

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 have been

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

1890-1897: Oscar de Satgé

1907: Mrs Wilson

1913-15: Seymour Harries

1924-40: Mrs Ethel Penn

1954: Mrs Neame

?1962 : Malcolm Pinhorn

1969: Peter Malkin