

The Holy Wells of Kent



James Rattue

Umbra Press

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The frontispiece shows Pilgrim's Spring, Burham
and the dressing of St Margaret's Well, Broomfield, 1995

The cover illustration shows Lady's Well, Goudhurst

Special thanks to Mr Ross Parish, fellow holy well enthusiast. Our collaboration on Kent wells came to nothing in the end, but he generously provided me with leads on several sites. Good luck with your own projects, Ross!

HOLY WELLS OF KENT

Introduction

This is the first general survey of named wells in Kent, apart from RH Goodsall's chapter on the more famous examples in *A Second Kentish Patchwork* in 1968, and a couple of other articles based on it. Kent is especially interesting, though, because it is the first county in eastern England to be investigated to this degree, and also because its complicated geology has had an impact on both the settlement patterns and the distribution of holy wells.

No Kent well can be proved to be older than the Roman period, but there are several where there are hints that the spring was important long before then: these will be mentioned in the gazetteer. It is only with the Christian holy wells that any pattern as such is clear. In his book *Continuity and Colonisation*, Alan Everitt argued that the earliest-settled parts of Kent, the Romanised parts, were the areas around Watling Street and the long strip round the Pilgrim's Way, at the foot of the Downs. The rest of the county was largely used as summer pasture for these areas. There was a series of large Romano-British estates which were adapted by the Anglo-Saxons, and formed the bases for the gradual settlement of the rest of Kent, which, in the Weald and Romney Marsh, took well into the 12th century. All the more important minster churches were in the early-settled areas; 10 out of 19 have Christian wells close by, and only Rochester and Hoo St Werburgh had no ancient spring of any kind. This close link between wells and minsters confirms a pattern we find in other parts of the country.

Another interesting aspect of Kent's wells is the distribution of dedications. Firstly, outside the early-settled areas, there are fewer Christian wells altogether. Secondly, the different areas have different patterns of dedications. Across the country as a whole, well-dedications to St Mary often seem to be relatively late - after about 1100 or so. Kent has 11 Mary wells; five are in the early-settled areas, making up 18% of the saints' wells there; two are on the Downs and Chartland (15%); but of the seven saints' wells in the late-settled Weald, four are dedicated to Mary - or 57%. I think this can only indicate that Kent's holy wells retained their early names in a way those of other counties did not (although we will find examples of wells which were renamed after Thomas Becket's death).

The Reformation removed the religious support-structure from the Christian holy wells, and this perhaps explains why there are so many churches with unnamed springs or dry springheads close by. Certainly the wells at Strood and Fordwich lost their sacred names and associations. Even so, Kent later acquired new secular wells as a result of the growth of London into its north-west corner. Most reports of well-traditions, nonetheless, point to the gradual loss of such folklore in the later 19th century, notwithstanding the occasional restoration, as at Kemsing, or modern invention, as at Minster-in-Sheppey.

Visiting the Wells

I only spent a few years in Kent and had little chance to visit many wells and inspect their current state, so I hope this booklet will encourage other people to try. If you do

have to cross private land to reach a well, always ask permission. The landowners I have met are invariably interested and helpful. Sometimes it is not practical to find out which of several farms owns this or that field. In such cases, always shut gates, never leave litter, keep to the edges of fields and avoid livestock. The countryside is the factory floor for the people who work there, and should be respected.

The survey covers the whole of the old county, including areas now within Greater London, but I have not included 'spa' sites unless they seem to have had a general, older healing reputation. The exception is Tunbridge Wells, which is in a class of its own! The source material for each site appears in small text after the description.

Abbreviations: KSC (Kentish Study Centre) RUMSC (Rochester Upon Medway Study Centre)

ADDINGTON

Hernewell Pond (TQ 652584) was called Erewell in 1843. This parish also had one of the **Nailbournes** for which Kent was noted, prophetic springs which rose usually in order to predict some disaster locally or nationally.

KSC IR29/17:3; W Hasted, *History of Kent* (1797-1801), iv 543

ALDINGTON

Callywell Lane (TR 062373) was named after the 14th-century John Coly, and the name **Colly Well** appears on the Tithe Map of 1842. The map also showed a house called **Goldwell** (TR 066369).

The ghost-hunter Peter Underwood reported that sounds are heard at Walnut Tree Farm which seem to relate to a murder, including those of a body being thrown in a well. 'The **well**, no longer used, has an odd atmosphere at night'. This story could relate to Walnut Farm (TR 042378). Finally, the early-20th century writer Charles Igglesden said that a path from Smeeth Station to Lympe Road was called the 'Pilgrim's Way' 'from the fact that there is a **well** at the Lympe end'.

KSC IR29/17:5; JK Wallenberg, *Place Names of Kent* (1934), 463; P Underwood, *Ghosts of Kent* (1979), 9; CH Igglesden, *Saunters Through Kent with Pen and Pencil* (1900-46), xiii 34

ALKHAM

'There is a **Nailbourne** in this parish, which though no spring appears, sends out sometimes water enough to carry a boat, when this happens, some of the inhabitants have the superstitious credulity to think it portends death, or a dearth'.

C Seymour, *Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* (1776), 5

APPLEDORE

In the cellar of Well House was an '**ancient well**' of 14th-century brickwork. Queen Anne was given a glass of its water when travelling through the village.

Igglesden, *Saunters*, ii (1901) 11

ASH-CUM-RIDLEY

A map of 1791 shows **All Souls Pond** at the edge of the parish between Hall Wood and West Field Wood (TQ 623620). It still survives, though overgrown and difficult to reach.

A possible '**holy well**' beside a ruined chapel in Chapel Wood, though, now seems to be lost (TQ 603664). Hasted writes that Holywell Farm at Stanstead (TQ 625631) owes its name to being owned by Holywell Priory in Shoreditch, but locals point out a well in the forecourt of the farm as being the **Holy Well**. Finally, opposite the old parish church of Ridley is **Bowdler's Well** (photo right), named after a former Vicar and restored a few years ago. The brick well-head, marked '1810', is covered by a thatched shelter (TQ 616638).



RUMSC P/8/28/1; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* ii 467-8; info. from Mr R. Parish; JA Syms, *Kent Country Churches* (1986), 194.

ASHFORD

Archaeological site maps in Ashford Library note that a medieval well was found at a chapel site in the town, possibly a '**holy well**' (TR 033436).

BAPCHILD

About 700 this village was *Baccancelde*, or 'Bacca's Spring'. This spring on Watling Street was renamed **St Thomas Becket's Spring** after the saint's murder in 1180 and lay along the main pilgrim road to Canterbury. It seems to have been associated with a leper hospital, though it is not clear whether it was really used for baptisms or whether that story is just a misunderstanding of the village's name, which had become *Bapchylde* in 1421. The spring (TQ 931632) is now in a poor state, at the head of a gully above some cress beds: you can reach it from a footpath opposite the road to the church, but it is quite overgrown. In the summer of 1994 it dried up for the first time in living memory.

In 1724 the Curate of Bapchild wrote in the Parish Register that **Streetwell** in the village was the spring lying between Canterbury and Rochester, mentioned by the Roman writer Antoninus and called *Aqua Lena*. Streetwell was supposed to be at Pent Farm.

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 242; V Martin, 'Holy Wells in Kent', *Source* O.S. 2 (1986), 27; RFH Lord, *A Short History of the Parish of Bapchild* (1926), 3, 6

BARHAM

Ropersole Farm has a pond right on the parish boundary (TR 228486). Its name probably reflects the local word *sole*, 'miry pool'.

BECKENHAM

In 1856 there was supposed to be a **well** in this parish where pins were left as offerings, and the water used to bathe sore eyes.

AJ Dunkin, *History of the County of Kent* (1856)

BENENDEN

Queen's Well (TR 806319) is a pump with an oak canopy erected in 1887 by the Earl of Cranbrook to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and stands outside the Manor House

gate. Not far away, a **pond** (approx. TQ 815325) was in 1909 haunted by Peggy, who drowned herself there after her betrothed married her sister. Finally, on modern maps we find **Jacob's Well** (TQ 827327).

F Hazlewood, *The Parish of Benenden* (1889), 161; Igglesden, *Saunters* ii 40

BEXLEY

Poulter's Spring was named after the 18th-century benefactor Arthur Poulter; the **Cold Bath** Wood of 1839 (TQ 457737) sounds as though it commemorates a healing well.

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 14; KSC IR29/17: 27

BIDDENDEN

A few hundred yards from the house in Ibornden Park was **Lady Pond** (about TQ 842406). Originally, this may perhaps have been named after the Virgin Mary, but a legend developed about Susannah Lost, who drowned herself in its waters in about 1837 after an unhappy love affair; her ghost was supposed to appear on the anniversary of the death and walk around the pond, but nobody knew when this fell.

Crosswells is a crossroads, now without a spring (TQ 840366).

Underwood, *Ghosts*, 11-12.

BIRLING

Puddle Well Shave (TQ 608668) appears on the Tithe Map of 1837. 'Shave' is a local word for a wood.

KSC IR29/17:34

BLACKHEATH

There are two unexplained well-named in this London parish. **Queen Elizabeth's Well** lay behind a school between Montpellier Vale and Tranquil Vale (TQ 396762); while the local road name **Cresswell** may or may not commemorate an actual spring (TQ 345683).

N Rhind, *Blackheath Village and Environs* (1976), 137

BOBBING

The Tithe Map of 1839 shows **Brookwells** Field (TQ 888665) and the topography is right for a spring.

KSC IR29/17:37

BOUGHTON ALUPH

The house here called **Buckwell** (TR 043482) was *Berchwelle* in the Domesday Book, deriving its name from *boc*, meaning 'beech tree'. Its moat is fed by the spring at a corner close to the road.

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 380-81; Igglesden, *Saunters* xxv

BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA

Gold Well, mentioned on the Tithe Award of 1842, may refer to a well where gold objects were left as offerings, or to its pleasant appearance or qualities. The Map itself is unavailable, so there is no grid reference for this site.

KSC IR29/17:43

BOXLEY

In front of All Saints' Church is a spring-fed pond which W.C. Finch calls **Pilgrim's Pond**, though he is the only writer who does (TQ 775589). The ancient trackway called the Greenway runs right beside the pond, and it may well have been a holy well of sorts. It could also be the same as the petrifying spring which Hasted describes as being 'just below' the church.

W.C. Finch, *In Kentish Pilgrim Land* (1925), f.p. 146; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iv 325

BREDGAR

The 1839 Tithe Map shows **Chantry Pond**, House and Garden (TQ 880604). The Chantry House is on the site of a 14th-century religious college; it still contains fragments of medieval stonework and there are sarsen stones in its driveway. The water emerges from the house side of the pond through a grotesque carved head.

KSC IR29/17:47



*St Blaise's Well, from Walter Hone's
Table Book (1831)*

BROMLEY

St Blaise's Well is one of the more famous Kent wells (TQ 408692). The martyr Blaise was patron saint of wool workers and was particularly popular in late-medieval England when the wool trade was the mainstay of the country's wealth. There was an altar of St Blaise in Bromley church and there may have been a connection with the medicinal spring, which had an 'oratory' attached to it. Hasted recorded that 40 days' indulgence was granted to anyone who prayed at the well at Pentecost and the two following days. The Bishops of Rochester owned this site since the 8th century, and so the well's fortunes were closely related to the attitudes of the Bishops; when the Reformation brought Rochester a radical bishop in the form of Nicholas Ridley, therefore, pilgrimages to the well probably ceased. The 18th-century enthusiasm for spas led to the well's rediscovery in 1754 by Mr Harwood, the bishop's chaplain, who traced its 'yellow ochrey sediment'; Bishop Wilcocks had it enclosed with a thatched

roof, and by 1756 'great numbers of people, chiefly of the middling and poorer sort, drink daily of this excellent water, many of whom have been remarkably relieved from various infirmities and diseases'. It went into a decline after 1800, especially during the reign of Bishop King who neglected the grounds of the Bromley palace. The well was restored a couple of times, and was still visible in the 1920s, but was finally buried under a housing development.

B Williams, 'St Blaise's Well', *Source* N.S. 6 (1998), 16; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* i 551; ELS Horsburgh, *Bromley, Kent* (1929), 99-102. There was also a springhead chapel of St Blaise in Offham parish (TQ 662565).

