



People of the Palace





Introduction



Upon entering the Palace, who could fail to be captivated by the magic of these wonderful buildings and think about the people who, within these walls, lived and laboured? In the past their story was told through The Pageant and we thought it appropriate in this 125th year of the school, for the tradition to be revived. I would like to acknowledge the huge efforts of the members of the History Society who, in the last two years, have researched these fascinating stories.

Linda Baker, Head of History

❧ The History Society ❧

Students: Zara, Abigael, Elizabeth, Rebecca, Nivaasini, Holly, Katrina, Ashleigh and Cecilia.



🏰 The Anglo Saxons 🏰

From the 8th century, the Vikings used their Longships to raid the coasts and inland waters of England for plunder. By 871AD the situation was critical; the only remaining Anglo Saxon kingdom left standing was Wessex. At its head was Aelfred, later known as Alfred the Great. He asked Archbishop Aethered for the strategically important land at Croydon to help him guard the southern waterways. Aethered agreed to the request and exchanged it for land at Certham in Kent.

The evidence for this exchange is contained in a collection of Anglo Saxon charters called the Cartularium Saxonicum. It is a crucial document for us here at Old Palace, because it shows us that there have been Archbishops in Croydon since the 9th century.

🏰 The Normans 🏰

In 1066 William of Normandy defeated the Anglo-Saxon King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. He made Lanfranc his Archbishop of Canterbury. William wanted to raise taxes from his new land – but first he needed to know how much it was worth.

He sent out his officials. According to the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, the native English were so in awe of the efficiency of the survey, that they compared it to the Day of Judgement and called it the Domesday Book.

The original Domesday Book is held at the National Archives in Kew. The Croydon extract tells us that the manor was worth £27.00 to the Archbishop!

🏰 Anselm 🏰

Saint Anselm was one of the most important Christian thinkers of the 11th century. He was born in 1033 and studied under Lanfranc, the previous Archbishop, at Bec in France. Anselm defended the rights of the Church against both William II and Henry I and was forced into exile on two occasions. We have very few records from the period, but certainly one of his roles as the Lord of the Manor of Croydon, would have been to dispense justice.

His biographer, Eadmer, describes the fairness of Anselm in dispensing justice while Abbot of Bec: '...and when any important business of the Church arose which it was not thought proper to settle in his absence, he disposed of it as justice required, according to the circumstances and nature of the case.'

Eadmer was a monk and a member of Anselm's household. He accompanied Anselm on the saint's extensive travels across Europe. His biography of Anselm Vita Anselmi (c.1124), is considered to be an authoritative account of the Saint's life.



Archbishop Stratford

After the death and martyrdom of Thomas Becket (1170), Croydon became a key staging post on the pilgrim route to Canterbury. Inns flourished and demand for provisions soared. Medieval markets required official consent and in 1343, Edward III allowed Archbishop Stratford to hold a weekly market and an annual fair. This would have been extremely profitable for both Croydon and the Archbishop.

John de Stratford was a close friend and the principal adviser of Edward III, travelling with him extensively, negotiating with the French on the king's behalf, and acting as President of the Council during the King's absence.

The grant was made in a legal document called 'a letter patent'.

'The king granted to the Archbishop of Canterbury a market at his manor of Croydon each Saturday and a fair on the feast of St John the Baptist.'

Patent Rolls 18 Edward III, held at the national Archive at Kew.



James I of Scotland

In March 1406, the young Scottish Prince James was sent for his own safety to France to escape the troubles of his homeland. He was captured by pirates off the Norfolk coast and spent the next 18 years as guest and hostage of the English kings, Henry IV and Henry V. James was most famous for his poems, especially the King's Quire. He married into the well-connected Beaufort family and took his Queen, Joan back to Scotland on his return.

We are fortunate in having definitive proof of James I being at Old Palace in 1414, because a land grant to Sir William Douglas of Drumlarig, was signed and dated as being from Croydon Palace in that year.



Stafford and Henry VI

Archbishop Stafford was responsible for much of what we see in the Banqueting Hall. His crests are proudly displayed and he created a stone canopy to mark the visits of his king, Henry VI. Permission to erect this canopy would have been a sign of great favour. A moderate man, the Archbishop was appointed to several of the high offices of state by the king. Henry was to visit Croydon more than once in what was to prove a deeply troubled reign in England and in France. Stafford would have wished to flatter the king by celebrating the victory of his father Henry V.

