery of langcastell there, and also of the lordschyppe of latimere there.

"IN THE FYRST Also the londys and tenements wyth the apptennc̃e ther w<sup>t</sup> in the seyde Ducheri that ben hold of the fee of mordanntis. And w<sup>t</sup> in the same constabulwyke of the same duchery. And also all th<sup>re</sup> londis & teñ wyth ther appteñ that ben hold ther' of the seyd lordschyp of latimer wyth in the seyd duchery and constabulwyke of the same ben tythed and owete to be tythed un to the seyd abbott and couent be the ryght of ther' seyde chyrche called Cheshū leycet. Excepte only suche tythes and glebis as the p'decesser' of the same Abbot and couent hauen grauntyd owt un to the chapelle and chapeleyne of the seyd Cheshm Boys, that is to wete tithis. of tithis otherweys the tenthe part of ten partis of tithis. i. tithid out and mor' ouer all syche tythes hole to haue un to the same chapel & chapeleyne ther of comyng of suche londys and tenements as certayne tennts ther' sum hadden and helde that ys to wete of the xxvj<sup>th</sup> acs that Geffrey Del Elber held & of tho xxxvij<sup>th</sup> accis that Ric Godby helde. and of tho xxvij<sup>th</sup> accis of lond that on Aldewyn Ruffus helde and of tho xvij accis that Ric danby helde. and of tho iiij accis that Emme the dowrtr of tride sum tyme helden. The sum of the seyde accis vj score accis and ij accis othir Weys Wreton vj<sup>xx</sup> accis & ii of londe. Hijs testibz henj' Aytell heur cowp."

[Br. Mus. Cotton MSS. Galba. E. iii.]