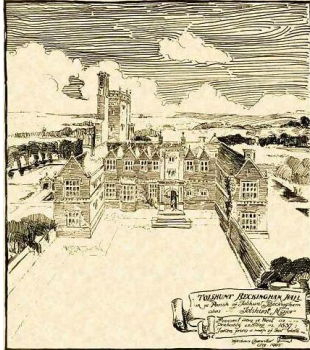


A history of Beckingham Hall

including a collection Beckingham Hall Gateway paintings and drawings from the past

Beckingham Hall is not, as has never been, within Goldhanger parish, but it is sufficiently close and has many historic connections with the village to justify its inclusion on the Goldhanger Past website. For example, the estate of Beckingham estate once included Follyfaunts, Longwick, Highams, Manor Farm, and probably Joyces and Rockleys Farms, all on the parish boundary and having many connections with the village. Beckingham Hall was also once the most grand and impressive Tudor building for miles around that in itself justifies a place in our local history. . .

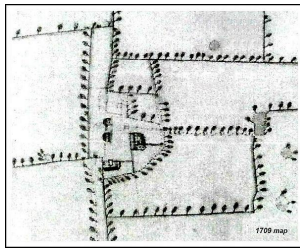


A drawing on the original Hall



The perimeter wall and gatehouse in 1916 with the later farmhouse behind

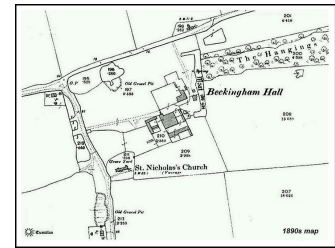
Sadly, the original Tudor Hall disappeared in the late 1700s, probably having demolished as the result of a fire. It has been described as a "Fortified Manor House", with both an outer protective wall and a moat, the combination of which surrounded and protected the entire house. The text on the drawing above indicates it to be a "Prospect from ye West", taken from a map of 1657, but recorded as drawn in 1905. If it is the church tower behind the Hall, which seems likely, it has been incorrectly placed. The moat can be seen to the left of the Hall and the Blackwater Estuary can be seen in the background. As well as the drawing and photo above which shows the more modern farmhouse behind the wall, the three maps below (which can be enlarged) give clues to the grandness of the original building. . .



1709 map



1875 map



1890s map

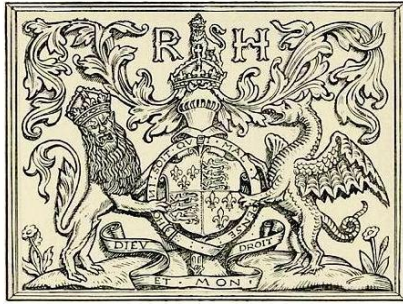
Unfortunately the 1709 map does not reveal much about the Hall, other than it shows a much a larger building than is shown on later maps. No moat is shown, and there appears to be two large buildings at the side of Church Road with curved frontages that don't appear on later maps. These are probably a representation of the gatehouse. The Church is shown on this map with the family chapel extending into the land adjacent to the Hall. The 1875 map clearly shows the replacement farmhouse and many more outbuildings. The moat can be seen on both the 1875 map and the 1890s map.

Perhaps the best know relict of the original Hall that demonstrates how grand the Hall originally was, is the oak panel that is prominently displayed in the Victorian and Albert Museum in London. . .

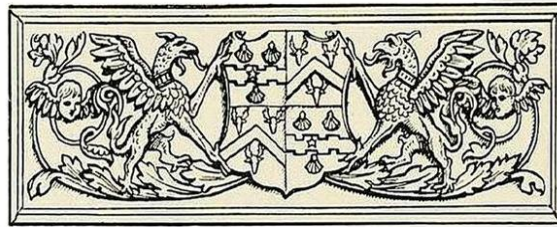


The panel is thought to have formed an over-mantel to the chimney-piece in the hall or principal apartment, and is said to have been saved from fire which destroyed the Hall. The superbly-carved renaissance ornament of scrolling stems, boys and dolphins has been combined with the arms of the Beckingham family, and the arms of Henry VIII, so as to promote the family's own status, and their loyalty to the King, who had granted them the manor in 1543.

