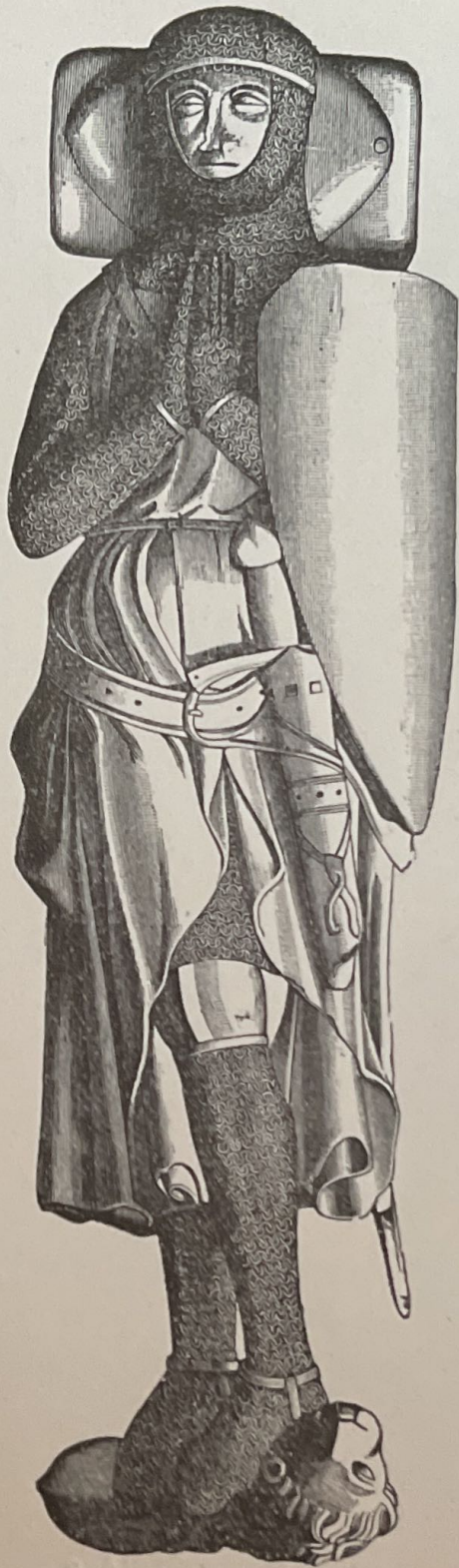


THE
CHURCH AND PARISH
OF GOSBERTON

W.J.KAYE, F.S.A

HISTORY OF GOSBERTON.



THE MONUMENT OF SIR JOHN DE RYE, KT. (?)
IN GOSBERTON CHURCH. 1280 A.D.

KAYE: HISTORY OF GOSBERTON.

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
Church and Parish
OF
Gosberton

IN THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN.

(WITH SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS AND TWO INSERTED PEDIGREES.)

BY

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[LONDON AND SCOT.]

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ERRATA.

- Page 22 for "Willia" read "Willia'."
- " 27 " "devote" read "devoted."
- " 28 " "1291" read "1268."
- " 31 " "store" read "stove."
- " 32 " "windows" read "window."
- " 45 " "Lodge" read "Longe."
- " 81 " "Invante" read "Juvante."
- " 87 " "Annog." read "Annoq."
- " 113 and Index, for "Solicitor" read "Attorney."
- " 114 for "Cockshult" read "Cockshutt."
- " 117 and Index, for "Bay" read "Day."

P R E F A C E .

IF from these pages the dwellers in the fen-land village of Gosberton can be induced to take a deeper interest in the history of themselves and of their church, the writer's aim will have been attained. Like so many works of this description this one has been financially unsuccessful; and this fact will in some measure account for the omission of matters which would otherwise have found a place herein. It was found necessary also to considerably alter my original intentions owing to the subsequent discovery of particulars unknown to me at the outset.

I desire to express my indebtedness to my friend J. Edwin-Cole, Esq. F.R. Hist. Soc., J.P., Barrister-at-Law, of Swineshead Hall, for the loan of the two inserted pedigrees, shewing his descent through various maternal ancestors, from the ancient Gosberton families of de Rye and de Cressy, as well as for most kind assistance rendered in many other ways; to the Lady Elizabeth Cust for the generous loan of unpublished MSS. relating to the Rye family, and to Walter Rye, Esq., for the gift of his published account of his ancestors (the de Ryes of Norfolk and Gosberton); to Dr. J. G. M. G. Stack for valued assistance in the account of the Volunteers, as well as for the encouraging interest he has taken in the work during its

Preface.

progress; to Edgar Leopold Layard, Esq. C.M.G., for the kind loan of numerous papers relating to the family of Calthrop; to the Vicar of Gosberton for permission to examine documents relating to the Church as well as for the few notes we have been able to extract from the parish registers; to Miss Topham for information as to the church; and to Dr. F. M. Sealy for the loan of notes left by the late Vicar. For help in various ways I am also indebted to the Rt. Honble. Lord Brownlow, to the President (Dr. Perry) and the Secretary (the Rev. E. M. Tweed) of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society; to the Rev. Canon Fowler, D.C.L., F.S.A., the Rev. Canon Hemmans, the Rev. Canon Maddison, F.S.A., the Rev. F. Todd, H. Peet, Esq., F.S.A., Charles Welch, Esq., F.S.A., Major Casswell, J.P., the Rev. J. H. Robinson, B.A., B. Fountain, Esq., and to my lamented friend the Rev. W. F. Creeny, M.A., F.S.A. For the illustrations I offer my thanks to Miss Topham, Dr. Stack and Dr. Sealy; and to Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co. for loan of the block of the knight's tomb. The de Rye seal is from a photograph by Mr. W. A. Southwell, and that of the Church by Mr. J. Sellers. My thanks are due to my subscribers, as well as my apologies for the long delay in publication.