BROOKLAND

Leaping Well appears on the Tithe Map of 1844 (TQ 982264).
KSC IR29/17:54

BROOMFIELD

In 1507, Agnes Caring left 12d in her will for the repair of **St Margaret's Well** here (TQ 839525). In recent years this has been identified with the old village dip-well just down from St Margaret's Church, an ancient stone structure with a grille and now topped by a white wooden cross. The parish now includes a housing estate at Kingswood, and to encourage people there to identify more with the ancient church, a former Rector (whose previous parish had been in Derbyshire), introduced the Derbyshire custom of well-dressing. This takes place on the afternoon of the Sunday closest to St Margaret's Day; in 1995 about 70 people attended the service.



LL Dunkin & A Hussey, *Testamenta Cantiana* (1906-7), ii 39

BURHAM

Pilgrim's Spring can be reached by a footpath west of the road from Aylesford to Lower Kit's Coty (TQ 739605). The spring feeds a pool in a wood, followed by a brick-lined pond which empties into a stream. This area was once called the Halygarden; the spring, piped to supply Aylesford Priory in 1394/5, was 'highly revered by the common people for the virtue and sanctity which they attributed to it, to which they made pilgrimages from all the neighbouring parts'. The well is not famous, but is interesting because of the context of sites around it. The Pilgrim's Way is about ¼ of a mile to the north; and Kent's chief megalithic monuments are closer at hand, while sarsen stones with hollows at the well itself may have formed another megalithic structure. It is likely that there was a Romano-British church at Eccles to the west, and the friars of Aylesford built a chapel dedicated to St Stephen just above the spring. This multi-layering of historical sites suggests a holy well of great age and pre-Christian significance.

A spring, which was cold in summer and warm in winter (and in 1788 was cold enough to kill ducks), was said to stain stones red, and was surrounded by stones, identified by Dunkin as a 'Druidical temple'. It isn't clear whether this site was Pilgrim's Spring or not.

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iv 409; CJ Wright, *A Guide to the Pilgrim's Way* (1971), 196; Dunkin, *Hist. Kent*.

CANTERBURY

In cathedrals in old Roman cities in continental Europe, it is common to find wells either taken over from former pagan temples or deliberately sunk by Christians, and it may be that Canterbury followed the same pattern. In which case, **St Thomas Becket's Well** in the Cathedral (TR 151579) may be old indeed, though it enters the records only in the

1300s. Becket was said to have drunk from this well, on the north side of the choir, and it was supposed to be where the dust and debris from the saint's martyrdom were washed away. As a result, its flow was increased, its water changed four times to blood and once to milk, and these miraculous transformations happened several times afterwards. The water was drunk by pilgrims to Becket's shrine and was taken away in lead bottles or *ampullae* to be used for cures: many miracles were recorded. The well has now been covered over.

St Martin's Church is the oldest in Canterbury apart from the cathedral; it contains Roman bricks and may have been used by Christians in the royal court of Kent even before the arrival of St Augustine's mission in 597. Just to the east was **St Martin's Well** (TR 160576), which was used in the middle ages for a conduit to the cathedral. There was also a lost spring at St Augustine's Abbey (TR 154577), mentioned about 500 years ago, and possibly a '**St Augustine's Well**'.

A grant of land by Bishop Aethelhard to St Augustine's, around the year 800, mentions **Eadburgewelle**, probably named after St Edburga of Lyminge; we never hear of it again. **St Peter's Well** was close to a chapel of that saint (TR 147581); it appeared in about 1500. Finally, there was **St Radegund's Bath** (TR 150583). The cult of St Radegund, queen and abbess of Poitiers, came to England with the Normans, and so this well is not one of Canterbury's oldest. In 1777 it was 'a fine spring built over and fitted for cold bathing', but it was filled in to build a car park in the 1930s.

There were also some secular named wells in the city. **Quenlingate Well** was in Broad Street, and **Sunwin's Well**, named from Sunwin the Smith, was in an alley off Buttermarket; both are recorded in the 1160s. In about 1200, Gilbert the Priest lived close to the **Hottewelle** in Stour Street (TR 147577), and **Red Pump** had appeared by about 1500.

AP Stanley, *History & Memorials of Canterbury* (1857), 219-20; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* x 107, xii 222; M Sparks, *The Parish of St Martin & St Paul* (1980), 22-3; Martin, 'Holy Wells', 27; W. Urry, *Canterbury Under the Angevin Kings* (1967), 197, 231, 232, 290; Canterbury Archaeological Trust, *Topographical Maps of Canterbury* (1982); B Gardiner, 'Notes on an ancient house ...', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 20 (1940), 112

CHALK

King's Well Mead was beside the Thames & Medway Canal in 1842, but has been filled in (TQ 706738).

RUMSC P77/27/1,2

CHARING

Two placenames here suggest springs, and their topography confirms it. **Drywell** is at TQ 956499; **Hope Well** is a house in a gully in Chapel Wood at TQ 971509.

CHARTHAM

Tom Wells (TR 079577) appear on the 1842 Tithe Map. The springs lie on a footpath from Watling Street and so could easily have been 'St Thomas Becket's Wells' originally. KSC IR29/17:75

CHATHAM

An 18th-century house in the Luton area of the town is called **Hopewell** (TQ 772658). The topography is right for a spring, though nothing is visible today.

CHERITON

The 14th-century collection of saints' stories, *Nova Legendae Angliae*, mentions **St Eanswith's Water** which the Anglo-Saxon Abbess of Folkestone, Eanswith, diverted to the town: in the words of the 16th-century Puritan William Lambarde 'she haled and drew water over the hills and rocks against nature from Swecton, a mile off, to her Oratorie at the sea side'. In the Manor court rolls, St Enswith's Well, Chapple Meadow and St Ensen's Chapel are all mentioned, and it was probably this chapel which was pulled down by workmen sent from Folkestone in 1546. The site of the well is uncertain. Hasted described it lying 'half a mile west of Castle Hill', which could mean the spring at TR 205375.

C Horstmann, *Nova Legendae Angliae* (1901), i 298; W Lambarde, *Perambulation of Kent* (1826), 152; WL Button, 'Sandgate Castle', *Arch. Cant.* 21 (1895), 259; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* viii 174.

CHIDDINGSTONE

Rvewell Pit is a waterfilled pit shown on the OS map (TQ 498433). It could be a misprint - otherwise the pronunciation of its name is doubtful!

CHILHAM

Gore Well appears on the 1840 Tithe Map (TR 061554).

KSC IR29/17:85

CHILLENDEN

A **pond** in this village was the scene of an extraordinary piece of water folklore. The Devil stole the clapper of the church bell, burned his mouth trying to eat it, and threw it into the pond. An elm tree sprang up on an island in the middle. If a person who, within the previous three days, had been within three English cloth yards of a church bell went to Chillenden and stood beside the tree, they would have good luck for a year. A rhyme about the story was said to be entirely forgotten by the 1890s, although it has a slightly fake ring about it – and why 'curses sad' in the final line?

The clapper did the Devil steale/ Red hot did make it for hys meale

But when to eat it he did trie/ It burnt hys lips amazinglie

So in his rage he did it fling/ Into the sole where it did bring

An ellem tree straight up to spring/ And curses sad on Chillenden.

A Moore, 'Kentish Odds and Ends', *Kentish Express & Ashford News* (1894-8) [volume bound in KSC], i 91 (1.5.1891)

CHISLEHURST

Swellinde Pette appears in 862 and refers to a *swelgende*, or whirlpool (TQ 452695).

JK Wallenberg, *Kentish Place Names* (1931), 211

COBHAM

On the northwest parish boundary, right beside the main road, was **St Thomas Becket's Well** (TQ 674697), so called 'probably from the use made of it by St Thomas Becket in his journeyings through these parts'. It is now lost.

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iii 405

COLDRED

The Tithe Map of 1843 shows **Webbs Well** (TR 284461).

COOLING

Ducken Wells appear in 1841 (TQ 758763).

KSC IR29/17:95

COWDEN

Ludwells Farm appears in 1843 (about TQ 455416). The name could refer to an owner of the farm, but the topography suggests a spring.

KSC IR29/17:94

CRANBROOK

This small Wealden town has a number of notable wells. In the early 1900s there was a **chalybeate spring** in an avenue in the garden of Glassenbury House, covered by the old font from the house's chapel. The avenue was haunted by the ghost of a girl whose husband was killed in a fall from his horse as they left for their honeymoon. At that time half the town was supplied with water from **King's Head Well** in Tanyard Lane; whoever drank from it, it was said, would return to Cranbrook. **Orchard Well** existed in 1839 (TQ 789379), as did **Whitewell** House (TQ 775377). The hamlet of Whitewell was haunted by a local witch called Jennings who had been burned, though the hamlet may have been named after the stream rather than a spring.

Pin Pond is the most interesting site. Again first shown on the 1839 Tithe Map, it was at Pin Pond Bay, 'a depression where four paths meet' in Anglely Wood (TQ 764361). Two smugglers were buried here, and 'May Dances' were held at the pond 'within the memory of present inhabitants' in the 1920s. This combination of folklore, including a crossroads and the possibility of pins being used as offerings, suggests a significant ritual site; and the proximity of a tree called 'Lady Oak' hints at a former dedication to the Virgin Mary.

Igglesden, *Saunters* vii 45, 35; KSC IR29/17:96; WS Martin, *A Glimpse of Cranbrook* (3rd ed., c.1925), 58-9

CRUNDALE

Well Farm at Sole Street, first recorded in 1739, used to be called **Simonwell** - possibly, though doubtfully, dedicated to St Simon. This site was occupied from the 1420s and the well there is 83 feet deep.

R Lancefield, *A Home in the Northeast Downs* (1987), 26-7

DEAL

Because it was not brackish, **Bear's Well** was 'the most popular, and certainly the best known' of Deal's public wells.

I. Green, *The Book of Deal & Walmer* (1983), 58

DEPTFORD

Cold Bath Well, recorded in 1874, sounds like a spa well.

J.G. Smith, *History of Charlton* (1874), iii 133

DOWNE

A place called **Herwells** appears on the 1841 Tithe Map at TQ 439622, where the

topography suggests there was a spring.
KSC IR29/17:115

DOVER

There are two named wells in Dover Castle, in addition to the very nice old well beside St Mary's Church next to the Pharos (pictured right).

Harold's Well, in the Keep (TR 325419), is supposedly the one which King Harold swore to give up to William of Normandy, thus giving the Norman his reason to invade England. There are traditions of underground passages leading from it, and an extensive system of pipes was indeed discovered during excavations in 1930 and 1931. Andrews's *Topographical Map of Kent* of 1769 shows another well in the lower bailey (TR 326419) labelled **Hicaesanwell**. If this is a mistake for 'hic Caesar well' - here is Caesar's well - it could be the one said to have been sunk by Julius Caesar, 60 fathoms deep and lined to the



Well next to St Mary in Castro

bottom with stone. In the town itself was the **Ladywell** (TR 316417), which was associated with the Hospital of St Mary, the Maison Dieu, founded about 1217, and first appears on a map of 1737. The well marked the boundary of the town and was in an alcove of the Maison Dieu's chapel, with steps leading down to it from the street. The water was sold by hawkers like 'Tea-Kettle Tom' until, in 1866, it was closed due to contamination.

ER Macpherson, 'the Norman waterworks in the Keep of Dover Castle', *Arch. Cant.* 43 (1931), 167-72; Seymour, *Topog. Surv.*, 329; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* ix 535; P Kennedy, *Walk Around Dover* (1988), 3

EASTCHURCH

Old House Pond was haunted by the ghost of Grace Davis, who was either drowned in it by her husband, or drowned herself, in October 1769. The story was still current in 1934. At about TQ 973718 was **Choles Spring**, recorded in 1842.

Igglesden, *Saunters* xxviii 71; KSC IR29/17:118

EAST PECKHAM

In 1841 this parish had a **Hobs Pool** (TQ 678494) - a name which apparently refers to goblins or similar supernatural creatures. It has disappeared today.

KSC IR29/17:127

EASTRY

'Whether the inhabitants ... were attracted hither by the medicinal properties and healing virtues of that mineral spring, in after days dedicated to St Ivo, which cannot now be traced, and of which the tradition has alone come down to us in books, it is impossible to say'. The church is dedicated to St Mary, and so the name of **St Ivo's Well** is unexplained.