The family motto is inscribed in Latin, which translates as 'Ingratitude is death'. It has been suggested that members of the Beckingham family, specifically the first Stephen Beckingham and his son also Stephen, are portrayed in the sculpture. The sculpture was bought by the V&A from The New England Company in 1912 for £370. Henry's coat of arms in the centre upper panel and the Beckinghams coat of arms in the lower central panel can be seen in detail in these drawings. . .



Henry VIII coat of arms



Beckingham family coat of arms

The most notable remaining structure at the site is the much painted Tudor gatehouse which has been recorded by many artists over the last 200 years. It has also frequently been photographed. . .



The Gatehouse 100 years ago

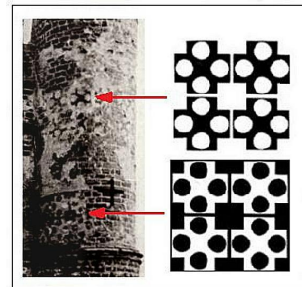


The gatehouse, gateway and walls in 2000

At seems that at one time the outer walls were elaborately decorated...

from... *Art, Artisans and Apprentices, James Ayres 2014*

In England sgraffito work goes back at least to the early sixteenth century and may be an Italianate influence. In about 1546 the outside walls of **Beckingham Hall, Tolleshunt Major, Essex**, were decorated in this way. This craft tradition is known to have persisted until 1719.



Sgraffito or sgraffiti is a technique of wall decoration of Italian origin, produced by applying layers of plaster which are tinted in contrasting colours. It can also be made in tile form. Small samples of the work on the outside of the gatehouse have remained into the 20th century and appear to be two contrasting black and white tile like decorations running in bands around the front, as seen above. The following two extracts describe the same external decoration as "pencilling" and "Ruddling" and indicate that the it was, and still is unusual. . .

from...
The Priory of Dartford and The Manor House Of Henry VIII
by A. W. Clapham in 1926

... We have a record here of two distinct processes; the okering and pencilling was a decoration of the external wall-surfaces and as such is of very uncommon occurrence at that date; I only know of one surviving instance at **Beckingham Hall, Essex**, where the decoration is in black on white, on one side of the gatehouse and the same pattern reversed on the other side of the building. The application of plaster of Paris to the jambs and arches of the gatehouse and the fire-places is a well-known and common device to imitate masonry in a brick building...

from...
English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products
by J Blair & N Ramsay in 1991

... Another bricklayer's task was to finish his work with a treatment of ochre, and this is occasionally met with in accounts. 200 pounds of it were bought for 'colouring' Fox's Tower at Farnham Castle in 1475. Seven pounds, together with 14 gallons of small ale and some glovers' offal, were bought for colouring a brick chimney at Collyweston Manor House (Northants.) in 1504. It was presumably applied to brickwork as a wash. The patrons there were the bishop of Winchester and Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of the king, which suggests that special trouble was taken to achieve a perfect finish on the best work, of which we now know little...

... Ruddling is not to be confused with the external 'pencilling' often performed by bricklayers from the mid 16th to the early 17th century (e.g. on the royal works); it was commonly in red, black or white, or some combination of them, apparently over a thin skim of plaster upon inferior brickwork or mixed materials. Early examples include Great Cressingham Manor House (Norfolk) and **Beckingham Hall, Tolleshunt Major (Essex)**, both c.1540-50.

This extract from Miller Christy's *Handbook for Essex* published in 1887 has an interesting description of the wall and gateway...

