THE BUSINESS OF THE SUFFOLK PARISH

1558-1625



Shattered fragments of medieval glass re-set in a window of Rattlesden church. They are symbolic both of the colourful interiors of pre-Reformation churches and of the destruction wrought by 16th- and 17th-century reformers. (Photo: Mike Durrant)

THE BUSINESS OF THE SUFFOLK PARISH 1558-1625

David Dymond

SUFFOLK ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY

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Front cover: Kersey village and church
Back cover: The 'Wenhaston Doom', *c*. 1490

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PREFACE and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has come out of my former work as Director of Studies in the Institute of Continuing Education at Cambridge. In the 1980s I had the privilege of working with an enthusiastic and industrious group of local historians in the well-documented parish of Mendlesham in mid-Suffolk. Over about five years, research was done by individuals and small groups on a variety of topics, and as a result several publications were produced. My personal contribution centred on the exceptionally rich churchwardens' accounts for that parish in Elizabethan and early Stuart times. Since then, I have continued to work intermittently on similar accounts for other places in Suffolk, in order to clarify the economic, political and social issues that demanded the attention of parish officials in this crucial early-modern period. (After all, during these years England might have returned permanently to the catholic fold, and become an outlying province of Spain governed from Il Escorial.) Having officially retired in 1995, I embarked on several writing projects, of which this is one. As is often the case, what began as an article evolved into a book.

While writing this study, I have received valuable information and helpful criticism from the following friends and colleagues: Ted Cockayne, Heather Falvey, Charles Farrow, Evelyn Lord, Clive Paine, Alan Rogers and David Sherlock. Similarly, over many years the staff of the Suffolk Record Office and of Cambridge University Library have answered my requests cheerfully and efficiently. For help of other kinds, I thank Steven Dart for introducing me to the riches of the cathedral library in Bury St Edmunds; Mike Durrant for designing and typesetting this volume, and seeing it through production; Nicholas Amor (chair) and the council of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History for agreeing to publish this work in their series of monographs; Diarmaid MacCulloch of St Cross College Oxford, who broke off his demanding schedule of work to write a typically generous foreword; and finally my wife Mary for her patience and support throughout.

In spite of all the help given to me by other people, I know that the book still has deficiencies for which I alone am responsible. In particular I apologise for weaknesses in the use of up-to-date secondary sources. They are mainly due to health problems in the last three years which have prevented me from visiting major libraries and collections, as I would normally have expected to do.

David Dymond — Bury St Edmunds, 15 February 2018

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library
CEAS	Centre of East Anglian Studies, UEA
CRO	Cambridgeshire Record Office
CRS	Cambridgeshire Records Society
CUP	Cambridge University Press
EcHR	*Economic History Review*
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
OUP	Oxford University Press
PRO	Public Record Office (now TNA)
PSIA(H)	*Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology (and History)*
Statutes	*Statutes of the Realm* (3 vols)
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SROB	Suffolk Record Office (Bury St Edmunds)
SROI	Suffolk Record Office (Ipswich)
SROL	Suffolk Record Office (Lowestoft)
SRS	Suffolk Records Society
TNA	The National Archives
UEA	University of East Anglia

FOREWORD

Parishes are one of this country's most ancient institutions. They are a carpet covering the land-surface of our kingdom almost completely, so that to step into an 'extra-parochial area' in England is to feel on the edge of Narnia, or at least it calls for a reliable landscape historian to explain what happened long ago to cause such a glitch on the map. In a county like Suffolk, whose face is still largely rural beyond its trunk roads and main towns, parish boundaries are still meaningful often a millennium after they were first argued into existence, when communities no doubt painfully thrashed out agreements about the fair distribution of coveted land, mindful of already venerable landmarks and memories of even older bounds and estates.

I grew up in a country rectory, in the last generation (one hopes) where historic parish records were kept in the parson's study cupboard – worry not, one of my father's last actions as Rector in the early 1970s was to take them all up to the County Record Office to find a safe home. Among them was the nineteenth-century tithe map, with its wonderfully-detailed and beautifully-presented picture of a landscape whose field-names spoke of remote antiquity, and whose bounds were those of a miniature kingdom, already known to Anglo-Saxons in all its path-turns and field-ditches. This was a classic Suffolk parish, only a mile by a couple of miles in extent, with a shape suggesting a careful mixture of upland and valley for maximum agricultural variety, and with interesting clusters of settlement whose origins begged for the historian's elucidation. At its centre, as indeed within the boundaries of all Suffolk's five hundred or so parishes, was a church for its people. Many of these buildings are still able through their standing fabrics to transport us at least as far back as the days when this intricate administrative structure fell like a ripe plum into the eager hands of William the Norman and his carpet-bagging followers.

David Dymond's theme is that vital stage in the development of the parish from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries when parishes began to beat off their administrative competitor the manorial system, which in East Anglia was an even more intricate and much more varied beast than parochial institutions. The medieval parish and its officers had been by and large servants of their church building and its liturgical life: when Tudor government took a much more active interest in solving the increasingly complex economic and social problems of the kingdom, the parish changed, and it became the lead institution to administer solutions for those concerns. It also had to cope with a religious revolution, the Protestant Reformation, which put parish officials to a great deal of trouble, and transformed their church buildings. So this book moves from varied activities concerning the church fabric and contents to such wider matters, which our age would call secular, but some of which within living memory were still often the concern

of the parish organisation of the established Church of England. David has rich materials to work from, in the form of the proliferation of administrative records, particularly the churchwardens' accounts, on which he has made himself the acknowledged authority over more than half a century. Those who have enjoyed both his many previous writings and his enviably light touch in lectures and teaching will know that there is much both to learn and to savour in the absorbing exposition which follows.

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President of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History

Epiphany 2018

The Business of the Suffolk Parish 1558-1625

Prelude

From the start of her reign Queen Elizabeth was determined to restore the Church of England which her father Henry VIII had established in the 1530s. Since his day this church had been pushed to a deeper level by her strongly protestant brother Edward VI (died 1553), but was then rejected in favour of catholicism by her elder sister Mary (died 1558). Soon after Elizabeth became queen in November 1558, the bonds with Rome were broken for a second time, and she became 'the only Supreme Governor in earth of the Church of England'. Nobody can tell, in the decades which followed, how many English men and women wholeheartedly accepted the new style of worship based on the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*, or how many favoured other forms of Christian belief and practice. It seems likely, as some leading historians have argued, that Elizabeth's middle-of-the-road church was accepted only slowly and reluctantly.[1] For certain, it was constantly under threat from the survival of catholicism above and below ground and, although it published its core beliefs and practices in canons and articles, was itself dogged by internal controversy. At issue were matters such as: the continued wearing of surplices; using the sign of the cross in baptism (conceived by some as idolatrous); the value of private clerical conferences or 'prophesyings'; and the puritan concept of predestination which divided humanity into the 'elect' few and the 'reprobate' many. Elizabeth's successor in 1603, James I of England and VI of Scotland, was son of the catholic Mary Queen of Scots, but had been brought up as a Scottish calvinist. He readily compromised on his principles to get the English crown, and then as king kept Elizabeth's title of 'Supreme Governor'. So, from its inception, this supposedly national church established by English law never acquired a single, unchanging character because of different groups constantly struggling for life or supremacy within it. Some of these disagreements led to fissures and complete separations, and eventually in the 1640s they contributed to the outbreak of ferocious civil war and the official emergence of 'nonconformity'.

[1] Duffy (1992), p. 573 referred to 'a slow and reluctant conformity imposed from above, with little or no evidence of popular enthusiasm for or commitment to the process of reform'. Collinson in Doran (2003), p. 31 wrote of 'the deeply divided religious state of the Elizabethan nation'.

In Elizabethan and early Stuart times the complex governance of England was inherited largely from the Middle Ages. It consisted of two hierarchies, one civil and the other ecclesiastical, tightly attached and to an extent overlapping. On the ecclesiastical side, the established church was headed by the monarch. After her or him came two archbishops of Canterbury and York, twenty-five diocesan bishops, and archdeacons who were each responsible for part of a diocese. All these clergy had legal staff and ran their own courts. On the civil side, government was again headed by the monarch. Next came the royal family, the privy council, the court with its ministers of state, and the two houses of Parliament (Commons and Lords). Beneath them were dozens of county communities dominated by land-owning gentry, and each headed by a lord-lieutenant with deputies. A proportion of the gentry were appointed magistrates who met regularly in quarter sessions. They were in contact with the royal court and palace of Westminster: a connection which was stronger when some of the gentry were also MPs, or held various *ad hoc* royal commissions, or were related by marriage to courtiers. The bottom level of the hierarchy, by far the biggest, consisted of thousands of parishes[2] run by lay officers, of whom the most important were churchwardens. Assisted by personal contacts and correspondence with superiors such as magistrates, sheriffs and high constables, these officials regularly participated in both the civil and ecclesiastical sides of government, which at times were hard to tell apart. Their annual accounts reveal issues which parishes were required by higher authority to deal with, and others which by themselves they chose to address. So, in the records of churchwardens we can discern something of the everyday economic and political issues which exercised ordinary men and women living at the broad and deep base of English society, in rural villages and small market towns.[3]

This study explores the character of parish business and local politics at a time when the English Reformation was reaching its climax. Chronologically it runs from Elizabeth I's accession in 1558 until James I's death in 1625, with a few excursions beyond.[4] Based very largely on churchwardens' accounts drawn from Suffolk, it is supplemented occasionally by evidence from ecclesiastical visitations and by architectural and archaeological observations. It illustrates ecclesiastical business pursued by parishes ever since the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, and a later expanding agenda, mainly civil in character, which was grafted on to it by royal and parliamentary authority, particularly in the sixteenth century. As J.R. Tanner long ago observed, 'Although the parish was selected by the Tudor sovereigns as the unit

[2] In the north of England early-modern parishes were usually much larger, and governmentally they were subdivided into 'townships' which had their own officers.

[3] The working relationship between the parish and county is well illustrated in East Anglia by comparing the surviving records of parochial officers with the working archives left by magistrates such as Nathaniel Bacon of Stiffkey in Norfolk: *Bacon Papers* (1566-1613).

[4] This study is based on original and printed churchwardens' accounts of varying quality and amounts of detail, relating to Aldeburgh, Bardwell, Boxford, Bungay, Cratfield, Exning, Langham, Long Melford, Mendlesham, Metfield, Mildenhall, Stoke by Nayland, Walsham le Willows, Wattisfield and Weybread. These communities, all in Suffolk, range from small villages to substantial market towns. For a larger urban dimension, the published accounts of Great St Mary's in Cambridge have been consulted. Printed and manuscript records of ecclesiastical visitations, at deanery and consistory levels, have yielded useful evidence to complement the accounts.

of local civil administration, it still retained its ancient ecclesiastical character'.[5] This essay carries sub-headings to guide the reader through the more detailed aspects of the subject. In work of this kind, which makes use of hundreds of pieces of original evidence from dozens of parishes, it is not always easy to decide what evidence should be quoted fully, preserving the flavour of the original language, what should be summarised and what should be merely referenced as supporting evidence. To help readers navigate quantities of thick detail, the main text has been supplemented by over 400 footnotes, a bibliography, a glossary and an index of people, places and subjects.

Parish government

The medieval parish was a defined ecclesiastical territory with church, burial ground and resident priest who was supported by tithes and his own farmland (glebe). In Suffolk about 418 churches, approximately four-fifths of the total medieval number, were already mentioned in Domesday Book completed in 1086. It follows that the majority of church-sites go back at least to late Anglo-Saxon or very early Norman times. Most of them were founded by local lords to serve their own estates and tenants. In shape and area, therefore, parishes represented those secular estates or manors at particular stages of their development. Thereafter, estates continued to change for economic, demographic and other reasons, but parish boundaries remained fossilised.[6]

The integrity of the parish as a distinct physical entity was perpetuated by the traditional custom of 'beating the bounds' or 'perambulating' at Rogationtide, five weeks after Easter. This was a time of year when parishioners prayed for fair weather, good crops and healthy animals.[7] The custom of walking round the boundary annually had been established in medieval times as a religious rite, and was the only procession to survive the Reformation, though in secularised form.[8] In the absence of accurate local maps (not normally available until the late eighteenth century), groups representing the whole parish, including the incumbent, walked the boundary every year in order to perpetuate knowledge of its often tortuous course. Where necessary, human memory was supplemented by 'bumping' boys to stimulate their memories, and by leaving physical markers such as inscribed stones or blazes cut into trees.[9] Those taking part in this ancient practice, which could take several days to complete, were predominantly male, with men acting as teachers and boys as pupils. Stops were made *en route* to read from the Gospels, to offer prayers and to take refreshment. Thus, in 1609 Wattisfield paid 2s 4d 'for Cackes & beere when we went perambulacion', and Mendlesham on the same mission in 1621 spent 9s on dinners for its minister, 'townesmen and the Schollers'[10] (Pl. 1).

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[5] Tanner, 1951, p. 508.

[6] Scarfe, 1999, 52-3, 196-98. Some churches in Suffolk were founded by groups of freemen.

[7] *Second Book of Homilies*, no. 17.

[8] Hughes & Larkin, II, 1969, p. 122. Psalm 103 was said or sung during beating of the bounds: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul....'. The minister might also quote, 'Cursed be he which translateth the bonds and doles of his neighbor'. See Hindle, 2008.

[9] Repairs to boundaries were mentioned occasionally: SROB, FL668/5/9/19 (3rd page).

[10] SROB, FL668/5/9/60 (3rd side); SROI, FB159/E7/45. For a 16th-century description of beating Melford's bounds over three days, see Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 64.



Pl. 1: Beating the bounds of Mendlesham, 15 April 1903. This party was entirely male, men teaching boys. Everyone wore a hat or cap, and most had stout boots and gaiters. About twelve walkers, mainly boys, carried sticks, presumably to slash the undergrowth. Bowler hats, wing-collars and gold watch-chains mark out the more prosperous inhabitants: the man second from the right was perhaps the vicar, and two substantial men to his right were probably churchwardens.

In spite of the time-honoured significance of this ritual, it was not always scrupulously observed, and public interests could clash with private. Churchwardens, clergy and named parishioners were quite often accused of non-compliance and poor leadership. For example Bishop William Redman's visitation of 1597 recorded that at Halesworth six parishioners and two churchwardens 'have not gone the perambulations', and that at Bromeswell no perambulation had been observed for six consecutive years.[11] Such cases may have resulted from simple human carelessness, but equally they may represent deliberate objections to a practice now regarded as unnecessary or antiquated. A certain factor was the increasing difficulty of getting to the boundary and following it over privately enclosed land. In 1597 parishioners at Linstead Parva excused themselves by saying that 'they have gone so much as they colde [could]' but that access had been denied by Hugh Werden and his wife.[12] At Bardwell in 1627 John Page was accused of 'stoppinge the perambulacion way so that by reason thereof they cannot goe the circuite of the parishe, to the great offence of the parishioners'.[13]

[11] Williams, 1946, pp. 129, 138.

[12] Williams, 1946, p. 130. Thirty-five parishes in the Archdeaconry of Suffolk did not perambulate in 1597; in 16 others incumbents or curates had not taken part: Williams, 1946, p. 22.

[13] NRO, DN/VIS/5/3/3 (Blackbourn Deanery). Three men of Hinderclay were accused of the same offence: one had locked a gate giving access to the boundary, and another achieved the same by 'hedgeinge up' the way. Robert Smyth of Hinderclay is cited under Bardwell for 'stopping and ditching up' the way there.



Pl. 2: The church-house of Fressingfield built *c.*1502, just beyond the churchyard edge. It was designed to house social and recreational events such as ales, and thus avoid desecrating the church and churchyard. Church-houses belonged to parishes, whereas guildhalls belonged to one or more local guilds. Both types of building often survived the Reformation because they were still useful socially and communally.



Pl. 3: The guildhall at Eye, also sited at the edge of the churchyard, was owned by two local guilds. It had been partly used for a school since the late 15th century, with a chantry priest as master. This use must have protected it when guilds and chantries were abolished in 1547, for it continued to be used as a grammar school until 1965.

From about 1400 the average English parish had complicated its structure by spawning a variety of newer sub-institutions, sometimes with separate funds to support them. These emphasised that the remit of the parish now extended way beyond the mere maintenance of a church and the provision of its liturgical equipment. Of these new attachments three broad categories can be distinguished. The first, exemplified by chantries and socio-religious guilds belonged to the 'old' religion; their endowments of properties, lands and money were appropriated by Tudor monarchs in the 1540s and afterwards were mostly sold off or given away. Of course, many chantry chapels and guildhalls still survived as *buildings* but, once the doctrine of purgatory had been officially rejected, their devotional purposes were now obsolete and they had to be used, if at all, in different ways. The second group of endowments was predominantly for social and economic purposes. They included domestic dwellings, farmland and church-houses acquired by parishes before the mid-sixteenth century, and almshouses and schools which were mainly founded later. The third group comprised new services established after 1550 such as poor-houses and workhouses to combat poverty; lockable stock-houses or store-houses to hold food, clothing and fuel for the poor, or building materials for the church; watch-houses to improve public safety, particularly at night; and pest-houses to prevent the spread of infectious disease.[14] All these newer sub-institutions and their associated buildings imposed new costs and responsibilities on parishes and their churchwardens.