WALTER JENKINSON KAYE.

BRUSSELS,

May, 1897.

ETYMOLOGY.

IN tracing the history of our church and village through the long centuries which have elapsed since its first foundation, it will be well to commence by making an enquiry into the origin of the place-name, wherein we shall be assisted by the collection of early examples of various spellings of the name, which occur in great number. The earliest instance, we meet with in Domesday Book, A.D. 1085, where it appears in the guise of Gozeberdechercha and Goseb'techirche, respectively. The lapse of nearly a hundred years shews a very trifling alteration; for in 1167 we find Goseb'deschirche and Goseberechirche. But in the next century—the 13th—the name undergoes the greatest change. The following instances of this date have come under our notice (we quote in chronological order): — Gosbercherch, Gosebencherch, Gosebbikirk, Goseberde Scherrhe, Goseberchirch, Gosberk', Gosbertchirche, Gosberchirche, Goseberdkyrk, Goseberkirke Gosberkirk, and Goseberchurche. The name appears during the 14th: and 15th: centuries as Gosberkirk, Goseberkyrk, or Goseberkerk; and not until the year 1510, (temp: Hen: VIII.) do we encounter it in its present form. Then for two centuries (1500-1700) doubt as to what was the correct form, Gosberkirk or Gosberton, appears to have prevailed. We have evidence of this in a document dated 1609 where allusion is made to Gosberton alias Gosberkirk. After this date, beyond mis-spellings such as Gorboston, Gosbertown, Gosbartowne, Gospertown and Gosperton, which occasionally

occur, the place has generally been known by its present name, though even at the time of writing one hears the traditional name of Gosberkirk in conversation with the villagers. All this tends to prove that Gosberton is a comparatively modern name, but that it was known to early and mediæval times as Gosbertchurch or Gosberkirk. For the derivation of this name we must go back to Saxon days, when tradition tells us—we have, we confess, no better authority—that a Saxon leader named Gosbert or Gosberd, who lived about the time of King Egbert (827-837), erected a church here. The meaning of the latter part of the name is palpable, -church and -kirk are of course identical. Had we not known that the suffix -ton was in this case modern, we should have found in it another link with Saxon times, when this word implied protection, signifying “a place surrounded by a hedge or rudely fortified by a palisade.” Our purpose in thus entering at such length into a discussion on the etymology is partly to correct the erroneous impressions promulgated by local *soi-disant* authorities on the subject, who would have us believe that -ton means “a place of tonnage” (whatever that may mean) or that Gosberton is in reality a contracted form of “God’s poor town”!

The hamlets of Westhorpe, Rysegate, The Cheal, The Clough, Rigbolt and Belnie, belong to the parish and from these names we may learn something. Rigbolt and Belnie take us again to Saxon days. The former was in earlier times figured as Wrightsbould, which would seem to suggest the locality of a smithy.

Under other circumstances we should have had reason to suppose that the first part of the word, *-rig*, was in all probability but another form of *ridge*, a feature worthy of note in so flat a district as this. The suffix *-ey*, in Belney or Belnie is also Saxon, and denotes a situation near the water (cf. Friskney, Tetney, Cadney, Blankney, Gedney). Connected with this is the Norman-French *eau* so frequently occurring in the neighbourhood, e.g., Quadring Eau-dyke, Gosberton Eau. In mediæval documents *eau* is often written *ee*, confirming the opinion that in those days *eau* was pronounced *ee*, cf. Beauchamp, Belvoir. *Clough* is a Saxon word meaning a cleft in a rock or in the side of a hill; but probably here indicates a boundary from its connection with Erse *cloch* a stone. [Vide Dr. Taylor, Words and Places]. Thurgote, an ancient sluice in Gosberton, leads us to Saxon times again, when Thor, after whom our Thursday is named, was their god of thunder. Cheal, which is variously spelled Cheil, Cheyle, Cheille, and Chille, may possibly mark the site of an old drying-house for corn, or bricks, from A.S. *cyln*. A distinct trace of the Danish influence is to be found in Westhorpe—the western hamlet. *Thorpe*, throp and trop (cf. Germ: *Thorf*) a village, which is very common in East Anglia and Denmark, but rare elsewhere; is almost entirely confined to settlements of the Danes as distinct from those of the Norwegians. *Gate* or *gade*, a road or village street, in Rysegate, owes its origin also to the Danes; while the former part of the word is of course traceable to the influential family of De Rye, which has

played so conspicuous a part in the history of Gosberton.

The *Roman Bank*, and Gosberton Bank, are relics left to us from the Roman occupation of Britain (55 B.C.—410 A.D.) when a large barrier was erected stretching inland as far as Bicker, to keep back the tempestuous sea.

The Saxons, who made their first incursion under Hengist and Horsa in 455, have left us constant reminders of their settlement here, as we have shewn in the place-names, Gosberton, Rigbolt, Belnie, Clough, Cheal, Eau-dyke, and Thurgote. Becoming christianized, the Saxons erected monasteries, built churches, constructed good high-roads and began the work of draining the fens.

The principal onslaught of the Danes in Lincolnshire took place in 866. Seven years later, by treaty with King Alfred the Great, the boundaries of the Danelagh were determined; but peace was not yet established; further ravages were made, until matters became so serious that Ethelred, thinking to put an end to Danish rule in England, ordered the dreadful massacre on St. Brice's Day, 1002; but in 1013, Sweyn took a bitter revenge, and especially in this part of the country, burning down monasteries and churches, and leveling houses with the ground.