Tolleshunt Major

from Durrent's Handbook of Essex by Miller Christy

A village, said to derive its various distinctive names from one Malger, who owned it in early times, and from the Beckingham family, whose seat, *Beckingham Hall*, adjoining the church, was in this parish. The remains of it present some very fine specimens of Tudor brick architecture. The old wall surrounding it still remains, and has an ornamental top. At the 2 ends there are turrets, at the base of which are niches like sentry-boxes. In the centre of this wall is the main entrance-gateway, still almost perfect. It consists of a battlemented square tower with upper storey and 4 corner turrets, the front ones crowned with smaller turrets, one of which is now gone. The doorway has a 4-centred Tudor arch. The tower is ornamented with various forms of crosses. On the S. side there are 2 smaller turrets, embattled. The present hall, which is moated, is modern, except the kitchen, in which is some fine oak carving, with the arms of Henry VIII.

extracts from... *English homes - Early Tudor: 1458-1558*, by H. Avray Tipping in 1921

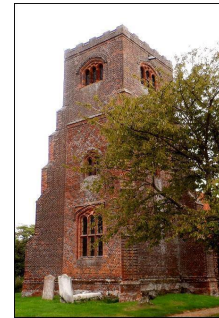
...It is unlikely that the Beckingham panels, although no doubt wrought in England for Stephen Beckingham, are by an English hand. The sculpture of the scrollwork, birds, beasts and boys, is of high order, and although there were Englishmen in Henry VIII's time who could produce work of greater finish than that at Tolleshunt Darcy, yet the deft elegance and mastery shown in the Beckingham panels are rather such as was possessed by the Italian and French carvers who found employment in England.

...The dwelling stands in a remarkable enclosure of Early Tudor brickwork, forming a court or garden over a hundred feet square. In the centre of the west side is a ruined gatehouse, of which the archway (now filled in) was not of width to allow more than a man on horseback to pass through. The upper floor was reached by a narrow stair in the thickness of the south wall, and from the room thus reached another flight conveyed to the roof. The room was lit towards west and east by three-light, arch-headed windows, and towards north and south by squints. The fireplace flue was carried up into one of the corner circular turrets, two of which are hollow with arched entrances to their exiguous space.

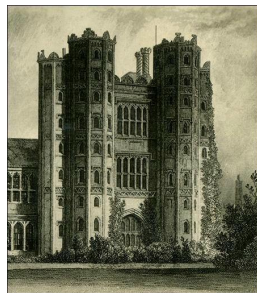
The same arrangement is found at the north-west corner of the enclosure, where a tiny garden alcove occupies the bottom section of the conically topped turret. Beyond the south wall of the enclosure a broad cartway, once arched over, is flanked by tall turrets with embattled parapets, such as we also see on the inner turrets of the gatehouse. On the gatehouse walls are still portions of original plasterwork painted in bands of black-and-white geometric patterns.

...The enclosing wall has a fine diaper of burnt ends. Smallish triangles rise from the plinth, and from the apex of every other one of these rise larger triangles. The wall is topped with an ample coping set on an over-sailing, toothed course, and the whole composition is one of dignified mass, relieved by interesting details.

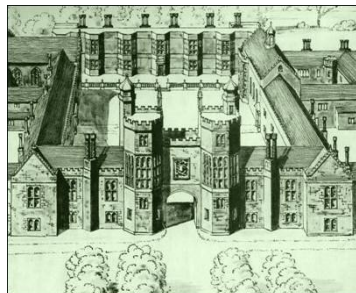
The tower attached to St. Nicholas church next the Hall was built by Sir Stephen Beckingham at the same time as the Gate House, and is built of the same type of Tudor red brick with blue brick diapering. Historian Nikolaus Pevsner wrote that the tower is disproportionately large compared the nave of the Church...



One wonders how unique Beckingham Hall gatehouse is and if there are, or were, any similar structures nearby. Layer Marney Tower is certainly the nearest Tudor building and has a large impressive gatehouse. The Palace of Beaulieu, a former royal establishment at Boreham, also called New Hall and is now New Hall School, also once had an impressive gatehouse, but both of these gatehouses were part the main buildings. . .