Even where villages had small populations and their parishes were below average size, they invariably described themselves as 'towns'–in the sense of townships or discrete communities which had their own names and boundaries. Each was administered by a chosen body which at this period seems not to have carried a generic name (other than 'town' or 'parish'), but later became known as the 'vestry'. In practice it consisted of the resident minister, churchwardens, lesser officers and the more well-to-do members of the parish. It also needs noting *en passant* that in this context the word 'town' was very often used adjectivally to denote the various possessions and responsibilities of parishes. Hence we frequently meet phrases like 'town house', 'town land', 'town armour', 'town spit', 'town farmer' (holding land of the parish) and 'town boy' (orphan apprenticed by the parish).

The office of churchwarden

Known also as churchreeves or guardians (*gardiani*), churchwardens were the principal executive officers of the parish, drawn from the laity and only rarely female.[15] They were

[14] By 1591 Mildenhall had a 'led howsse': SROB, EL110/5/5, fol. 13r. In 1592 it paid 6d 'for locke and key for the stoke howse': EL110/5/5, fol. 14r. Great St Mary's in Cambridge built a lime-house in 1593 when its tower was rebuilt: Foster, 1905, p. 246. In 1635-42 Boxford had watch-houses, a stock house and almshouses: SROB, FB77/E2/3/E2/3/77, 83, 94. In 1565 and 1575 Bungay St Mary mentioned its 'candell house' or 'torch house' *in* the church: Mann, 1934, p. 64; *East Anglian*, III, 43.

[15] At Exning in 1620 a retiring churchwarden was 'the widdowe Howleite': SROB, FL567/5/1/36. In 1577 Widow Curtysse of Bungay St Mary was given expenses for meeting four local men 'to talk of divers causes touchinge the churche': Mann, 1934, p. 65. See French, 2006.

chosen 'by the joint consent of the Minister and the Parishioners'. Only if they could not agree was the minister to choose one warden, and the parishioners another.[16] Comparisons with wills and tax returns show that wardens in Suffolk were elected from the ranks of minor gentlemen, yeomen, clothiers, leading tradesmen and others of a broad 'middling sort'.[17] Although literacy was spreading steadily at this period, some wardens and parish clerks could not write or were reluctant to do so, and paid others to make a fair copy of their accounts (a task called 'engrossing').[18] Usually two wardens were chosen each year, though in larger places with a complicated settlement pattern the number could be higher. The parish of Mildenhall, centring on a bustling market town and with populous outlying hamlets bordering the fen, each year elected four or five wardens.[19]

In practice churchwardens played two important roles. First, they were responsible for maintaining the church and its services, the churchyard and all other parish possessions. The latter might include town-lands, town-houses, former guildhalls and church-houses, springs, wells, pumps, market crosses, pounds, bridges and gates. Second, they were expected to implement at local level the policies of central government and the new national church, working with superiors in the hierarchy such as magistrates, high constables, royal commissioners, archdeacons and bishops, and helping to collect various dues and taxes. Thus, in 1560 Metfield paid 43s to the queen's collector 'for a tenth and fyftenth called a taxe to thuse of our Soverin lady the quene'.[20]

In addition churchwardens maintained working relationships with lesser officials in the parish such as overseers of the poor, sextons and clerks, and with the lords and bailiffs of local manors, for example paying the latter rents for town lands,[21] paying for new by-laws, and where necessary giving sweeteners.[22] Churchwardens were also expected to act as the eyes and ears of higher authority, ecclesiastical and civil, passing information to appropriate officials and making presentments. In archdeacons' courts and magistrates' sessions, they provided, for instance, spoken and written evidence of immoral behaviour, 'haunting of alehouses', swearing, usury, misuse of Sundays, bad behaviour in church, non-attendance at church, and catholic or evangelical recusancy. Furthermore, parliamentary legislation increasingly imposed new responsibilities on parishes, such as the fining of those who defied an Act of 1571 by not wearing English-made woollen caps on Sundays and holy days, and the systematic trapping of 'verminous' animals and birds in return for cash, in response to Acts

[16] *Constitutions & Canons*, 1604, no. 89.
[17] Dymond, 2015, pp. 178-94. John Moyes of Ringsfield was thought to be a usurer *inter bonos et graves ejus parochie* (among the honest and responsible of this parish): Williams, 1946, p. 116.
[18] SROB, EL110/5/5, fol. 29r. At Exning in 1611 both retiring wardens used marks rather than signatures: SROB, FL567/5/1/55.
[19] In 1581 Mildenhall had two wardens 'for the Towne' and two 'for the Rowes': SROB, EL110/5/5, 2r.
[20] Bower, 1938, p. 143.
[21] In 1616 Wattisfield paid rents to the manors of Wattisfield Hall and Mickfield in Stanton: SROB, FL668/5/9/35r.
[22] Mendlesham in 1611 spent 6s 8d 'when the Bailiff of the Duchy was here': SROI, FB159/E7/30.

of 1532-33 and 1566 passed 'for the Preservation of Grayne'.[23] Alternatively, when wardens broke the rules they could be dismissed by higher authority. In 1577 for instance the two church-reeves of Bungay St Mary were discharged from office by the bishop of Norwich for breaking down 'the partycion that was betwene the chancell & churche' (meaning the lower part of the roodscreen which was meant to survive). They had misinterpreted the queen's injunctions, and were immediately replaced by two other men who served out the rest of that year. A marginal note in the accounts asserts that 'John Edwards here Lye [tells lies] for it [the screen] was full of Immagery not defaced'.[24]

In some parishes, surviving accounts were the work of *town*wardens. Bardwell provides an excellent example (Pl. 4) In 1466 certain principal inhabitants were appointed as feoffees or trustees of a sizeable estate, which extended into several parishes and was bequeathed by one William Beton.[25] From this self-perpetuating body two to four townwardens were nominated annually to administer the so-called 'town lands' of Bardwell. They had overall responsibility for parish income and expenditure, and each year they opened their accounts by stating how much they expected from renting out the town lands. Furthermore they paid *church*wardens working under them. For example, in 1586 Bardwell's townwardens gave 5s 8d to the churchwardens for their charges at the bishop's visitation, and in 1610 they paid 6d 'for a booke of articles for the church wardens'.[26] Because they were appointed by the terms of a late-medieval will, and were not subject to annual election, townwardens usually remained in office for long periods, and the same individuals and surnames appear in the accounts year after year. Thomas Doe served as townwarden of Bardwell from at least 1593 until 1620, and Stephen Muryell gentleman remained in that office from at least 1580 until 1626.

William Beton's feoffees at Bardwell, who supervised the work of the townwardens in administering their considerable estate, are shadowed in other places. Mendlesham had a body called 'the eyght menne', Boxford had its six chief inhabitants, and Mildenhall (as previously noted) had its 'twenty-four'.[27] Whatever their manorial or other origins, such supervisory bodies could be activated as needed, for example to investigate alleged maladministration or to settle disputes. Another permutation occurred at Wattisfield: John Mallowes and John Person accounted for money spent since 30 November 1608, and were then chosen as

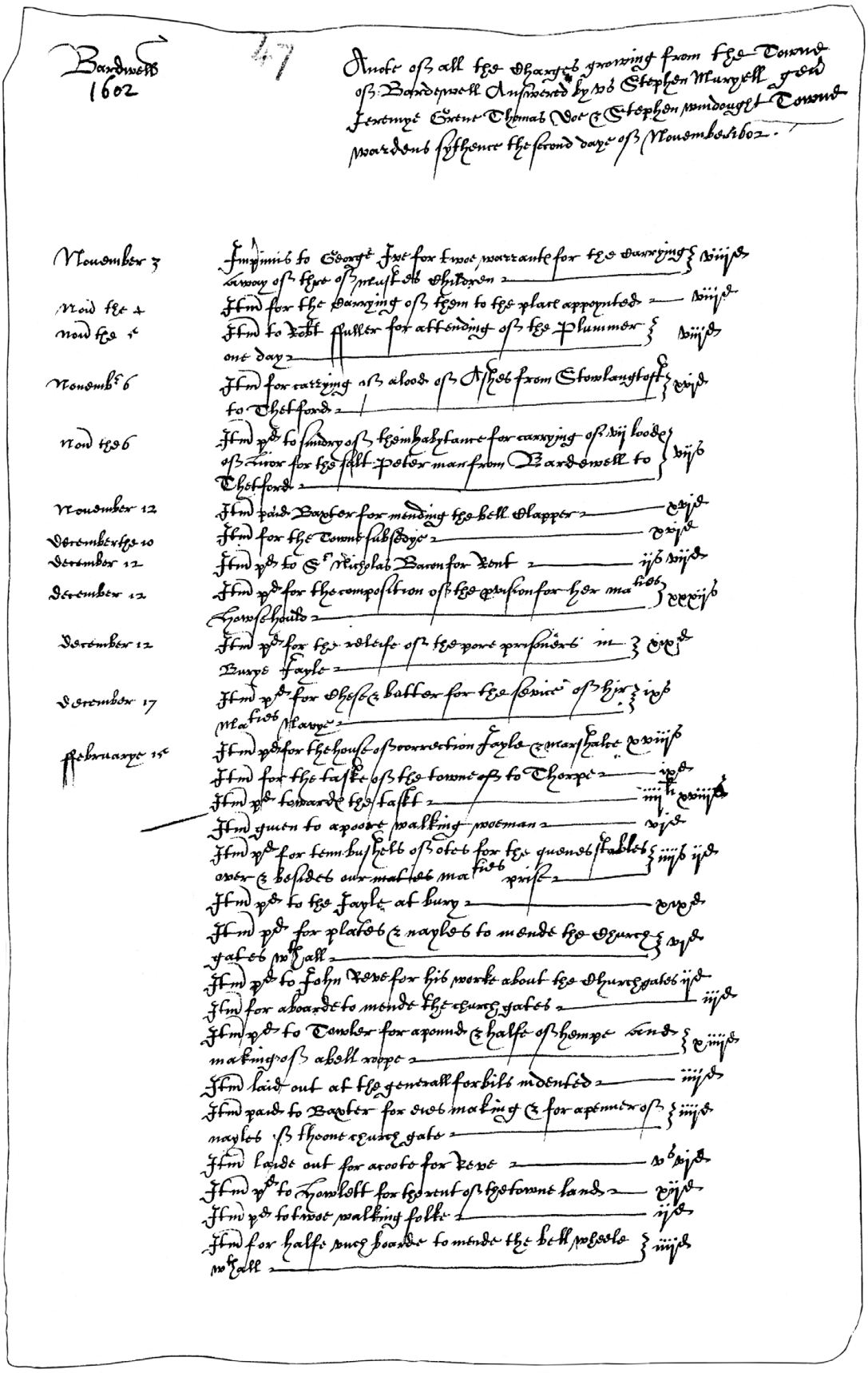
[23] In Melford in 1608 'a Regester in parchment' was bought for 8s, and a man was paid £1 for writing it. In 1600 the parish clerk was paid 8d 'for wryteinge the billes out of the Register [register bills]': SROB, FL509/5/1/21r. In 1579 Bardwell paid 2d for a copy of the Act of 1571, and 2s 'for the dyscharge of the statute for capes': SROB, FL522/11/22/7. In *c.* 1580 Cratfield listed a catch presented for payment to a 'distrybuter for the vermen'; it included fourteen moles, six 'hoddespyts hedes' and starlings, four jackdaws, one magpie, two 'hauppe' (?plovers) heads, two buzzards and one hedgehog: Holland, 1895, pp. 104-05. See Lovegrove, 2007.

[24] *East Anglian*, III, 199; Mann, 1934, p. 65.

[25] Will of William Beton (1466): SROB, IC500/2/11/31. In 1616-17 the townwardens of Bardwell paid 'for Writtinge a release from Gilbert Hill to the residewe of the feoffes of the towne': SROB, FL522/11/22/87.

[26] SROB, FL522/11/22/17/66. At Wattisfield in 1616 John and Edward Mallowes were both concurrently townwardens and churchwardens: SROB, FL668/5/9/ 65r.

[27] SROI, FB159/E7/22.



Pl. 4: Accounts of Bardwell: the expenses, beginning on 2 Nov 1602, of four named townwardens. Their payments are characteristically mixed in character, but the identification of precise days of the month is not usual at this period.

townwardens; the next Easter they were elected churchwardens who were expected to present their accounts on 8 November 1609.[28]

Constitutionally, the full complement of parish officers varied according to local needs, and could change over time. Several medieval offices of an exclusively religious nature, such as torch-reeves and wardens of the Easter Sepulchre, did not long survive the death of Queen Mary. By contrast the roles of churchwarden, questman, constable, sexton and parish clerk were medieval in origin and retained their significance well beyond 1558.[29] The same is true of searchers of cloth and leather, whose duties reflected the main economic emphasis of the local district. The parish clerk was chosen by the rector or vicar, and was his assistant during services: he was to be 'of honest conversation, and sufficient for his reading, writing, and also for his competent skill in singing'.[30] Very different were the offices of overseer of the poor and surveyor of highways, newly created by Tudor legislation, who were answerable to local magistrates and supported by the payment of compulsory rates.[31] The more important and onerous offices were voluntary but their expenses were met by the parish. For example, at an ecclesiastical visitation held at Ixworth in 1616, the parish of Wattisfield paid 8s 1d for the dinners of its minister, two churchwardens and two questmen, with the costs of their horses and some paperwork.[32] Lesser officers such as sexton and dog-whipper were appointed rather than chosen and usually received a quarterly wage.[33] Meanwhile, specialist craftsmen such as masons, glaziers and clocksmiths were employed as needed, though some of them were contracted to carry out regular maintenance in return for an agreed quarterly or annual sum. In 1584 Mildenhall gave a plumber £3 'of a newe bargayne', while in 1586 Aldeburgh paid 7s to a glazier 'for one yeres kepinge of the churche windowes'.[34]

Churchwardens' accounts

Accounts left behind by churchwardens appear in several different forms. They can be the work of individuals or the consolidated work of two or more people; they may be rough working accounts or more easily legible fair copies; and they can appear as loose sheets of paper or as sewn books (inevitably some books have unravelled and ended up as loose sheets). When they include the accounts of other officers such as constables and overseers of the poor, as sometimes happens, they are usually described archivally as 'town books'

[28] SROB, FL668/5/9/60r.

[29] Bardwell's principal officers were 'townwardens', supported by a town estate; it and Wattisfield had both townwardens and churchwardens. Walsham and Mendlesham had churchwardens and feoffees.

