

DUDLEY HOWARD

THE HISTORY AND
ANTIQUITIES OF
HORSHAM

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The History and Antiquities of Horsham

The ancient town and borough of Horsham, which has generally been past over in topographical accounts, as a place unworthy of notice; or lost in the dazzling descriptions, of the “modern maritime Babylon of Sussex,” must always remain a spot, dear to the lover of antiquities, and romantic scenery. The derivation of its name, has ever continued a matter of great perplexity; which perhaps may be considered as a very strong argument, in favour of the antiquity of the place. Some persons conjecture, that the appellation is derived from the two Saxon words, hurst, and ham, the first syllable signifying a wood, and the second a village or collection of houses: and this opinion seems to be supported by the known fact, that this part of the county, was formerly one entire tract of forest land: but again quite as good if not a superior derivation, may be taken from the two words, Horsa, and ham, that is the village of, or built by, Horsa.

Horsham has enjoyed the privilege of sending two members to Parliament, ever since the year 1295: by the passing of the reform bill, however, one representative was considered sufficient for the business of the borough. The names of the persons first elected

for the town, were Walter Burgeys, and Walter Randolph: Robert Henry Hurst esq. is the present member.

The spring assizes for the county, had also long been held in the Town-Hall of Horsham; but this privilege was selfishly abstracted from the town, by the inhabitants of Lewes; and even the county gaol, which has been stationed here, for time immemorial, is, we understand, to be removed to the all devouring eastern rival: the quarter sessions however, are still held here.

Still, notwithstanding, as respects the town, Horsham is greatly improving: the number of buildings which have been lately erected, and which are still erecting, are of a new and very handsome description: the streets are neatly paved, with the large flat stones procured from the excellent quarries in the neighbourhood; and the illumination of the streets by gas, which is being carried on with great spirit and energy, contribute very greatly to the general respectability and good appearance of the place.

Horsham consists of 4 principal streets, crossing one another at right angles, with a large square, stretching due N. and S., in the centre. The upper part of this square is commonly denominated the Gaol Green, in consequence of the prison, which formerly stood at the northern end, but of which two large walls, now found useful in an adjacent brewery, only remain.

The northern side of the edifice, though perhaps not quite equal to the southern, appears to great advantage, though

the modern windows, which have been substituted in several instances for others of great antiquity, add greatly to diminish the general effect.

On entering the church by the eastern gateway, the interior of the structure appears to the highest advantage: the large and beautifully simple communion window, reaching almost from the basement to the roof, is by no means the least attractive object of attention; while the handsome appearance of the altar, raised by a flight of several steps, covered entirely with crimson cloths, the unusually large extent of the communion rails; and the numerous beautiful monuments, in every direction, afford a very elegant appearance, perhaps not to be equalled by any other parochial edifice in the county. Yet at the same time, the venerable roof of oaken planks; the large yet highly sculptured beams which have weathered nearly a thousand years; the tattered escotcheons; the crested helmets; and the antique tombs, afford a view at once pleasing and romantic. – Some attempt has been made to illustrate this portion of the church, (the chancel) in the annexed engraving, but no drawing can do justice to the original building.

The dimensions of the church are as below.

Length	146 ft.
Width	53 8 in.
Height	47 10

The roof is supported upon wooden ribs, crossed by others of the same materials: the joints are covered by ornamented plates of iron, of very grotesque descriptions: in the nave, the ribs are almost double the distance apart, of those in the chancel: the junction of the roof and walls, in the latter portion of the edifice, are adorned with curious little figures of horses, foxes, &c. &c. interspersed with stars, and many other similar devices.

The entire edifice is supported upon eight columns on either side: three constituting the chancel, and the remaining five the nave: the galleries are particularly neat, more especially that appropriated to the organ, the whole of the pewing being covered entirely with green baize. The lancet windows, with which the church was formerly furnished, have almost all been altered for others of a later date, except in the clerestory, where they retain their original form. The large east window, before mentioned, was formerly adorned with no less than 14 coats of arms richly painted. The roof was put up, at the time that the Norfolks were lords of the borough: in the year 1825, a curious old inscription was discovered upon the summit of the walls, reaching from one end of the church to the other, but it was very remarkable, that the centres of all the letters, (which were about a foot in length) were entirely, and apparently designedly effaced, so that not the slightest meaning could be discovered from it.

In the chancel, is the curious and remarkable effigy of Thomas lord Braose ob. 1396. This noble and ancient family were formerly almost the sole proprietors of the county of Sussex.

One of their residences was at Chesworth, an ancient mansion to the south of the town, which shall afterwards be described; and Bramber Castle also near Steyning, originally appertained to these powerful barons. The head of the figure, “is defended by a basinet, ornamented by a draplet of jewels, his throat by the ample carmail, attached to the helmet as in the time of Edward III. His arms are in plate armour, and his body in a shortened hauberk, kept from pressing on his chest, by means of the plastron, or breast-plate, within. Over this is the jupon, bearing his coat of arms, viz. seme of cross croslets, a lion rampant crowned. Suspended from his military girdle at his right hip, is his dagger, the sheath of which, is ornamented in an architectural style, and in the same manner at the left, hung his long sword, of which no traces now remain. On his insteps, are large pieces attached to the spur leathers, and terminated by indented edges which conceal the chain mail beneath. His jousting helmet, surmounted by his crest, a demi-lion rampant, issuing from a coronet, is under his head, but greatly mutilated, all below the oscularium, having been destroyed.”¹

At a very small distance from the above mentioned monument, is a very beautiful altar tomb of white marble, relieved alternately by slabs of black: upon this is an admirable and most elaborately executed figure, of a lady, in long flowing robes, her right hand reclines upon her breast, while her left rests upon the Holy Scriptures, in a peculiarly graceful manner: it is

¹ Dallaway page 355 vol 2.

the work of Francis Fanelli, an Italian sculptor, of great eminence in his day, and has escaped the devastation generally inflicted on works of art in the parochial edifices of Sussex; the inscription is as follows.