'Letters patent' of Henry VI were issued at Croydon from 1447 to 1450 and again in 1455.

'Letters patent' can be viewed free of charge at the University of Iowa, project of Professor G R Boynton, 2003.



❧ Katherine of Aragon ❧

One of the favourite tales of the Palace is the proposal of Henry VIII to Katherine of Aragon in 1509. Katherine had previously been married to Henry's brother, Arthur, but he died young. For six years she was held in England by Henry VII who was reluctant to return her and her dowry to her parents, the powerful Spanish rulers Ferdinand and Isabella. Eventually, young Henry did marry Katherine, just six weeks after the death of his father. We like to think that the proposal was made at the Palace.

Katherine of Aragon's normal residence during her six years of waiting, was Durham House in the Strand. However, according to Paget (writing in 1937) she was at the Palace when Henry paid a visit from 22 May to 2 June 1509 – and they married nine days later on the 11th. We also know that the Tudor matriarch, Henry's grandmother Margaret Beaufort, had strong links with the Palace and it is very likely that Katherine spent some time here in her care.

❧ Archbishop Cranmer's trial of Frith ❧

Frith was a leading Protestant reformer. Henry VIII's divorce and break with Rome, coincided with the spread of Protestant ideas from the continent, ideas that struck at the heart of the established order. Henry, although at odds with the Pope, was deeply opposed to most of the new thinking. Frith's denial of transubstantiation was abhorrent to the king. Archbishop Cranmer, who sympathised with some of the reforming trends, was reluctant to condemn Frith. So, Cranmer brought the reformer from the Tower to Croydon in a failed attempt to give him a chance to recant. Frith was later burned at Smithfield.

Cranmer was likely to be sympathetic to a Protestant reformer. He himself became the author of the Protestant English Prayer book, produced in the reign of Henry's son Edward and he too would become a martyr for the reformed faith.





Jane Dormer

☞ Mary Tudor ☜

Henry VIII's daughter, Mary I, was a frequent visitor to Croydon where she would meet with Archbishop Reginald Pole, her leading ally in the campaign to reunite England with Rome. Jane Dormer, linked by marriage to Mary's homeland, was a chief lady-in-waiting and was, by reputation, kind and generous to the poor, a quality it was said she shared with her mistress.

Jane Dormer herself is a fascinating character. She was later to marry the Duke of Feria, then left her homeland for Spain. We are fortunate in having a contemporary account of her life by Henry Clifford, a confidante so close that he was entrusted with the funeral arrangements for the Duchess in Spain.

'The Queen seldom went in progress except it were to the Cardinal's House at Croydon (for Cardinal Pole her kinsman was Archbishop of Canterbury). And being at Croydon for her recreation with two or three of her ladies - she would visit the poor.'
From a contemporary life of Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria by Henry Clifford.



Sir Christopher Hatton

☞ Elizabeth I and Hatton ☜

Hatton played a major part in Elizabethan affairs of state. He represented Queen Elizabeth I in the House of Commons and was one of the commissioners who found Mary Queen of Scots, guilty of treason. He was a great favourite of the queen.

There are several ideas as to why Elizabeth made Hatton her Chancellor. First of all, she knew he was loyal and could be trusted at a time of great danger. Secondly, Hatton was a capable man with extremely powerful connections. However, it is also sometimes said that Elizabeth, a keen dancer, appointed him because of his skill on the dance floor!

Elizabeth came to Croydon frequently and held court here. So the giving of the Great Seal of England was carefully recorded, 'in the Archbishop of Canterburies house, wher he received the great seale in the gallery there.' Stow, Annals. Ed. 1615.

The velvet bag which contained the seal is kept today at the Victoria and Albert museum in London.

☞ Nashe Masque. Summer's Last Will and Testament ☜

The Masque was first performed at the Archbishop's rural palace because, at the time, bubonic plague was in London and it is believed that the professional actors who should have performed, would not have been allowed to come from London, hence the masque was performed by amateurs here at Old Palace. There is a reference to this in our Pageant, where it talks about "green men". In the same way the title refers both to the season of summer and Will Sumer, the famous jester of Henry VIII.

