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DENT-DE-LION GATEHOUSE, MARGATE.
WITH A PEDIGREE OF THE FAMILY OF PETTIT.

BY THE REV. C. E. WOODRUFF, M.A.

THE Isle of Thanet, with the exception of the very interesting Norman house at Minster and the beautiful fourteenth-century Grange at Salmestone, cannot boast of much mediæval work outside the Churches. It was therefore a matter of some disappointment to many of our members that, owing to want of time on the second day of the Society's Ramsgate excursion, 1900, "Dandelion Towers," as the Gatehouse is popularly called, was necessarily excised from the programme. We hope that the following brief description, illustrated by a plate prepared from an admirable photograph by Mr. Youens, the Society's Honorary Photographer, may to some extent supply the information that would have been more satisfactorily gained by personal inspection.

This fine early fifteenth-century Gatehouse is all that now remains of what was once probably the most important and best fortified seat in Thanet. Of the history of Dent-de-lion, however, we know very little. The earliest owner that we can find recorded was a member of that great Kentish family of Sandwich, of which Planché remarks that we hear so much but know so little.* In the thirty-second year of King Henry III. (1248) Sir Henry, the son of Simon de Sandwich, did homage for the lands he held of the King *in capite* in the right of his wife Joan, daughter of Sir William de Auberville. Of these lands Dent-de-lion formed part, and on the death of Henry de Sandwich without issue they passed to his niece Juliana, the wife of that doughty

* Planché's *Corner of Kent*, p. 301.



DENT-DE-LION GATE, MARGATE.

knight Sir William de Leybourne, so intolerant of “ifs” and “buts”—

Gullemes de Leybourne ausi
Vaillans homs sanz més et sanz si.

William de Leybourne died seised of Dent-de-lion in the third year of King Edward II. (1310), when this seat, together with the rest of his vast estates, descended to his granddaughter Juliana de Leybourne, the great heiress known as the “Infanta of Kent,”* who in 1362 granted to the Abbot and Brethren of St. Augustine’s Monastery in Canterbury her manor of Dene in the Isle of Thanet.† It is probable that Dent-de-lion was included in this gift, since twenty years later this seat seems to have been occupied by one William de Dandelyon, bedell of Minster Manor, and one of the *Custodes* of the Hundred of Ringslo when the adherents of Wat Tyler broke into the house of William Medmenham of Manston and burned his books and muniments.‡ According to Hasted, William de Dandelyon was succeeded here by his son John Daundelyon, who may have been a brother of Marcellus Daundelyon, Abbot of St. Augustine’s in 1426, and the father of John de Daundeleon, buried in the north chancel of the Church of St. John, Margate, in 1445, where his effigy in brass still remains. John Daundelyon left no male issue, and his only daughter is said by Lewis and subsequent writers to have carried the estate in marriage to Pettit of Shalmsford Street in the parish of Chartham. It must be observed, however, that neither in the Pedigree of Pettit drawn up for the Visitation of 1619, nor in the fuller pedigree of that family preserved in Gough’s additions to Lewis,§ is there any mention of this alliance. Valentine Pettit of Minster, who died in 1545, married Joan daughter and heir of William Beverley of Fordwich, and their son Henry is the first Pettit that we can positively identify in connection with Dent-de-lion;

* Planché’s *Corner of Kent*, p. 302.

† Thomas of Elmham. (Ed. Hardwick.)

‡ *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. III., p. 73. A Reginald Daundelyon of Thanet and a William Daundelyon, living 1384, are mentioned in the Plea Rolls of Dover. (Surrenden MSS., Maidstone Museum.)

§ Gough MSS. 4, Bodleian Library.

hence it is not improbable that this estate came to the Pettits from the Beverleys, who may have acquired it after the dissolution of the Abbey in 1538. The Pettits owned Dent-de-lion for more than one hundred years, and continued to reside here until the death of Captain Henry Pettit in 1661-2.