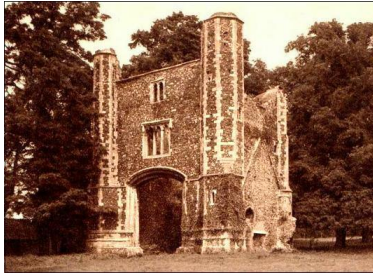
Layer Marney Tower



New Hall gatehouse

However, three other ancient gatehouses have been identified in the eastern region which appear to have a much closer in resemblance to the Beckingham gatehouse. The Abbeygate at Thetford priory, is older at c.1400 and not built of red brick. Erwarton Hall gatehouse near Shotley in Suffolk was built at the same time as Beckingham Hall and Nikolaus Pevsner described that gatehouse as "similar to that of Beckingham Hall which can be dated c1545 with certainty". The gatehouse with even greater similarity however is the Water Gate at Thomas Wolsey's ill-fated "Cardinal's College of Saint Mary" in College Street, Ipswich, which is close to the

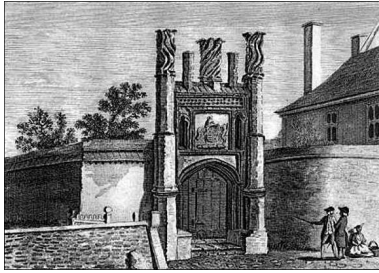
river. All the college buildings were destroyed by Henry VIII, but the gatehouse remains with its chimneys and pinnacles missing, and of similar appearance, even with similar boundary walls. Neither the Water Gate at Ipswich nor Erwarton Hall gatehouses have any signs of windows so had no accommodation for a gatekeeper as at Beckingham Hall, however the Abbeygate at Thetford does have windows. . .



