

Misc. 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 I. (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 Blackemansbury 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. (1)

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 Bæaems" who farmed the Harbour revenues in the time of Charles 1. (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 Bæaems, under whose patronage Cornelis Janssen came into the neighbourhood. (6)

Sir Arnold Braems had as his guest a famous portrait painter of his day, Cornelius Janssen, for 20 years a fasionable 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 1 . . . this painting on copper is of Richard Bargrave who was the builder of Bifrons in the 16th century (15)

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 February, 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, et (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 elavations. (16)

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 Conyng- ham 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<sup>x</sup> 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)  
Bridge, Tithe Map, 1838. (7)

Key to Main Sources Consulted

- (1) Archaeologia Cantiana.
- (2) Bishops' Transcripts, (Canterbury Cathedral Archives).
- (3) Bridge Church (St. Peter's) Parish Registers, 1569-1767),  
(Canterbury Cathedral Archives).
- (4) Chalklin, C.W. Kent: a social and economic history. Longman's, 1965.
- (5) Everitt, Alan The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660. Leics. Univ. Press 1966.
- (6) Gardiner, Dorothy The Oxinden Letters, 1607-1642.
- (7) Hasenson, Alec The History of Dover Harbour. Aurem Spec. Eds. 1980.
- (8) Hasted, Edward History of Kent, Vol. 4. (Folio ed.)
- (9) Hueffer, F.M. The Cinque Ports. Blackwood, 1900.
- (10) Igglesden, C. Saunters through Kent . . . Vol. 1X.
- (11) Jones, J.B. The Annals of Dover, 2nd ed. Dover Express, 1938.
- (12) Jones, J.B. Dover: a Perambulation. Dover Express, 1907.
- (13) Lyons, Rev. John History of the Town and Port of Dover, Vol. 1. 1813.
- (14) Mee, Arthur Kent: the Gateway of England. Hodder & Stoughton 1936.
- (15) Peirce, D. History of Bridge. Unpublished.
- (16) Quiney, A. Kent Houses. Antique Collector's Club 1993.
- (17) Schellink, W. The Journal of William Schellink's Travels in England, 1661-1663. Royal Historical Society
- (18) Tithe Map Bridge. 1838.