The Elizabethan Stage, E K Chambers 4 volumes, Oxford Clarendon press, 1923; Volume 3 pp.451-3



Archbishop Laud

☞ Archbishop Laud and the Duke of Buckingham ☜

The Duke of Buckingham, royal favourite and adviser, was Laud's patron. The reign of Charles I had not begun well in 1625, with unease among the political nation, and as was the custom, criticism was directed not at the king but at his minister. Felton, a disillusioned officer, held the Duke to blame for failures in his campaigns abroad and his own lack of promotion, and so stabbed and killed Buckingham in Portsmouth in 1628.

'News of his death came to me at Croydon, where it found myself and the Bishop of Winchester, Ely and Carlisle at the consecration of Bishop Montagu for Chichester, with my Lord's Grace.'

Extract from the diary of Archbishop Laud, 24th August 1628. The diary is held today at St John's College, Oxford.



Brereton

If there has to be a villain of the piece, that title would surely go to Sir William Brereton, Commander of the Cheshire Forces in the English Civil War. During the Civil Wars of the 1640s, Church lands were seized by Oliver Cromwell, head of the parliamentary forces and sold. Brereton was given the tenancy of the Palace in 1652 and he died there in 1661. There are two favourite stories of his desecrating the chapel, either by stabling horses there, or by turning it into a kitchen.

However, the contemporary source - which is also used in subsequent accounts - was written during the reign of Charles II, the son of Charles I and we can clearly see its bias.

The Mystery of the Good old Cause Briefly unfolded, 1660, July, London ("in the first year of England's Liberty, after almost twenty years' slavery") – 'Sir William Brereton, as Mr Cleavland hath it, a notable man at a thanksgiving dinner, having terrible long teeth and a prodigious stomach, to turn the Archbishop's Chappel of Croyden into a Kitchen.' The source can be seen today at the British Library.



Juxon

Juxon

On 30 January, 1649, Charles I was taken to the scaffold outside the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall in London to be executed. Charles had lost everything in the Civil War, but he still had his son Charles II who was safe in the Netherlands. It was vital to Charles that he die in dignity for the sake of his son. He chose his friend Juxon, the Bishop of London, to attend him on the scaffold. Upon his return Charles II rewarded Juxon with the See of Canterbury.

Then turning to the bishop he said, 'I have a good cause and a gracious God on my side.'

The bishop replied, 'There is but one stage more. This stage is turbulent and troublesome - it is a short one. But you may consider it will soon carry you a very great way, it will carry you from earth to heaven; and there you will find a great deal of cordial joy and comfort.'

Observations on the life and death of Charles by W Lilly, Student of Judicial Astrology 1651, in Baron Masere's Tracts Published by R Wilks, London 1815.

Hutton

Hutton was Archbishop of Canterbury for only a few months between 1757 and 1758. After him the Palace was neglected by the Archbishops; the town of Croydon had continued to grow and townsfolk were coming far too close to the walls of the Palace for comfort. The See of Canterbury finally sold it in 1780 and the Archbishops moved to Addington.

