

3 Bridge Place; Braems

During the Thirty Years' War an international entrepot developed at the port of Dover as a result of English attempts to tax continental Europeans for using neutral English shipping by forcing traffic into Dover to pay taxes. Goods brought to Dover for storage, then reexported in English ships.. Silver entrepot began in 1620, by 1632 (diplomatic accord England/Spain) "It provided that English vessels freighting Spanish silver should always stop at Dover in order to unload two-thirds of their cargoes for coinage in London. The silver removed from the ships was transported over the Dover Road to the Tower Mint." Rate reductions resulted in higher income: "The Farmers saw their revenue from commodity re-exports increase from £11000 in 1634 to over £18000 in 1636 and to £23000 in 1638." *Arch Cant* 95, 1979 pp 53-64 A KEPLER: Entrepot Policy etc . No wonder A Braems thought he could afford to build a big house!

A Hasenson: The History of Dover Harbour, p 42 (map p 43): In 1641 "The Land at this point is mostly owned by Jacob Braeme[s]." Jacob was son of Charles Braems, m 1595, d ca 1611 of Sandwich & Dover. Jacob was Customer of Dover. Elder Brother of Sir Arnold, ba. Oct 1602. hence born 1596/1600. Arnold 1602-1681, knighted 27 May 1660.(in consequence of his 'humble remonstrance' to Charles II which accounts for a great loss of money?) MP for Dover 1660. [see Blackmansbury, vols 5 & 8]

Bridge Place

The Manor of Blackmansbury, alias Bridge belonged to the Abbey of St Augustine, a total of 62 acres and three roods. Was let to tenants until suppression of the abbey in 1539 put it into the King's hands. In 1545 this manor, with divers lands in Houndpit and Blackmanbury was granted to Henry Laurence to hold in capite by the 20th part of a knight's fee, and he that year held a court here; and in his descendants it continued till 1576 when it was alienated by John Laurence to William Partherich, [Harris spells this Patrick] whose grandson Sir Edward Partherich passed it away in 1638 to (afterwards Sir) Arnold Braems who built a spacious and magnificent mansion on the site of the ancient court-lodge, which he named Bridge Place, in which he afterwards resided, as did his son Walter Braems until his death in 1692; but the great cost of building this seat so impoverished the estate that his heirs, for he had no surviving issue, about the year 1704, were obliged to part with it, which they did by sale to John Taylor, of Bifrons, who soon afterwards pulled down the greatest part of this mansion, leaving only one wing of it standing, the size and stateliness of which, being of itself full sufficient for a gentleman's residence, cannot fail to implant in our minds an idea of the grandeur of the whole building when entire. He died in 1729 since which this manor and seat has continued in his descendants, in like manner as Bifrons, down to his {great - {Hasted 2nd edn}} grandson the Rev. Edward Taylor. (Ed. Hasted, Vol.3 p724/5).

This was the largest house in 17th century East Kent after Chilham Castle. It appears to have been rectangular, certainly with a flat front of nine bays with the main door in the centre (Illustrations by Schellinks, 1661, and Adriaen Ocker, late 1670s), two storeyed, but with a row of seven dormers projecting from the hipped roof. Of this only three bays of the house's left hand end remain.

Some excavations in 1962 by members of the King's School uncovered parts of the terrace and other garden remains.

Among subsequent owners / tenants have been

1849: R Brice, vice-chairman of the Board of Guardians (of the Union)

1890-1897: Oscar de Satges

1907: Mrs Wilson

1913-15: Seymour Harries

1924-40: Mrs Ethel Penn

1954: Mrs Neame

?1962 : Malcolm Pinhorn

1969: Peter Malkin

[Mrs Friend: I remember when General and Lady Byng resided there. . .the Duchess of Albany, daughter of Queen Victoria stayed after opening some official event in Canterbury]

