

Parishes and parish churches in Kent : The lost church of Pett

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, there were rather more than 400 parish churches in Kent. The site of every one of them is known, with a single exception. A small church called "Pett" or "Pette" has vanished from the map. If anyone knows where it was, I should very much like to be told.

The following notes are the sum total of what I know about Pett church. I have gone through them and tried to make sure that they are comprehensible, but I have not tried to turn them into proper English.

c 1090 - "De pytte, iii d'" - a chrism fee imposed by archbishop Lanfranc (Ward 1933:66, Flight 2010:230) - in a 12th-century version of the same list, the corresponding entry, "Pette, iii dener'", is entered under the heading "chapter of Charing" (Flight 2010:231)

1281 - Ricard de Gylesham admitted as rector - patron Stephan Girard of Romney (Reg Pecham) <Stephan Gerard occ 1284 as tenant of Eastleigh in Lyminge>

1286 - Johan de Wygeton admitted as rector - patrons Agnes widow of Hamo Pitte and Stephan son of Stephan <?Girard?> of Romney (Reg Pecham)

1293 - pension of 3 shillings from church of Pette among assets to belong to incoming vicar of Westwell - CCA-DCC-ChAnt/W/48

1295 - Hamo de Romenal sub-deacon admitted as rector (Reg Winchelsey 902) - 1295 occ as deacon (907) - 1296 occ as rector of church of Pette and priest (909) <I owe this and other information to Karen Brayshaw of Canterbury Cathedral Library, who kindly checked the indexes of Reg Winchelsey, Reg Chichele and Reg Bourgchier for references to Pett.>

1318 - "Hamo de Remenale, Parson of the Church of Pette" occ as dummy feoffee in fine relating to land in Westwell and Hothfield (AC 14:255)

1328 - visitation in church of Westwell - "Sir John, rector of the Church of Pette has withdrawn a pension of 3 shillings due to the Vicar of Westwell ... the Vicar appeared and said that he was satisfied" (AC 33:89)

1334 - "William atte Welle, parson of the church of Pette" occ as dummy feoffee in fine relating to Boughton Aluph (AC 50:126)

1349 - "From: Canterbury, archdeacon, official of / To: Canterbury, Christ Church, prior and convent / Into Thomas de Gravesende's presentation of Richard atte Welle of Lullingstone (Kent), priest, to the church of Pett next Charing (Kent), vacant by the resignation of William Michel. Clergy of the deanery of Charing are named as attending" CCA-DCC-SVSB/II/143/1 - dd 9 Jul 1349 <Thomas de Gravesend kt occ 1343-50 as patron of Nurstead dioc Rochester>

1364 - "From 1364 to 1379 one named Roger Newlond was patron of the advowson of Pette Church" (AC 15:xlix)

1385 - small benefices not paying tax - in Charing deanery - Pett, 5 marks (Mon Ang 1:91)

1424 - Thomas Blyton chaplain admitted as rector of Pette (Reg Chichele 224)

1429 - William Leche chaplain admitted to rectory of Pette vacant by death of William <?Thomas?> Blyton - patron William Colfe of Westwell (Reg Chichele 254)

1430 - John Wellynge chaplain admitted to rectory of Pette - patron William Colefoll (Reg Chichele 268)

1431? - "Grant by William Colfell? of Westwell to Richard atte Leghe of Westwell and William, his son, of lands and rents as specified in Westwell parish and the advowson of the church of 'Pette'. No date." CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/335 - "Four leaves containing copies and drafts of apparently unrelated grants and accounts, but written in a single <mid 15th-century> hand." - the dated documents run from Oct 1431 to Oct 1432

not mentioned in Reg Bourgchier

not marked on Simonson's map (1596) - which does show derelict churches, if they were recently derelict

not listed by Somner (1640:514) - but a note written by Somner into his personal copy of the book (now in Canterbury Cathedral Library) adds Pett to the list and gives the dedication as St Blaise - he does not say how he knew that, but information of this kind comes, most often, from wills