When Lewis published the second edition of his *History of the Isle of Thanet* in 1736, the mansion to which this gate formed so imposing an entry was still standing, for he says that, "in the windows of the dining-room are the arms of Daundelion quartering those of Pettit."* But in the engraving he gives of the gateway nothing can be seen of the house, which probably stood a little to the north, near the site of the house now occupied by Mr. H. T. Wallis.† The Gatehouse therefore formed no part of the house itself, being merely flanked by walls encircling the inner precinct, an arrangement less common in domestic than in conventual buildings. The four square towers—one at each corner—are nearly 40 feet in height and embattled at the top, their cores being formed of blocks of chalk, faced with brick and flint laid in alternate courses. The bricks are 2 inches thick and 10½ inches long, and the courses 9 or 10 inches deep. Between the southern towers is the double entry, commanded by crossed loopholes set about 7 feet from the ground. The greater arch has a depressed head, and is 8 feet 9 inches wide; the smaller one, of more pointed form, 4 feet 11 inches. The iron hinges of the great wooden doors remain, but there is no indication of a portcullis, moat, or drawbridge. The inner court (now the farmyard) is reached by a wide single arch 23 feet from the outer one. The intermediate space (now open to the sky) formerly had a flat timber roof, forming the floor of a guard-chamber constructed of the same materials,‡ of which nothing now remains. Access to this chamber was

* Lewis's *History of Thanet*, Second Edition, p. 150.

† Mr. Wallis tells me that within his grounds he is able to trace indications of foundations of considerable extent.

‡ See Lewis, Second Edition, p. 150. Lewis says that, "Over the gatehouse, betwixt the towers, has been erected a building of pannel work for a pigeon-house." Lewis shews this in his engraving, but it seems probable from the plate that this wooden erection between the towers was part of the original plan.

obtained by newel stairs in each of the four towers, the pointed doorways of which remain both above and below, but the steps are left only in the north-west tower.

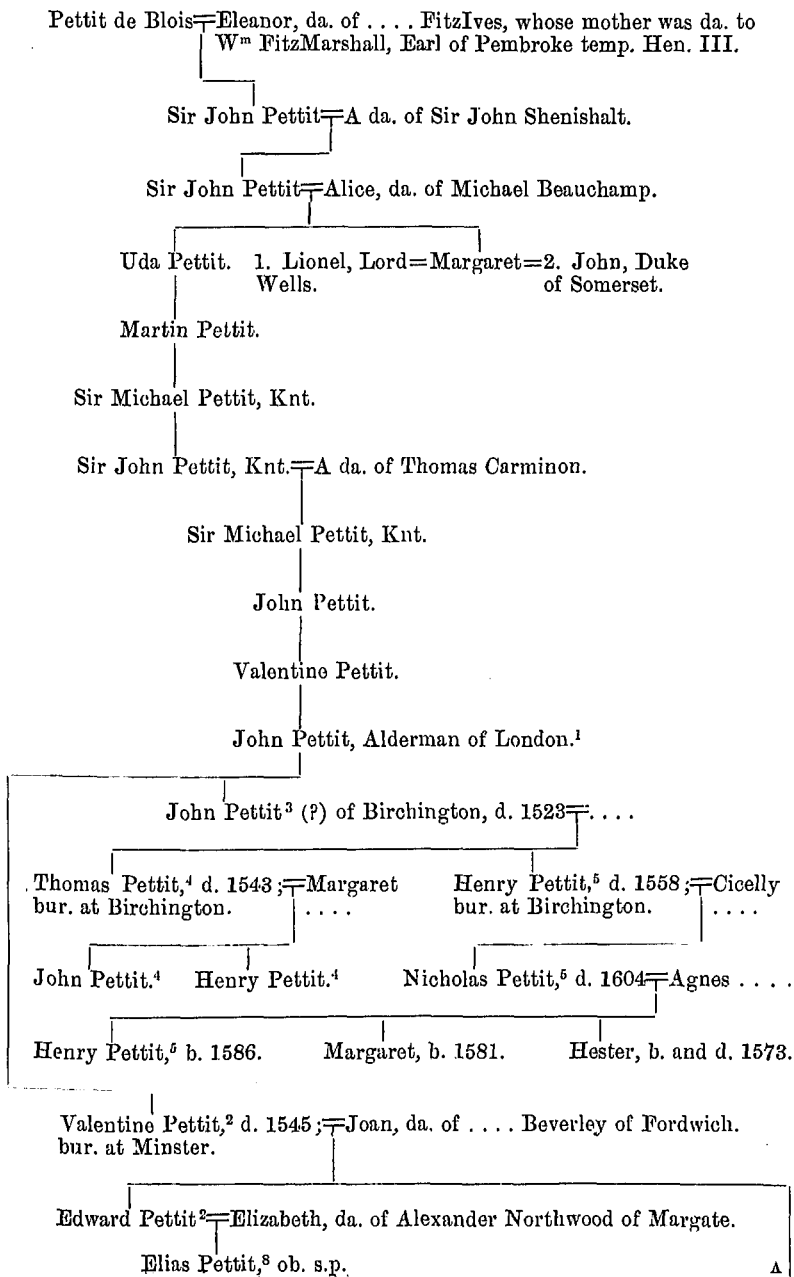
On the exterior front of the Gatehouse, over the entrance and between corbels representing lions' heads, are the following arms: *Sable, on a fesse indented, voided argent, three lions rampant of the same*, ascribed by Lewis to Dent-de-lion. On the sinister side of the smaller portal is the figure of a demi-lion with a label issuing from the mouth, on which was inscribed "Daundelyone," but this is now obliterated.* Under the south-western tower a chamber was discovered in 1703, in which were some fragments of pottery and glass, and under the opposite south-eastern tower was what Lewis calls "a well prison," but neither of these subterranean apartments is accessible at the present time. The plan and general architectural features of this fine Gatehouse would lead us to infer that it was built in the first half of the fifteenth century. Modern farm buildings now encroach on either side of its time-worn towers, in which a number of pigeons have taken up their abode, but it still retains much of its ancient dignity, and is especially interesting as representing a type of gatehouse of which very few examples remain in the county of Kent.