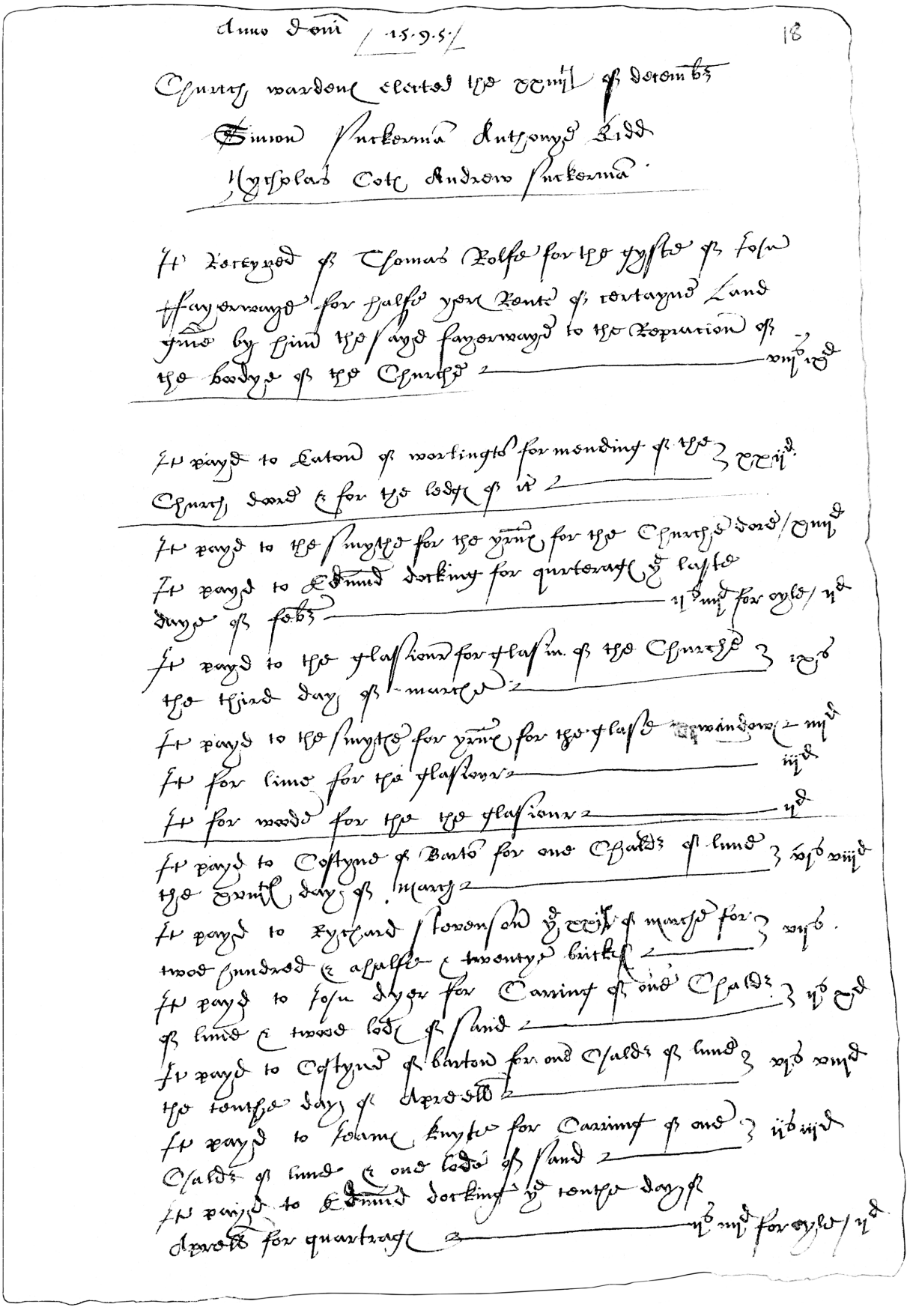
[30] *Constitutions & Canons*, 1604, no. 91.

[31] Slack, 1990, pp. 59-64, for summary of legislation in 1531-1744.

[32] SROB, FL668/5/9/65 (4th face). Mendlesham in 1616 referred to a 'questmans due' of 12d a year: SROI, FB159/E7/38/p. 3.

[33] At Aldeburgh in 1567 Spooner was paid 10d 'for his attendans at the churche with the whyppe': Winn, 1926, p. 34. At Mendlesham in 1610 one Petall was both clerk and sexton; his quarterly wage as clerk was 5s, and as sexton 3s 4d: SROI, FB159/E7/20, 28.

[34] SROB, EL110/5/5, fol.7v; Winn, 1926, p. 41. Meals were sometimes given at parish expense for groups such as tenants and magistrates; in 1621-22 Mendlesham paid £10 12s 0d 'for the Mynisters ordinary' for 53 weeks: SROI, FB159/E7/45.



Pl. 5: Accounts of the four churchwardens of Mildenhall who were elected on 24 Dec 1595; mostly concerned with repairs to the church.

or 'vestry books'. In addition to numerous items of expenditure and income, accounts can also incorporate memoranda such as farming leases, financial receipts and quotations from wills. The language used is predominantly English although, under clerical influence, Latin occasionally appears. The use of Arabic numbers, in preference to Roman, becomes noticeable in the second decade of the seventeenth century.

It has to be conceded that these accounts vary hugely in the amount and quality of information they give, quite apart from the vagaries of uneven physical survival, uncertain dating, imperfect literacy and the regular turnover of wardens. Each entry is essentially a sum of money attached to a 'label' of variable length which is the writer's attempt to explain the transaction. While some accounts contain rich evidence for certain aspects of local life (for instance, Bardwell for building work, Wattisfield for efforts to cope with vagrancy, and Bungay for the recreational scene), many entries are undeniably short, vague or ambiguous. Particularly frustrating is the habit of giving overall costs without any detailed break-down. For example, when raw materials for repairs were bought, the charges for labour, carriage, boarding and refreshment were often unspecified. The opposite defect also appears when apparently complete transactions quote only part of the total cost. In addition the historian has to wrestle with the ambiguity of important words like 'making' which can easily mean 'mending', and of 'repairing' which can stand for 'making'. Because of these omissions and uncertainties, mathematical analysis over time is difficult, and most trends can be assessed only impressionistically.

Two specific examples will show the difficulties and unevennesses that frequently confront those who use this kind of evidence. At Boxford in 1628 a churchwarden unhelpfully wrote, 'given to pore foockes at severall tymes, 3s.' By contrast, an account for Mendlesham in 1605-06 reveals that the parish dressed a pauper child called 'Woodwardes girle' with wool, a coif, smock, apron and strings, neckerchief, hat, hairbands ['fillettes'], shoes and an 'upperbody', at a total cost of 8s 7d.[35] Furthermore, some accounts contain totally unexpected items. For instance, at Wattisfield in 1576 the reader is suddenly presented with a recipe for poplar ointment, and Bardwell in 1594 recorded a prayer for benefactors.[36] Undeniably too, the occasional entry can be quite poetic. In 1605-06 Mendlesham gave 12d to one Sholverd, 'for watching with Moll being sick, & laying him forth being deade', while at Wattisfield in 1577 Robert Knott was paid 12d 'for feyinge of the watringes mouth' (cleaning out a spring or pond).[37]

Reckoning day

The churchwardens' accounts used in this study leave no doubt as to the importance of the town's annual meeting or 'reckoning day', which was previously known as *dies composicionis*

[35] SROB, FB77/E2/3/p. 43; SROI, FB159/E7/26.
[36] SROB, FL668/5/9/5, 6v; SROB, FL522/11/22/37. For poplar ointment, see p. 69, footnote 300.
[37] SROI, FB159/E7/26; SROB, FL668/5/9/13r.

or *dies computar*'.[38] It could be convened at any time of the year, though often at Eastertide,[39] and most likely took place somewhere in the church. The business of the day was divided into two main parts, as had been the practice before the Reformation. First, the accounts of parish officers in the preceding year were read out publically, so that they could be discussed and approved; this ritual was to happen within a month of the end of the financial year.[40] Having given their accounts individually or merged into a single account,[41] the two or more wardens of the parish 'craved allowance' for the stated sums of money received and disbursed, and settled any debts owing one way or the other. On 28 December 1582 Mildenhall recorded that the four retiring churchwardens 'have mayd their account to the Inhabitauntes there before us [the vicar, five named laymen and others unnamed and unnumbered] & so they are gone freelye from their office & have theyre *quietus est* [quittance]'.[42]

Sometimes, however, mistakes were discovered in the annual reckoning and were later corrected. For example, at Bardwell in 1593 Richard Sillot was given 8s 2d 'wher he was over reconed in the last accompte',[43] and then in 1616 'all the inhabitaunce of the towne' agreed that debts owing to three men and amounting to 18s were to be discharged.[44] At Dunwich All Saints it was recorded in 1597 that for five to six years two churchwardens had 'never made their accompte'.[45] In addition, we occasionally find evidence of sharp practice. In 1576 Cratfield paid several men 6s 8d 'in consyderacion of an evyll bargayne taken of the Towne', and gave 10s to a churchwarden called Fylby 'that he was constrayned to pay wrongfullye'.[46]

Reckoning day was also the time when new officers were chosen or re-chosen. Sometimes called the 'choosing', this important event saw the laity of the parish, allegedly 'the hoole Townshyp', select their lay officers for the forthcoming year.[47] Thus, in 1615 Boxford chose two churchwardens, four overseers of the poor, two questmen,[48] two surveyors of highways and four overseers of cloth.[49] At Clare on 6 April 1602 Gregory Hubberd and Richard Longe 'by comon consente of the Inhabitantes' were chosen as churchwardens. On the Sunday following, their names were published in the church by the minister, and the

[38] Holland, 1895, p. 37.

[39] In 1593 Gt Ashfield took its accounts on 17 Nov, coronation day of the queen: SROB, FL520/5/1 (*sub* 1593). At Bassingbourn (Cambs), between 1496 and 1540 the financial year usually began in March; every other month of the year was also used: Dymond, *Churchwardens' Book of Bassingbourne, Cambs, 1496-c. 1540*, Cambs Records Society, 2004, p. xxxv.

[40] *Constitutions & Canons*, 1604, no. 89.

[41] SROB, FL567/5/1/1-30; SROB, FL668/5/9/3r, 4r, 5r; SROB, FL509/5/1/39r.

[42] They surrendered to their successors a communion cup, service books, surplices and cash: SROB, EL110/5/5/4v.

[43] SROB, FL522/11/22/31.

[44] In 1600 four men of Bardwell were compensated for 'old debts' due since the last reckoning: SROB, FL522/11/22/85. In 1607 Henry Burlingham of Bardwell was paid 20d for 'a debte whyche he chalenged from the towne about fower yeares synce': SROB, FL522/11/22/59.

[45] Williams, 1946, p. 128.

[46] Holland, 1895, p. 100.

[47] SROB, FL522/11/20/119; Dymond, 2015, p. 186. Selected also were constables, searchers of cloth and of leather, feoffees of town lands, auditors and assessors. No evidence has been found of chosing wardens by a rota system.

[48] Questmen enquired into parishioners' attendance and behaviour at church; later called sidesmen.

[49] SROB, FB77/E2/3/13.

old churchwardens, William Weckes and Mr Nicholas Sharpe, 'were removed of their said office.'[50] The actual changeover of wardens and other officers took place, not immediately, but a few days later when the incumbent formally read out the choices made. Those chosen for statutory civil offices, such as overseers of the poor, were sworn in before magistrates. It was common for churchwardens to have held lesser offices previously, and then to be chosen as wardens several times, either consecutively or at intervals. For example, George Scott of Hessett was constable and overseer before he served as churchwarden at least four times between 1600 and 1605, and Richard Sharpe of the same parish was elected churchwarden at least eight times between 1594 and 1605.[51]

Once the formalities were over, reckoning day normally ended with refreshments. In 1581 Wattisfield paid 3d 'for peares & drynck on the reckoninge daye'. In 1585 it spent 5s on 'the Suppers of the <whole> Inhabitauntes at the reckoninge Daye at nyght', and gave a further 6d 'to the Maidens of Nicholas lockes house' who presumably had helped to prepare and serve the food. In an unstated year it also gave £1 2s 6d 'to diveres poore of the Towne at the Reckoning Daye'.[52] Such inducements may have made ordinary parishioners more aware of the day's importance, and may even have encouraged some of them to sit through formal accounts and elections. But in an age when reference was commonly made to 'the chief inhabitants of the parish then present', 'the most honest' and 'the best of the town', it would be wrong to assume that late sixteenth-century reckonings were attended any more enthusiastically than are AGMs today. Occasionally we are given tantalising glimpses of heated disagreements breaking out on this important day, as happened at Long Melford at Eastertide in 1594. A parishioner called Stephen Shephard 'openly accuseth our pastor upon eister surday the 2 day of Aprill 1594 that he Corruptly and personaly did Chuse a churchwarden'. The minister, it seems, was anticipating the later custom of allowing the incumbent to elect one of the wardens. On top of that, Shephard 'Contended and braled ?brawled] with him in the Church, and obstinatly would kepe on his hatt in Contempt of our [*del.*] pastor'.[53] As might be expected, reckoning day gave disgruntled parishioners the chance to air political or religious grievances and to pursue personal animosities.

We can assume that most elections were achieved by a simple show of hands by the minister and parishioners then present, but in some places more elaborate arrangements were certainly observed. At Mildenhall on 12 Nov. 1582 the churchwardens were 'elected and chosen by the common consente accordinge to the accostomed order'. They were drawn from a privileged group known as the 'Twenty-Four', whose origins lay in the court leet of

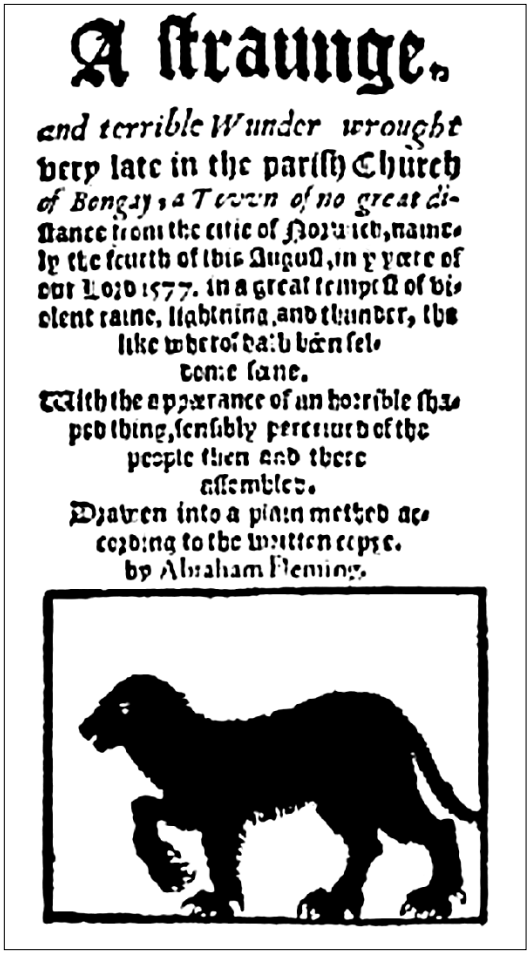
[50] SROB, FL501/5/1. At Bardwell's reckoning on 9 April 1519 two men 'be thasent & Eleccion of the hoole Townshyp be Chosyn Cherche wardens ffor this yeer folowyng'; they received from the previous wardens 14s 'in full payment of ther Acownte'; the new wardens also received 12s 4d from two legacies and a gift, 14d 'gatheryd in the Chyrche', 20d for the rent of 'the Chyrche shoppe', and 31s 3d profit of 'a Chyrche ale made the sonday be for' halow messe day': SROB, FL522/11/20/119.

[51] SROB, FL584/1/1.

[52] SROB, FL668/5/9/25 (1st face); FL668/5/9/29r (deletion of the word 'whole' implies that supper was enjoyed by less than the total population; no indication is given of women being present); FL668/5/9/35r.

[53] SROB, FL509/5/1/15 (4th page). The date is scrawled and could be 1574.

the capital manor of Mildenhall.[54] At Great St Mary's in Cambridge 'thawncient custome off the parishe' demanded a sort of electoral college: the two retiring wardens each chose one person; those two chose six other individuals; then finally the nominated eight chose the two churchwardens for the next year. However, in 1621 the parish bemoaned 'much trouble from yeare to yeare in choosing of Churchwardens....few men of sufficiency will undertake the same, in view of the smalnes of the fyne heretofore paid'. As a result the fine charged for refusing office was raised to 40s.[55] From 1532 onwards Boxford elected a new churchwarden to serve with one from the previous year, which at least ensured some continuity and previous experience. By 1658 the same parish agreed that certain named individuals should be overseers of the poor by rotation 'once in seven yeares', and similarly should bear the office of churchwarden every seventh year.[56]


A straunge.
and terrible Wunder wrought very late in the parish Church of Bongay, a Towne of no great distance from the citie of Norwich, namely the fourth of this August, in yeare of our Lord 1577. in a great tempest of violent raine, lightning, and thunder, the like whereof hath bene seldome seene.
With the apparance of an horrible shaped thing, sensibly perceived of the people then and there assembled.
Drawen into a plain method according to the written copie.
by Abraham Fleming.

Pl. 6: A 'straunge and terrible wunder' recorded at Bungay St Mary when on 4 Aug. 1577 a fierce electric storm hit the church, killing two men, injuring others and damaging the building. Some thought this event was an attack by a huge ravening dog known as 'Black Shuck'.

