

## CHAPTER II

### SURREY AND THE SANDERS

The origin of the name Surrey is a contraction of the words "South Country". In the Middle Ages it was a densely forested area, with frequent marshes on low ground, straddled by the line of the North Downs, along the sides of which ran one of the most ancient trading routes, later the Pilgrims' Way, keeping its traffic at a high enough level to steer clear of the lower miry ground. This south country is the origin of the Sanders, the commencement of a long family line stretching over several centuries to the present time.

The first Sanders mentioned in contemporary chronicles as living in Charlwood date back to 1243, and several county histories and unpublished sources agree that the earliest forebear of the Charlwood family came from Sanderstead, a few miles away, before the Norman Conquest. In those days, of course, surnames as such were not used, so that delving into family origins becomes perhaps rather more speculative than historical.

However, an account of the earliest fathers is contained elsewhere. Little is known of the deeds or personalities of such early Surrey gentry, except their names and those of their children down to the end of the fourteenth century. Then events push this family "of great antiquity" into a position of power in the locality and in the country at large, and from that time their lives become copiously documented. Wills, memorials, deeds and chronicles survive to this day, which tell us much about the lives of many of them.

Father and son had been settled for nearly two hundred years in the remote

village of Charlwood in the Surrey Weald before the marriage of William Sander and Joane Carew about 1450. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this union. The Carews were one of the biggest land-owning families in the south, and were connected with many of the great medieval families of England. Their descent needs no explanation in these pages, but through William's marriage with Joane, the heir to the Carew estates as there was no son, and two later marriages between the families, the Sanders family acquired much land in Surrey and great influence in the nation. In Feudal England, it need hardly be added, upstarts could not marry the nobility, so that William himself must have been a gentleman of property well settled in Charlwood long before his fortunate marriage.

William Sander dies in 1481, eleven years after his wife Joane. Their eldest son died in 1501 without issue at Banbury, leaving the other two sons, Richard, who became heir to his father's estates, and Henry, who moved to another village in Surrey, Ewell. William's heir, Richard, died very young, but not before leaving his wife with three sons to perpetuate the name. He is best known for his own memorial, the remarkable carved oak rood screen in Charlwood Church. It is believed that the gilded panels above the screen, which have recently been successfully restored and lighted, were originally a surround to the family pew: clearly they do not fit above the rood screen, and it is most likely that Richard's son had them carved and placed round the family pew in memory of his father. This son and heir was Nicholas Sander, whose effigy can be seen kneeling at a prayer desk with his wife, Alys, and their children, on the brass on the south wall of the chancel at Charlwood. As the brass is inset in the chancel wall, and not

on the floor of the aisle, it is entirely intact, and it forms one of the finest memorials to the family which can be seen. Nicholas was a lawyer, and was an executor of Henry VIII's will. Clearly he was a man of national importance who was accustomed to life in the capital and to traveling widely.

Nicholas' brothers, although never coming into their father's property, were also eminent. William, the younger, was Sherriff of Surrey. The elder brother, Thomas, went to war in Flanders as a young man, and on his return went with his commander to Derbyshire. There he made good, became lord of the manor of Lullington and his descendants are the ancestors of the Sanders, who lived in Derbyshire throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Although Nicholas' sons and daughters are represented on the Charlwood brass as children, they were well grown up by the time the brass was put up in their parents' memory. The eldest son, Thomas, kneeling immediately behind his father and appearing thoughtful and childish, had at the time already attained one of the most powerful positions in the country. He had been knighted three years before his father's death for his services as King's Remembrancer of the Exchequer.

Thomas Sanders was born in 1500, and received the best education. He possessed a substantial library, which not only contained books on his profession, law, but also works of literature in English, French and Latin. Thomas's following the legal profession was clearly accompanied by success and reward. In 1539 he bought the Flanchford, Hartswood and Buckland estates, near Betchworth, in Surrey. Later that year he was appointed lawyer to Anne of

Cleves, and even though his unfortunate principal quickly lost favour with Henry VIII, Thomas both retained his appointment and the ear of the King. During the same year Thomas, now an eminent citizen, married Alice, daughter of Edward Walsingham. Walsingham was also in a position of great favour with the King: he had been knighted at Flodden Field. Later he was well known as Lieutenant of the Tower of London at the time of Anne Boleyn's imprisonment, and also when Sir Thomas More and Lord Chancellor Wriothsesley were in custody.