PG ELGAR: The Braems of Bridge Place: Bygone Kent 18, 1997 says bridge Place was built with imported Dutch bricks.. The house possessed a large deer park, an aviary and extensive gardens. Schellinks arrived on 8 July 1661 at 8pm 'to a friendly welcome and were magnificently entertained and drank quite a few healths with sack'. Next day he played on the bowling green. The grounds were 'very beautiful, well kept pleasure grounds, with fruit trees, well watered by a fast flowing fresh sparkling stream of wonderfully clear sweet water. This splits up into several branches and rivulets; [did Braems divert the stream? An early map qv shows a house astride the stream] also some fish ponds in which trout is bred. . . There are also some vineyards, producing yearly two or three hogsheads of wine. He also has his own brewery, bakery, wine-press, hop garden, barns, stables, oxen, cows, sheep, pigs, geese, ducks. . .everything that one can desire. . .He has planted a fine avenue of lime trees from his house to the church. . .Schellinks also mentions an annual muster of seven or eight companies of the Militia on 6th October 1661, each 200 men strong, on the hill above Bishopsbourne. Arnold & Walter were respectively Major and Colonel in the East Kent force in the civil war, supporting the royalist cause. Arnold lost considerable sums in this respect. (see Pinhorn: Blackmansbury). In the Kentish rebellion of 1648 the petitioners were led by Arnold.

Arch Cant 116, 1996 J KEPLER: The international entrepot at Dover in crisis etc pp293-303.contains a long account of the activities of Jacob Braems (Brames) who 'had inherited a quay, wharves, and herring houses at Dover from his father (Charles) in 1611. During the 1630's he had spent £3000 in building houses at Dover to fit and accommodate his fishing business...' Made losses. Qv. This was Arnold's brother, but A must have been also closely involved.

BRAEM(E)S FAMILY

Mise. Notes

Origins Family came of Flemish stock. Ancestors settled at Sandwich at the beginning of the Stuart Period. Jacob (father of Arnold) set up in business as a merchant at Dover in the time of Charles 1. (11)

Arnold Braems, later Sir Arnold Braems, Kt. Born in Dover, baptized as in register of St. Mary's, 3rd Oct. 1602. Used his energies to develop Dover as a port. He acquired land all along the Sea Front and made a fortune out of Harbour Rights. Erected large buildings, monopolized landing and warehousing of goods, farming harbour tolls and customs. First chairman of Dover Harbour Board. Elected M.P. for Dover, April, 1660 and received Knighthood from King Charles II. Remained at House of Commons only a short time, preferring commercial life. Buildings used by officers of customs. Most of them destroyed in disastrous fire in 1808. (13)

Expended much of his fortune on construction of an enormous mansion at Bridge (Bridge Place).

Bridge Place -Background Originally Manor of Bridge or Blackmansbury was in possession of the Abbey of St. Augustine. Suppressed by Henry VIII and lands taken. In 36th year of reign granted it to Henry Lawrence to hold by knight's services. Court was regularly held, the ancient court lodge standing on the spot occupied by Bridge Place. Passing through several hands the land came into possession of Sir Arnold Braems who pulled down the court lodge and erected a magnificent mansion on the site (c. 1638?). (13)

Sir Arnold Braems. Kt. departed his life in his mansion house called Blackmansbury alias Bridge Place on Sunday morning, 10 o' clock, 13th November, 1681, in the 80th year of his age, buried on 21st of the same month in the East Chancel of the Chapel of Bridge. close to the tomb which he had . . . erected there in memory of his two deceased ladies.

Widow - Margaret

Kentish Rebellion, 1648 In the town of Dover itself the petitioners were led by Sir Arnold Braems.

Group of conspirators involved in further conspiracies. Walter (son) and Arnold Braems among moving spirits - disturbing the peace of the County - helped to pave way for the Restoration. Off the Kent coast the newly-knighted Arnold Braems endeavoured to corrupt the Commonwealth Navy, 1659.

Walter Braems laid a plot at Dover to seduce the Governor and betray the Castle to Prince Charles, (1647-48). It is practically certain that Walter Braems and other Kentish gentry were involved in the assassination of Dr. Dorislaus in May, 1649; arrested as suspected accomplices(?).