Maintaining the church externally

After 1558 churchwardens were still responsible for maintaining the fabric of each church (though the chancel legally belonged to the rector, and may have had a different structural history).[57] In this task they were subject to the higher authority of archdeacons, bishops and their legal officials, which was based on regular visitations and the workings of ecclesiastical courts. Thus, the bishop's visitation of 1597 revealed that Coddenham's chancel was 'in great decay in the rooffe, pavement and glasse wyndowes', with the result that 'beggers creepe into the chauncell throughe the wyndowes and lye in the church abusing the same'.[58] On rare occasions routine use and maintenance were interrupted by totally unpredictable 'acts of God'. On Sunday 4 August 1577, during matins and 'at the tyme of Procession', Bungay St Mary was hit by 'A great terryble & ferfull tempest....such darknes, Rayne, hayle, Thunder & lightnyng as was never seen the lyke', which left the tower scorched and damaged. Two men were killed and the legs and feet of several

[54] SROB, EL110/5/5, fol. 2r; Craig, 1993, pp. 362-63.
[55] Foster, 1905, pp. 43, 184, 189.
[56] SROB, FB77/E2/3/p. 260. In parishes with small populations it was easier for a few individuals to assume control and create a 'closed' or 'select' vestry. In the small village of Langham, Captain Richard Maltyward served continuously as churchwarden from 1651-71, Richard Frost from 1650-60 and John Jolly from 1661-73: SROB, FL599/5/1/p. 27.
[57] In 1602 Mendlesham (a vicarage) paid 4s to Henry Whiting 'for mending the chancel': SROI, FB159/E7/21.
[58] Williams, 1946, p. 147.

others were burnt.[59] In a parallel example, the tower at Bardwell was shaken and damaged in 1580, 'the year of the earthquake'. Battlement brick ('bartelmet brycke') had to be bought, and the weathercock was taken down for repair. As a form of insurance the parish prudently bought a 'bocke of prayer apoynted after the earthequacke'.[60]

Most surviving churchwardens' accounts, like those of their medieval predecessors, refer to the routine repair of churches externally, their walls, doors, windows, roofs and towers (which in Suffolk were almost invariably called 'steeples'). Because this region lacked good building stone to make square-cut ashlar, the facing of walls and towers largely depended on flint. This was used either in the form of raw cobbles, or cut to reveal the darker, glassy interior. Expensive imported limestone was reserved for friezes and decorative mouldings around doors and windows giving, against the flint, a subtle and pleasing variety of tone and texture. Other kinds of stone used included clunch (a harder form of chalk), coralline crag and glacial erratics. Roofs, as mentioned in Redman's articles of 1597, were made of three kinds of material: lead, clay tiling or thatch. Because stained-glass windows were no longer in vogue, the emphasis was now on plain white glass in quarries and lattices. The latter were panels of lead and glass, fastened to iron bars by twisted wire.[61] Individual repairs of churches usually cost less than £1, and were undertaken by craftsmen from the local district including masons, carpenters, thatchers, plumbers and glaziers. Before work actually started, preliminary inspections and discussions were the first costs to be faced. Thus, at Metfield in 1594 a carpenter was given bread and beer costing 2d 'when he came to see the reparacion to be done upon the church roffe'.[62] Typically for East Anglia, Exning in 1591 spent 1s 10d in the 'gatheringe of ten lodes of flinte stones for the churche wales', and Wattisfield in 1609 paid a thatcher 20d 'for stopping [plugging holes] abought the Church'; the straw cost another 2s.[63] Sometimes structural repairs replaced earlier work done on the cheap. In 1616 Wattisfield paid for 'beatting downe the bricke woorke in the Church Windowes' and for sixteen feet of new glass.[64]

The most helpful churchwardens' accounts specify the costs of raw materials and their carriage, the number of days worked by different levels of craftsmen, their pay and the cost of their food and board.[65] Expenses can also include the erection of scaffolding or 'staging' made up of boards, spars, nails, ropes and skeps (baskets to carry stone or lead). In work on its tower in 1614-15, Bardwell spent 7s 4d on 'a rope to drawe stuffe uppe into the

[59] *East Anglian*, III, 199-200. For this storm, which also hit Blythburgh, see Anon, *A Straunge and terrible Wunder, wrought very late in the Parish Church of Bongay* (London, n.d.), copy in SROB, 942.64 BUN.

[60] SROB, FL522/11/22/9-10.

[61] Melford in 1598 paid 'For 25 latesses for the churche windowes' and 2 lbs of wire 'for to fasten the latesse'; William Jaxsun was paid 1s 'for settin of the latesses huppe': SROB, FL509/5/1/19 (2nd face).

[62] Bower, 1938, p. 135. In 1605 Metfield paid 6d 'for the use of a payer of boot leggs [?bottles] ....used when the holes about the steple were stopt'.

[63] SROB, FL567/5/1/9; SROB, FL668/5/9/60 (3rd face). In the 1580s Melford paid for 'gatheryng of stonys [flints]'; women were heavily involved: SROB, FL509/5/1/3.

[64] SROB, FL668/5/9/65 (2nd face).

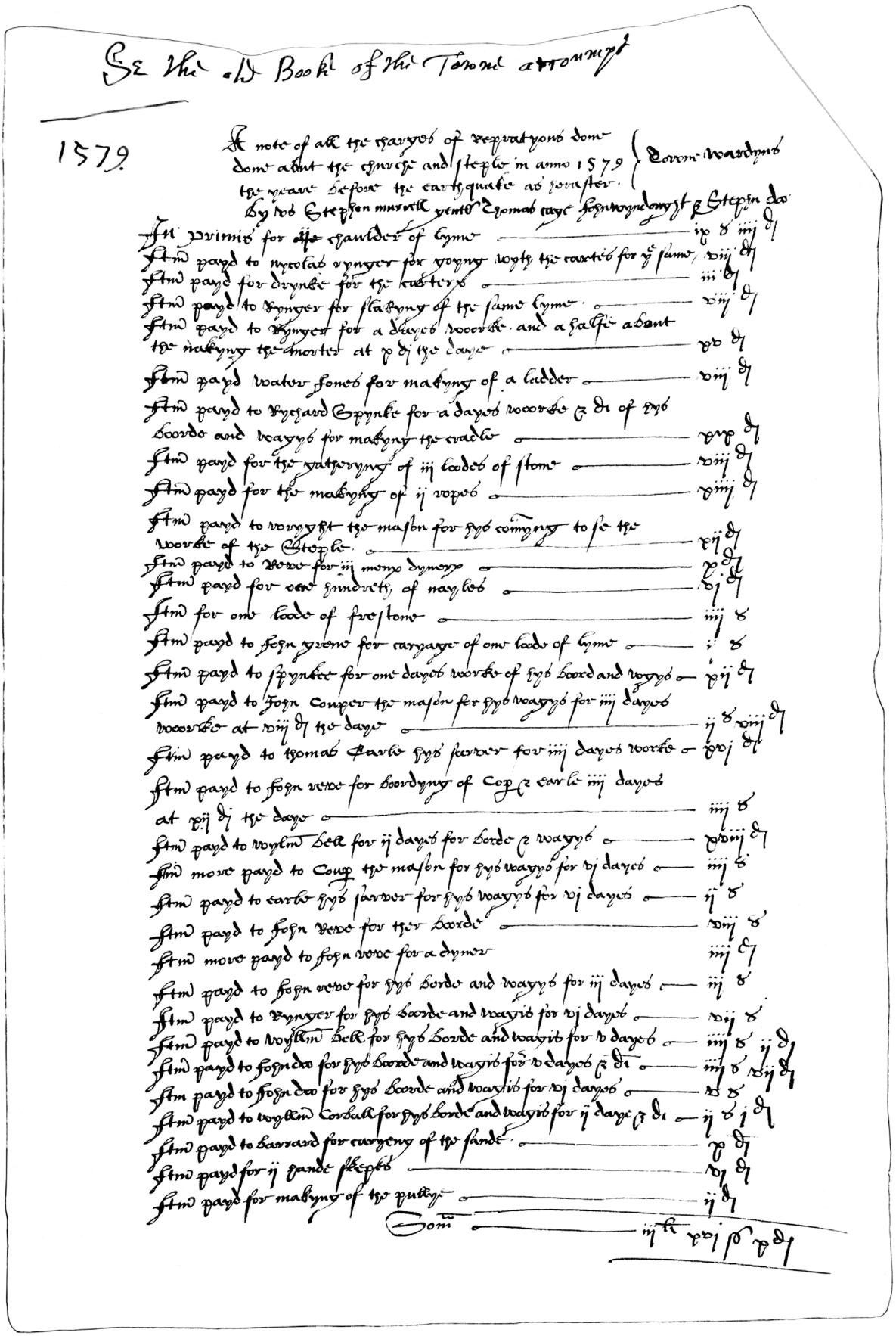
[65] Raw materials included limestone, freestone, 'softstone', ragstone, flint, 'calk' [chalk or clunch], brick, timber, glass, lead, lattices, solder, iron, sand, hair, lime, thatch, reeds and rushes.

steplee for the mason & plomer', 2s 6d on 'heweing of the stageing tymber', 2s 9d on 'lynes to stage with', 2d for 'greese for the pullyes', 3s 6d on 'a rope to stage with', and 1s 2d on three skeps.[66] At Mildenhall in 1601 rush-rope was used 'to tye the skaffold', while in 1617 Melford paid 7s for 'makinge a Cradle [hoist] in mendinge of the steple'.[67] Gutters, pipes, spouts and cisterns are occasionally mentioned, but otherwise tend to be hidden under the general costs of plumbing.[68] Nonetheless, Mendlesham in 1586 spent 4s on 'syx spowtes of woode to conveye the water of the leades'; subsequently they were treated with white lead. In 1610 the sexton there was required to clean the leads and spouts of the church and porch, 'caryinge away the menuer'.[69]

Repairs done to church exteriors, against the damaging effects of ever-changing English weather, were normally patchwork in character and carried out as defects were found.[70] In 1614 at Mendlesham 14 lbs of sheet lead were bought for 2s 4d, with 6 lbs of solder costing 5s, 'for flashes for the Church leades'. Then, remarkably, they were used 'aboute some 22 places'.[71] Taking a different approach, some prescient wardens anticipated trouble and thereby saved money: at Mendlesham in 1610 panes of glass 'redy with the wynd to decay' were fastened to make them more secure.[72] At intervals serious structural problems arose, and had to be dealt with at greater expense. In 1612-13 Bardwell, soon after spending 4d 'to nayle downe the leade that the winde did blowe upp', paid the huge sum of £21 11s 11d for repairing the roof.[73] Occasionally, of course, the costs were even higher, as in 1592-94 when the tower of Great St Mary's in Cambridge was rebuilt for £219.[74] Some parishes gave money 'in Earneste of worke to be done', or drew up agreements with craftsmen to maintain parts of the structure in return for annual payments.[75] In 1628 glazier Richard Slinger of Lavenham agreed to maintain all the windows of Great Waldingfield church, and for that was paid 7s every Easter Monday, with the parish supplying the raw materials.[76]

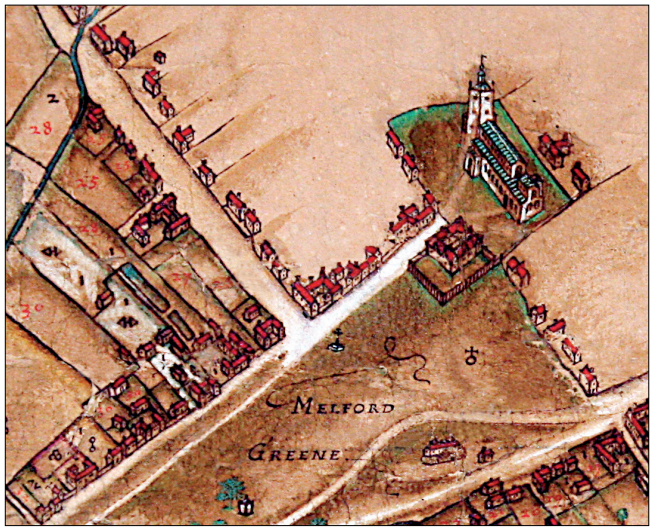
The most detailed example so far found of costed repair work on a church exterior covers 2½ pages in close handwriting. It relates to Bardwell's nave and tower in 1579 (Pl. 7). Its emphasis is not so much on the fabric of the church as on the materials purchased and the craftsmen brought in to carry out the work. The raw materials included three loads of stone (probably flint), one load of freestone, one load of 'softstone' for the windows, lime and sand to make mortar, an array of nails, gudgeons and forelocks, and lead and solder. Made on-site were a cradle, pulley, ladder, rope, barrel and plumber's mould. The workforce, most of whom

[66] SROB, FL159/22/11; SROB, FL522/11/22/79-80.
[67] SROB, FL522/5/5/31v; SROB, FL522/11/20/7-8; SROB, FL509/5/1/40v.
[68] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 37.
[69] SROI, FB159/E7/11, 28. In 1610-11 Melford paid for sweeping the leads and clearing 'the Sestons & pypes', and also for 'mendinge the spoutes': SROB, FL509/5/1/4, 30 (p. 4).
[70] In the sense of stopping up holes in the fabric: SROB, FL668/5/9/60 (3rd face).
[71] FB159/E7/35.
[72] SROB, FB159/E7/28 (4 Feb).
[73] SROB, FL522/11/22/73-4.
[74] Foster, 1905, p. 263.
[75] SROB, FL509/5/1/ 22 (3rd page).
[76] SROB, FL514/1/6 (15 Apr. 1628).



Pl. 7: The nave and western tower (‘steple’) of Bardwell underwent major repairs in 1579. The four townwardens recorded the expenses in considerable detail.

were named, consisted of two masons, one plumber, their assistants ('sarvers') who numbered at least seven men and one boy. They were given wages and, as they came mostly from outside Bardwell, were boarded locally. For example, a mason called Wryght was paid 12d 'for hys commyng to se the worke of the Steple', 4d for his dinner at Bury St Edmunds when 'chosyng the stone', and 4s for six days' work; his unnamed boy was paid 16d for the same period. A local man called John Reve was paid 6s 8d for boarding Wryght and his boy for five days. The most revealing entry concerns 14d paid for 'caryeng one lode of stone from Euston'. This must refer to limestone from Northamptonshire or Lincolnshire which had been brought by barge across the Fens as far as Euston on the River Blackbourn, and then carted by road over the last five miles to Bardwell.[77] By contrast the stone 'chosen' by Wright at Bury was almost certainly salvaged from the site of the great Benedictine abbey which had been officially dissolved forty years earlier.



Pl. 8: A detailed map of the manor of Melford drawn by Samuel Pierse in 1613 illustrates an Elizabethan lantern on top of the medieval tower.

Completely new structures were occasionally added to medieval churches in post-medieval times. At Melford in 1597-98 two references to the 'lanterne' show that the timber and lead spike on top of the tower, which was clearly drawn on Samuel Pierse's superb map of 1613 (Pl. 8), was at least late Elizabethan in date.[78] No evidence has been found for the building of vestries, and those known to have existed, as at Melford, Mendlesham and Mildenhall, were all constructed before 1550.[79] Pentices too are sometimes mentioned, but are difficult to place. In the only explained example at Bungay Holy Trinity, the word apparently refers to the stone housing of the external bell, on the gable at the east end of the nave.[80]

In spite of this picture of generally conscientious maintenance and repair, which was a continuation of what was done before Henry VIII unleashed the English Reformation, we must remember that a significant minority of churches at this time were in serious decay. Some in areas like the Breckland and Sandlings had been altogether abandoned because of the decline of rural populations since the mid-fourteenth century. Others were suffering from more recent neglect, particularly on the part of lay rectors, incumbents and churchwardens.[81]

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[77] SROB, FL522/11/22/7-9.

[78] SROB, FL509/5/1/18r; Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 157.

[79] Behind its high altar *c.*1500 Melford built two vestries for clergy and choristers. Mildenhall had an early vestry above a porch, and so probably did Boxford. However, most vestries seem to have been built in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

[80] Mann, 1934, p. 92 (*sub* 1563).

[81] *East Anglian*, I, 340, 370; II, 27, 75, 89, 223, 231; Williams, 1946, pp. 127, 130, 147.

In 1597 Culpho church was 'in greate ruin', needing at least £20 to repair it by levying a special rate or 'cessement'. At Hazlewood, where by 1627 the chancel had fallen down, Mr Topcliffe 'farmer of the rectory' argued that the chancel had been ruined for a 100 years and that 'there is room sufficient in the church [nave] to contain the people of the parish'.[82]

Maintaining the church internally

A related responsibility inherited from the past was keeping the interiors of churches clean, sweet-smelling and properly ordered for regular worship. This process, often described as 'trimming', was emphasised in the second book of homilies published in 1571 and in the canons of 1604:

> The Church-wardens or Quest-men shall take care and provide that the Churches be well and sufficiently repaired..., that the windows be well glazed, and that the floors be kept paved, plain and even, ... without dust, or any thing that may be either noisome or unseemly, as best becometh the House of God .....[83]

Accordingly, churchwardens regularly spent money on maintaining church interiors in amounts large and small. At several times of year surplices and communion cloths were washed, and communion vessels were scoured. Brushes, besoms, spades, shovels and ladders were bought or borrowed to combat cobwebs, dirt and manure, while nets, guns, gunpowder and saltpetre were procured to control birds, bats and other verminous nuisances.[84] Cratfield in 1583 paid 9d for a 'Roocke neete' and 10d for 'the line for the nets'; Melford in 1597 spent 4d on 'Gune pouder for byrdes'; and Boxford in 1586 paid 12d 'for copwebinge of the church' and 12s 'for sweepeing & trymmeing of the church'.[85]

To lubricate their bells, clocks and chimes, nearly all parishes regularly recorded the purchase of either soap, oil, grease or even butter and lard, as well as ropes, wire and leather. However, in contrast to the medieval period, expensive candles, tapers and wax were mentioned less frequently, because the emphasis was now on illumination rather than religious ceremony.[86] For communion services, usually held three to twelve times a year, bread and wine were routinely purchased.[87] Officially the bread was to be 'common fine bread' without any

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[82] Williams, 1946, p. 141; NRO, DN/VIS/5.