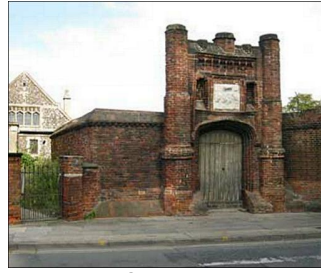
Abbeygate at Thetford priory



Erwarton Hall Gatehouse at Shotley

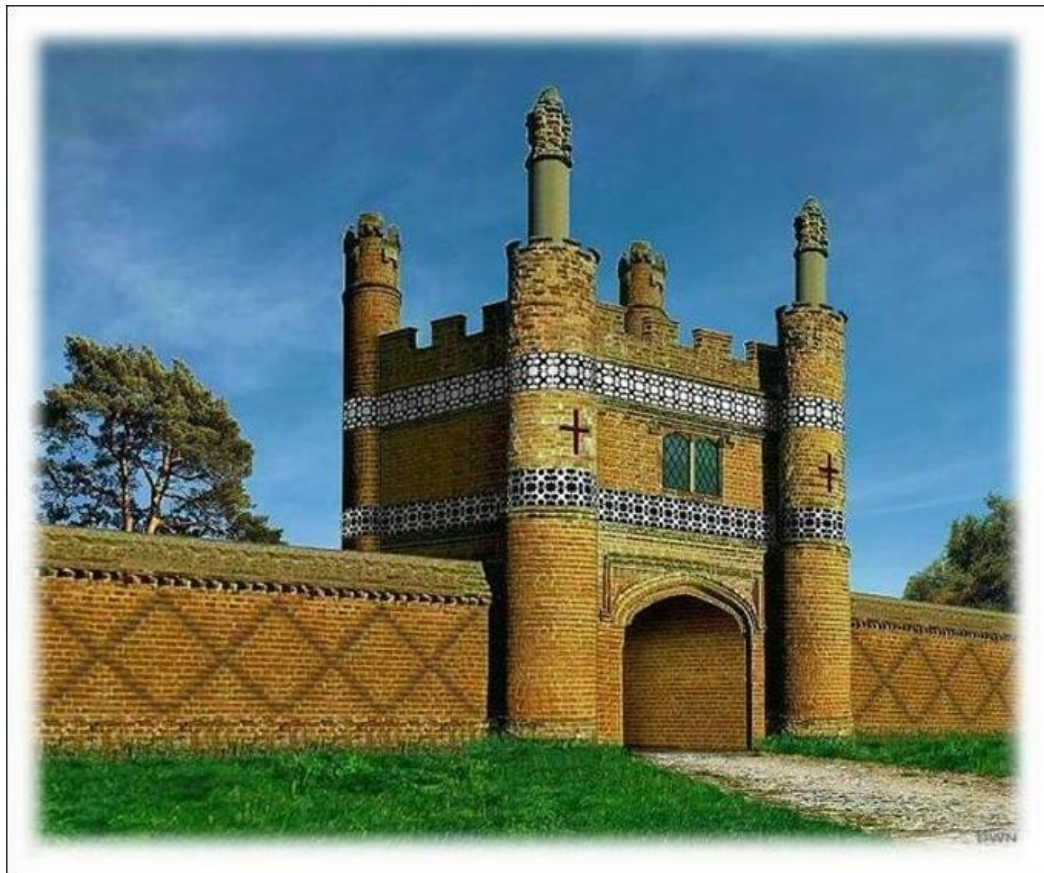


Wolsey's original Water Gate



The Water Gate at Ipswich today

Recent and old photographs, lithographic drawings from the early 1800s, and other historic information given herein from various sources enable us to envisage what the gatehouse might of looked like when it was originally built, and in turn give some clues to the appearance of the original Hall, as it is unlikely that the gatehouse was more ornate than the Hall. The castle-like gatehouse originally had chimneys built into the two front turrets, with two matching ornate rear castellated turrets (also replicated on the gateway turrets close by), and castellated top edges on all four sides. The early drawings (below) also show the front turrets with small castellations and signs of two bands of decorative black and white sgraffito tiles arounded the outside. The entrance arch would probably not have been filled with brickwork and a plain wooden door. The Tudor brick arch top and window tops are the same design as the windows in the church tower. The perimeter wall had prominent blue brick diapering also matching up with the church tower. . .



a computer art impression of the original gatehouse

A timeline of know events and milestones

- 1150s** The estate was given to Coggeshall Abbey by Godfrey de Darcy, also known as Godfrey de Tregoz
- 1536** Coggeshall Abbey was dissolved
- 1537** The manor was rented to a John King
- 1544** Henry VIII sold it to Stephen Beckenham and his wife Anne, together with Follyfaunts and Longwick farms for £929.
The Charter granted to Stephen Beckingham by Henry VIII for the sale is held in the London Metropolitan Archive in London...



- 1545** Stephen Beckingham built the tower on St Nicholas Church
- 1546** Wooden panelling from Beckingham Hall displaying this date is in the V&A, (purchased in 1912).
- 1574** Sir Thomas Beckingham, (c.1574-1633), of Tolleshunt Major, Essex
“His grandfather acquired the Essex manor of Tolleshunt Major from the Crown in 1543, and thereafter this property was s known as Tolleshunt Beckingham. He owed his election to the first Stuart Parliament for Sudbury to his father-in-law, Sir William Waldegrave, whose family had been electoral patrons in the borough in the Elizabethan period. He was also a neighbour of the Darcy family.”
- 1609** A family chapel and mausoleum was built on the north side of St Nicholas Church with kneeling effigies of Stephen Beckingham and his wife with their heraldic shield. It was pulled down later when the Beckinghams sold the estate.
- 1609** Stephen Beckingham constructed a heraldic shield in the church which featured statuettes of himself and his wife Alvis Beckingham (née Terral).
- 1613** Sir Thomas Beckingham was removed from the Essex bench and received a licence to travel for three years, which might suggest he was in debt.
- 1620** Sir Thomas Beckingham sold parts of the estate to Christopher Clitherow.
- 1636** The Beckingham family sold the Hall to Sir Thomas Adams.
- 1647** Sir William Adams, son of Sir Thomas Adams, sold it to Thomas Fox, a London cheesemonger.
- 1710** Thomas Fox's wife re-married and the Hall was acquired by the Revd. Dr. Daniel Williams.
- 1711** The Revd. Dr. Williams left Beckingham Hall in trust to the New England Company.
- 1753** The Beckinhams were in residence at this time as noted in The Gentleman's Magazine of 1797 and are referred to as “one of the oldest Saxon families in this island”.
- 1782** The Hall was demolished and replaced by a much smaller farmhouse. (Wikipedia)
- 1783** The Beckingham family still owned the lands at this time.
- 1700s** The Sir Stephen Beckingham Trust gave £2 per year out of Freme Farm, but not paid since 1815 (White's 1848 Directory)
- 1870s** Ernest Page farmed Beckingham estate. He was the brother of Charles Page of Old Rectory Farm.
- 1880s** James A Piggot farmed 420 acres of the Beckingham estate, employing 22 men and 4 boys and was know at the time as “Baron Piggot”