WF Shaw, *Liber Estriae* (1870), 2

EASTWELL

In 1720 Lord Winchelsea told Thomas Brett a peculiar story. There had been, he said, a bricklayer on the estate of Sir Thomas Moyle at Eastwell who, in the mid-1500s, had claimed to be 'Richard Plantagenet', an illegitimate son of Richard III. His claim to the Duchy of York was not recognised, though local people believed it enough for his name to go into the parish register as Plantagenet; and near Plantagenet's Cottage on the Boughton road is **Plantagenet's Well** (TR 020473). It is 20 or 30 feet deep, but about 1895 was filled with building rubbish and sealed up. The site was railed off and marked by two 'fine trees'. In 1981 the well was a round red-brick structure about three feet high. The estate also contained **Duke's Spring** (TR 015465) and **Countess's Spring** (about TR 010473), 'supposed to be very ancient'. A last tradition related how a 'headless horseman' rode from the Pilgrim's Way through Eastwell House and into the lake every Midsummer Eve.

In the woods west of St Mary's Church is **St Mary's Spring** or Lady Well (TR 006474). It was used to supply the house, and was dammed in the 1840s for the lake. Seymour, *Topog. Surv.* 343; Igglesden, *Saunters* iii 10; P.G. Dormer, *Eastwell, the Royal Village* (1986), 19; Underwood, *Ghosts*, 41; PG Dormer, *Eastwell's White Lady* (1987)

EBONY

To the south-west of the (now lost) church in 1710 were the **Crock Wells**, and there were two legacies left in the 1500s to the **Hogwell** Light in the church. The name could derive from Old English *haelige* (holy) or *hoch* (high or deep), and the well probably stood on land whose rents were used to pay for the Light. There are many springs locally and neither site can be identified.

J Winniffrith, 'The Medieval church of Ebony', *Arch Cant* 100 (1984), 160, 162-3

EGERTON

Stilton Well was a petrifying spring in a wood between Greenhill House and Britcher Farm in 1919 (TQ 910467), while **Bedewell** is a house with a pond opposite it, on the modern OS map (TQ 898475).

Iglesden, *Saunters* xiii 84

ELMSTEAD

Garretts Well appears on the 1841 Tithe Map.

KSC IR29/17:127

ELTHAM

Two wells in this parish are both named on the 1844 Tithe Map, **Calves Spring** (TQ 445750) and **Lemon Well** (TQ 442745).

KSC IR29/17:129

ERITH

The first mention of a named well in this parish is Robert Henthorne's will of 1493, in which 3s 4d were left 'to the mendyng of a well callyd **Beton Well**', though as there was a Bedyn Strete in 1473 it was probably older than that. In 1843 it was called Beeting Well (TQ 491782).

Duncan & Hussey, *Test. Cant.* i 24; Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 30; KSC IR29/17:130

EYNSFORD

The Lullingstone Roman villa was the site of an artificial **water shrine** (TQ 530651). At the end of the 2nd century a 'cult room' was built at the north end of the villa, surrounded by an ambulatory. In the cellar was a niche decorated with paintings of three water nymphs and a tank in the floor for water. In the 4th century a Christian chapel was built over it, and the cellar used for busts of the owners' ancestors.

The village also has an odd water-folklore story. In the 1300s, John de Boudon, lord of the Manor, was on his way to Mass when his path was crossed by a black dog which vanished into a **pond** that never held water again. To avert ill luck he gave an ebony model of the dog, with a gold collar, to the church, where it stood by the altar.

P Newman, *Buildings of England: West Kent* (1969), 373-4; Moore, 'Odds and Ends' i 16 (28.4.1894)

FAVERSHAM

In 1933 there was a pump in the yard of the Swan Inn called **Crosse Well** (TR 016613). This was supposed to be the residence of the Roman martyrs Crispin and Crispinian, a story which dated back to the Middle Ages although why these two saints should have come to Faversham has never been satisfactorily explained! In 1986 Crosse Well was said still to exist, under the name of 'St Crispin's Well'.

Ewell, east of the town, is derived from *aiwel*, 'great spring'. It was first mentioned in 1769 but must be much older.

Igglesden, *Saunters* xxvii 14-15; A Percival in *Bygone Kent* 7 (1986); Andrews's *Topog. Map of Kent*

FOLKESTONE

There is a **Holy Well** under the downs on a footpath at the head of a small wood, or at least there was before the Channel Tunnel terminal was built (TR 223382), which may be the St Thomas's Well mentioned by some writers as a 'pilgrim's well' in these parts. In the town is **Bowles Well** Gardens (TR 237372); and, at 'a place called Foard' there was, in the 1770s, 'a fine salubrious spring of water, which has all the virtue and efficiency of the chalybeate .. proved with success by Dr Gill ... of infinite service in cold chronical distempers, weaknesses, and bad distempers'.

F Watts, *Canterbury Pilgrims and their Ways* (1917), 235; SJ Mackie, *Folkestone & Its Neighbourhood* (1856), 94-5; Seymour, *Topog. Surv.* 390

FORDWICH

Tradition states that Thews Lane ('thew' means a ducking-stool) was the site of the **Thief's Well** mentioned in the town's 13th-century *Custumal*. The public ownership of this well was guaranteed by by-laws. All those condemned to death in the Abbot of Fordwich's court, the *Custumal* stated, were to be bound and thrown in it to drown. By 1900 it was already 'long ago filled up', leaving only 'some stones in the wall of a cottage garden between the church and the infant's school'. **Wynelyng Well**, mentioned in the perambulation of the town boundaries of 1270-1300, could be at TR 184587, at the end of Well Lane. The **Nichor Well** of 1729 is completely lost - a *nycere* is a water-sprite in some parts of the country - and so is **Our Lady's Well**. This was opposite Homely Hall in a meadow, from where a culvert led off to a dipping-place down a lane opposite the Firs. At some later date it became known as the 'town's well' and lost its saint's dedication, probably as a result of the Reformation.

CE Woodruff, 'Fordwich Municipal Records', *Arch.Cant.* 18 (1889), 83; Igglesden, *Saunters* i 77; CE Woodruff, *History of the Town & Port of Fordwich* (1895), 102, 112, 116

FRINDSBURY

St Thomas's Watering-Place was a pond on the parish boundary in the 1790s (TQ 740697).

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iii 526

GOUDHURST

In the village is **Trowswell**, first recorded as Crower's Well on Andrews's map of 1769, which is now a series of dry pipes and tanks over the roadside fence in a gully (TQ 727382); while the lost **Taywell**, on the road to the east, appeared in 1489 and means 'well in an enclosure' (TQ 731380). **Lidswell** House is also above a spring (TQ 723386). But the most interesting wells are at the far southern end of the parish. Both are private. Combwell Priory was founded in Henry II's time: the meaning of its name is unknown. In 1226-7 the Priory was granted a fair on St Mary Magdalene's Day, and, although **St Mary Magdalene's Well** first appears only in 1621, it is reasonable to guess that visitors to the fair also went to the well. The spring is now covered by a large brick pumping-house, in the woods behind the farm. There is a statue in the garden which is called 'The Combwell'; it seems to show a man in late Tudor costume holding unidentifiable implements, and the head has been replaced at some time. It is supposed to represent a cook who saved the Royalist household from Parliamentary troops in the Civil War, dressed as a woman. Any relationship with the well is unclear.

Lady's Well is a very grand Classical structure to the rear of Bedgebury Park School, a private girls' school off the B2079. The water is chalybeate, and the structure could be of any date between the early 1620s and the 1930s. Locally, it is supposed to be named after the early 19th-century Lady Beresford, or Miss Bickersteth, headmistress from 1932 to 1964, in whose memory a plaque was placed on the well-house. Structurally this is perhaps the most impressive well in the county.

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 312; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* vii 79; KSC U814 P1

GRAVESEND

In 1872 another of **St Thomas's Waterings** was located in this town (TQ 648742).

RH Goodsall, *A Kentish Patchwork II* (1968), 126

GREAT CHART

Bridewell (TQ 982407) appears in 1624, but **Goldwell** (TQ 969425) dates at least to 1313. This house was named after a spring in its cellar, which was once thought to be curative.

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 410; Igglesden, *Saunters* ii 50

GREAT MONGEHAM

There seem to have been two wells here. **Barnswell** appears on the 1839 Tithe Map (TR 350522). There is also **Pixwell** Lane, which runs towards a spring site, now dry (TQ 345510).

KSC IR29/17: 256

GREENWICH

The town well was in **Stockwell** street (TQ 384775) and Roman wells have been found

in the vicinity.

B Platts, *A History of Greenwich* (1973), 210

HARBLEDOWN



The **Black Prince's Well** here is attractive and easy to get to, and so has become one of the better-known wells in the county. Its water was supposedly healing, especially for sore eyes, and legend says the Black Prince asked for it on his deathbed. Hasted, though, maintains 'how it gained that name is not known'. The leper hospital of St Nicholas, only yards away from the well, was a pilgrim destination because it owned one of Thomas Becket's shoes. The well (TR 129582) has a stone arch topped with the three-feather emblem of the Prince of Wales, and steps leading down to the water.

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* ix 15; RC Hope, *The Legendary Lore of the Holy Wells of England* (1893), 80

HARRIETSHAM

Finch describes the **Pilgrim's Lakes** here (TQ 837552), and a cottage which supplied the needs of 'pilgrims visiting the pool', but with no further details.

Finch, *Kentish Pilgrim Land* f.p.90

HARTLEY

A legend about a **well** at Fairby was recorded in 1927. 'About 200 years ago' a gang of fleeing thieves threw their loot in the 300-foot-deep well under the kitchen floor, where it remains. The owner of Fairby at that time, Richard Treadwell, is said to ride round the house at midnight, without a head.

GW Bancks, *Hartley Through the Ages* (1927), 161

HARTLIP

Digswell Lane, on the modern O.S., is at a site which suggests a spring (TQ 846647).

HASTINGLEIGH

A witch was ducked in the **pond** in the village centre (about TR 097449), but rescued by the priest who took her to make her confession. Hastingleigh seems to be the proper location of this legend, though Igglesden places it at Ivychurch.

A Marsh, *A Time to Remember* (1985), 8

HAWKHURST

Landwell Brook appears in 1840; the spring was at about TQ 763287.

KSC IR29/17:173

HAYES

The history of **Dr Hussey's Well** here has become garbled. According to FS Gammon it



was erected as a public drinking-fountain by the Archdeacon of Norwich and Rector of Keston, Dr Clarke, in 1736, hence its occasional name of Archdeacon's Well. That, however, does not explain the name of Husseyswell Crescent which commemorates Dr Thomas Hussey, the Rector from 1831 to 1854. Additionally, the well was also called Jacob's Well after Jacob Angus who repaired it later. And when we actually find the well (TQ 403663), which is a low stone structure set into a wall on the Crescent, it seems older than any of these gentlemen! It was rich in sulphates and calcium, and 'in former days much used' for its medicinal properties.

FS Gammon, *The Story of Keston in Kent* (1934); Thompson, *A History of Hayes* (1935)

HEADCORN

Nunnery Pond here (TQ 818464) appears on the 1841 Tithe Map and now forms a moat around a farmstead. From the same source comes **Puggie Pit** (TQ 818446), a pond whose name possibly derives from *pwca*, 'goblin'.

KSC IR29/17:162

HERNE

The local Kentish saint commemorated here is probably St Edburga of Minster, the abbess of that monastery who died in 751 and appears in 1888 as the patron of **St Ethelburga's Well** at Ford Manor in this parish (TR 203657). 'Legends and stories about the springs (one in the old palace grounds and another, "St Ethelburga's", in a meadow behind the house opposite) the vineyard, and the fishpond, still linger in the neighbourhood'.

JR Buchanan, *Memorials of Herne* (1888), 13-14

HIGH HALSTOW

1841's **Lipwell** (TQ 769757) is lost, but the spring that gave rise to the placename **Sharnal** - which is recorded as *Ssarnwelle*, the 'filthy spring', in 1327 - survives as an overgrown, reedy pit just off the main road opposite the houses of Sharnal Street (TQ 792745).

KSC IR29/17: 162; R McDougall, *The Story of the Hoo Peninsula* (1980), 19-20; Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 120

HOATH

The 1839 Tithe Map shows **Harts Well** (TR 206649), but the **Hatch Spring** is entirely lost. The name, recorded as merely 'Hatch' in 1690, could refer to a spring-wood rather than a water feature.

KSC IR29/17:183; Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 512

HOLLINGBOURNE

All Saints Church here lies at a springhead - the wells can still be located in the field outside the churchyard (TQ 843552). The dedication was originally to St Anne, and the fact that a fair was once held in the field containing the springs on the saint's feast day of 25th July increases the likelihood that these were originally **St Anne's Wells**; as the

village is clearly named after the springs, there is a strong possibility that there was some pagan significance to the site.

Elsewhere in the parish were **Egg Well**, a pond where paths cross recorded in 1840 (TQ 826564), and **Frogshole**, now a house with a well and pond, shown on the modern OS map (TQ 852554).