[83] 2nd Book of Homilies, www.anglicanlibrary.org/homilies/index.htm ch.III. The house of God 'to be sufficiently repayred in all places... honourably adorned and garnished, and to be kept cleane and sweet....' In 1597 Gt Bricett exemplified a *dis*ordered church: 'dyvers polles and tressells are layd in the Chauncell in the fayre tyme': Williams, 1946, p. 147.

[84] Saltpetre (potassium nitrate) is a major constituent of gunpowder. At Bardwell in 1614 the saltpetre man, who had the right to dig anywhere in the interests of national defence, was paid 2s 'for not bringeinge his tubbes to town': SROB, FL522/11/22/76. He was probably paid off because his digging could be very disruptive and smelly.

[85] Holland, 1895, p. 107; SROB, FL509/5/1/17 (3rd face); SROB, FB77/E2/2/p. 183. In 1621-22 Bardwell paid 4s 'for scouring the Church wyndowes', presumably inside and out: SROB, FL522/11/22/98.

[86] From 1538 royal injunctions ordered that candles be used only for illumination and not for superstitious purposes; the only exceptions then allowed were candles on the communion table, the 'plough light' and 'rood light'. At Exning in 1595 candles were used 'in lokinge \to/ the clocke in the eveninges': SROB, FL567/5/1/20.

[87] By Canon 21 (1604) communion was to be taken 'at the least thrice in the year, whereof the feast of Easter to be one': anglican.net/doctrines/1604-canon-law. In 1614 Boxford held communions at Easter, Midsummer, Michaelmas and Christmas: SROB, FB77/E2/3/9. In 1601 Mildenhall celebrated seven communions at Eastertide, and three at Christmastide: EL110/5/5/25r.

idolatrous symbols on it such as crosses.[88] Sometimes the bread was identified in accounts as high-quality wheaten 'manchet' and the wine as sack, muscatel or claret. After Easter 1602, churchwarden Tobie Hewitt of Melford bought 11 pints of 'Muskadine' (6d a pint) and 5 pints of 'Claritt' (4d a pint). The more highly priced wine, as John Craig has suggested, may have been intended for 'the better sort' of communicants.[89] An unusual entry of 1622 reveals that Weybread was fined 16d at an ecclesiastical court 'for want of wyne at Communion'.[90]

The practice of 'perfuming' church interiors by burning incense and arranging scented herbs and flowers certainly survived after 1558, but mainly to make them smell sweetly on special occasions such as Christmas and Easter. In 1584 Cratfield paid 4d 'for a swete ode off Juneper', and at Aldeburgh in 1625-26 the chamberlain's accounts mention 'perfume oyle' and 'perfume Candle'.[91] At Mendlesham in 1610 the sexton was paid 4d 'for fraunkensence to burn in the churche at two tymes',[92] while in 1619 the wardens of Great St Mary's in Cambridge paid 3s 6d for 'flowers and hearbes in the Church on Christmas and Easter daies'.[93]

Traditionally the floors of churches were made of layers of rammed clay, chalk and other natural materials. Thus in 1598 Exning spent 20d 'for fetchinge of two lodes of Claye to the churche'.[94] Increasingly, however, it was the practice to use manufactured clay tiles known as 'pavement bricks' or 'pamments', which were undecorated, square or rectangular, plain or glazed, and set in lime mortar. In 1587 Mendlesham spent £1 19s 8d on 900 'Peament for the Cherche' at 4s 4d the hundred. Their carting cost an extra 3s 6d, and it took fifteen days to lay them.[95] Inevitably pamments wore and cracked, and they were often broken when graves were dug inside the church. In 1615, as the result of an official visitation, an ecclesiastical court in Bury St Edmunds found that Boxford had faults in its chancel 'wher the pamments were broke up for the burials'.[96] The careless back-filling of a grave could cause later trouble: at Wattisfield in 1608-09 the sexton was paid 2d 'for mending a place in the Churche which was senekkon [sinking]'.[97] In 1608 Thomas Bacon of Bungay St Mary revealed a common motive for digging graves within the church: he paid a fee of 6s 8d 'for hys wifes grave by his seat in church'.[98] It is sometimes recorded that the floors of churches were strewn with vegetable matter such as rushes and straw, which was swept up at intervals and renewed. No doubt this practice helped, in the normal absence of fireplaces and metal braziers, to keep the feet of the congregation a little warmer. In 1613 Mendlesham bought

[88] Hughes & Larkin, II, 1969, p. 131.
[89] SROB, FL509/5/1/22 (2nd face); Craig, 1993, p. 376.
[90] *East Anglian*, I, 411.
[91] Holland, 1895, p. 108; Winn, 1926, p. 30. The word 'ode' means either 'wood' or 'load'.
[92] SROI, FB159/E7/28.
[93] Foster, 1905, p. 351.
[94] SROB, FL567/5/1/30.
[95] SROI, FB159/E7/12. In 1612-13 Mendlesham bought 100 pamments at Woolpit: SROI, FB159/E7/33.
[96] SROB, FB77/E2/3/p. 10; Bower, 1938, p. 142.
[97] SROB, FL668/5/9/60r.
[98] Mann, 1934, p. 69.

'twoe Bunches of Pesstrawe [pea-straw] for to laye in the stooles or Seates in the Churche'.[99] Another kind of floor-covering which had the same effect was woven rush-matting. In 1572 Cratfield bought three mats for its chancel, and in 1589 Aldeburgh spent 13s 4d on 'matts for the Churche [nave]'.[100] In 1614 Weybread unusually recorded a 'dosse' (hassock), for the incumbent to kneel on.[101]

After 1558 the interiors of churches became progressively plainer as they lost the intricate carvings, multiple colours and gilded surfaces associated with the Latin Mass.[102] Where devotional features had been removed, masons were employed to patch the walls and fill in holes. For instance, at Bungay Holy Trinity in 1561 a craftsman was paid 7½d 'for stopping up the place wher the holy water stoppe studde by the churche dore'.[103] In the adjacent parish of St Mary, 14d was the price of 'stopping up the walle next the vesterye wher the Auter stoode'. Internal wall-surfaces, which had carried painted images to teach the faithful, were either scraped off or, less destructive in the longer term, covered by layers of white limewash that were freshened at intervals.[104] At Melford in 1563 a man called Prince was paid for 'scraping owt of the payntinges all the lengthe of the quire'.[105] In 1561 Bungay St Mary bought a pound of 'Redde ockyr for defacyng the christover [image of St Christopher carrying the Christ-child]'.[106] At Bardwell in 1618-19 a mason was paid 9s 6d 'for whiting the church & the porch'. Extra expenditure included lime, 'half a bushell of shreeds & a peck of hare', and a kettle 'to seeth sysings'.[107]

The whitewashing of church walls was accompanied by the painting of biblical quotations (Pls. 9 & 10). In 1583 Cratfield paid James Meeke 12s 'for twelf dayes worke for whiteng and castinge' of the church, while his assistant received 10s. Between them they also received 7s for beer 'when they were workinge' (mainly on ladders and scaffolding, be it noted). Then in the same year the parish spent 22s 6d 'for scripture setting upp' in the church.[108] In 1604 Canon 82 gave official approval to 'chosen sentences written upon the walls....in places convenient'. All this was a direct reversal of the policy imposed by Queen Mary: in 1555 Melford had spent 8s 4d 'puttyng owte the vayn scrybylyng uppon the churche walles'.[109]

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[99] SROI, FB159/E7/32.

[100] Holland, 1895, p. 98; Winn, 1926, p. 41. Mats were sometimes misspelt as 'nats'.

[101] *East Anglian*, I, 411.

[102] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 9.

[103] SROI, 115/E1/1. In the 17th-18th centuries, church interiors were painted for purely decorative reasons; Kedington still has imitation fluting painted on arcade pillars. Pillars of Hadleigh's nave in 1629 were coloured black, yellow and orange-brown: painting in Hadleigh Deanery. At Stoke by Nayland in the 1690s the interior was painted 'Spanish White', except for the bottom 5ft 2ins which was given a dark colour akin to a domestic wainscot; arcade capitals were blackened; the font was painted with 'a Marball Cullor in oyle': SROB, FB80/A1/1, p. 65. In 1665 Boxford paid the large sum of £21 for painting the church: SROB, FB77/E2/3/p. 143. Metfield's font was coloured by at least 1634: Bower, 1938, p. 131.

[104] Some parishes were accused of having chancels 'not whited': Williams, 1946, p. 130.

[105] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 126.

[106] *East Anglian*, III, 19. In 1547, early in Edward VI's reign, Bungay St Mary paid 16d for 'skrapyng the Christofer': *East Anglian,* I, 227. The Christopher destroyed in 1561 had clearly been restored in Mary's reign.

[107] SROB, FL522/11/22/90-91. 'Shreds' of leather or cloth were mixed with hair to give body to whitewash.

[108] Holland (1895), p. 107. In 1635 Weybread paid £1 9s 0d for 14½ yards of 'sentences' upon the church walls, at 2s a yard: *East Anglian*, II, 4.

[109] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 111.



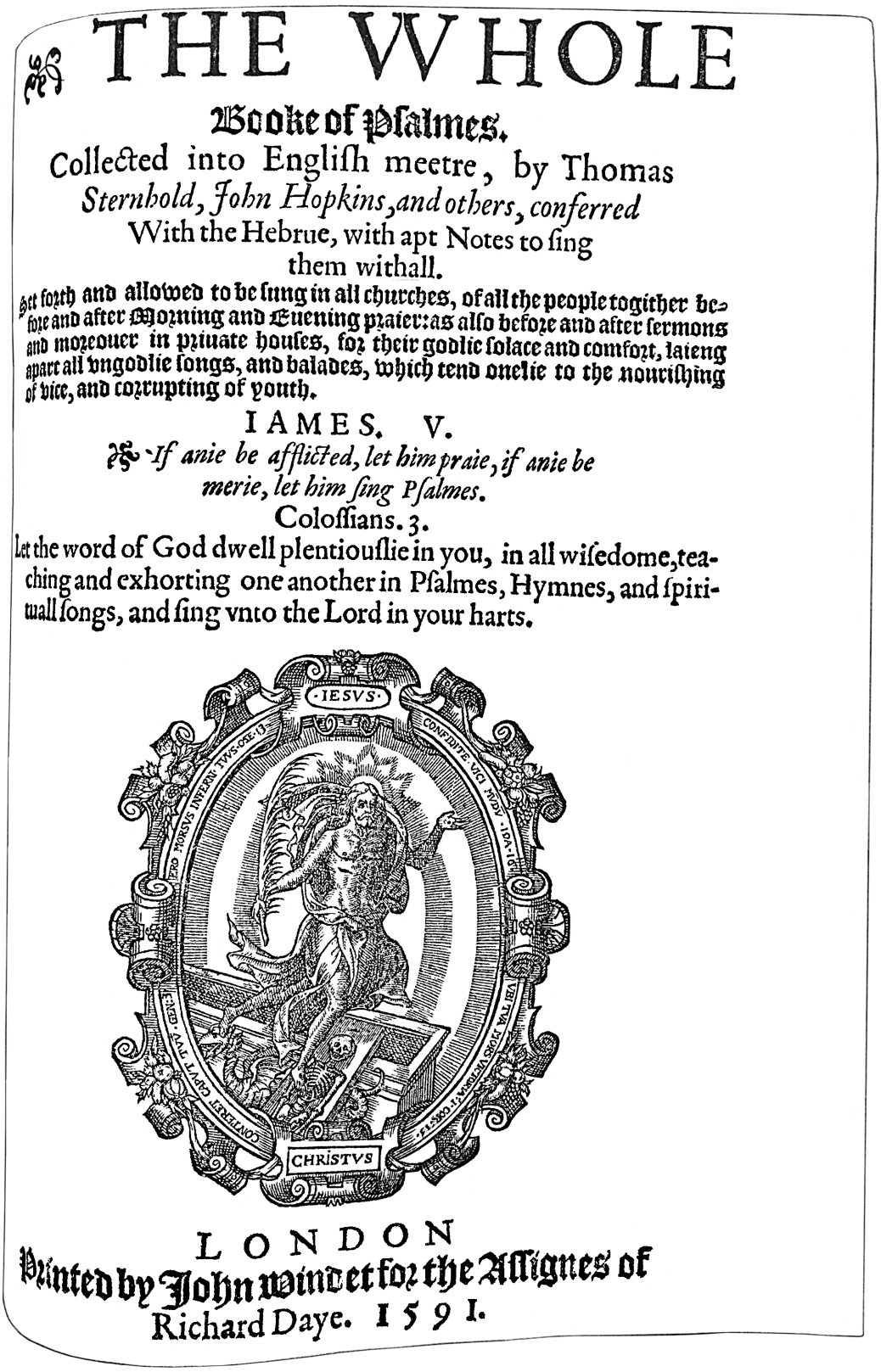
Pl. 9: At Lakenheath removal of whitewash on the nave walls has revealed five separate phases of medieval wall-painting, dating from the early 13th century to the late 15th. Among themes illustrated are the Harrowing of Hell and Virgin and Child with St Edmund.



Pl. 10: After the Reformation, Lakenheath's pictorial wall-paintings were replaced by 'sentences': biblical quotations in English set within decorative frames. This example from St John's gospel, 6, 27 draws attention to the 'bread of life which came down from heaven'.

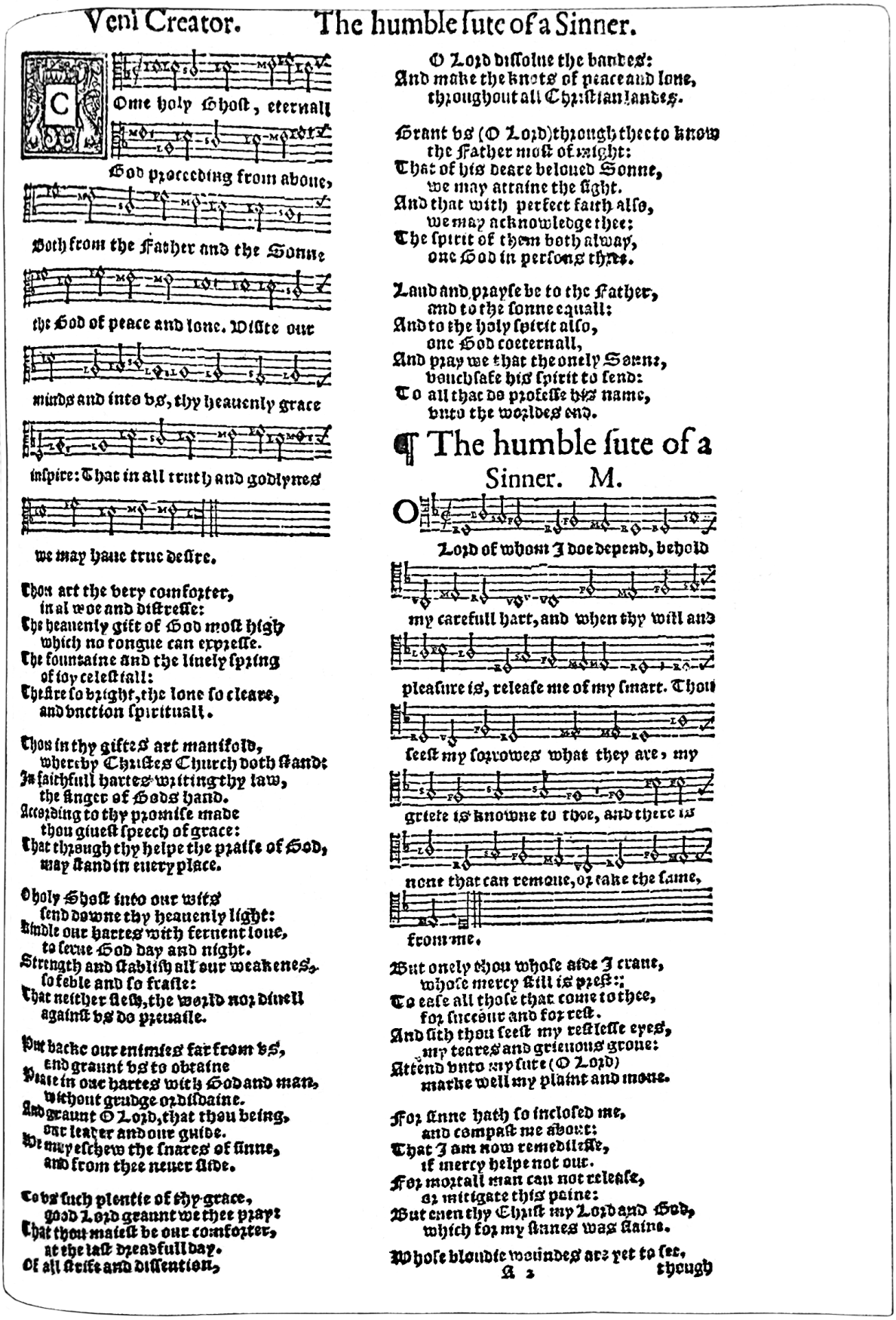
Although the evidence is patchy, churchwardens' accounts show a change in the character of church music in this period. For instance, in the decades before 1558 the records at Melford clearly demonstrate the importance of organs. In an inventory of church goods made in 1547, this parish had 'thre payre of orgayns', meaning three instruments: two are named in the accounts of 1554 as 'great' and 'in the choir'. One of them was probably fixed in the roodloft above the screen. A fourth organ in the Lady Chapel had been sold to Mr William Clopton, who left ten acres of land to support the organ player in the church. A fifth organ stood in the chapel of St James which lay over a mile to the south of the church. In Mary's reign Melford's surviving accounts make several references to the mending and maintenance of organs. In 1554 for example £4 was paid for 'making the great organs'; in 1555 organ makers were boarded locally; and in 1556 pewter was bought for one of the instruments. Towards the end of the century, however, the mood changes to one of declining interest and disposal. In 1576 at Cratfield an organ case was taken down, while Bungay St Mary sold off 51 lbs of 'tynne that were pipes of the great organes'. To return to Melford, its 'ould organe pypes' were sold off in 1617.[110] The emphasis in worship was swinging away from Gregorian chant and plainsong performed in Latin by clergy and trained choirs towards more lusty congregational singing in the native language.