Two years later, in 1541, Thomas Sanders was appointed Commissioner of Sewers responsible for wide areas of the country immediately south of the Thames - "from Lambyth Towne to Kingestone on Temys" This was an important task dealing with draining and reclaiming the marshy areas down by the Thames. The appointment anticipates, by about 350 years, the interest in this subject of another lawyer, the author of Sandars on Sewers, in the nineteenth century. The same year also saw Thomas's appointment as a Commissioner of the Peace for Surrey. His colleagues included the Earl of Arundel, Lord Howard of Effingham and his cousin William Sanders of Ewell. Their task was the control of weights and measures, to see that liveries and arms were not misused, and to prosecute all kinds of criminals, vagrants and vagabonds. Sir Thomas' name appears very frequently in ancient county chronicles in this connection and in 1552 he was appointed Commissioner to Provide for the safe keeping of Church goods in Surrey. However, far from being limited to functions, even though they were important ones, within Surrey, in 1541 he entered national affairs and became Member of Parliament for Gatton. He was re-elected in 1553 and 1558.

In 1550, Thomas Sanders was knighted

for his service to the King and the previous year he had been appointed King's Remembrancer of the Exchequer. This was a post of the greatest importance in days when the King was really monarch and it is not surprising that Sir Thomas was knighted for it: together with the Lords Treasurers Remembrancers and the Remembrancer of First Fruits, his job was to look after and regulate the King's financial affairs. This was no mean task, especially as it was also necessary for him to nominate sherriffs, deal with feudal dues and control the coinage of the realm. This was regulated by the Trial of the Pyx which was conducted by a Goldsmiths Company jury, whose job was to maintain minimum quantities of precious metals in coins. As well as these rigorous duties, Sir Thomas also filled the post of Commissioner of the Peace and Commissioner of Church Goods, and had his substantial property in the country to look after.

On Queen Mary's accession in 1553, Sir Thomas' name appears on the Pardon Roll and he must be credited with great astuteness to appear as Queen's Remembrancer in the new reign, under a catholic Queen. Those who were not prepared to change their religious affiliations at the beginning of the successive reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth were not pardoned and lost their posts in the Government as well as their property, if not their lives. It was a fierce choice to make, but Sir Thomas appears to have survived the storm and to have remained on as Remembrancer under three reigns before his death in 1556.

Sir Thomas' will is at Somerset House, and it is fortunate that it has been preserved as it is an informative and detailed chronicle of not only the early Sanders history but also of conditions in contemporary Surrey. In his will Sir Thomas made detailed provisions for the

administration of the land he owned, careful thought for his wife and for the burial of his body, depending on where in the country he died. The will speaks of property at Charlwood, in the Manor of Sanderstead, East Purlew, and Cruses, at Chipstead, Woodmansterne and Ewell, Reigate, Walton, Betchworth, Buckland, Flanchford and in Black Friars. In 1544 the advowson of Merstham had been granted to Sir Thomas by Cranmer. The lands at Sanderstead had been settled on him by his father on his marriage to Alice Walsingham; it is possible that the tenement in Black Friars came from the dissolution of that monastery some years earlier.

Sir Thomas was succeeded by his two sons Edmund and Thomas Wite Sanders. Edmund the elder, married into what must surely rank as one of the most permanent families in the British Isles. His wife was Philippa Gage, daughter of Edward Gage of Firle Place in Sussex, and it is amazing that 400 years later, in 1970, the same family still lives at Firle, just beneath the Sussex Downs. The younger son, Thomas Wite, rose to no great fame except as forefather of the ten generations of Sanders who remained in Charlwood until the 20th century.

The third son of William Sanders and Joane Carew, Henry, Uncle of Nicholas Sanders who appears on the brass at Charlwood, was also the founder of a substantial line of the family. This appears to have been entirely ignored in previous accounts of the family, but this branch contains several prominent figures living at the same time as Nicholas and Sir Thomas.

Henry realised at an early age that, as his father's third son, he would come into little if any of his father's property at Charlwood, so he moved to Ewell, also in

Surrey. There he became a squire of a small estate where he carried on his country interests as had his brother, Richard, at home. In fact he did inherit some property at Charlwood and Newdigate from his father, and his wife, Joan Lepton, no doubt brought him more with her dowry. By training Henry was a lawyer, but his interests centred on his land and his manor, Batailles, or Botalls, at Ewell.

By the time of his death he was clearly one of the notables of the county. As in the case of Sir Thomas, Henry's will also survives, and it gives us a valuable source of information about the way of life of the Sanders of Ewell. Henry evidently owned lands which he settled in two separate estates shortly before his death in 1518. The first estate comprised land at Ewell, Epsom and Chessington; the second at Charlwood, Newdigate, Ockley, Nutfield, Southwark and Bletchingley. The Southwark property which is somewhat surprisingly included with other lands all in the south of Surrey, comprised the Three Crowns Inn or as his trilingual will described it, "hospicio meo vocat le threcrownes". It is near St. Mary Overy Church (now Southwark Cathedral).