Gerard's Plot, 1654 In this wild conspiracy several of the young Kent cavaliers who were to have been John Gerard's officers in 1651 were involved, including Walter Braems. The plot itself had little connection with Kent, but it set off a train of events leading to the most serious insurrection of the Interregnum, the Rising of 1655, usually known by the name of its Wiltshire leader - Penruddock. (5)

Additional Notes on Braems

Member of Royal Fishing Association.

Son-in-law of Sir Thomas Palmer of Wingham.

Brother-in-law of Thomas Harfleete of Bekesbourne and Anthony Hamond of St. Alban's Court
Held rank of major in the East Kent force.

From 1670 onwards

At the Southern end of the (Custom House Quay) . . . was constructed a quay by James Hammond . . . while at the Northern end one Isaac Minet had a wharf and further along the Braemes family were established. The quay they owned at this point lay opposite their large warehouses across the Harbour, a block of houses known as "The Old Buildings", all destroyed by a great fire in 1808. (7)

The shipbuilding yard was then situated at the north-east corner of the Harbour, opposite the northern extremity of Strond Street . . . lay next to the warehouses which the Minets had taken over from the Braemes family (c. 1660). The Pents and houses running along the Crosswall, also the Harbour Wall of 1592 - land at this point mostly owned by Jacob Braems. (7)

Reference to "Major Braems" who farmed the Harbour revenues in the time of Charles I. (7)

At Bridge, though nothing of his house now remain, lived Sir Edward Partherich and his wife (Oxinden's kinswoman). After their property had been sold to the Dutch merchant Sir Arnold Braems their residence was handsomely rebuilt as Bridge Place - a frequent guest was the painter Cornelis Janssen who painted portraits of the friendly families. (6)

About 1636 Sir Edward (Partherich) of Bridge conveyed his house at Bridge to . . . Sir Arnold Braems, under whose patronage Cornelis Janssen came into the neighbourhood. (6)

Sir Arnold Braems had as his guest a famous portrait painter of his days Cornelius Janssen, for 20 years a fashionable artist in Blackfriars(?) at Bridge he painted county families. (14)

High on the east wall is a portrait thought to be the work of Cornelius Janssen a noted painter of the time of King Charles I . . . this painting on copper is of Richard Bargrave who was the builder of Bifrons in the 16th century.

The town of Dover seems to have been moderately loyal to the Parliamentarians, though a return of "suspects" in the town reveals the fact that disturbances may have been possible. These rather curious returns of suspected persons throughout the kingdom occupy seven volumes in the British Museum Add. mss. series. A suspect was most carefully watched. Information on movements was notified to central officials. Dover returns were made by one Reynolds "Registrar".

Reynolds seems to have been a careless person - constantly upbraided for sending returns wrongly addressed or writing in an illegible hand. (9)

Egs. Dover Arnold Braems, merchant 6th Febrgary, 1656 at the house of Mr. Richard Harrison, a tailor over against the Dolphin Tavern in the Parish of Barking.

12th Feb. Braines gave notice of removal to Dover.

12th March Againe at Harrison's.

19th May Arnold Braems of Bridge went to the house of Harrison a taylor [] (9)

Bridge Place, addn. Fragment of a large brick courtyard house built between 1638 and 1659 by Sir Arnold Braems in a correct classical style with Tuscan plasters, a first floor entablature and eaves cornice articulating the elevations.

Much of the mansion was built with hand-made Dutch brick which was brought over from Holland and landed at Sandwich.

Recently drawings of the original house were discovered in Amsterdam Museum.

After Chilham Castle it was the largest country house in East Kent in the 17th century.

Had a large deer park and aviary.