Several Stephen Beckinghams were associated with the Hall

Typical for the period, and confusingly now, the first name Stephen was passed down through several generations of the family. They were all wealthy educated professionals, well known in their day and have historical records...

Stephen Beckingham the 1st (1518-1588) original owner

married three times:

1. Anne Unton (m.1538, d. about 1550) - mother of Thomas (c1540-1596), Mary, Alice, Thomasin, Elizabeth
2. Elizabeth Browne of Wiltshire (d about 1554) (m.about 1550) - mother of Stephen (1550-1611)
3. Johanna of Bygrave Herts (d.1588) (m.about 1555)

Stephen Beckingham the 2nd (1550-1611) married to Avice Tyrrell

Here is an extract from Stephen Beckingham the 2nd's Will, which reveals both their wealth and their complex family relationships using the same first names...

Stephen Beckingham, of Tolleshunt Darcy, Co. Essex, Esq., whole in body, &c. Will dated 4th July, 1606.

To be buried within my father's chapel, in the parish church of Tolleshunt Maier, als Tolleshunt Beckingham, Co. Essex, and a tomb to be sett in the wall, and as near my grave as conveniently may be, with what superscription it shall seem good to my executor,

Persons named:—

My nephew and godson, Stephen Butler, £10.

Bequests to poor of Tolleshunt Darcy and Tolleshunt Maier.

My chief mansion house in Tolleshunt Darcy, to Avice Beckingham.

To my nephew, Sir Thomas Beckingham, Knt., "my lace or chaine of gold which I used to weare about my necke."

To such heir male as shall enjoy my lands and tenements, "my Jewell with the Unicorne's horne which is fashioned like a Roman A, sett all over with diamondes and rubyes and other precious stones," and all my silver plate, jewells, chaynes of gold, household stuff, &c., of my house in Tolleshunt Darcy.

To my now wife, Avice, her wearing apparel, wearing jewells, and chaynes of gold, and houses called Beckingham's tenements, in the parish of St. Mary Overies als St. Saviour's, Southwark, County Surrey

My lands and tenements in Tolleshunt Maier, &c., &c., to Stephen Beckingham, second son of my brother, Thomas Beckingham, remainder in default to the next or second son of my said nephew, Sir Thomas Beckingham (eldest son of my brother, Thomas Beckingham); remainder in default to the other younger sons of the said Sir Thomas Beckingham; remainder in default to William Beckingham, eldest son of my said nephew, Sir Thomas Beckingham; remainder to Stephen Beckingham, son of my uncle, Thomas Beckingham; remainder to the eldest and other sons of my uncle, John Beckingham; remainder to the next heir male of my name of the ancient house of Beckingham, of the Manor House of Puddlecoate, County Oxon; remainder in default to St. John's, College, Oxford.

To my kindsman, the Lord Petra, my best horse or gelding.

Stephen Beckingham, son of my brother, Thomas Beckingham, to be executor.

Stephen Beckingham the 3rd was admitted in 1665 as a Fellow-Commoner at Jesus College Cambridge.

This Stephen Beckingham of Tolleshunt Darcy was made a barrister in 1671.

Stephen Beckingham the 4th (c1697-1756) lived at Bourne place, Bishopsbourne, Kent

Stephen Beckingham's wedding to Mary Cox in 1729 was recorded by Hogarth...