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* v 463; Everitt, *Continuity* 297; KSC IR29/17:183

HORSMONDEN

Both this parish's wells appear on the 1842 Tithe Map. **Cold Well** was at TQ 710397. Had there been a 'Great Well Field' we would suspect that '**Little Well** Field' did not contain a well-name at all, but, as there isn't, perhaps it does (TW 705392).

KSC IR29/17:185

HOUGHAM

St Radigund's abbey was founded about the year 1191, and in the yard of the farm which now occupies its site is 'a large broad pond, of distinguished use in such a locality, whence probably the manor took its name of **Bradsole**' (TR 275419) - a 'St Radigund's Well', perhaps. At TR 281388 we find **Lydden Spout**, named in 1843.

E Knocker, *On the Antiquities of Dover* (1857), 39; KSC IR29/17:188

HYTHE

The wells of Hythe are all named in the medieval records of the town, according to Mr Dale. Dental Street derives its name from the **Denthalle Water** spring, though where that name came from is unclear. **Jowet Pette** was clearly of some importance, for people were fined for spoiling its water. Fines were also levied for residents caught throwing dung on the **Holy Well** which adjoined St Leonard's Chapel, 'a large open well of water' partway up Church Hill (TR 161349). This well came to the attention of John Leland, who noticed 'in the top of the chirche yard ... a fayr spring' during his 16th-century travels.

HD Dale, *The Church of St Leonard at Hythe in Olden Days* (1931), 88-89; J Leland, *Itinerary* (1869) iv 65; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* viii 249.

ICKHAM & WELL

The hamlet of **Well** was *Welles* in 1240, and the springs which gave it its name clearly had some sacred significance, rising directly beneath the medieval chapel whose ruins stand beside the Nail Bourne. They now sit in marshy ground and are not easy to reach (TR 200565)

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 523

IFIELD

At TR 662708 was the Chinglede Welle of 1240 which gave its name to the hamlet of Singlewell, the 'pebbly spring'. At some point during the 13th century a story arose of a serving girl called Salerna who, having fallen down the well, called upon St Thomas Becket to save her and, safely reaching the bottom, was then rescued, whereafter it became **St Thomas's Well**. It was capped about 1916, when it was found to be 140 feet deep. Another disused well a mile to the west was also referred to as a **St Thomas's Well**.

Wallenberg, *Place Names* 100-101; S Harker, *The Book of Gravesham* (1979), 42-3, 46.

IGHTHAM

This parish is surprisingly well-provided with water sites, some of which seem to be of considerable antiquity. **Redwell** (TQ 591558), first recorded in 1839, sits at the base of a Bronze Age round barrow, with two swallowholes nearby. Daphne Raisen recalled a '**Roman Well**': 'as a child ... I visited a pond on Styants Farm locally reputed to have been a Roman bath, with steps leading down to it where Roman remains had been found' (TQ 577565). The **Waterflash** in Oldbury Hillfort (TQ 581558) fed the Waterflash Stream and Pond in 1907. The ancient meeting-place of Ightham Mote has a spring-fed **moat** said to be haunted by 'an unnatural presence'.

Shadwell, named after the Shode River, and **Trice Well** (TQ 598567) both appear on the Tithe Map of 1839, while Mr Bennett records a number of other wells: **Bates Well**, 'named after an old inhabitant'; **Bennett's Old Well**; **Buckwell**, possibly at TQ 587578; and **Moor Well**.

KSC IR29/17:196; W Whitaker, *Wells & Springs of Kent* (1908), 45; D Raisen, *Oldbury Hill* (1986), 1, 20; FJ Bennett, *Ightham - the Story of a Kentish Village* (1907), 49, 55, 57, 139-44

KEMSING

St Edith's Well is one of the county's best, a keyhole-shaped well with steps leading down to the water, set in its own small 'Well Garden' in the centre of the village (TQ 555587); the War Memorial is at the other end. Lambarde claims that 'in the late time of the Popish *polytheia*, the Image of Edith ... was religiously frequented in the Church-yarde at Kemsing, for the preservation of Corne and Graine, from Blasting, Myldew, Brandeare, and other such harmes as commonly do annoy it'. People brought corn to be blessed, the priest took a portion, and aspersed the rest with holy water which was then mingled with the main stores of corn. The well is not mentioned as playing any role in this ceremony, though it must surely have been visited at the same time. Instead it has to wait for Hasted to mention that its water was 'said to have wrought many miracles to such as applied to [St Edith] for relief'. The Well Garden was a 'waste' plot given to the



village by Lord Sackville, and passed to the Parish Council in 1895. The well was fenced in after George Dawes, a villager, fell in it and drowned while drawing water, although there was a legal disagreement over the measure. At the start of the last century it was still believed to help sore eyes. The well dried up in 1898 and for a full four years from 1988 to 1992.

Lambarde, *Perambulation*, 457; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iii 32; VE Bowden, *The Story of Kemsing in Kent* (1994), 125-6; W Jerrold, *Highways & Byways of Kent* (1907), 358

KENNINGTON

Chalk Well appears on the 1840 Tithe Map (TR 027442).

KSC IR29/17:203

LAMBERHURST

If you follow the footpath south from the church and across the golf course, in a hedge adjoining the field and set into a bank you will find **Lady Well** at the foot of a flight of steps (TQ 682365). It is a square building of brick and stone covering a round stone tank about 18 inches across. The sole record of the well is on the 1841 Tithe Map, but the earliest of the many graffiti dates etched into its walls is 1831. The church is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and there were parish fairs on March 21st and the old Lady Day.



The other well in this parish also appears in 1841: **Camberwell** Field was next to Well Meadow (TQ 660387).

KSC IR29/17:212; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* v 297

LANGLEY

Supposedly no less a source than Warksworth's *Chronicle of England*, written in 1592, mentions the prophetic **spring** here, which ran dry before battles and rises in the price of corn. However, this is also said of the well at Lewisham, with which this site, if it has any separate existence, has obviously been confused.

RC Hope, *Legendary Lore of the Holy Wells of England* (1893), 81; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* v 346

LENHAM

Famously, the two rivers Medway and Stour both rise in this parish and flow in opposite directions. The source of the former is **Ewell**, a name deriving from the Anglo-Saxon *aiwelme* or 'great spring', at TQ 878508 and mentioned by Hasted. The Stour's origin is the **Streetwell**, which appears in 1776 (TQ 901521). There is also the **North Well** of 1839 (TQ 908522).

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* v 417; Seymour, *Topog. Surv.*, 757; KSC IR29/17:220

LEWISHAM

There is much confusing and contradictory information about the famous **Lady Well** of Lewisham (TQ 375749). Like the well at Langley, this is supposed to be the 'Womere water' mentioned in Warksworth's *Chronicle* as having 'run hugely' in 1472, and which rises to predict dearth, disease or battle. Some sources further state that John Leland recorded it in his *Collectanea*, but if so I have never found the reference. Joseph Childrey mentions a 'Bourn near Croydon' which rises to predict dearth or plague, but he also identifies Warksworth's 'Womere' with a spring near St Albans in Hertfordshire, so the truth is difficult to uncover.

The name 'Ladywell' first appears in the parish register in 1793, and is not shown on local maps of 1745 or 1769, which distinguish only a single house here. A sketch of 1820 shows a romanticised little round dip-well by the roadside with a stone kerb, but by 1910 it had been demolished and was represented by a fountain at the Ladywell Baths which re-used some of the original stonework.

The most modern account adds to the layers of folklore, referring to it as a 'pilgrim's well'; a local pub sign at the time depicted a nun supposedly murdered at the well, but it was only 15 years old in 1986 and there was no earlier record of that story.

The parish also contains three modern street-names which could record wells, **Cordwell** (TQ 391748), **Foxwell** (TQ 363758), and **Abbot's Well** (TQ 368747).

R Smith, *The Well of Our Lady* (1986); J Childrey, *Britannia Baconica* (1661), 54-5, 87; Hope, *Legendary Lore*, 80, from *The Antiquary* XII pp.56-8; LL Duncan, *History of the Borough of Lewisham* (1908), 110; AS Foord, *Springs, Streams & Spas of London* (1910), 199-203

LEYBOURNE

Pilgrim's Pump was the name very tendentiously given by WC Finch to a pump on the site of the well at Grange Hospital (TQ 687584), built in 1859. It seems to have been another of his romantic coinings.

Finch, *Kentish Pilgrim Land*, f.p.153

LINTON

A footpath called **Goosewell** Lane led next to the Tudor Old Vicarage (TQ 753500); the name has been dubiously attributed to a 'Holy Ghost Well' which had healing properties, and which was closed by Lord Cornwallis and sold to the Mid-Kent Water Company about 1920. There was also a **Ewe Well** here in 1842 (TQ 739486).

Igglesden, *Saunters* xxvi 27; KSC IR29/17:226

LITTLEBOURNE

Arrianes Well was in a wood at the bottom of Fishpool Hill, and supplied the fishponds of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury. It is supposed to be named after Adrian, abbot of St Augustine's when it acquired the estate in 690.

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* ix 148; Igglesden, *Saunters* ii 57-8; E Jeffries, *Early Littlebourne* (1983), 9

LOOSE

This low-lying and regularly flooded village is full of springs. One, possibly a **holy well**, is situated right next to the gate of All Saints Church, and flows facing east (TQ 757521); another spring rises in the garden to the north. Well Street contains a number of powerful **healing springs** (photo to right), one at the road junction, and one further up. Their reputation was entirely lost in 1995 (TQ 755521). The Tithe Map of 1840, additionally, shows **Five Well Meadow** (TQ 767519).

Igglesden, *Saunters* ix 41; KSC IR29/17:229



LUDDESDOWN

Beside the ancient chapel of Dode, ruinous for many years but now restored by its owners and occasionally used for services as a memorial to the community which once lived around it, is a **Holy Well** in the form of a round brick structure, now itself restored (TQ 668637).

VE Vigar, 'Some Holy Wells in Kent', *Bygone Kent* 4 (1983), 710

LYDD

First recorded in 1433, and in the form of 'a certain wall called Pigwell Wall', **Pig Well** is shown on Andrews's 1769 map of Kent (TR 032203).

Wallenberg, *Place Names* 484; Andrews, *Topog Map of Kent*; A Hussey & MM Hardy, *Records of Lydd* (1911), 231

LYMINGE

St Edburga or Ethelburga was the daughter of the first Christian king of Kent, St Ethelbert, and widow of St Edwin, King of Northumbria; she founded the abbey of Lyminge after her husband's death and ruled it until her own in 647. **St Ethelburga's Well**, source of the local Nail Bourne, was the village's water supply for centuries, and legacies were left to repair it in 1484 and 1490 - on the latter occasion Henry Rand bequeathed 4d for the repair of 'the well of St Edburge the Virgin'. Camden mentioned it; according to Hasted it 'never fails'. In 1878 two plots of land and the interest on the invested funds used to build the present well-house. However the current structure was built in 1898 by Colonel Heywood while serving as MP for the area. Today it sits below the level of the road, a brick well-house covering the spring and surmounted by a wooden shelter for the pump at road level (TR 162409).

There is a second spring, **Lint Well**, south of Etching Street (TR 174395).

Duncan & Hussey, *Test. Cant.*, ii 204; Igglesden, *Saunters* iii 56-7; W Camden, *Britannia* (1695), 199n; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* viii 80

LYMPNE

A dubious spring here could have been a '**St Mary's Well**'. The ruins of a chapel at Court-at-Street dedicated to Our Lady stood near a pond supposedly 'used by the pilgrims' (TR 089382), as Igglesden recorded in 1909. The chapel was in fact a hermitage - one Sir William was the hermit in 1525, for instance - and in the 18th century the cross-slabs in the churchyard at Lympe were believed to mark the graves of the hermits of Court-at-Street.

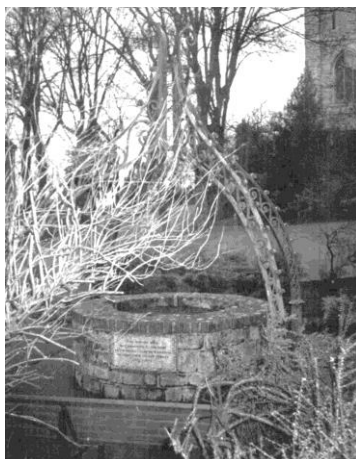
Igglesden, *Saunters* vi 75; Seymour, *Topog. Surv.*, 534-5

MAIDSTONE

St Anne's Well was close to St Anne's chapel at Springfield (TQ 755570), although the only source of information is Alan Everitt's book. A spring formerly existed at St John's Chapel at Wren's Cross at the end of Mote Road (TQ 763554), and it seems very likely that this was a '**St John's Well**'. More recently, in 1977, an old well near St Faith's church was restored and converted into a **Wishing Well** by the local Rotary Club (TR 759560).

