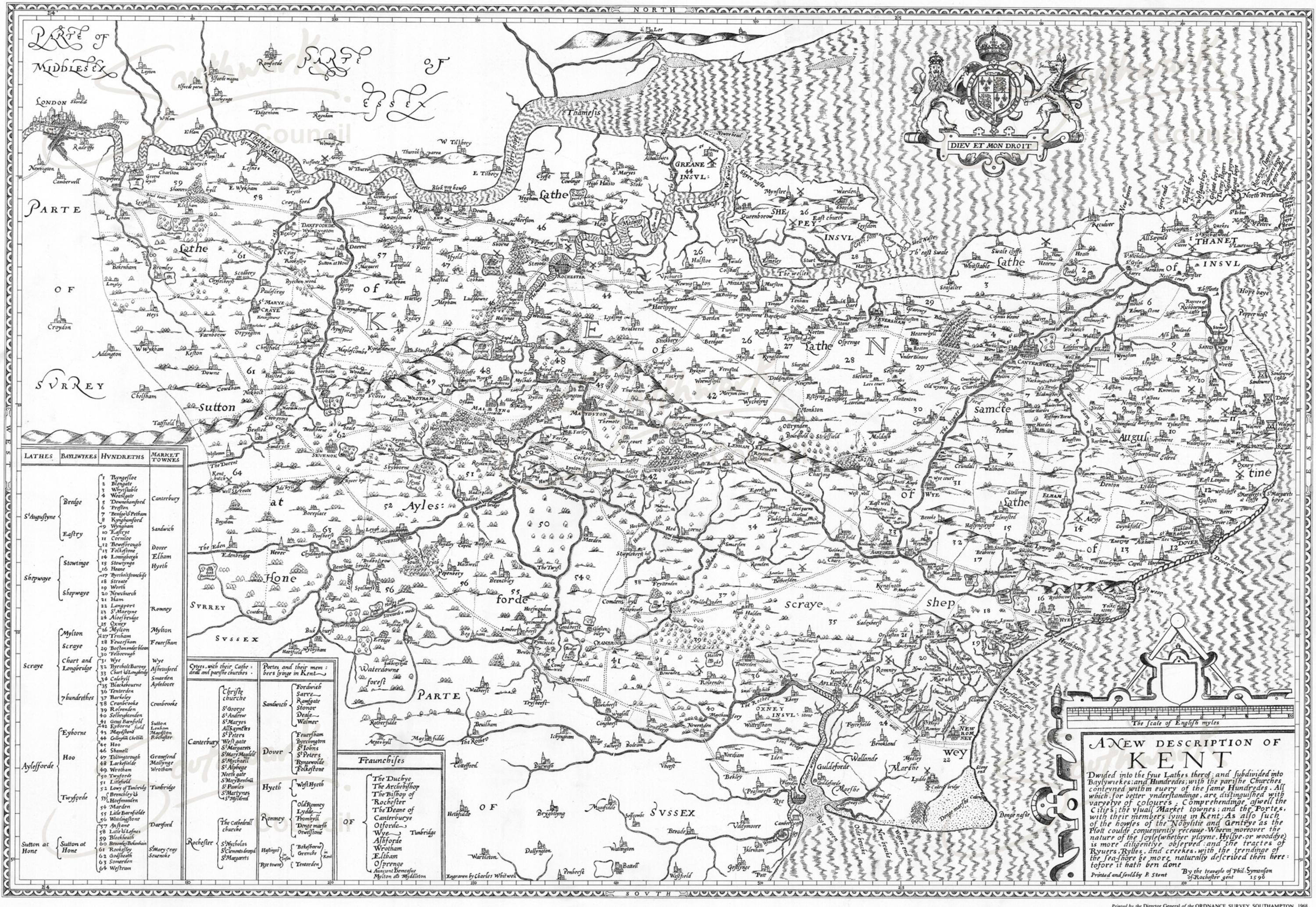
SYMONSON'S MAP of KENT, 1596

(AS PUBLISHED BY STENT ABOUT 1650)



A Note on this Facsimile Reproduction

Philip Symonson held the post of Expenditor, Superintendent and Surveyor of the Bridge and the Bridge estates at Rochester from 1592 until his death in 1598. He was also Mayor of Rochester in 1597/8. We know that as Surveyor he made maps of four estates belonging to the Bridge Wardens of Rochester. They are:—

Manors of Nashenden and Little Delce, n.d., n.s.

Lands in the Parish of Dartford, n.d., n.s. The Manor of Langdon, 1596, n.s.

Escate at Tilbury, n.s.

The first three of these are preserved in the archives of the Bridge Chamber at Rochester; the fourth has disappeared. All were manuscript maps. Symonson also drew a map of The "Decayed Harbrough of Rye," 1594.

The work by which he is best known is his great map of Kent, bearing the date 1596. No complete copy of the first issue of this is known, but the eastern sheet, in the possession of Canon G. M. Livett, was reproduced by the Royal Geographical Society in English County Maps in the collection of the Royal Geographical Society, by Edward Heawood, 1932. This sheet is in every respect the same as the eastern sheet of P. Stent's re-issue reproduced by the Ordnance Survey, except that no publisher or place is given. There are traces of erasure around the date, 1596, which have led some writers to think that the original date was 1576, but the latter date is for many reasons unlikely and the erasures do not seem to have any real significance.

The next issue (illustrated above) was reproduced by the Ordnance Survey in 1914. From the dates of Stent's activity as a publisher and from the watermark of the map this

issue can be dated at about 1650. From this, the earliest known copy of the whole map, we learn that Charles Whitwell was the engraver of the original plate. Whitwell was one of the best of the early English copper engravers, and did maps of Surrey (1594, by Norden), France (c. 1590, for Plancius), Asia (1595, for a book) and Jerusalem (about the same time).

The next issue appears in Villare Cantianum, by Thomas Philpott, published by W. Godbid in London in 1659. The original date has been erased, and two views added at the top. These are of Rye, by Sir Anthony van Dyck, and of Dover Castle and Town, by Hollar. "Printed and sold by P. Stent" is repeated.

The next issue was also by Stent, but has his address added ("at ye White Horse in giltspur Street") and the date 1659 substituted for 1595.

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John Overton, who succeeded to most of Stent's plates, re-issued this map in 1666 (date on map), with his own name and address in the place of Stent's.

Finally in 1770 the plate was again used by John Sayer, Symonson's name being at

The map was copied, with reduction and alterations, in Harris's History of Kent, 1720. For size and detail the map was superior to any English county map of its time. Like Norden, but unlike Saxton, Symonson showed the roads. His village churches are not shown conventionally, as was the case on most maps of the time, but as they actually appeared.