*The Wedding of
Stephen Beckingham
and Mary Cox*

Oil on canvas, 50¹/₂ × 40¹/₂ in. (128.3 × 102.9 cm)
Signed, dated, and inscribed: (lower left)
Nuptiae: S: Beckingham: Ar / June: 9: 1729:
W: M: Hogarth: pinxt: (on minister's book) of
Matrimony

Stephen Beckingham, London and Bourne Place, Bishopsbourne, Kent (until d. 1756);² Stephen Beckingham, Bourne Place, London, and Ivy House, Hampton Court (1756–d. 1831; inv., n.d. [before 1768], as My Father's Wedding—Hogarth pinxit); by family descent to Herbert William Deedes, Sandling Park and Salwood Castle, near Hythe, Kent (1891—at least 1906; sold to Carstairs)

The Beckinghams were from Wiltshire and later established in Essex. Generations of the family belonged to the legal profession and had been associated with London's Inns of Court.



Stephen Beckingham the 5th (c1729-1813) of Bourne Place, Bishopsbourne, Kent,

was the son of Stephen Beckingham the 4th. This Stephen Beckingham was painting by the famous artist P G Batoni (1708-87) in 1752-3...



extracts from ... <http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Pub/ArchCant/Vol.046%20-%201934/046-12.pdf>

The Ancient Stained Glass In Bishopsbourne Church, Kent

written by N E Toke in 1934 and recorded by Kent Archaeological Society

...The fine Renaissance glass in the St. Catherine's Chapel, was inserted by the Beckingham family, who owned Bourne Place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The estate was originally the seat of Sir Anthony Aucher who died in 1692 leaving two sons. On the death of the younger of these in 1726 the estate devolved to their sister Elizabeth, the wife of John Corbet, Esq. of Shropshire, who died in 1736. The latter's eldest daughter Mary Catherine, became the owner of Bourne Place, and carried it with a marriage to Stephen Beckingham, who died in 1756. The Beckinghams then held Bourne Place until 1844...

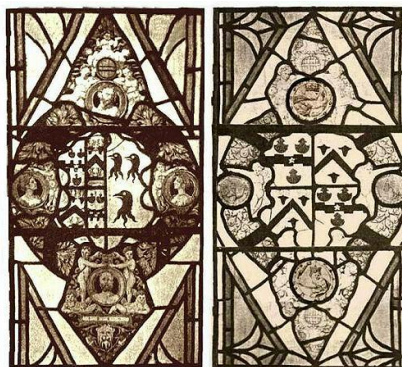
A series of tablets, ten on either side of the window, commemorates members of the Aucher and Beckingham families beginning with Sir Anthony Aucher, Master of the Jewel House in the times of Henry 8th, Edward 6th, and Queen Mary, slayed at the loss of Callis" in 1558, and ending with Miss Louisa Beckingham, who died in 1844...

The heraldic glass bears the date 1550, and was probably brought from Beckingham Hall in Tolleshunt Major, Essex, where the family of Beckingham was seated at one time...

In Mr. Herbert Cole's *Heraldic and Floral Forms used in Decoration* there is an illustration of a carved oak panel from Beckingham Hall. It shows the arms of Henry VIII and the date 1546. These panels are illustrated also in "*Early English Furniture and Woodwork*" by H. Cescinsky and E. R. Gribble, who state that they are probably the work of Walloon craftsmen resident in Essex. The panel is are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington...

The lower portion of the window in the Church is divided into three of which the two lateral ones contain six shields, three on either side, ith the arms of Beckingham and their various impalements. The centre portion contains the Royal Arms, as borne by the Tudors, together with two finely-wrought pieces of seventeenth century Dutch glass...