Everitt, *Continuity* 296; *Arch Cant* i (1858), 169

Wishing Well, Maidstone



MARDEN

Tywell (TQ 760456) and a **Bottomless Pond** (TQ 723442) both appeared on the 1841 Tithe Map; while **Cornwells**, on the modern Ordnance Survey, is a farm with a pond (TQ 736428).

KSC IR29/17:240

MARGATE

Seymour wrote that 'the **Salt-Water Bath** here has performed great cures in nervous and paralytic cases, and numbness of the limbs' - but this lost therapeutic site may have been nothing more than a receptacle for sea water, and not a 'well' of any independent sort. At **ROCHESTER**, too, 'not far from the victualling-house', was 'a commodious **salt-water bath**, which receives the water every tide' - this seems to have been a similar sort of arrangement.

Seymour, *Topog. Surv.* 557, 678

MEOPHAM

Quince Well existed in 1840, but is now lost.

J Carley, *Field Names of Meopham & Nurstead* (1981)

MEREWORTH

Smarts Well (TQ 656541) appears on the 1840 Tithe Map, but as there was a family called Smart living in the village in the 1270s, it was probably much older.

KSC IR29/17:245; Wallenberg, *Place Names* 159

MILTON

This minster town is based around an important spring which was first mentioned in about 1232 as Chealewelle; by Hasted's time it was called **Chilkwel**, and Chalkwell in 1839 (TQ 893643).

Hasted, *Hist.* vi 164; KSC IR29/17:252; WO Hassall, *Cartulary of St Mary, Clerkenwell* (1949), 133

MINSTER IN SHEPPEY

Tadwell was first recorded in 1841 and, about the turn of the last century, was tapped for the public water supply (TQ 966724). More exotically, **Santa Maria Well** (TQ 955719) is at the site of a former Roman Catholic school.

But more interesting by far are Minster's other wells, a modern hydrolatric phenomenon. In 1987 Brian Slade, President of the Sheppey Archaeological Society, wrote in one of a series of local history pamphlets, *The Minster Mysteries*, that restoring the old well beside the Abbey gatehouse would be a 'novelty' that would attract many tourists. Over 1990 and 1991, both this and another well in a private garden some yards away were excavated. In the second, which became known as the **Abbess's Well**, Roman coins and other debris were discovered; the fabric was identified as 12th century. In the larger well at the Abbey gate, a small object was found which gave the story a new impetus. This bronze plate, together with wax fragments apparently in the same shape, was identified as a three-headed pregnant woman. When asked her opinion, prehistorian Professor Mircea Eliade stated that a cross on the back was 'obviously pre-Christian' and the site was quickly dubbed '**The Well of the Triple Goddess**'.

Soon afterwards, the cures began. Nine months after one of the excavators touched the 'image', his wife successfully gave birth to a daughter after four miscarriages previously. Other couples similarly benefited, and the water of the Abbess's Well, too, was quickly curing ailments among the villagers. A successful media campaign to raise money for the larger well's restoration resulted in attention from newspapers, TV, the *Fortean Times*, and a growing stream of international visitors. The Well of the Triple Goddess was still sealed over in 1996, but the Abbess's Well is fairly accessible.

There is no independent evidence that there ever was a holy well of any sort at Minster, nor that St Sexburga, the Abbey's 7th-century founder, had the 'vast knowledge of healing waters, herbs and medicine' claimed for her. Despite statements that 'images like [the Triple Goddess] have been found worldwide' there is in fact not a single example of pagan deities being reproduced in wax for pilgrims to take away, and the object looks like no cult image from any Celtic context: it looks more like a buckle or clasp. Minster's hilltop site, its recorded history, and possible megalithic remains in the parish all make it not unlikely that there was a pagan shrine here, but this object is not evidence for it. Nonetheless, the cult was very active in the late 1990s, with the village 'under siege' at times from people coming to visit the Abbess's Well and to touch the Triple Goddess. Such is her power that one miracle birth occurred after a couple merely sent a donation to the well restoration fund!

B Slade, *The Well of the Triple Goddess* (1993); *The Abbess's Well* (1994); 'The Minster Wells', *Source* N.S. 4; *Daily Express*, 26.10.1996 p.59

MINSTER IN THANET

On a golf course close to Pegwell Bay is a pit, now usually dry, but which represents **St Augustine's Well** (TR 343639). Apparently local nuns used to clear it out, but this has ceased to happen for almost twenty years. The story goes that St Augustine, on landing at the point in 597 with his missionaries, struck the ground with his staff and caused the spring to burst forth in the midst of the salt flats. However, there is no mention of this tale in any old source, and the landing place was located some distance away until the 1890s. Instead, Hasted states that the Anglo-Saxon St Mildred also landed here before going on to found the local 'minster', and I suspect this well was hers before it became associated with Augustine.

Hasted has another story for us. Quoting a chronicle of St Augustine's, Canterbury, as his source, he relates that Thunor, a courtier of the 7th-century King Egbert of Kent instigated the murder of some princes and was sentenced to surrender his land at Minster for an abbey. When asked how much she wanted, St Domneva answered that she needed as much as her deer could run round 'in one course'. Thunor attempted to stop the deer, but was swallowed by the earth at a pit which was called **Puteus Thunor** - and *puteus*, of course, also means 'well'. Could this conceivably be a thinly-disguised pagan site named for the god Thunor? Hasted identified it with the old abbey chalk pit.

G Dowker, 'On the landing-place of St Augustine', *Arch Cant* 22 (1897), 127; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* x 266, 269-70

NEWINGTON

This parish was a second-rank minster, connected with the shadowy St Hildelith whose shrine was in the church. There seems to have been a link between wells and stones here. **Wardwell** (TQ 862656) rises north of the church and appears in 1840; down the road to it, at the crossroads, are a couple of small megaliths. The Lubickwell of 1598 survived at **Libbetswell** Cottage into the 1930s (TQ 856657); its legend tells that, after the churchwardens tried to sell one of the church bells, the Devil stole them and, having rested on the Devil's Stones close to the church, threw them into the river, or alternatively into Libbetswell. A witch advised that the bells could be recovered by tying ropes to four white kine, but when this was tried, one was found to have a tiny black spot and the bells were never raised.

KSC IR29/17:267; Wallenberg, *Place Names* 260; Anon, *The Church of St Mary at Newington* (c.1970), 15-16

NEWINGTON-NEXT-HYTHER

Lidwell is named first in 1840. It is now on an Army firing range and therefore inaccessible (TR 183389).

KSC IR29/17:266

NEWNHAM

The 1841 Tithe Map shows **Brockwell** at TQ 936566.

KSC IR29/17:307

OFFHAM

The house called **Godwell** was recorded first in 1313; there are spring ponds here today (TQ 662579).

Wallenberg, *Place Names* 149; Whitaker, *Wells & Springs* 45

ORPINGTON

The source of the River Cray, **Newell**, is not as new as its name implies; in fact it is one of Kent's earliest recorded well names, appearing in 798 as *Creagas aewelme*, from Anglo-Saxon *aewielm*, 'great spring' (TQ 467667). In 1843 a place called **Cornwell** is also noted, where the topography suggests a spring once existed. The church, close by, was a minster.

Everitt, *Continuity*, 75, 198; Wallenberg, *Kentish Place Names*, 34; KSC IR29/17:279

OSPRINGE

A **Holy Well** here was said in 1939 to lie close to the old religious hospital on Watling Street; it was one of the springs Whitaker suggested 'ought to be holy wells' in 1908.

EM Smith, 'Kentish Wells and their story', *Around Kent County* Autumn 1939, 58; Whitaker, *Wells & Springs*, 36

OTFORD

St Thomas Becket's Well here, now on private land (TQ 531592) is an important site, not least for having been properly excavated - still a rare achievement among holy wells. Its flint floor was dated to the 12th or 13th century, while the main fabric was perhaps built in 1382, coinciding with the reconstruction of the Manor House. Clear water now fills a large, open rectangular pool fed by two inlets at one end.

Becket's Well is almost certainly older than Becket. The parish fair was on St Bartholomew's Day

(August 24th) and his image in the church named after him was still visited in the 1570s to cure barrenness, so Lambard tells us. It is very likely that Bartholomew was the original patron of the well and that the name of Becket was attached as part of the campaign of rededication that we also see at work at the Singlewell in Ifield. The



Archbishop of Canterbury owned the Manor of Otford and the advowson of the church, so he could perhaps exert influence over the village's religious habits - whereas holy wells elsewhere, such as Edith's at Kemsing, remained untampered with. Lambarde also recorded the legend that Becket struck the earth with his crosier to provide water for his palace. In the early 1900s children came to bathe scratches and grazes in the water, while post-War hop-pickers took bottles of it home to London.

The village also contained **Colletwell** (TQ 530593) in the 1790s.

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iii 21, 24, 29-30; Lambarde, *Perambulation*, 460; FRJ Bateman et al, 'Thomas a Becket's Well', *Arch Cant* 70. 172-7; G Ward, *Sevenoaks Essays* (1931), 126-8; D Clarke & A Stoyell, *Otford in Kent* (1975), 51-2; FL Clarke, 'Reminiscences of Otford', *Cantium* 5 (iii) (1973), 50

OTHAM

Otham Hole, a pond set in a deep depression, is named in 1735 (TQ 800526).

KSC U673 P2

OTTERDEN

Prickle Well here appears in 1839 (TQ 940528). On the parish boundary we also find a possible **Holy Well**, a spring on the north side of the site of St Martin's Chapel.

KSC IR29/17:283

PEMBURY

The farm name **Hawkwell** is first recorded in 1279 (TQ 639431).

Wallenberg, *Place Names* 187

PENSHURST

In the 1790s, **Kidder's Well** and **Tapner's Hole** were in Peshurst Park, but nothing seems to survive. **Lancup Well**, which is not located at all, dated at least to 1465. Finally, a pond at Peshurst Place was called **Diana's Bath**, in the typically romantic, classicising way of post-Reformation garden improvements. The name is first recorded in 1719, but the gardens date back to the 16th century, so it may be earlier.

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iii 229; Wallenberg, *Place Names* 92; E Hall, *Garden of England* (1995), 18

PETHAM

Dr Moore mentioned a prophetic **Nailbourne** here in his *History of Kent* written in the 1710s.

Moore, 'Odds and Ends', iii 27 (25.9.1897)

PLAXTOL

A spring called **The Spoute**, the main water supply for the village, rises under an ash tree on Dalton's Farm (TQ 612535).

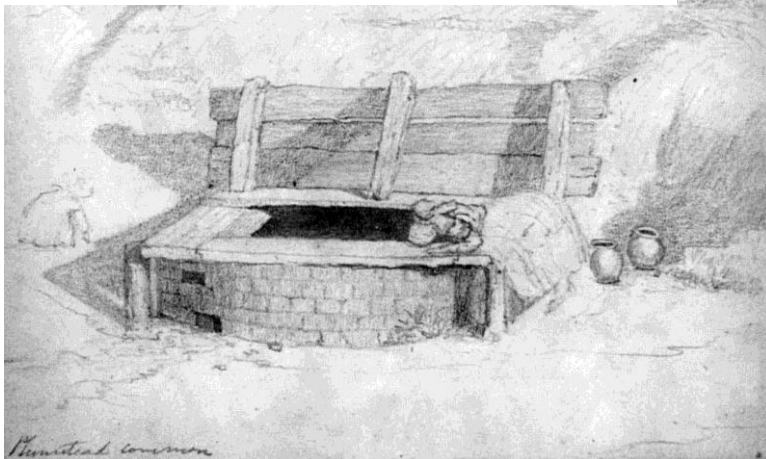
Bennett, *Ightham* (1907), 3; Plaxtol WI, *Plaxtol, a Kentish Village* (1957), 59

PLUMSTEAD

The 1842 Tithe Map names two wells. **Bird Springs** was a plot of arable land, so was not likely to have been a wood-name (TQ 445773). The street 'Drawell' is named from a **Draw Well** (TQ 454784), which seems to be a real name, not just a general description.