Here lyeth (expecting a joyfull resurrection,) the body of Elizabeth, late wife of Thomas Delves Esquire, son and heire apparent to Sr. Henry Delves of Dvddington in the Covnty of Chester, Barronet, who deceased the 2nd day of December 1654, being somewhat more than 25 years old; then in childbed of Henry their 2nd son, who with Thomas their eldest son did both survive her. She was enriched with many ornaments, both of mind and body, and memorable for virtue, in the several relations of her life, whereunto she was any way engaged, being religious as she was a Christian, dutiful as a daughter, affectionate as a wife, tender as a mother, discreete in her family as a Mistris, charitable in the relation of a neighbour, also of a sweet and affable disposition and of a sober and winning conversation. She was the only child of Hall Ravenscroft Esq.r of this parish, by the mother descended of ye Staplays of this county. Her sorrowful husband, sadley weighing such a considerable losse, erected this monument, that an impartiall memorial of her might bee the better communicated to posterity.

On the south side, are the arms of the deceased with the motto "In Dieu ma foy".

According to Dallaway, mention is made in the visitation book of Philpot and Owen, A.D. 1634, of two other monuments, not

at present remaining. "Under the communion table,

Hic jacet William Hoo armiger, qui obiit 2do mensis
Sept. 1465

Arms, Hoo impaling a fess.

On a marble stone,

Orate pro animab, Thomæ Cobert et ejus uxor qui
quidem Tho. ob. 1495.

Arms, two shields, 1 Covert, impaling a phaon's head:
2 impaling, a chevron, 2 roundlets, in chief a buck's head
caboshed."

Under the organ gallery, is a curious brass of a man and
woman, in the antique dress of the time, with the following
inscription, in Gothic characters, below them.

Here lyeth Richard Foys, and Elizabeth his wife: which
Richard deceased in 21 day of April, MDLCIII.

Affixed to one of the columns supporting the organ gallery,
is a small slab of white marble, with a frame of black: the
inscription in black letter runs thus.

In this seat is interred the body of Thomas Pyke Barber
and Chyrurgeon, who departed this life the 16 day of Nov.,
in the year of our Lord MDLXXXI; and in remembrance of
him, this monument was erected by his brother Wm. Pyke.

At a very small distance from this tablet, the annexed
inscription can be discovered upon a stone in the middle cross
aisle.

Here lyeth Robert Hvrst of Hvrst hill, who died a. d. 1483, Nicholas his son, A.D. 1533, and Richard son of Nicholas Feb. 16th a. d. 1592.

The other monumental inscriptions are to the following persons.

John Mitchell of Stammerham 1610, Mary his wife daughter of William Gresham gent. of Surrey, 1610; Maurice Barrow gent. 1778; John Parsons esq. 1702; Cecilia Maria his wife 1700; Mrs. Olive Eversfield, only sisters to Mary wife of Charles Eversfield, of Denne place, 1704; Rev. Geo. Marshall, 35 year officiating minister of this parish, 1819; Charles Eversfield of Denne place, and Mary his wife; Sir Charles Eversfield Bart., 1784; Mrs. Olive Eversfield 1803; Anna Maria Willemot Thornton, 1824; William Jamieson vicar of Horsham 1821; Edward Tredcroft, 1768; Mary Tredcroft, 1794; Sarah and Henry Du Cane Cap. Richard Marriott, 1805, the beautiful female figure which surmounts this monument, is the work of Westmacot, Tristram Revel, lieut. col. 1797; Rev. T. White 1788; Thomas Brien sen. 1741; Mrs Mary Jenden 1802; John Smith esq. 1758; Elizabeth Smith; 1780; Griffith Smith 1663; Charles Smith 1689; Adam Smith 1789; Harriet Smith 1800; Mrs Martha Longhurst 1750; John Foster 1750; Elizabeth Foster his wife 1743; John Medwin eldest son of John Charles & Mary Medwin, unfortunately killed by a fall from a gig, at the foot of Picts hill near Horsham, 1806; Lieu. Henry Clough Medwin 1815; Henry Ellis 1785; Mrs Ann Godwin 1822;

George Cheynell 1747; Elizabeth his wife, 1781; John Eversfield esq. 1669. Besides these there are slabs to the memory of the following individuals. – Thomas Waller: Thomas Dunball: Mary Woodyear: William Norman: John Higgen: Thomas Buen: Henry Waller: John Rowland: Hannah Howes: Ann Curtis: John Pilfold: Robert Hall: William White: William Griffith: Henry Griffith: Ann Griffith: Hen. Groombridge: Elizabeth Hewet: Henry Ellis: Henry Groombridge: Judith Jeamison: Samuel, Sarah, and Catherine, Wicker: Matthew White: Francis Read: James Waller: John Middleton esq.: Ann Chourn Isabella Ramsden; Sir Bysshe Shelley Bart. of Castle Goring: Mary Catherina his wife: Catherine their daughter. All of these monuments, with the exception of six, belong to the last century.

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