Henry Sanders clearly had connections not only in the parts of the county immediately South of the Thames, but also in and near London itself. His will directed that his body be buried at the Savoy Hospital, on Savoy Hill, near London. The funeral at the Savoy was no small ceremony as its detailed arrangements are set out in Henry's will, which ordered the payment of the (then) very large sum of 6/8d to each of the four chaplains officiating at both the mass at Savoy Hill and the funeral in Ewell. The priests were paid 14d and "dinner where he will", and the parish priests along with the poor of Ewell, 4d.

The funeral was held in Ewell and the body transported through the frozen depths of winter a dozen miles or so to the Savoy. The cortege was accompanied by two torchbearers - "torchias ardentis in manibus suis" - each of whom was paid 4 shillings and their expenses for the journey. Apart from gifts of his land, Henry left gifts of £60 to each of his daughters. His will shows that he was an early trustee of lands held for Corpus Christi College and appointed the Bishop of Winchester to be supervisor of his estate.

Henry naturally left his land to his sons, Nicholas and William. Of these two, William continued the family line at Ewell and also rose to the more prominent position in the nation. He was a lawyer, like his father, and during his life held several treasury appointments. In the county he was a Receiver of the Court of Augmentation, administering Church Lands, a Commissioner of Church goods and Crown escheator. He was also, of course, a Commissioner of the Peace at the same time as his cousin, Sir Thomas, and the two men must have had many occasions when their duties as well as their families brought them together.

On the accession of Queen Mary in 1553, the Court of Augmentation was abolished, but William rose to a more powerful position under the new Queen, and became Cofferer to Queen Mary. This was the zenith of his career, and it was not long before we find him knighted and appearing as Sir William. His duties were to a certain extent similar to those of his cousin, Sir Thomas, but more on a personal level than managing the national exchequer which was the task of the Queen's Remembrancer. On Queen Elizabeth's accession he obtained a pardon, reverted to the Protestant faith and was soon to serve the new monarch as Surveyor of the Queens lands.

Sir William and Sir Thomas were both involved in quelling Wyatt's abortive rising in 1553 the purpose of which was to prevent the Queen's marriage with Philip of Spain. A considerable armoury was found in the house of Sir Thomas Cawarden, who was one of William's neighbours in Surrey, so large that it was valued at £2,000, and took seventeen large wagons to remove it. This incident caused great bitterness in Cawarden, and later his widow. Eventually Lady Cawarden's executor was prohibited by the Privy Council from continuing these embittered proceedings against Sir Thomas and William. William's property was still intact at the time of his death, but his will is not so informative as that of Sir Thomas; its provisions were simple, leaving most of his property to his son Nicholas.

This Nicholas was a prosperous lawyer who married another of the Carews, Isabel. Her father had been a friend of Henry VIII, but was beheaded in 1539, only three years after receiving the Order of the Garter. Nicholas Sanders himself was imprisoned in 1577 as a recusant, but, like his father, he owned too much to be able to afford to stick to his catholic principles, and he was pardoned. However, his sympathies did not alter, and he supported many catholics and catholic causes, even if only in secret; he is also known to have given an annuity to his brother, Erasmus, who was in the Fleet Prison for the same offence.

Nicholas' brother, Erasmus, evidently was not so flexible in matters of religion as his father and cousins who sued out their Pardons on each change of monarch. He was a barrister, and on numerous occasions he was imprisoned for his religious beliefs. Eventually he moved to Tenby, where he became successively bailiff and mayor. From him is reputed to descend a long and reverend line of Sanders, several

of whom were notable clerics, whose descendants stretch down to the present day. Among them are a father and son both called Erasmus - the father a Doctor of Divinity and the son a Canon of Windsor and Vicar of St. Martins in the Fields - a note of whose life appears in the Dictionary of National Biography. His nephew, Edward, was Governor of Madras, and his son, Kenrick Francis Sanders, Prebendary of Salisbury and Lord of the Manor of North Ormsby, Lincolnshire.

Nicholas Sanders' son, also Nicholas, inherited Batailles Manor from his father on his death in 1587. He himself was knighted in 1603, when he was a Justice of the Peace for Surrey, and had been Member of Parliament for various Cornish towns, but the most interesting exploit of his life, and one which led to his downfall, was his connection with a scheme to convey water by covered aqueduct from Hoddesdon to London. It was a rival scheme to Sir Hugh Myddleton's New River Scheme, and in fact the opposition from the New River was one reason for its getting into difficulties. In eight years £25,000 was spent, but the scheme never produced a dividend and Sir Nicholas and his son Henry saw it closed with no redress to the promoters. It is sad, but not surprising, in view of the large sums lost, that Henry Sanders was forced to sell Batailles Manor in 1658, thus ending a long line of Sanders in Ewell. Their more fortunate, but now quite remote, cousins at Charlwood, continued the Surrey line of the family many generations further, but the loss of so huge a sum impoverished the descendants of the well-known Cofferer to Queen Mary too much for them to be able to keep their lands and manor in Ewell. They never returned there.