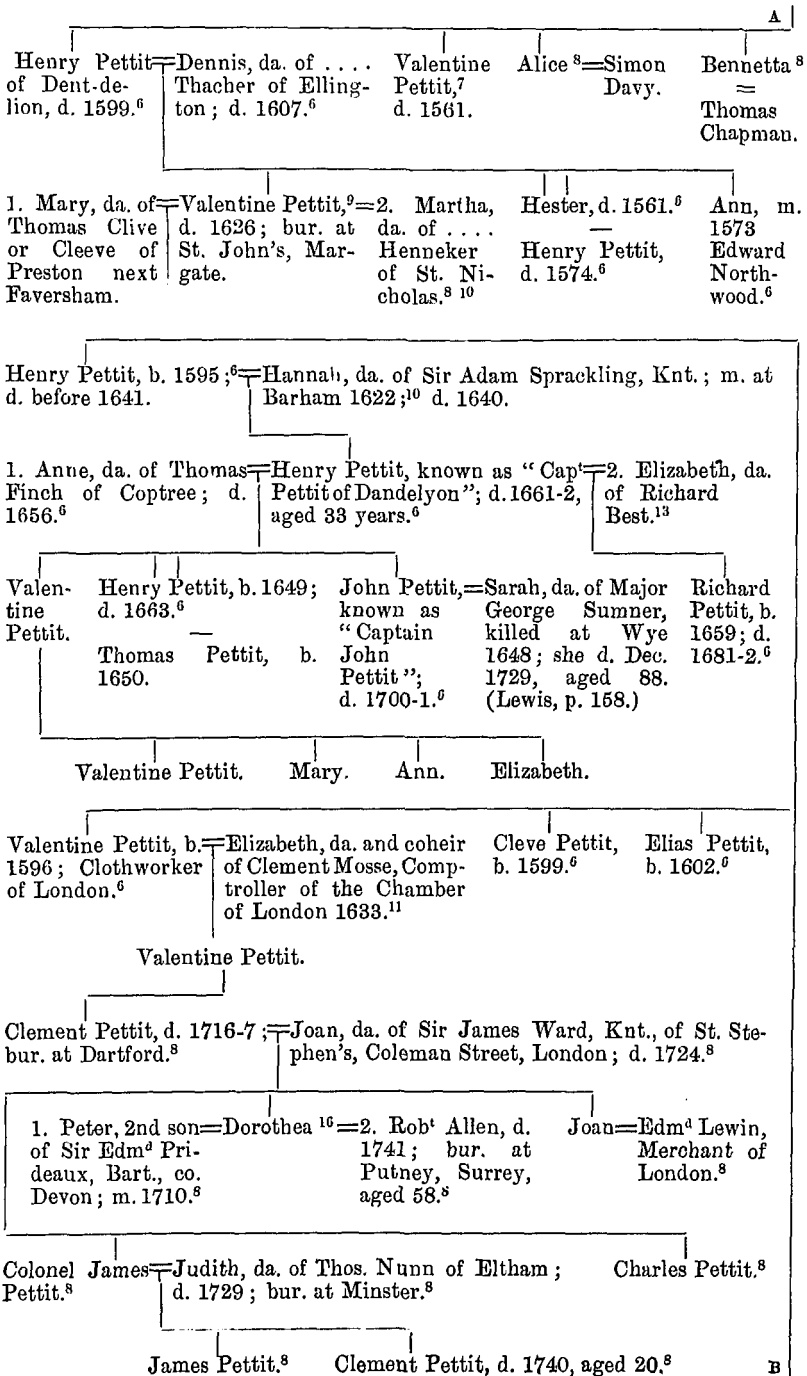
May we venture to hope that the present owner, by the execution of a few small repairs, especially to the battlements of the towers, may arrest to some extent the ravages of time, and preserve this interesting ruin from further decay. "In this utilitarian age he is indeed a public benefactor who religiously spares the smallest fragment that elucidates the mode of life and social habits of bygone generations."