KSC IR29/17:294

Draw Well, Plumstead, from a sketch by Captain George Bent of the Royal Engineers, c.1850. (Courtesy of the Royal Engineers Museum, Chatham)



POSTLING

The East Stour river rises beside SS Mary & Radigund's church, a 'constant fountain, which never fails in the driest season' (TR 145392). A house called Ashwells is here too, which has led some to argue that **Ashwell** and this '**holy well**' are identical; but the 1843 Tithe Map shows Ashwell at some distance away (TR 144394).

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iii 229; Wallenberg, *Place Names* 92

PRESTON

A **pool** is said to cover the remains of Juliana de Leybourne's palace, and her treasure (TR 245606); and there is also a spring in the lane yards from St Mildred's Church which may be a **holy well** (TR 244605).

A Bignell, *Kent Lore* (1985), 51-2

RAMSGATE

Pegwell first appears in 1799, and there was clearly a spring here to judge by the topography (TR 334644).

Wallenberg, *Place Names* 602

RAVENSBOURNE

Caesar's Well was supposedly discovered by Julius Caesar, who saw a heron drinking here on his way to London. However, on Hasted's map of the 1790s the spring is called merely 'The Bath', and the story may be Victorian, although a path did lead from it to a nearby Roman camp. A Mr Burrows of Holwood planted twelve trees here, built stone palings round the spring, and a bath-house: it became known for curing weak and rheumatically limbs. It was still known as Cold Bath or Old Bath in 1827, but local traditions were a little confused: 'tis said to have been discovered by Mr Julius Caesar, the gentleman who has howned 'Olwood before the 'onorable Pitt 'ad it' ... 'Caesar and his Danes used to drink' here, were stories noted by Hewlett Cooper. Walter Hone in



1831 described it as 'a water of great virtue, formerly walled in, and still resorted to, by persons afflicted by weak or sprained limbs'; and access to it was an argument against the Enclosure of Keston Common. But in later years 'its privacy being greatly disturbed after the formation of the new road to Westerham ... the trees were grubbed up, and the buildings left exposed, the ravages of mischievous boys completed its final destruction'. Today Caesar's Well is a keyhole-shaped brick pool in a popular country park (TQ 419640).

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* ii f.p.38; W Hone, *The Table Book*, ii 641-4; W Hewlett-Cooper, *Old Keston* (1879), 21-3

RECULVER

Another 7th-century church site: there was a **Birds Well** in the parish in 1839 (TR 208677).

KSC IR29/17:300

RINGWOULD

A ghost called the Blue Lady haunts the cliff-path over Old Stairs Bay, looking for the lover her father killed; she drinks at the **Blue Well**. Her appearance brings good fortune to the village (TR 379480).

A&B Williams, *Ringwould & Kingsdown* (c.1980), 6

ROCHESTER - see MARGATE

RODMERSHAM

Saywells Cottage is recorded in 1839. 'Saywell' may be nothing more than a personal name, but if it was a well, the name of Pin Field next door may hint at the custom of offering pins there (TQ 914596).

KSC IR29/17:307

ROLVENDEN

On the parish boundary within Hole Park, rises a spring which in 1903 was said to have been healing 'in bygone days' (TQ 830323). If a couple were to drink from it they would be married within ten months. 'Hole' is said to be derived from 'Holy Well', and the spring has also been called **Jacob's Well**. Additionally, Andrews's map of Kent of 1769 shows **Pook Well** at TQ 828306 - a name referring to fairy spirits.
Igglesden, *Saunters* v 88; JT White, *Parks of Kent* (1985)

ROMNEY - see WYE

RYARSH

Fatherwell, despite its vaguely Christian-sounding name, was in fact Fartner's Well in 1769, and first appears in its modern form in 1821 (TQ 668576).

Andrews, *Topog. Map of Kent*; KSC U1431 P1

ST MARGARET AT CLIFFE

The 1840 Tithe Map shows **Bodewell** at TR 371454.
KSC IR29/17:241

ST MARY CRAY

In 1908 **Henrietta Spring**, 'north of the road', was the main water supply for the village.
Whitaker, *Wells & Springs*, 61

ST PAULS CRAY

Hobling Well, recorded in 1839, may relate to the British fairy-figure Robin Goodfellow, as 'Hob' is short for Robin and there was a 'Robin's Hole' close by (TQ 456691). **Homefield Spring** is named after the family of William Homfeld (fl. 1322), but could be a wood, not a well. Finally, **Palewell** (TQ 467695) is a suggestive street-name.
KSC IR29/17:99; EA Webb, *The History of Chislehurst* (1899), 205; Wallenberg, *Place Names* 25

SANDHURST

Two **pools** close to the county boundary are reputed scenes of suicides, and of associated hauntings (TQ 795382).
J&C Bord, *Sacred Waters* (1985), 141

SEAL

The Tithe Map of 1843 shows **Little Well** Field at TQ 562571. As at Horsmonden, there is no 'Great Well Field' here, so it is reasonably safe to assume that it was an independent well-name, and the landscape indeed suggests a spring existed once.
KSC IR19/17:318

SELLING

Ghost Pond was here in about 1783, and **Gore Well** (TR 061555) in 1841. There was also supposed to be a prophetic **Nailbourne**, but no trace of it was visible by the 1890s.
KSC U542 P2; KSC IR29/17:320; Moore, 'Odds and Ends' iii 27 (25.9.1897)

SEVENOAKS

The 'Hole Well', recorded as early as 822, was probably in Greatness where in 1847 there was a 'chalybeate spring which flows into an antique stone cistern' close to the site of the chapel of 'Our Lady of Greatness' (TQ 531568). This, in turn, is probably the same site as **St John's Spring**, covered in not long before it was first described in 1931. In 1986 an image, identified as that of Jesus holding a child, appeared in a house on Hospital Road, and the owner discovered healing abilities. The Vicar of St John's church, commenting on the mysterious events at the time, believed the holy well site was somehow involved.

South of the town, **Shaw Well** was called Chalwell in the 1840s (TQ 531568).

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 142; H Bagshaw, *History, Directory & Gazetteer of Kent* (1847), i 654; Ward, *Sevenoaks Essays* 14-16; *Sevenoaks Chronicle* 5.9.1986

SHELDWICH

The **Harewell** of 1253 could mean 'grey', 'boundary', or 'army' spring - or could simply be a reference to hares. There is nothing visible today, but the topography suggests a well (TQ 014582).

Wallenberg, *Place Names* 295

SHIPBOURNE

Lady Vane's Spring here is named after a 17th-century landowner.

A Major, *Hidden Kent* (1994), 149

SIDCUP

Farwell is a local street-name (TQ 470720).

SITTINGBOURNE

The **Nailbourne** here was supposed to flow when national hardship was at hand. There was also 'a clear **spring** of water in the high road' near the church of St Michael (TQ 909636).

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iii 333; vi 153

SOUTHBOROUGH

Crundwell is a weak chalybeate spring, not easy to get at, in the wood east of the pond at Crundwell Road (TQ 575423).

SOUTHFLEET

The Roman settlement of Vagniacae contained a complex of seven or eight temples based round the headwaters of the Fleet river. One had an enclosed room which could have been a **pool**; and elsewhere the skeletons of two six-month-old babies were found under two corners of a floor (TQ 612722). When the floor was replaced about ten years after it was laid, two more babies were interred at the opposite corners. The earlier pair, horribly, had been decapitated - a grisly insight into Roman superstition.

WS Penn in *Arch Cant* 79 (1964), 170-89

SPELDHURST

It was possibly John Adam, a resident of this parish in 1327, who gave his name to **Adam's Well**. It was 'famous long before the Tunbridge Wells waters were discovered',

but already by 1766 it was said to cure only mangy dogs (TQ 549383). The de Corthone family were also villagers in 1327, and **Courtenwell** (TQ 547396) was probably named after them. Finally, **Harness Well** appears on the modern Ordnance Survey (TQ 538282).

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 95; DD Mackinson, *History of Speldhurst* (1930), 41; Whitaker, *Wells & Springs*, 45

STAPLEHURST

Loddenden is said to be haunted by the ghost of a woman who drowned herself in 'the huge **well** which runs under the house'.

Igglesden, *Saunters*, v 67 (1903)

STROOD

'**Seynt Nicholas Welle**' appears in a will of 1444; the church is also dedicated to St Nicholas, suggesting a close relationship between church and well. Its sanctity fell away very quickly during the Reformation: already by 1556 the parish was paying 6d 'for makynge of a trowghe to the common well', clearly the same site, but with no sacred identity remaining.

HR Plomer, *Churchwardens' Accounts of St Nicholas's, Strood* (1927), 6

STURRY

Buckwell appeared in the 1200s; in 1840 there was still a pond at the farm bearing the name.

Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 514; KSC IR29/17:355

SUNDRIDGE

Camberwell appears on the 1840 Tithe Map (TQ 492522).

KSC IR29/17:356

SUTTON AT HONE

Alan Everitt writes 'the ancient religious site at Hawley, or 'holy clearing' ... seems to have been associated with a chapel and a **spring**', though he elaborates no further and names no source.

Everitt, *Continuity*, 297

SWANLEY

Kettlewell, at TQ 515692, is a local road-name, and may not represent a well.

SWANSCOMBE

Pastwell House (with Cresswell Terrace to the north) first appears in about 1910-1930, but a well is shown north of the site on a map of 1791 (TQ 601745). An intriguing **Maiden's Well**, possibly at TQ 605736, is named in the 1843 Tithe Award - the name often refers to the Virgin Mary.

RUMSC P/362/28/14-15; KSC IR29/17:362

SWINGFIELD

St John's House was a headquarters of the Knights Hospitallers, and contained a chapel also dedicated to their patron saint, John the Evangelist (TR 232441). In its cellar

'is a very old well, until recently in constant use. There is a tradition that the water ... possessed certain properties, and that the priests made great use of it'. This is therefore very probably a **St John's Well**.
Igglesden, *Saunters* xxx (1935), 80

TEMPLE EWELL

'*Aewillemeare*' appears in about 722; the '**great spring**' it refers to was the source of the river Dour. The manor was owned by the Knights Templar, hence its name - it has nothing to do with a temple. (TR 282445)
Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 560

TENTERDEN

All the wells in this town are recorded only on the Ordnance Survey: **Eastwell** is a farm name (TQ 885336), as is **Westwell**, where the water now rises down the valley (TQ 878329). **Bridewell** has a pond at the bottom (TQ 883331); and **Frog's Hole** has a spring (TQ 925353).

TEYNHAM

In 1743 we hear of 'the well or spring called **Down Well**' on the 'borough' boundary. It is now a featureless spring beside a footpath (TQ 974629).
E Selby, *Teynham Manor & Hundred* (1982), 102

THURNHAM

Igglesden tells us he'd read an account of the **Roundwell** here in 'an old book' a century old, which would place the record about 1820. The spring was known as Christ's Tears because it constantly overflowed, but by the 1920s it was forgotten (TQ 808554).
Igglesden, *Saunters* xiv 69-70

TONBRIDGE

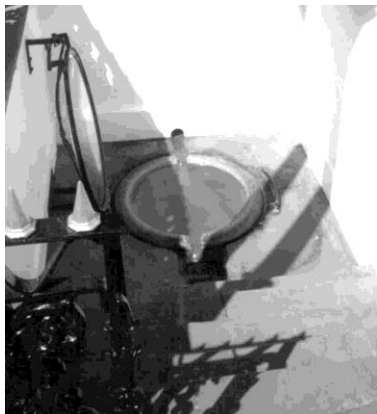
St Mary's Well, which was 'said to have enjoyed a local reputation in olden times', is sadly lost; though it may be the 'common well' for whose repair Clement Haytt bequeathed 40 shillings in 1558. There may also have been a '**Pilgrim's Well**', because the Tithe Map of 1841 shows a 'Pilgrims and Well Wood' at about TQ 607452.
A Savidge, *Royal Tunbridge Wells* (1975), 12; CW Chalkin, *A Kentish Wealden Parish*, Oxford B.Litt thesis in KSC (1960), 15; KSC IR29/17:371

TROTTISCLIFFE

A document of 1543 mentions 'the highe waye betwixt **Clevett Well** & the Church of Trottisclyfe', and this is probably the spring rises 100 yards below the church (TQ 647604). It could also be the same as Seymour's 'fine spring ... that produces a trout river'.
TS Frampton, '58 rectors of Trottiscliffe', *Arch Cant* 20 (1893), 190; Seymour, *Topog. Surv.* 775

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Only discovered in 1606, Tunbridge is a fascinating well site: the famous **chalybeate spa** here became, for a time, as close as it was possible to get to being a Christian holy well without actually being one. After the spring's discovery, the fact that it lay on the edge of three parishes in the middle of nowhere retarded its development, and it was



not until 1678 that the first 'local amenity' was built - significantly this was a church, dedicated not to an official saint but to 'Saint' Charles the Martyr, the executed king and patron of all High Church royalists. Funded by public subscription, the church was a good indicator of the sort of place Tunbridge was destined to become. It was to remain for many years a chapel of the parish church at Speldhurst, and its priest and attached school (for seventy 'poor children') were entirely supported by offerings and fees from the wells. This astonishing pattern of clergy and social institutions deriving their income from a water-site is unparalleled in post-Reformation Britain, even where other spas such as St Anne's in Brighton or St George's in Southwark used Christian names.