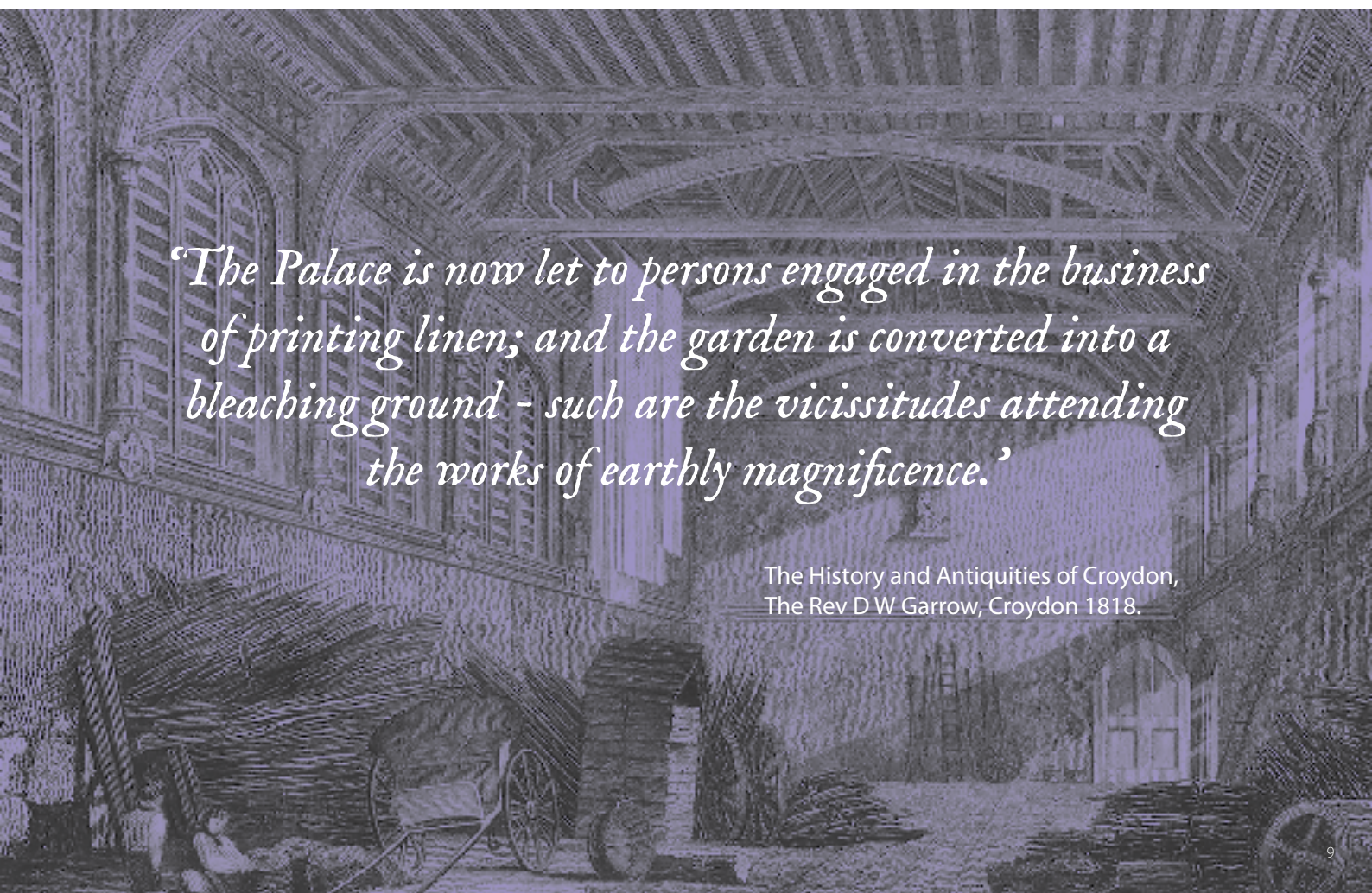




The Industrial Revolution and the Palace

Old Palace was turned into a bleaching factory in 1780. Young girls and some boys, aged from just 9 to 14, also worked in the Palace as apprentices in silk and ribbon manufacture, only being released when they reached the age of 21, or on their date of marriage. The Palace was ideally situated because of the many ponds in the area and a ready supply of labour.

The Palace's time in the Industrial Revolution is very well documented, with maps from 1868 clearly showing the bleaching fields and pictures of the sad state of the Banqueting Hall, with the clothes hanging over the rafters.



'The Palace is now let to persons engaged in the business of printing linen; and the garden is converted into a bleaching ground - such are the vicissitudes attending the works of earthly magnificence.'

The History and Antiquities of Croydon,
The Rev D W Garrow, Croydon 1818.



*'The Elizabethan scene performed before
Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip in 1960'*





'In 1887 the late Duke of Newcastle, at that time an undergraduate at Oxford, hearing of its sad plight, bought, 'this Palace of the Sleeping Beauty asleep beneath the dust of ages, with its tangled garden of weeds,' and presented it to the Community of the Sisters of the Church, then at Kilburn, who at the cost of hundreds of pounds, restored the building and two years later established in it a 'Middle Class School for Girls and Infants.' In 1890 this was recognised by the Education Department as a Higher Grade School and in 1904 as a secondary school.'

Miss Hazledene; scholars

Both extracts are from the brochure that accompanied The Pageant in 1960.

Programme notes written by Mrs L. Baker.



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