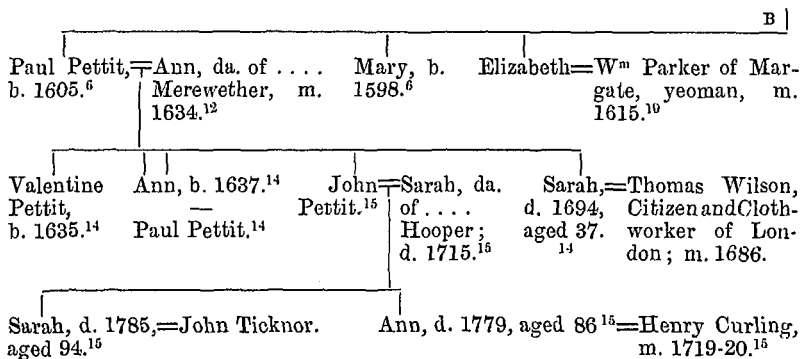
* Described by a newspaper reporter after the Ramsgate Meeting as "an enormous tooth."

PETTIT OF DENT-DE-LION.

ARMS.—*Argent, on a chevron gules three bezants between three lions' heads erased sable, crowned or.*







AUTHORITIES.

¹ So far copied from a Pedigree of Pettit in Gough's Additions to Lewis's *Thanet*. (Gough MSS. 4, Bodleian Library.)

² Will in District Probate Office, Canterbury (A Lib. 25, f. 1).

³ *Ibid.* (A Lib. 13, f. 204).

⁴ *Ibid.* (C Lib. 19, f. 18).

⁵ *Ibid.* (C Lib. 27, f. 83).

⁶ *St. John's Registers, Margate*.

⁷ Will in District Probate Office, Canterbury (A Lib. 35, f. 4).

⁸ Gough, as above.

⁹ Will in District Probate Office, Canterbury (A Lib. 66, f. 1).

¹⁰ *Canterbury Marriage Licences*.

¹¹ *Visitation of London, 1634*, vol. ii., pp. 115, 364. (Harl. Soc.)

¹² *Canterbury Cathedral Registers*.

¹³ *St. Paul's Registers, Canterbury*.

¹⁴ *St. George's Registers, Canterbury*.

¹⁵ *Dr. Cotton's History of St. Lawrence, Thanet*.

¹⁶ *Registers of St. Dionis Backchurch, London*.