All that was needed now was a miraculous creation legend. The story went that St Dunstan, tenth-century Archbishop of Canterbury, was shoeing a horse at his forge - either at Glastonbury or Mayfield - when the Devil appeared to him. The saint grasped the Enemy's nose in his red-hot tongs, and the distressed Fiend then cooled his singed proboscis in a spring, which turned red as a result: a chalybeate well. In 1874, when the *Life of Dunstan* was reprinted, this story had not yet been attached to a particular place, and 'who gave the story the Tunbridge Wells turn remains a mystery'. The well now takes the form of basins in front of Bath House in the Pantiles; from Easter to October the water is sold at a souvenir kiosk (TQ 584391).

Muxelwell is a farm whose topography suggests a spring (TQ 608399). Seymour, *Topog. Surv.*, 778; Savidge, *Royal Tunbridge Wells*, 11-12

ULCOMB

Noakes Well (TQ 490858) of 1838 appears as Noals Well in 1769. KSC IR29/17: 376; J Andrews, *Topog Map*

UPCHURCH

Holywell Farm is Hailiwelle in the 13th century. The well forms a long pool in an overgrown copse by a footpath (TQ 852669). Wallenberg, *Place Names*, 272

WALTHAM

Burnt House Well appears on the 1840 Tithe Map (TR 113492). KSC IR29/17:380

WATERINGBURY

Couples would visit the **Pizien Well** here due to the story that if a bridegroom gave his bride its water to drink, they would conceive healthy children. The derivation of the name is not clear: locally it was also called 'Poison Well', which seems rather to undercut its supposed virtues, but residents know nothing of it now. There was also a family called Pizien, and the name was Pyssing Well in 1473! This probably had no disagreeable meaning, but referred instead to its trickling flow. In the 1920s it was a walled pool by

the roadside, but now runs into a drain opposite Hatwell (that is, 'at the well') Cottages (TQ 675532).

The **spring** that rises at Watringbury Place (TQ 685537) is so close to St John the Baptist's church that it may be a former holy well. It flows through a series of ornamental pools, and out of a monstrous stone head.

Hasted, *Hist. Kent* v 107; Wallenberg, *Place Names* 168; Igglesden, *Saunters* xxii 77-8

WESTERHAM

Holywell, on the parish boundary (TQ 455559) and **Little Spout** (TQ 449499) are both named in 1843. In addition the Ordnance Survey map shows **Brown's Oven Spring**, on the parish boundary with Sundridge (TQ 464516), **Froghole** (TQ 448510), and the **Chartwell** (TQ 457516), which has acquired a vicarious fame through lending its name to Sir Winston Churchill's home.

KSC IR29/17:386

WEST FARLEIGH

The **Ewell** stream (see FAVERSHAM for the name) rises at a spring southeast of the village (TQ 719520).

WEST KINGSDOWN

This parish's wells are recorded on modern Ordnance maps only: **Stanwell** House is in Botsom Lane (TQ 566637); and the topography at **Tinkerpot** suggests a spring (TQ 572608).

WEST LANGDON

The Tithe Map of 1841 shows 'Well Pasture' next to Chapel Yard, which contains the remains of Langdon Abbey (TR 324468), possibly a dim record of a lost **holy well**. At the head of a valley in this parish is **Maydensole**, a farm with a pool (TR 314476); *sole* is the local word for a pool, and 'Maiden' sites often relate to the Virgin Mary.

WEST MALLING

St Leonard's Tower was built by the famous clerical engineer Bishop Gundulf in about 1070. The spring which rises yards away is known as **St Leonard's Well**, although the chapel of the tower was dedicated to Lawrence, with its own fair held on St Lawrence's Day. Seymour noted the spring as 'a fine rivulet'. Today it emerges from a stone arch by the road to Tonbridge (TQ 675570) (photo right).

Gillet's Hole was another spring at the south end of the village, but its location is



uncertain.

Seymour, *Topog. Surv.*, 549; Hasted, *Hist. Kent* iv 521, 523; Vigar, 'Holy Wells', 709; Whitaker, *Wells & Springs*, 45

WEST PECKHAM

Adam's Well and **Eve's Spring** are both at Adam's Well Farm, named in 1841. Adam's Well is now represented by a few stones beneath a bank in the garden (TQ 636526), and Eve's Spring is a featureless rivulet behind the wood to the rear of the farm (TQ 635525).

KSC IR29/17:288

WESTWELL

Whitaker (p.40) pointed out the springs north of the church (TQ 991475), but the other wells are farther away. **Charwell** Cottage has a spring on the parish boundary (TQ 969481); as Charnewelle (1278) it probably means 'the peasant's spring'. **Lady's Well** is shown only on the modern Ordnance Survey, but now has a beehive-shaped brick well house and is probably an old site (TQ 981446).

Wallenberg, *Place Names* 402

WHITSTABLE

Bridewell is a street name whose topography suggests a spring, though nothing appears to survive (TR 121662).

WILLESBOROUGH

The only information we have about this well comes in a brief magazine note from 1939: 'another holy well, dedicated to "Our Lady of Lacton" has recently been discovered at Lacton Hall' – which leaves some doubt as to whether this was an old or a new **Lady Well** (TR 039417).

Smith, 'Kentish Wells', 58

WINGHAM

Wingham Well is named in 1840; the stream from it fed the bath at the Roman villa, and was 'famous for the freshest water cress ever grown' (TR 236566).

KSC IR29/17:395; G Dowker, 'A Roman Villa at Wingham', *Arch Cant* 14 (1882), 135; Igglesden, *Saunters* i 80

WOMENSWOLD

A pond and **well** lie close to St Margaret's Church (TR 228506).

WOODCHURCH

Westwell is shown on the Ordnance maps, but no spring remains (TQ 918340).

WOODNESBOROUGH

The history of the Conduit has been lost, but it appears as **Convent Well** on old Ordnance Survey maps. It stood near Melville House in an overgrown hollow by a ditch: by the 1930s it had dried up due to water workings.

Igglesden, *Saunters* xviii 75

WOOLWICH

Cardwell is a street name in this borough (TQ 431787).

WROTHAM

Garretts Well (TQ 606566) and **Shearwell** Shaw both appear on the 1841 Tithe Map. KSC IR29/17:405

WYE

In the 1770s 'Pickard's Dene, a valley below Wyedown' had 'an excellent **spring**, much frequented by the people of the vicinity'. Whether this 'frequenting' was for any medicinal purposes or for more prosaic reasons is now unknown. It could be the spring at TR 076450.

The legend of **St Eustace's Well**, which is now a little square stone and brick structure in a cottage garden at Withersdane (TR 062458), has often been told, but it first appeared in the Chronicle of Roger of Hoveden only a year after the events took place. In 1200 Eustace, Abbot of Flai, visited southeast England on a preaching tour, and came to Wye. 'There he blessed a certain well which the Lord had embued with such grace that the blind saw, the lame walked, the mute spoke, the deaf heard, and whatever his disability, whoever drank from this blessed well was sure to receive his health'. A woman with fits was brought and aspersed with the water by 'the man who was deputed to look after that well', and vomited up a demon in the form of a toad. It is not clear, though, whether the well had these healing powers before Eustace blessed it. Its fame was fading in the early 1800s, but around 1900 it had been used against eye disorders in living memory, by which time it was a pool with steps leading down and a wooden handrail. In 1841 there was a place called Hermitage nearby.

From Wye, Abbot Eustace went on to **ROMNEY**, where he found the inhabitants in the grip of a drought, and brought forth a spring for them by striking the ground with his staff in the classic fashion of saints the world over. This was perhaps a '**St Eustace's Well**' too, but it has not survived.

Seymour, *Topog. Surv.*, 640; Roger of Hoveden, *Chronicle* (EETS ed, 1871), iv 123; J Brand, *Popular Antiquities* (1812), ii 263; Igglesden, *Saunters* i 20; KSC IR19/17:406

Unconfirmed well names

There remains a large number of well names recorded in the sources whose status cannot be confirmed without an extensive programme of field research. I hope that, by recording them here, I will encourage investigators in Kent itself to pull on their boots and find out whether they are still there!

BENENDEN: Redwell (TA 24, 1333 & 1319, map ref TQ 826331); Handwell (TA 24, 1, map ref TQ 835333); **BEXLEY**: Banwell (street name, map ref TQ 475743); Friswell (street name, map ref TQ 492754); **BICKNOR**: Brockwell Banks (TA 37 (1842), 87, map ref TQ 855591); Goldwell Wood (TA 37 (1842), 1681); Crosswell Farm (TA 37 (1842)); **BIDDENDEN**: Goldwell (KSC U78 P29 (1788), map ref TQ 862365); **BILSINGTON**: Tamwells (TA 31 (1840), 211, map ref TR 042358); **BLACKHEATH**: Bankwell (street name, map ref TQ 394752); **BRASTED**: Great Well House (TA 46 (1844), 620); **BRENCHLEY**: Lowdwell (TA 49 (1841), 763, map ref TQ 648405); **BRENZETT**: Burwells (TA 50 (1844), 230, map ref TQ 973257); **BROMLEY**: Tredwell (street name,

map ref TQ 420683); **CHISELHURST**: Stockwell (TA 87 (1843), 658); **COWDEN**: Butterwell (TA 88 (1841), 538); **DEPTFORD**: Holywell (street name, map ref TQ 402779); **DETLING**: Ridgewell (TA 108 (1839), 39, map ref TQ 794576); Cordwell (TA 108 (1839), 135, map ref TQ 799587); **DITTON**: Nycopitts (KSC Ch26 P1 - 1743); **DOVER**: Taswell (street name, map ref TR 321418); **ERITH**: Bedwell (street name, map ref TQ 491782); **FOLKESTONE**: Dixwell (street name, map ref TR 214354); **GREAT CHART**: Padwell (TA (1841), 19, map ref TQ 981419); **HADLOW**: Goldwell (KSC U681 P4B (1788), map ref TQ 638483); **HINXHILL**: Blackwell (Wallenberg, *Kentish Place Names*); **HYTHE**: Mollendwelle (Dale, *Church of St Leonard ...*, p.88); Penny Pot (possibly not a well name) TA 192 (1841), 503, map ref TR 148342); Strodevelle (Dale, *Church of St Leonard ...* p.88); **KENNINGTON**: Honeypot (TA 202 (1839), 202); **KINGSNORTH**: Bridewell (TA 208 (1839), 205, map ref TQ 998396) - probably relates to Bridewell in Great Chart; **LAMBERHURST**: Broadwell (KSC U840 P8 - 1749); Snagswell (KSC U120 P49 - 1795); **LENHAM**: Goldwell (TA 220 (1839), 933, map ref TQ 884499); **LITTLEBOURNE**: Gorswell Shaw (TA 227 (1840), 44, map ref TR 198571); **LYDD**: Kitewell (street name, map ref TR 048216); **MEOPHAM**: Harwell (TA 244 (1842), 313, map ref TQ 651633 (?)); **NEWINGTON**: Chinkwell (TA 267 (1840), 59); **NEWINGTON next HYTHE**: Frogwell - i.e. Frogholt (Wallenberg); **PENSHURST**: Hamswells (TA 290 (1838)); **PLUMSTEAD**: Pegwell (street name, map ref TQ 541775); **ORPINGTON**: Brockwell (street name, map ref TQ 459679); **RAINHAM**: Taswell (street name, map ref TQ 824664); **RODMERSHAM**: Buckwell (TA 307 (1839), map ref TQ 913596); **ROLVENDEN**: Buckwell (KSC U409 P16 - c.1730); **ST MARY CRAY**: Hodswell (TA 97 (1843), 119); **SEVINGTON**: Hughwells (TA 323 (1841), 99, map ref TR 041402), also recorded in Mersham parish; Hawkswell (TA 323 (1841), 82, map ref TR 034404); **SPELDHURST**: Shodwell (TA 338 (1841), 824, map ref TQ 558412); **TUDLEY**: Padwell (TA 374 (1843), 169, map ref TQ 629432); Hawkwell (farm name); **WALTHAM**: Penny Pot (TA 380 (1840)); **WESTWELL**: Shadwell (TA 387 (1840), 886); **WOOLWICH**: Andwell (map ref TQ 468797), Cantwell (Map ref TQ 436774), Combwell (TQ 464791) - all three steet names; **WROTHAM**: Little Gowells (TA 405 (1841), 842); **WYE**: Shadwell (TA 406 (1841), 28, TR 054426).