[110] Dymond & Paine, 2012, pp. 65, 102, 107-08, 111-12; Holland, 1895, p. 101; *East Anglian*, I, 199. See Willis, 2010. In churchwardens' accounts so far consulted, very little is said or implied about newer forms of church music.



THE WHOLE
Booke of Pſalmes.
Collected into Engliſh meetre, by Thomas
Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others, conferred
With the Hebrue, with apt Notes to ſing
them withall.
Set forth and allowed to be ſung in all churches, of all the people togither before and after Morning and Euening prayer: as also before and after ſermons and moreouer in priuate houſes, for their godlie ſolace and comfort, laieng apart all vngodlie ſongs, and balades, which tend onelie to the nouriſhing of vice, and corrupting of youth.
IAMES. V.
If anie be afflicted, let him praie, if anie be merie, let him ſing Pſalmes.
Coloſſians. 3.
Let the word of God dwell plentiouſlie in you, in all wiſedome, teaching and exhorting one another in Pſalmes, Hymnes, and ſpirituall ſongs, and ſing vnto the Lord in your harts.
IESVS
CHRISTVS
LONDON
Printed by Iohn Windet for the Aſſignes of
Richard Daye. 1591.

Pl. 11: *The Whole Booke of Psalms* by Sternhold and Hopkins, edition of 1591. Translations of the psalms, with metrical and musical settings, had accumulated since the early 16th century. In 1562 John Daye published the first complete English collection for congregational singing; thereafter it was reprinted many times. Reformers encouraged psalm-singing as a godly alternative to popular songs which tended only to 'the nourishing of vice, and corrupting of youth'.



Veni Creator.

COme holy Ghoſt, eternall
God proceeding from aboue,
both from the Father and the Sonne
the God of peace and loue. Wiſite our
minds and into vs, thy heauenly grace
inſpire: That in all truth and godlynes
we may haue true deſire.

Thou art the very comforter,
in al woe and diſtreſſe:
The heauenly gift of God moſt high
which no tongue can expreſſe.
The fountaine and the liuely ſpring
of ioy celeſtiall:
The fire ſo bright, the loue ſo cleare,
and vnction ſpirituall.

Thou in thy gifts art manifold,
whereby Chriſtes Church doth ſtand:
In faithfull hartes writing thy law,
the finger of Gods hand.
According to thy promiſe made
thou giueſt ſpeech of grace:
That through thy helpe the praiſe of God,
may ſtand in euery place.

O holy Ghoſt into our wits
ſend downe thy heauenly light:
Kindle our hartes with feruent loue,
to ſerue God day and night.
Strength and ſtablish all our weakenes,
ſo feble and ſo fraile:
That neither fleſh, the world nor diuell
againſt vs do preuaile.

Put backe our enimies far from vs,
and graunt vs to obtaine
Peace in our hartes with God and man,
without grudge or diſdaine.
And graunt O Lord, that thou being,
our leader and our guide.
We may eſchew the ſnares of ſinne,
and from thee neuer ſlide.

To vs ſuch plentie of thy grace,
good Lord graunt we thee pray:
That thou maieſt be our comforter,
at the laſt dreadfull day.
Of all ſtrife and diſſention,
O Lord diſſolue the bandes:
And make the knots of peace and loue,
throughout all Chriſtian landes.

Grant vs (O Lord) through thee to know
the Father moſt of might:
That of his deare beloued Sonne,
we may attaine the light.
And that with perfect faith alſo,
we may acknowledge thee:
The ſpirit of them both alway,
one God in perſons three.

Laud and prayſe be to the Father,
and to the ſonne equall:
And to the holy ſpirit alſo,
one God coeternall,
And pray we that the onely Sonne,
vouchſafe his ſpirit to ſend:
To all that do profeſſe his name,
vnto the worldes end.

¶ The humble ſute of a Sinner. M.

O Lord of whom I doe depend, behold
my carefull hart, and when thy will and
pleaſure is, releaſe me of my ſmart. Thou
ſeeſt my ſorrowes what they are, my
griefe is knowne to thee, and there is
none that can remoue, or take the ſame,
from me.

But onely thou whoſe aide I crane,
whoſe mercy ſtill is preſt:
To eaſe all thoſe that come to thee,
for ſuccour and for reſt.
And ſith thou ſeeſt my reſtleſſe eyes,
my teares and grieuous grone:
Attend vnto my ſute (O Lord)
marke well my plaint and mone.

For ſinne hath ſo incloſed me,
and compaſt me about:
That I am now remedileſſe,
if mercy helpe not out.
For mortall man can not releaſe,
or mitigate this paine:
But euen thy Chriſt my Lord and God,
which for my ſinnes was ſlaine.

Whoſe bloudie woundes are yet to ſee,
though

Pl. 12: Sample page of the ‘Book of Psalms’, giving words and music together. A related page explains the tonic sol-fa system of singing.



Pl. 13: The protestant hatred of 'icons' is well illustrated at Southwold by the deliberate scratching out of saints' faces on the roodscreen. The saints illustrated here are SS Paul, John and James.

As has already been noted, stained-glass containing pre-Reformation imagery was routinely destroyed in the Elizabethan period, a major transformation that was often carried out selectively and therefore cumulatively. The principal objective of this aesthetic vandalism was to rob idolatrous figures of their power to deceive–most efficiently done by obliterating heads or faces (Pl. 13), followed by hands and feet. Thus, in the 1560s John Mylne of Aldeburgh was paid 6s 'for blottynge oute of the faces of the Imags in the church wyndowes'.[111] At Bungay St Mary in 1580 a glazier was paid 12s 6d 'for mending of all the holes & defaceyng the heads & stoppinge them with newe glass'; 5s were spent on sixty score quarries of new glass used in the third and fourth windows.[112] This selective approach made a cogent protestant point, and at the same time made

[111] Winn, 1926, p. 35.
[112] *East Anglian*, III, 200; Mann, 1934, p. 66.

good economic sense. By 'blotting out' the most offensive details in the glass, wise parishes saved themselves from the much larger expense of replacing whole windows.



Pl. 14: Preston St Mary impressively exhibits two new requirements in Elizabethan churches: the Royal Arms to stress the monarch's headship of the Church and a list of the Ten Commandments. Here both took the form of hinged triptyches. On the back of the Arms are biblical quotations fulminating against 'horrible idolatraye'.



Pl. 15: At Helmingham this monument of 1615 commemorates four Lionel Tollemaches, lords of the manor. To accommodate it, a special dormer window was cut through the nave roof.

Commonly fixed to church walls at this period were framed 'tables' or panels of wood (or perhaps canvas), on which important verbal information was displayed in English for the education of a steadily more literate age.[113] The texts of the tables were, it seems, bought in printed form and then glued to the panel for public display.[114] The process started in 1561 when the queen ordered the display of the Ten Commandments (or Decalogue) at the east end of all churches, above the communion table (Pl. 14). Later on, other texts were added. In 1563 the archbishop of Canterbury published the prohibited degrees of marriage, which were also required by Canon 99 to be displayed in churches. In 1598 Exning spent 2s 3d on 'makinge of \a/ table of bord for the tenn' commaundementes & one other table for the Degres prohibited in maryadge'.[115] By 1602 Mildenhall displayed tables proclaiming the commandments, prohibited degrees of marriage and local tithing customs.[116] In subsequent generations the distinctly protestant practice of painting religious texts on church walls or on specially made panels expanded to include the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and many quotations from the New and Old Testaments.

Another major trend inside churches after 1558 was the steady proliferation of funerary monuments of all shapes and sizes, accompanied by displays of armorial bearings and by laudatory inscriptions in Latin and English. To a greater extent than had happened before the Reformation, local élites (whether aristocrats, gentry or clergy) regarded the floors and walls of their parish churches as appropriate advertising space for their own virtues and personal achievements.[117] Especially good displays can be seen at Hawstead for the Drury, Cullum and other families, and at Helmingham for the Tollemaches. In the latter case, the

[113] Having been used for a decorative retable behind a pre-Reformation altar, the word 'table' now applies to the communion table and the framed panels of instruction around the church.

[114] *East Anglian,* I, 411.

[115] SROB, FL567/5/1/29.

[116] SROB, EL110/5/5/33r. In 1561 Elizabeth ordered that commandment tables be placed in all churches above the communion table: Bremer & Webster, 2006, 2, pp. 348-49.

[117] One characteristic medium was the hatchment, a painted heraldic panel originally displayed on a dead person's house and later moved to the church.

insertion in 1615 of a towering monument for four successive Lionel Tollemaches (died 1552-1612) required the construction of a special dormer window cut through the roof (Pl. 15). At Badley a ledger-stone in memory of Dorothy Pooley (died 1625) used words rather than carved marble and laid claim to an (impossibly) saintly life:

> 'her sexes pride, her ages wonder, goodness, grace, beautye, vertue, spottlesse trueth, grayheaded judgement in fresh flowring youthe, chastitye, witt, zeale, pietye, all these laye in this coulde case .....'

To accommodate their burials and monuments the gentry and clergy tended to regard the chancels of churches as their preserve, while people of middling status were buried further west in naves, aisles or porches. Quite apart from the expence of making the monument, it usually cost 6s 8d to dig and refill a grave in church and to re-lay pamments around the grave-slab. In the meantime most members of the local population were laid to rest in the churchyard. Even there a degree of display and competition was possible, for example in the way a site was chosen. The least popular place for burial was usually on the colder north side of the churchyard, alleged by some to be set aside for unfortunates such as suicides, executed criminals, the unbaptised and the excommunicated.[118]

Within the re-ordered parish church several other characteristic features are sometimes mentioned in churchwardens' accounts.[119] They include royal arms to emphasize the monarch's headship of the Church of England in place of the Pope (such displays could almost rival the dominating scale of the medieval roods which they replaced); wooden galleries usually sited at the west end of the nave to accommodate groups such as singers, instrumentalists, schoolchildren or paupers; hour-glasses fixed on or near the pulpit to measure the length of sermons for the benefit of both preachers and congregations; wooden biers to carry the dead to church and grave; a locked coffer to store the parish register with its record of baptisms, weddings and funerals; a box for protecting the bible; and a strong chest or 'poor man's box' for voluntary alms-giving.[120] The introduction of communion rails, under the influence of the high-church Laudian movement, has not been found in the accounts so far searched but must have been a significant new cost in the 1630s.[121]

Another liturgical revolution

At the end of the sixteenth century the great majority of Suffolk's parishes contained a church where Christian congregations had worshipped for five hundred years or more. Externally

[118] Dymond, 1999, 467-8.

[119] In 1603-4 Bardwell paid 15s for making the new king's arms, and less than 3d to set them up: SROB, FL522/11/22/51-52. Boxford in 1624 paid 1s 'for mending the staiers of the gallerye': SROB, FB77/E2/3/p. 34. By 1629 Hadleigh had a gallery at the west end of the nave: painting in Hadleigh Deanery. In 1606 Wattisfield paid 10d for an 'Ower Glase' and 20d for its iron parts: SROB, FL668/5/9/57r. In 1594 Exning paid 7s 'for a newe herste for the Churche', with iron plates and nails: SROB, FL567/5/1/15-16.

[120] The contents of the poor-box were meant to be distributed publicly to the most needy. Rents and profits from pre-reformation guilds, obits, lamps, *etc*. were converted to poor-relief, using the same box: Hughes & Larkin, II, 1969, 123-24.

[121] For altar rails, see Cautley, 1982, pp. 185-86.

this building frequently displayed a complicated fabric which had slowly evolved over centuries, with parts dating from Norman or even late Saxon times through to late medieval. In stark contrast, the interiors of these churches had been recently transformed three times in just over one decade, that is, in the years following the accessions of three Tudor monarchs: Edward VI in 1547, Mary in 1553 and Elizabeth in 1558. At these times the agenda of the parish and its officials were sternly dictated by central government. Elizabeth's injunctions of 1559, based closely on those of Edward VI, demanded:

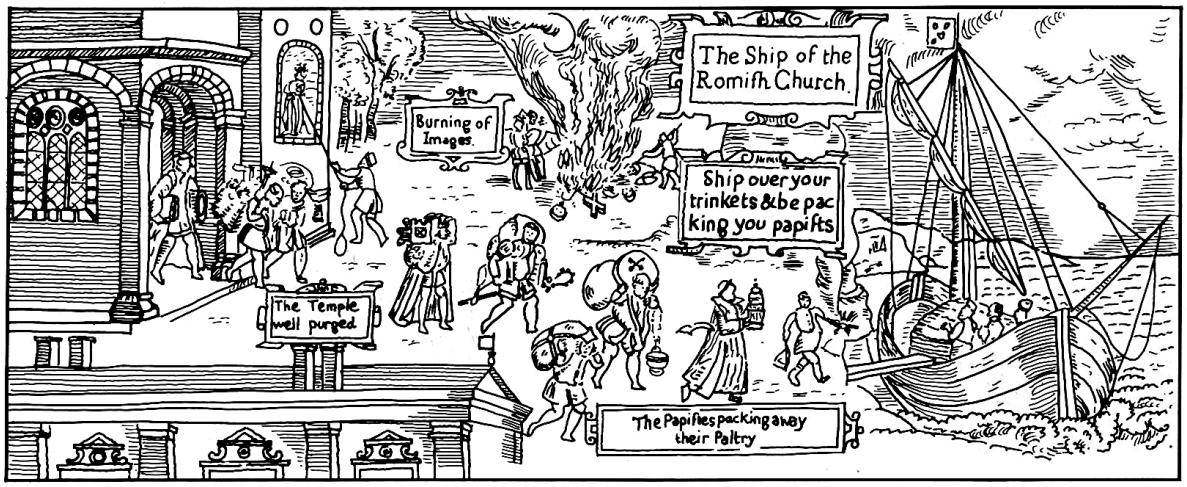
> that they shall take away, utterly extinct, and destroy all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables [altars], candlesticks, trindles [chandeliers], and rolls of wax, pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry, and superstition, so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glasses, window, or elsewhere within their churches and houses...[122]

A royal order of 1561 gave further instructions about, for instance, the removal of roodlofts and chancel steps, preserving the monuments of distinguished people, and the introduction of new furnishings such as the communion table.[123] Instructions of this kind had serious financial implications for lay parishioners, and must have influenced their opinions in public and in private. Yet whatever changes were demanded by higher authority, the Canons of 1604 made it absolutely clear that the work was to be done 'at the common charge of the Parishioners in every Church'. In the light of this, it is not surprising that to raise cash parishes frequently sold off redundant materials no longer officially needed for public worship, such as carved images, vestments, plate and Latin service books. They seemingly found plenty of willing buyers.