The Heirs of Sir Arnold Braems, namely one Sir Thomas Braems (? probably mistaken for Walter), had to sell it in 1704 to the Rev. John Taylor of Bifrons. Remained in possession of the Taylor family until purchased by Marquis of Conyngham and became part of Bifrons Estate. Today - a country club, owned and run by Mr. Peter Malkin. (15)

The heirs of his son Walter (d.1692) were forced to sell the estate c. 1704. So extensive had been his building that the purchaser was able to pull down all except one wing and still have a large enough house for a gentleman's residence. (8)

1671 A collection by H.M. Privy Council towards the raising of £3000 for "the redemption of a great number of our Christian countrymen from that miserable Turkish infidel whose inhuman slavery and bondage they now groan under". Sir Arnold Braems and his Lady - £1.10.0, apart from 4d and 3d all the rest gave 2p each. (15)

Buried in linen - a matter of extravagance for which a heavy fine was imposed - a law compelled all to be buried in wool for the benefit of the home woollen industry. (13)

Bridge Place came into the possession of Walter Braems the old merchant's son, but widow sold it to Mr. John Taylor, who pulled down the greater portion of it. Remained in the possession of the Taylor family until purchased by the Marquis of Conyngham - - present tenant Mr. William Howard. Remaining part was apparently one wing - wall upon which stables are built marks front of the old building. (13)

Custom House, Dover New Custom House erected in 1806, as the houses erected by Braems were in a very ruinous state. The old house was originally in two dwellings, which were occupied by Braems and his son Walter, then the principal merchants in the town. They had a grant of the Beach on the opposite side of the basin, on which they

erected a square pile of buildings for store-houses. They were then in expectation of Dover being made a free port. (11)

One wife buried in St. Mary's Church, Dover.

Obituaries Anno Domini, 1681. Sir Arnold Braems, Kt. (Born in Dover and baptized as in the Register of St. Mary's in that town Doth appear October 3 A.D. 1602.

Departed this life in his mansion house called Blackmansbury alias Bridge Place on Sunday morning, ten o'clock November 13th A.D. 1681 in the 80th year of his age and was buried on the 20th of the same month in the east chancel of the Chapel of Bridge, close to the tomb which he had . . . erected there in memory of his two deceased Ladies.

(3)

x. Arch. Cantiana says 21st. Anno Domini, 1684. Sarah the daughter of Walter Braems of Blackmansbury alias Bridge Place esq. by Mary his wife (who died of this child being the 14th) two hours after she was delivered was born on Tuesday(?) 27th at half an hour past eight at night and baptized the next day being Wednesday January 28th 1684.(3)

1692 (Colonel) Walter Braems (of Bridge Place) was buried in woollen in the east chancel of the Chapel of Bridge on the 7th day of September, 1692. (2)

Maps	Dover, c. 1641.	(P. 41)
	Dover, 1750.	(P.43) (7)
	Bridge. Tithe Map,	1838.

Key to Main Sources Consulted

- (1) Archaeologia Cantiana.
- (2) Bishops' Transcripts, (Canterbury Cathedral Archives).