The shield (on the left of this photo) is dated 1550. It bears : Beckenham, impaling: Argent, three rooks' heads erased, sable, and for Sharpe of Essex. The lowest shield is undated, and is ornamented at the top with a mauve coloured medallion containing the bust of a Queen holding a sceptre, and at the bottom with a similar medallion with the bust of a King with a sceptre. Medallions on either side contain, respectively, a warrior brandishing a sword, and what appears to be a Tartar warrior in a quilted tunic. It bears: Beckingham, impaling: Azure, on a fess, or, a greyhound courant, sable, between three spearheads of the second, for Unton...



The shields (in the right on this photo) compartment are almost identical with those on the left as far as the ornamentation round them is concerned. The uppermost one is dated 1550, and bears : Beckingham, impaling : Argent, three hawks' lures, sable, for Bromwich. The centre one bears: Beckingham, impaling: Azure, chevron between three escallops, for Browne of Horton Kirby, Kent. The shield has the arms of Beckingham alone...

Note: Bourne place, Bishopsbourne was the Beckingham family seat in the 1700 & 1800s and today is called Bourne House.

John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England, and Wales* in 1870-72 recorded the following, and is another indication of the Beckingham legacy and the family's connection with Kent...

TOLLESHUNT-MAJOR, or Beckingham, in Maldon district... A seat of the Beckinghams was erected here in the time of Henry VIII., and is now represented only by an embattled gateway. The living is a vicarage in the diocese of Rochester. Value £187.

Some of the information on this webpage is taken from:

Miller Christy's *Handbook for Essex* published in 1887

Tolleshunt Major in words and pictures by Karen Tuke in 2002, Essex libraries reference: E.TOL.4

The History of Beckingham a booklet published by W L Hall in 1936

Early English Furniture & Woodwork by Herbert Cescinsky & Ernest. R. Gribble in 1922

The Priory of Dartford and The Manor House of Henry VIII by A W Clapham In 1926

English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen Techniques, Products by J Blair & N Ramsay in 1991

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O140692>

<http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Pub/ArchCant/Vol.046%20-%201934/046-12.pdf>

SEAX listing for - Beckingham Hall

SEAX listing for - Beckingham Hall, walls and turrets

Beckingham Hall Gateway paintings and drawings

from the past

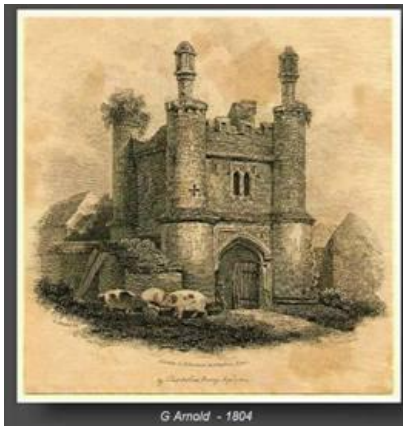
for over two hundred years Beckingham Hall gateway has been an attractive subject for artist's...



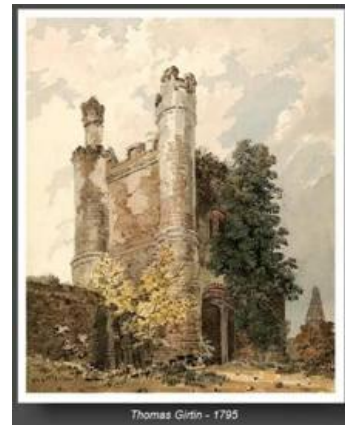
J. Allen (date unknown)



W H Bartlett 1832



G Arnold - 1804



Thomas Girtin - 1795



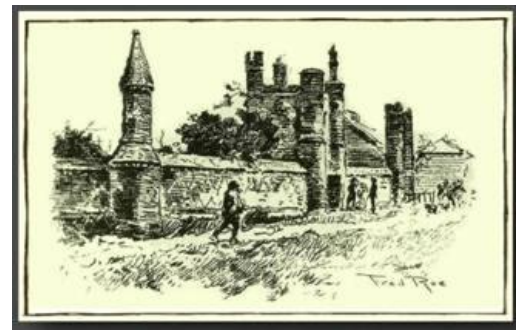
Alfred B Banford



Robert Nightingale



Charles Barrett - 1893



Fred Roe 1920