not mentioned by Philipott

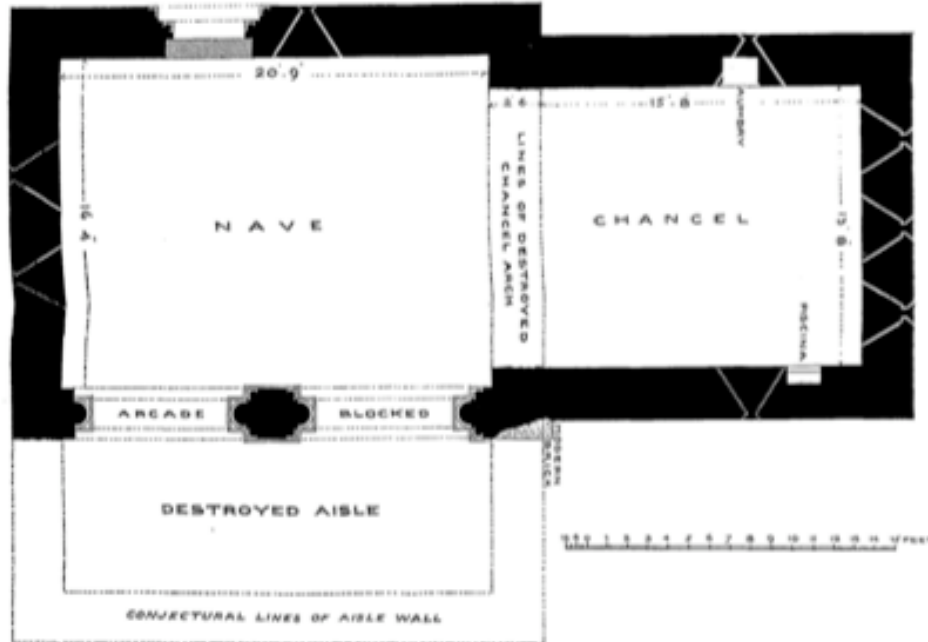
not mentioned by Hasted

no wills cited by Hussey (1907)

From all this I gather that Pett church existed before 1100 and was still in existence after 1400. It was a very poor church, with (no doubt) a very small parish - but it was an independent church. (We are not told why it owed a pension to Westwell: the mere fact that it did does not imply that Pett was subordinate to Westwell.) It was certainly somewhere near Charing. When the parish ceased to exist, it must have become merged into one of the neighbouring parishes - possibly Charing, but there is no proof of that. The advowson seems to have been a loose piece of property, the ownership of which did not run with the ownership of any nearby manor. (It definitely did *not* belong to the owners of Pett('s) Place in Charing.)

I have only one further thought on the subject, and it may be completely wrong. There does exist (though I have never seen it) a small derelict church or chapel not far from Charing, the building called Newlands Chapel (TQ 936482). The documentary evidence relating (or seeming to relate) to it is noted briefly by Scott Robertson (AC 15 (1883) xlix) and Hussey (AC 29 (1911) 87-8 and 225-6). Bensted (1911) gives a description of the building, illustrated with a plan and elevations, and with a drawing of the north door (a rather elegant piece of work). (His plan is

reproduced below.) He calls it a "domestic chapel" - but I wonder whether it does not look more like a church (a very small church, to be sure). Is it worth considering the possibility that "Newlands chapel" might be "Pett church" under another name?



References

- H. Bensted, 'Newlands Chapel', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 29 (1911), 85-6.
- C. Flight, *The survey of Kent* (BAR, forthcoming).
- A. Hussey, *Testamenta Cantiana: East Kent* (London, 1907).
- G. Ward, 'The lists of Saxon churches in the Domesday Monachorum, and White Book of St Augustine', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 45 (1933), 60-89.

First posted Feb 2010