Bridge Place - late 17th century

- on site of ancient Court Lodge
Garwintons of Bekesbourne owned it, the last of whom was Thomas Garwinton who died in the 11th year of the reign of Henry IVth (c1411). Bridge Place went to a daughter of his by marriage to the Hauts of Hautbourn and by another female of that name to the Isaaks, who had also some estate here many ages before that.
From this family part of it went somehow to the Lawrences.
- 1545 Henry Lawrence held the court lodge in the 36th year of the reign of Henry VIII
- c 1680 about the middle of Queen Elizabeths reign they both joined in a sale of it to William Patrick Esq; grandfather to Sir Edward who parted with it and the manor to Mr Arnold Braeme of Dover.
- 1638 was the property of Sir Edward Partherich (Patrick?) and his wife.
- 1638 Manor of Blackmansberry bought by Sir Arnold Braems from Partherich. Braems was from a family out of Flanders, ie Flemish. His father(Charles) was a merchant in Dover. Sir Arnold was elected MP for Dover in 1660 and was knighted at Canterbury on May 27th 1660 for services to King Charles II. He pulled down the ancient Court Lodge and built Bridge Place. Bankrupted himself by so doing. Built of hand-made Dutch bricks brought over from Holland and landed in Sandwich. Died at Bridge Place in 1681. Married first Joanna, 2nd daughter of Walter Henflete (or Septvans) of Bekesbourne,
secondly, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Dudley Digges, Master of the Rolls, & thirdly, Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Palmer, of Wingham, Bart. During his life Bridge Place often visited by the artist Cornelius Janssen.
- Nov 15th 1660 Samuel Pepys** records a meeting with Sir Arnold Brames. "And did myself walk homewards (hearing that Sir W Pen was gone before in a coach) to overtake him and with much ado at last did in Fleet Street, and there I went in to him, and there was Sir Arnold Brames, and we all three to Sir W Batten's to dinner, he having a couple of servants married today" They all had dinner and then made offerings of money - Pepys gave 10 shillings & thought most of the others gave more.
- Dec 27th 1660 Pepys diary**:- "This afternoon there came in a strange lord to Sir William Batten's by a mistake and enters discourse with him, so that we could not be rid of him till Sir Arn. Breames and Mr Bens and Sir W. Penn fell a-drinking to him till he was drunk, and so sent him away."
- Oct 5th 1661 Pepys diary**:- "And at night Sir W. Penn and I alone to the Dolphin, and there eat some bloat-herrings and drank good sack. Then came in Sir W Warren and another and staid a while with us, and then Sir Arnold Brames, with whom we staid late and till we had drunk too much wine.
Subsequently owned by his son, Colonel Walter Braems who died in 1692- heirs could not afford it's upkeep. In the 17th century it was the largest country house in East Kent after Chilham castle - had a large deer park and aviary.
- c1680 visited by the artist Schellinke. Described the house as containing, in addition to Braems's own fine residence, a large number of rooms, chambers, halls and other good appartments. The grounds were 'very well kept pleasure grounds with fruit trees, well watered by a fast flowing stream of wonderfully clear sweet water, (the Nailbourne). This splits up into several branches and rivulets; also some fish ponds in which ... trout is bred. There are also some vineyards. ... also a brewery, bakery, wine-press, hop garden, barns, stables, oxen, cows, sheep, pigs, geese, ducks'
- 1704 sold to John Taylor of Bifrons by Sir Thomas Braems- pulled it all down apart from one wing. Held by the Taylor family until

1826-1849	Richard Brice Esq. - farmer-vice-chairman of Board of Guardians of the Union
1857	Tombstone in churchyard - sacred to memory of George Athill Esq of Bridge Place
1878	Contents of Bridge Place auctioned April 2nd - property of Walter Gipps Esq - leaving the neighbourhood.
1882	Col. Moyle Billington
1890-1898	Oscar de Satgé
1899-1904	Mrs Wilson
1904-05	J B E Wilson Esq. Mrs Wilson
1905-07	Mrs Wilson (an Arthur Thomas Wilson M.B.,B.Ch was physician & surgeon, medical officer & public vaccinator No.1 district, Bridge union & medical officer of Bekesbourne sanitorium. Any connection?)
?	Dr Wilson (GP for Bridge & surrounding villages) & his brother Mr J Wilson : sons of Mrs Wilson above. members of a well-known Irish family? Another brother called Sir Samuel Wilson- not in Bridge.
1907-12	Seymour L Harries
1919	R H B Hammond-Chambers
1922-1940	Mrs Ethel Penn TN 8
1927	Mr Wiliam Howard - conflict of dates. Tenant of Marquis of Conyngham.
??	General & Lady Bing. The Duchess of Albany, daughter of Queen Victoria, stayed there after opening some official event in Canterbury
1924-49	Mrs Ethel Penn (TN 8)
1952	Miss N Penn
1954	Bought by the Hon Mrs Neame
1955	Harold Wyles
?	sold by Mrs Neame to Mr Malcolm Pinhorn (genealogical printer) with an entrance lodge and 6 acres of ground