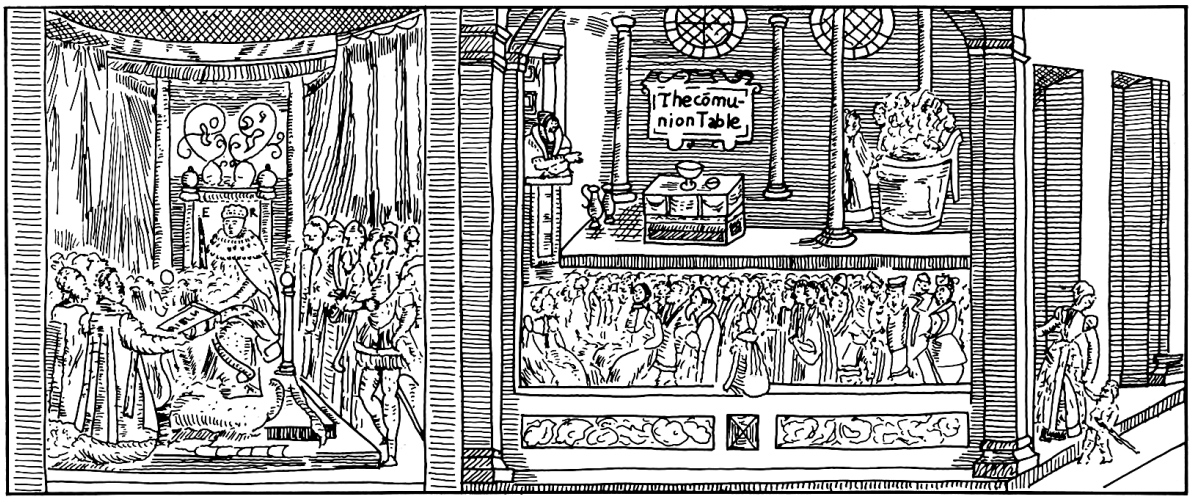
This campaign of deliberate destruction early in Elizabeth's reign sealed the fate of thousands of liturgical items, large and small, in local parish churches. They can be divided into two broad categories. First, come all those precious and irreplaceable medieval works of art and craftsmanship which had been given to churches by benefactors before the Reformation, and which had somehow (the mechanisms must vary) survived the highly destructive protestant reign of Edward VI starting in 1547. The second group consists of objects made in Mary's reign as replacements, perhaps hastily and cheaply made, for what had been destroyed under Edward. In the study of such momentous changes, churchwardens' accounts and lists of church goods are prime sources, recording how fully and how promptly local communities complied with orders from higher authority. In Collinson's memorable words, these events amounted to 'an iconoclastic holocaust of Catholic images and other objects, the fiery end of Catholic England'.[124]

Good evidence along these lines is available for the two parishes of Bungay, dedicated to St Mary and Holy Trinity. In 1557 a carpenter named Edward Molle was paid over £2 for re-erecting the images of SS Mary and John on the roodscreen of St Mary's, including their 'fettching home' from an unstated hiding-place, and their 'setting uppe....on the Rood lofft'. One year later, after

[122] Frere, 1910, p. 16; Hughes & Larkin, II, 1969, 117-32.
[123] *Royal Order*, 1561, pp. 109-10.
[124] Dymond & Paine, 2012, pp. 120-01; Doran, 2003, p. 29.



Pl. 16: The purging of catholic imagery in English churches, as depicted in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1583 edition). Offensive 'Romish' objects were torn down, burnt or shipped away to safety.



Pl. 17: A depiction from the same source of Edward VI giving an English bible to his people, and of a reformed church focussed on a communion table and pulpit.

Elizabeth's accession, the same man was paid 7d 'for takyng downe the ymages', and two others called Cotes and Felld were paid 4d and 9d respectively 'for breking the ymages'.[125] In 1561-62 Molle and his man were paid for taking down the 'perk' or roodloft.[126] At the adjacent church of Holy Trinity conformity came faster. Within a year the parish had installed a new communion table and pulpit, and made (or mended) its font; it had also erected a new 'particion' between nave and chancel, and hung 'a Booke of Commandementes' on the wall.[127] The pace of change at Great St Mary's in Cambridge was rather different. It removed its majestic early-sixteenth-century roodloft in 1562-63, but its main year for selling off redundant equipment such as the Lenten veil, corporas cases, crosses, censers, vestments and Latin service books was 1567-68, roughly a decade after Elizabeth's accession.[128]

[125] *East Anglian*, II, 277-78.
[126] *East Anglian,* III, 19. 'Perk' was used more commonly in Norfolk.
[127] SROL, FC148/E1/1.
[128] Foster, 1905, pp. 150-01, 162, 164. For the making of this screen, see Cambs RO, P30/6/1. In 1575 Boxford paid 'for crosyng of a booke', perhaps the erasure of offensive words: SROB, FB77/E2/2/p. 172.

On a national scale, one of the most compelling pieces of evidence for this mass destruction early in Elizabeth's reign is an inventory of 'monuments of superstition' (*Inventarium Monumentorum Superstitionis*), which was drawn up in 1566 by the churchwardens of about 177 parishes in the county of Lincolnshire.[129] Here, the same liturgical transformation seems to have been carried out faster and perhaps more consistently than in Suffolk. Most of the now offensive liturgical objects from the catholic past were recorded as destroyed, broken, burnt, melted down and, very often, sold off, but a significant proportion were deliberately put to a wide range of new uses, some of which seem quite respectful and others downright sacrilegious. Thus, at Dembleby the roodloft was used to make a new communion table, and at East Halton a vestment was cut up and 'maid a coveringe to the pulpit'. By contrast, Latin service books at Horbling were sold to a mercer who tore the leaves out 'to put spices in'; Colsterworth sold its censers, a chrismatory, pix and other objects 'at Grantham fair'; and at Wroot tabernacles housing the twelve apostles, 'with other popish papisticall and supersticious Idolls', went up in flames. Even more dramatically, at Woolsthorpe the rood with its images of the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist 'and all other Imagies of papistrie and the rood loft' were in 1564 burnt 'in the open strete'.[130] All over England spectacles of this kind must have made powerful impressions on the minds of witnesses, whatever their ages or religious leanings–impressions which no doubt eventually drifted away into a haze of folk memory.



Pl. 18: In the Clopton Chantry at Long Melford church, a piscina and its associated drain and pillar have been hacked away. This crude vandalism must be datable to the early years of either Edward VI or Elizabeth I.

Many churches still display details that remind us of their pre-Reformation character and texture. They can include pieces of medieval glass high up in window tracery, smudged fragments of wall-paintings, battered holy-water stoups, and remains of tabernacles that once contained revered images of saints (Pl. 19). But, arguably, the most significant and sizeable relics of the catholic Mass still to be seen in our churches are roodscreens (without their lofts and carved figures), and narrow, steeply winding staircases near the junction between nave and chancel (Pl. 20). The lower doorway of the staircase is sometimes in the nave itself, but also quite often in a northern or southern aisle, and occasionally in the chancel. Some staircases appear to be part of the original stone structure and others, as shown by changes or bulges in the masonry, are later insertions. In the medieval period these stairs enabled priests and their assistants to climb up to a narrow loft running along the top of the roodscreen, in order to perform special services. The loft in turn gave access to the rood itself, when it needed to be ritually dressed. However, while the loft and rood were twice destroyed in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I, the staircase

[129] Peacock, 1866, pp. 60, 65, 97, 107, 169, 170; also Duffy (1992), p. 573, note 23.

[130] Also at Woolsthorpe, all Massbooks and 'other bookes of papistrie' were defaced and then given to the late (?Marian) parson Mr Hutton: Peacock, 1866, p. 169.



Pl. 19: An elaborately decorated 14th-century niche or 'tabernacle' at Icklingham All Saints which, in spite of considerable damage, still shows the shadow of its original saintly image.



Pl. 20: The rood-stairs of medieval churches often survive, at or near the junction between nave and chancel. This example is at Icklingham All Saints.



Pl. 21: An alabaster panel depicting the Adoration of the Magi, discovered *c.* 1790 under the floor of Long Melford church. This small but beautiful object vividly reminds us of innumerable works of art and devotion lost during the Reformation.



Pl. 22: At Icklingham All Saints, traces of the upper part of the roodscreen can be seen in 1) two sockets which originally housed the ends of the rood-beam, and 2) in two nicks taken out of the chancel arch probably to accommodate the arms of Christ's cross.



Pl. 23: The embattled rood-beam at Denston still spans the church. At Yaxley, by contrast, the rood-beam was crudely cut off, leaving a horizontal stump on each side.

itself proved harder to hide or eliminate. It was normally left unaltered, with or without doors, and sometimes used as an oddly-shaped cupboard. Alternatively it was simply blocked off by rendered brickwork at one or both ends.[131]

When the liturgical changes imposed in the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth are added together, nobody can deny that the Reformation as a whole caused the destruction and disappearance of thousands of works of medieval art formerly belonging to English parish churches. Made variously of stone, wood, glass, paint, gold, silver, precious stones, textiles, vellum and other materials, their loss represents an artistic and historic disaster of the first magnitude.[132] Yet the huge scale of this 'spoyle' (to use the favoured description of recusant Roger Martin of Melford)[133] should not obscure the fact that pre-Reformation artefacts are occasionally re-discovered after being deliberately buried, covered up or secreted away by people wishing to save them from desecration. That is why valuable survivals are sometimes seen in museums and private collections, or restored to an ecclesiastical setting. At Melford, for example, a small and beautifully carved alabaster panel depicting the Adoration of the Magi, probably from a fourteenth-century altarpiece, was found *c.* 1790 buried under the floor of the church (Pl. 21). Still with traces of its original paint and gilding, it is now re-set on the wall of the north aisle.[134] At Hessett a pyx-veil and a burse, two exceedingly rare pieces of late-medieval embroidery, probably survived because the chest in which they were kept was awkward to open.[135] Generally speaking, however, the most commonly re-discovered items are medieval wall-paintings found under peeling layers of whitewash. For example Troston in the 1990s yielded images of SS George, Christopher and Edmund, and in 2001 a 'Wheel of Fortune' came to light at Ilketshall St Andrew.[136]

As previously suggested, Elizabeth's phase of the Reformation involved more than emptying the church of features from the catholic past, and disposing of them as 'ould trashe' or 'for fyer wode'.[137] To help meet the expenses of the Reformation many previously significant liturgical items were sold off to local individuals, whose motives may have been genuinely religious, merely sentimental or unashamedly commercial. For example at Melford in 1563-65, Pamer of Sudbury bought 'the gylte of the rod lofte' and 'the cardved tymber of the same' for £1 6s 0d, but nothing is said of his reasons for buying them.[138] In some cases, however, we know how such purchases were subsequently used or adapted. Thus, at Kedington a length of former screen was used to front an elaborate box-pew for the Barnardiston family

[131] The roodloft stairs at Metfield were re-discovered in 1935: Bower, 1938, p. 132. Where the rood filled the upper part of a chancel arch, one can sometimes see where the arch was cut to accommodate the top and arms of the rood itself. 'The Archaeology of the Chancel Arch' is a subject which still awaits intensive study.

[132] More of real artistic and historical worth was surely lost in Edward's reign; from 1558 onwards a proportion of the religious artefacts destroyed were 'modern' replacements hastily assembled in Mary's reign.

[133] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 93.

[134] Dymond & Paine, 2012, frontispiece.

[135] *PSIA*, IV, 327-30. Both are now in the British Museum.

[136] Pevsner & Bettley, 2015. Nationally important is the discovery in the 1990s of early wall-paintings in the ruinous church of Houghton-on-the-Hill (Norfolk), and the 'Last Judgement' revealed in 2004 around the chancel arch of Holy Trinity, Coventry.

[137] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 125.

[138] Dymond & Paine, 2012, pp. 124, 129. In 1547-48, Mr William Clopton of Kentwell had bought stone and wooden carvings from the church, including 'the greateste images....of alabaster': *ibid.*, pp. 94-96.



Pl. 24: The manorial pew of the powerful Barnadiston family which dominates the east end of the nave at Kedington, is fronted by a length of former medieval screen; the rest of the structure is probably early 17th century. The pew has a ceiling, is divided into two compartments, and contains benches and hat-pegs.

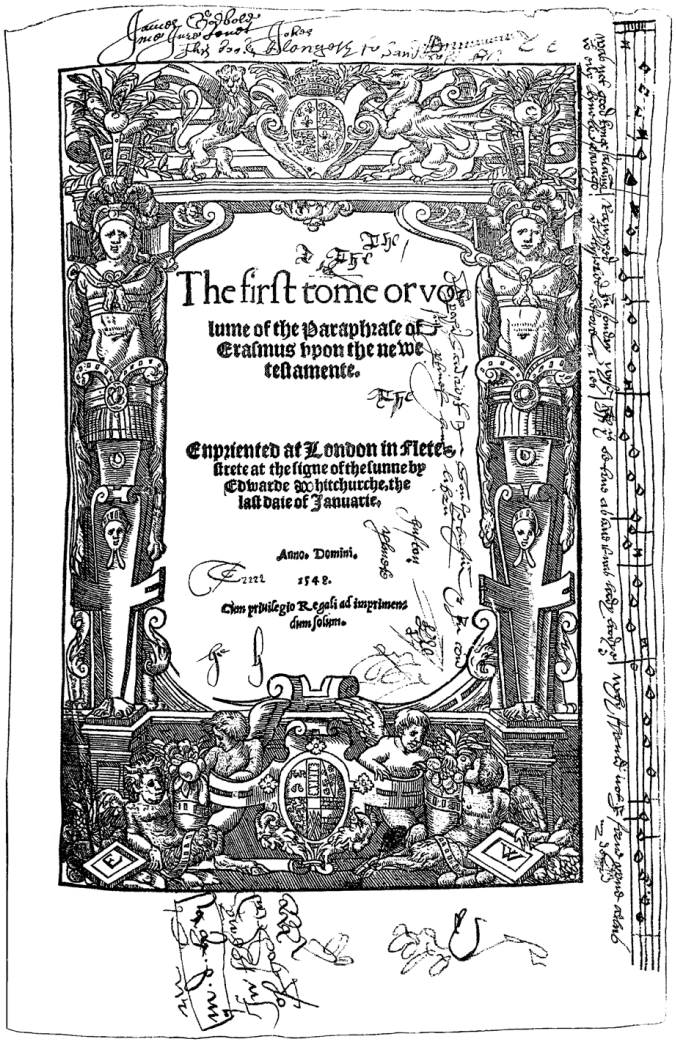
(Pl. 24). At Bungay St Mary in 1562-63 nine sleeved surplices were made from 'the cloth that was before the Roodlofft', and in 1577 at Bungay Holy Trinity old redundant copes were made into 'game players gownes & coates'.[139] By contrast it is noticeable that much-venerated relics, which had often featured in pre-Reformation lists of church goods, quietly and significantly disappeared.

While so many items of the old religion were being destroyed, churches were at varying speeds being physically converted for protestant worship. Masons patched the fabric where altars, roodlofts, tabernacles and holy-water stoups had been hacked out;[140] carpenters constructed new communion tables and wall-panels; glaziers replaced stained glass with plain; and metal-smiths made communion cups large enough to give consecrated wine to the laity.[141] Also impressive at this time was the work of London-based and provincial printers

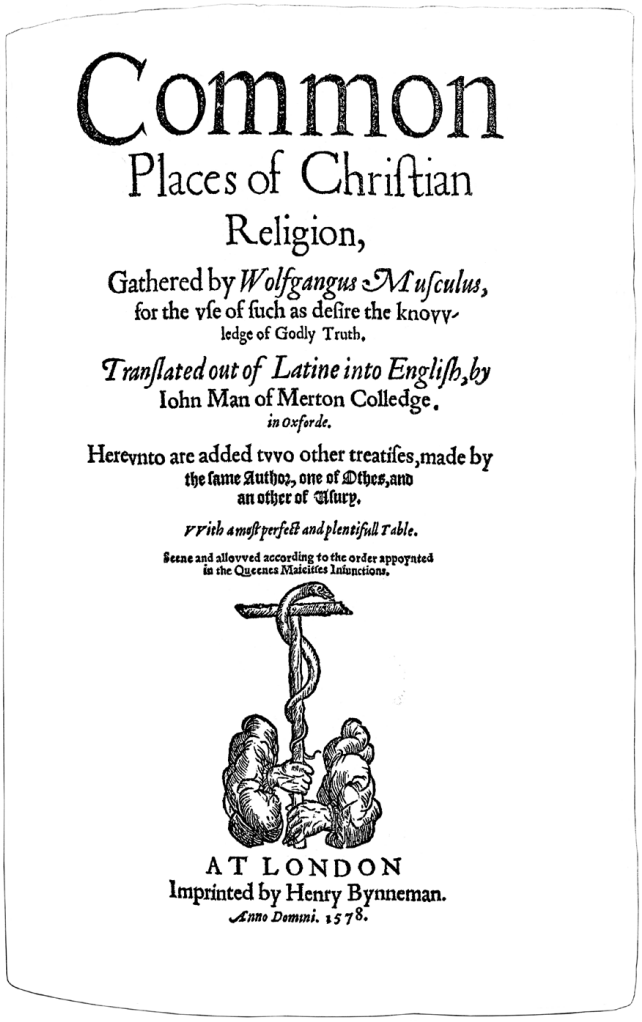
[139] Galloway & Wasson, 1980/1, p. 146. At Bungay St Mary in 1580 a velvet cope was sold to Richard Kynge for 40s: *East Anglian*, III, p. 198.