Alphabetical list of wells

Abbess's Well, Minster in Sheppey
 Abbot's Well, Lewisham
 Adam's Well: Speldhurst, West
 Peckham
 All Souls Pond, Ash cum Ridley
 Archdeacon's Well, Hayes
 Arrianes Well, Littlebourne
 Ashwell, Postling
 Barnwell, Great Mongeham
 Bates Well, Ightham
 Bear's Well, Deal
 Bedewell, Egerton
 Bennett's Old Well, Ightham

Beton Well, Erith
 Bird Spring, Plumstead
 Bird Well, Reculver
 Black Prince's Well, Harbledown
 Blue Well, Ringwould
 Bodewell, St Margaret at Cliffe
 Bottomless Pond, Marden
 Bowdler's Well, Ash cum Ridley
 Bowles Well, Folkestone
 Bradsole, Hougham
 Bridewell: Great Chart, Tenterden,
 Whitstable
 Brockwell, Newnham

Brookwell, Bobbing
 Brown's Oven Spring, Westerham
 Buckwell: Boughton Aluph, Ightham,
 Sturry
 Burnt House Well, Waltham
 Caesar's Well: Dover (?),
 Ravensbourne
 Calves Spring, Eltham
 Camberwell: Lamberhurst, Sundridge
 Cardwell, Woolwich
 Chalkwell, Kennington
 Chalybeate Spring: Cranbrook,
 Tunbridge Wells
 Chantry Pond, Bredgar
 Chartwell, Westerham
 Charwell, Westwell
 Chilkwel, Milton
 Choles Spring, Eastchurch
 Clevett Well, Trottiscliffe
 Cold Bath: Bexley, Deptford
 Cold Well, Horsmonden
 Colletwell, Otford
 Colly Well, Aldington
 Convent Well, Woodnesborough
 Cordwell, Lewisham
 Cornwell: Marden, Orpington
 Countess's Spring, Eastwell
 Courtenwell, Speldhurst
 Cresswell, Blackheath
 Crockwell, Ebony
 Crosswell, Faversham
 Crundwell, Southborough
 Denthalle Water, Hythe
 Diana's Bath, Penshurst
 Digswell, Hartlip
 Dr Hussey's Well, Hayes
 Down Well, Teynham
 Draw Well, Plumstead
 Drywell, Charing
 Ducken Well, Cooling
 Duke's Well, Eastwell
 Eastwell, Tenterden
 Egg Well, Hollingbourne
 Eve's Spring, West Peckham
 Ewell, Faversham, Lenham, Temple
 Ewell, West Farleigh
 Ewe Well, Linton
 Farwell, Sidcup
 Fatherwell, Ryarsh

Five Well, Loose
 Foxwell, Lewisham
 Frog's Hole, Hollingbourne, Tenterden
 Garretts Well: Egerton, Wrotham
 Ghost Pond, Selling
 Gillett's Hole, West Malling
 Godwell, Offham
 Gold Well: Aldington, Boughton
 Monchelsea, Great Chart
 Goosewell, Linton
 Gore Well: Chilham, Selling
 Harewell, Sheldwich
 Harness Well, Speldhurst
 Harold's Well, Dover
 Harts Well, Hoath
 Hatch Spring, Hoath
 Hawkwell, Pembury
 Henrietta Spring, St Mary Cray
 Hernewell Pond, Addington
 Herwells, Downe
 Hicaesanwell, Dover
 Hob's Pool, East Peckham
 Hobling Well, St Pauls Cray
 Hog Well, Ebony
 'holy well': Ash cum Ridley, Ashford,
 Loose, Otterden, Postling, Preston,
 West Langdon
 Holy Well: Ash cum Ridley, Folkestone,
 Hythe, Luddesdown, Ospringe,
 Upchurch, Westerham
 Homefield Spring, St Pauls Cray
 Hope Well: Charing, Chatham
 Hotwell, Canterbury
 Jacob's Well: Benenden, Hayes,
 Rolvenden
 Jowet Pette, Hythe
 Kettlewell, Swanley
 Kidder's Well, Penshurst
 King's Well, Chalk
 King's Head Well, Cranbrook
 Lady Pond, Biddenden
 Lady Vane's Spring, Shipbourne
 Lady Well: Dover, Eastwell, Fordwich,
 Goudhurst, Lamberhurst, Lewisham,
 Westwell, Willesborough
 Lancup Well, Penshurst
 Landwell, Hawkhurst
 Leaping Well, Brookland
 Lemon Well, Eltham

Libbetswell, Newington
 Lidwell, Newington next Hythe
 Lidswell, Goudhurst
 Lint Well, Lyminge
 Lipwell, High Halstow
 Little Well: Horsmonden, Seal
 Lud Well, Cowden
 Lydden Spout, Hougham
 Maiden's Well, Swanscombe
 Maydensole, West Langdon
 Moor Well, Ightham
 Nailbourne: Addington, Alkham,
 Petham, Selling, Sittingbourne
 Newell, Orpington
 Nichor Well, Fordwich
 Noakes Well, Ulcomb
 Northwell, Lenham
 Nunnery Pond, Headcorn
 Old House Pond, Eastchurch
 Orchard Well, Cranbrook
 Otham Hole, Otham
 Palewell, St Pauls Cray
 Pastwell, Swanscombe
 Pegwell, Ramsgate
 Pigwell, Lydd
 Pilgrim's Lakes, Harrietsham
 Pilgrim's Pond, Boxley
 Pilgrim's Pump, Leybourne
 Pilgrim's Spring, Burham
 Pilgrim's Well, Tonbridge
 Pin Pond, Cranbrook
 Pixwell, Great Mongeham
 Pizien Well, Wateringbury
 Plantagenet's Spring, Eastwell
 Pook Well, Rolvenden
 Poulter's Spring, Bexley
 Prickle Well, Otterden
 Puddle Well, Birley
 Puggle Pit, Headcorn
 Queen's Well, Benenden
 Queen Elizabeth's Well, Blackheath
 Queningate Well, Canterbury
 Quince Well, Meopham
 Red Pump, Canterbury
 Red Well, Ightham
 Roman Well, Ightham
 Ropersole, Barham
 Roundwell, Thurnham
 Rvewell Pitt, Chiddingstone

St Ann's Well: Hollingbourne(?),
 Maidstone
 St Augustine's Well: Canterbury(?),
 Minster in Thanet
 St Blaise's Well, Bromley
 St Eanswith's Well, Cheriton
 St Edburga's/Ethelburga's Well:
 Canterbury, Herne, Lyminge
 St Edith's Well, Kemsing
 St Eustace's Well, Wye
 St Ivo's Well, Eastry
 St John's Well: Maidstone(?),
 Sevenoaks, Swingfield(?)
 St Leonard's Well, West Malling
 St Margaret's Well, Broomfield
 St Martin's Well, Canterbury
 St Mary's Well: Lympne(?), Tonbridge
 St Mary Magdalene's Well, Goudhurst
 St Nicholas's Well, Strood
 St Peter's Well, Canterbury
 St Radigund's Well, Canterbury
 St Thomas Becket's Well: Bapchild,
 Canterbury, Chartham(?), Cobham,
 Folkestone, Ifield, Otford
 St Thomas's Watering: Frindsbury,
 Gravesend
 Salt Water Bath: Margate, Rochester
 Santa Maria Well, Minster in Sheppey
 Saywells, Rodmersham
 Shadwell, Ightham
 Sharnal, High Halstow
 Shaw Well, Sevenoaks
 Shearwell, Wrotham
 Simonwell, Crundale
 Smarts Well, Mereworth
 The Spoute, Plaxtol
 Stanwell, West Kingsdown
 Stilton Well, Egerton
 Stock Well, Greenwich
 Streetwell: Bapchild, Lenham
 Sunwin's Well, Canterbury
 Swellinde Pette, Chislehurst
 Tadwell, Minster in Sheppey
 Tapner's Hole, Penshurst
 Taywell, Goudhurst
 Thief's Well, Fordwich
 Thunor's Pit, Minster in Thanet
 Tinkerpot, West Kingsdown
 Tom Wells, Chartham

Trice Well, Ightham	Sheppey
Trowswell, Goudhurst	Westwell: Tenterden, Woodchurch
Tywell, Marden	White Well, Cranbrook
Wardwell, Newington	Wingham Well, Wingham
Waterflash, Ightham	Wishing Well, Maidstone
Webbs Well, Coldred	Wynelyng Well, Fordwich
Well, Ickham & Well	
Well of the Triple Goddess, Minster in	

Subject Index

Agricultural customs - Kemsing
 Antiquarian speculation on placenames - Linton, Rolvenden
 Baptisms - Bapchild
 Barrows - Ightham
 Bells - Chillenden, Newington
 Boundaries - Burham, Cobham, Dover, Fordwich, Frindsbury, Otterden, Rolvenden, Sheldwich, Teynham, Westerham, Westwell
 Castles - Dover, West Malling
 Chalybeate springs - Cranbrook, Folkestone, Sevenoaks, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells
 Churches close to wells - Ash cum Ridley, Ashford, Boxley, Canterbury, Cheriton, Hythe, Ickham & Well, Loose, Luddesdown, Maidstone, Otterden, Preston, Sevenoaks, Sittingbourne, Watlingbury, Womenswold
 Condemnations - Cheriton
 Crosses - Maidstone
 Dedications changing - Bapchild, Ifield, Minster in Thanet, Otford
 Devil, the - Chillenden, Newington
 Enclosure - Ravensbourne
 Eyes - Beckenham, Kemsing, Wye
 Fairies - East Peckham, Headcorn, Rolvenden, St Pauls Cray
 Fairs - Goudhurst, Hollingbourne, Lamberhurst
 Fertility customs - Minster in Sheppey, Rolvenden, Watlingbury
 Garden wells - Cranbrook, Hollingbourne, Penshurst
 Ghosts - Aldington, Benenden, Biddenden, Cranbrook, Eastchurch, Eastwell, Hartley, Ightham, Ringwould, Staplehurst
 Healing wells - Beckenham, Boxley(?), Bromley, Canterbury, Eastry, Great Chart, Harbledown, Hayes, Linton, Loose, Margate, Otford, Ravensbourne, Rolvenden, Speldhurst, Swingfield, Wye
 Hermits - Lympne, Wye
 Hillforts - Ightham
 Megaliths - Burham, Minster in Sheppey, Newington
 Modern traditions - Minster in Sheppey
 Monasteries, etc. - Bredgar, Canterbury, Dover, Goudhurst, Harbledown, Littlebourne, Swingfield, West Langdon
 Origin legends - Minster in Thanet, Otford, Ravensbourne, Romney, Wye
 Pagan sites - Burham, Hollingbourne, Minster in Sheppey, Minster in Thanet

Petrifying springs - Boxley, Egerton
Pilgrimages - Aldington, Boxley, Bromley, Burham, Canterbury, Folkestone,
Harbledown, Harrietsham, Kemsing, Lewisham, Leybourne, Lympne, Tonbridge
Pins - Beckenham, Cranbrook, Rodmersham
Prophetic wells - Addington, Alkham, Langley, Lewisham, Petham, Selling,
Sittingbourne
Restorations - Ash cum Ridley
Roman sites - Bapchild, Eynsford, Greenwich, Ightham, Southfleet, Wingham
Royal figures - Appledore, Benenden, Eastwell, Harbledown
Spas - Canterbury, Deptford, Margate, Rochester, Ravensbourne, Tunbridge Wells
Treasure - Hartley, Preston
Trees - Chillenden, Cranbrook, Plaxtol
Water supply - Burham, Cranbrook, Deal, Eastwell, Greenwich, Hythe, Kemsing, Linton,
Lyminge, Plaxtol, St Mary Cray
Well-dressing - Broomfield
Wishing - Chillenden, Maidstone
Witches - Cranbrook, Hastingleigh, Newington



James Rattue studied history
at Balliol College, Oxford,
and has worked in museums
in Dorset, Kent, and Buckinghamshire.

He is also the author of
The Living Stream: Holy Wells in Historical Context (1995),
published by the Boydell Press.



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