[140] John Prince of Melford was paid 'for the mendinge of bothe the sydes of the churche, wher the rod lofte was': Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 125.

[141] Bungay St Mary in 1568 paid 21s 'for a Communyon cuppe made of one payer of chalice, havyng a cover, for workmanship & some silver': *East Anglian*, III, 21.



Pl. 25: *Paraphrases* of Erasmus, edition of 1548, printed in London by Edward Whitchurche. In 1517-24 Erasmus rewrote the Gospels, Acts and Epistles in Latin. Then in 1548-49 the *Paraphrases* were translated for use in English churches. Manuscript notes on this title-page include the words and music of a popular 16th-century song.

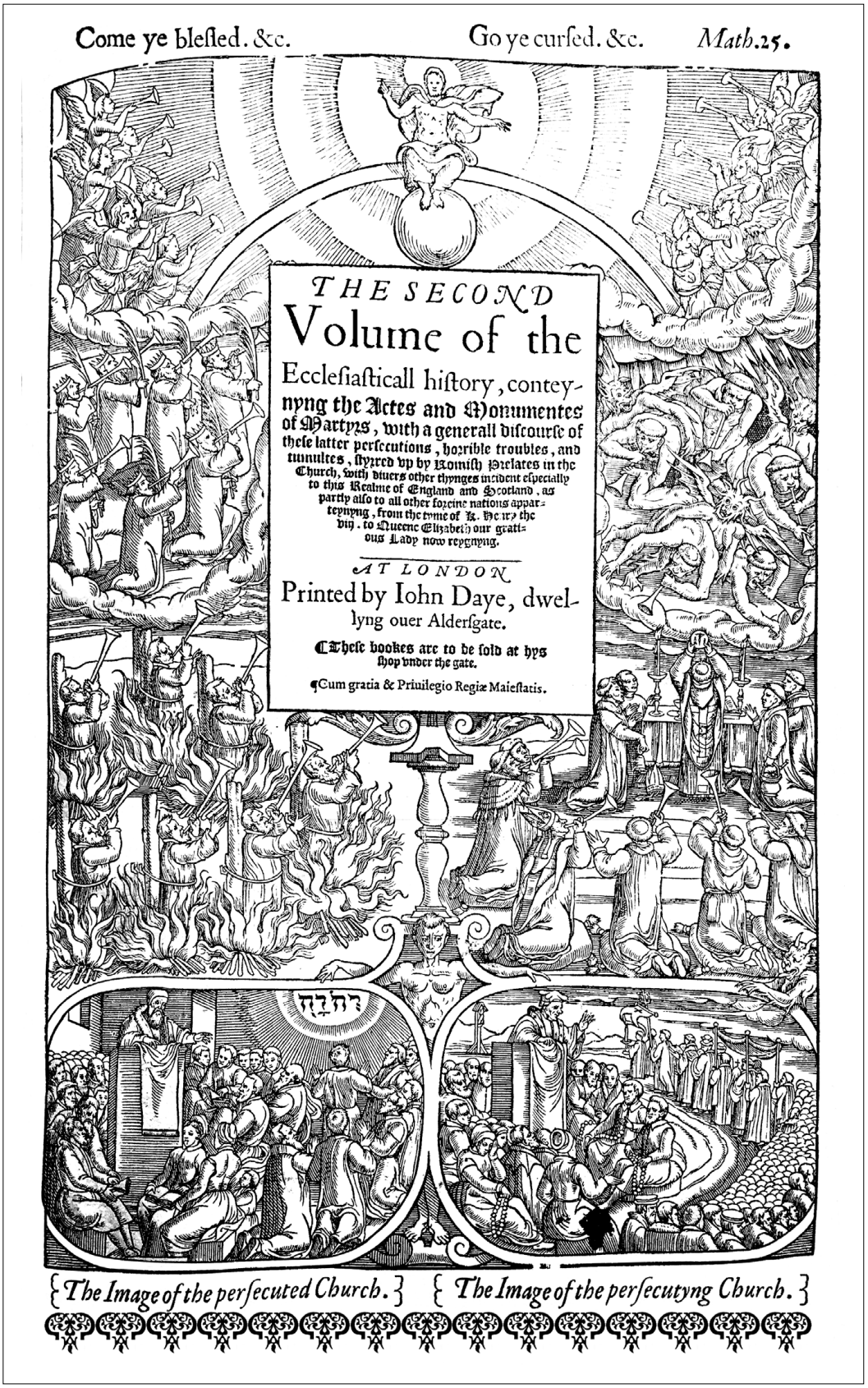


Pl. 26: *Common places of the Christian Religion* by Wolfgang Musculus, edition of 1578. Musculus (1497-1563) was a protestant humanist who taught in several European cities including Bern. His *Common places*, once translated from the Latin, was another text required in English churches.

who released a flood of protestant texts. Every church was supposed to have the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559 edition), the two books of homilies, the queen's injunctions, the *Paraphrases* of Erasmus (Pl. 25), the *Apologia* of John Jewell, the *Common Places* of Wolfgang Musculus (Pl. 26), and John Foxe's highly influential *Book of Martyrs* (Pl. 27).[142] These were meant to accompany 'one book of the whole bible of the largest volume in English', which was regarded as 'the special food of man's soul'.[143] Unlike the pre-Reformation situation when English translations of the Bible were forbidden, nobody now was to be dissuaded from reading any part of the Bible.

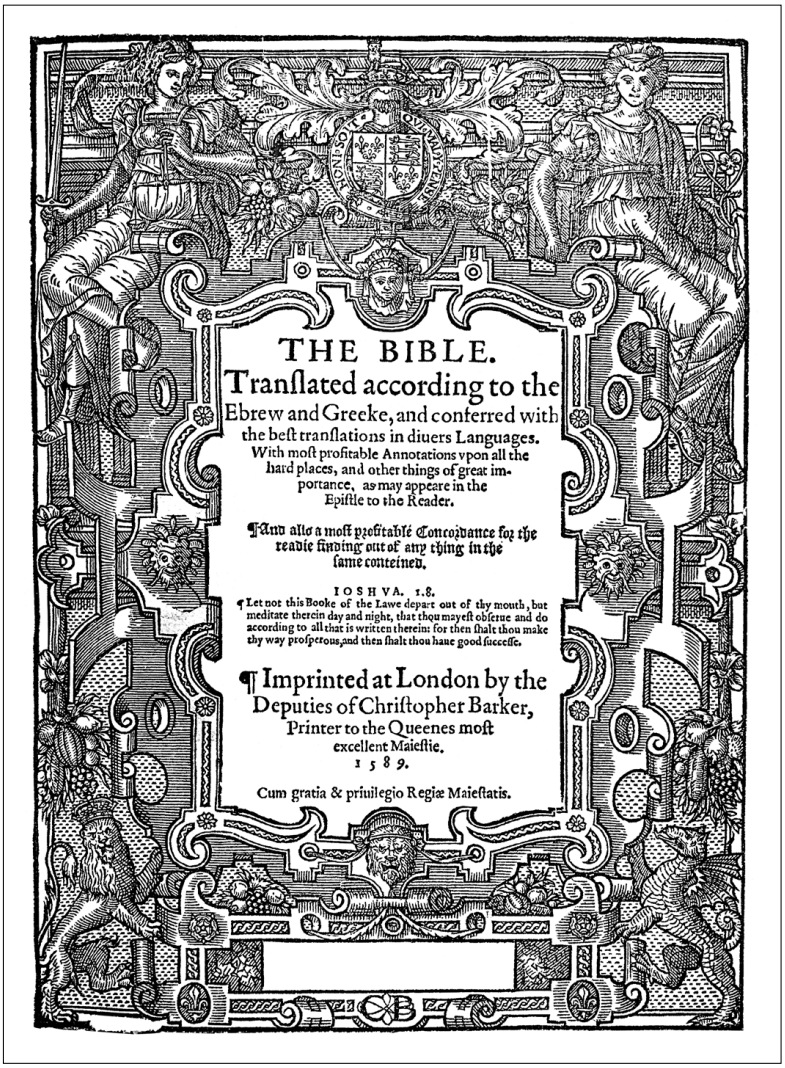
[142] Erasmus, Musculus and Jewell were all translated into English, a massive undertaking in itself. Bedfield still has a copy of Erasmus's *Paraphrases*: see D. MacCulloch in *PSIAH*, vol. 43, pt 3 (2015), 492-3.

[143] Hughes & Larkin, II, 1969, 119: 6th injunction of 1559.



Pl. 27: John Foxe's *History of the Acts and Monuments of the Church*, popularly known as *The Book of Martyrs*, was first printed in Latin in 1554 and translated into English in 1563. It went through many editions and was highly influential in the protestant cause. It vividly describes and illustrates the persecutions carried out by 'Romish Prelates' in Queen Mary's time. This illustration comes from an edition of 1570.

Following these trends, Boxford in *c.* 1559 bought a book of homilies for 12d, a new psalter for 12d and the queen's injunctions for 5d; in 1562 it paid 4d towards a prayer-book, as well as £2 14s 10d for a communion cup. In 1572 it bought an English bible for 18s, bringing it home for 6d.[144] The increased emphasis on 'the Word of God', printed and preached in English, was a defining characteristic of the renewed protestant religion, and parishes sometimes went to considerable lengths to acquire what they wanted. In 1590 one of Exning's wardens paid £1 8s 2d 'for the byble at London & for bringinge of yt from the stationers to my ende'.[145] Provision of this kind sometimes called for extra precautions in the church. Aldeburgh *c.* 1572 bought chains to secure its growing library, including one costing 8d for its copy of the *Book of Martyrs*.[146] For security's sake the bible was supposed to be kept in a special box, but in some places that did not prevent over-enthusiastic browsing. In 1572 Bungay St Mary paid a scrivener 5s 'for mending decayed places in the Bible'.[147] Regrettably, we are not told what parts of the book were most worn, or whose grubby fingers had done the damage.


THE BIBLE.
Translated according to the
Ebrew and Greeke, and conferred with
the best translations in diuers Languages.
With most profitable Annotations vpon all the
hard places, and other things of great im-
portance, as may appeare in the
Epistle to the Reader.

¶ And also a most profitable Concordance for the
readie finding out of any thing in the
same conteined.

IOSHVA. 1.8.
¶ Let not this Booke of the Lawe depart out of thy mouth, but
meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest obserue and do
according to all that is written therein: for then shalt thou make
thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou haue good successe.

¶ Imprinted at London by the
Deputies of Christopher Barker,
Printer to the Queenes most
excellent Maiestie.
1589.

Cum gratia & priuilegio Regiæ Maiestatis.

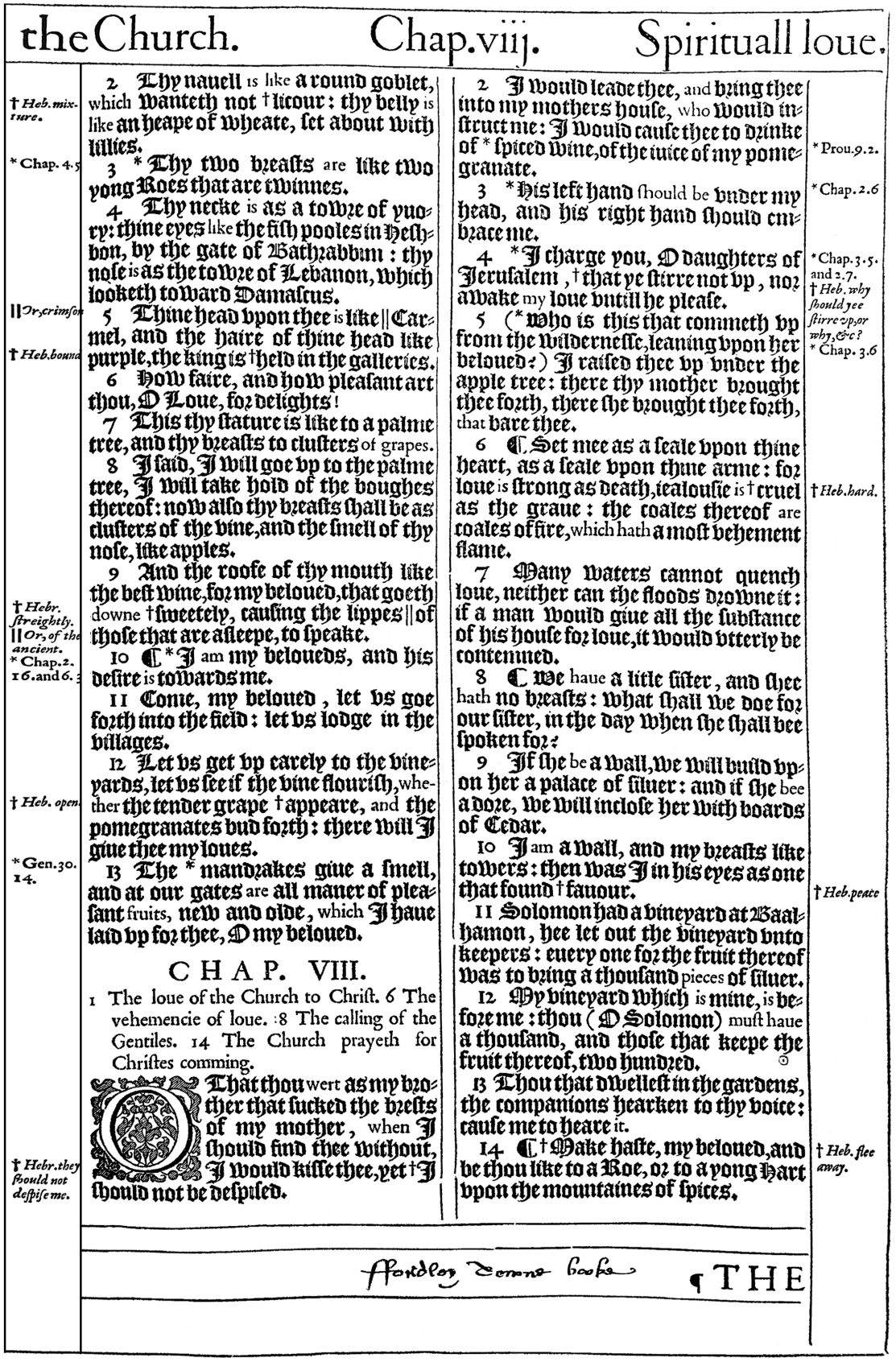
Pl. 28: 'The Geneva Bible', edition of 1589. Compiled from the Hebrew and Greek by scholars led by William Whittingham, this bible was completed in Geneva in 1560 but not printed in England until 1576. Its tone is strongly Calvinist and puritan, and its incisive language made it more attractive than the earlier 'Great Bible'. Mass-produced in various sizes, it became the most widely-read bible in the 16th and 17th centuries in both England and America. The text is divided by chapters, numbered verses and engravings, and marginal notes explain 'the hard places' (difficult passages).

[144] Northeast, 1982, pp. 70-01; SROB, FB77/E2/2, p. 171. Prices quoted may not represent the total costs. Presumably Boxford bought the Great Bible of 1539.

[145] SROB, FL567/5/1/7. In 1594 Bardwell paid 10s for Musculus's *Commonplaces*: SROB, FL522/11/22/33; in 1603 it acquired the new book of canons: SROB, FL522/11/22/52. In 1590 it paid £1 7s 8d 'for a bible & the cariage from london': SROB, FL522/11/22/24. Mendlesham in 1616 paid 6d for an unidentified book entitled 'God & the King': SROI, FB159/E7/40.

[146] Winn, 1926, pp. 38-9.

[147] Mann, 1934, p. 63.



the Church. Chap. viij. Spirituall loue.

2 Thy nauell is like a round goblet, which wanteth not †licour: thy belly is like an heape of wheate, set about with lillies.
3 *Thy two breasts are like two yong Roes that are twinnes.
4 Thy necke is as a towre of yuory: thine eyes like the fish pooles in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the towre of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.
5 Thine head vpon thee is like ||Carmel, and the haire of thine head like purple, the king is †held in the galleries.
6 How faire, and how pleasant art thou, O Loue, for delights!
7 This thy stature is like to a palme tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
8 I said, I will goe vp to the palme tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose, like apples.
9 And the roofe of thy mouth like the best wine, for my beloued, that goeth downe †sweetely, causing the lippes ||of those that are asleepe, to speake.
10 ¶ *I am my beloueds, and his desire is towards me.
11 Come, my beloued, let vs goe forth into the field: let vs lodge in the villages.
12 Let vs get vp early to the vineyards, let vs see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape †appeare, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I giue thee my loues.
13 The *mandrakes giue a smell, and at our gates are all maner of pleasant fruits, new and olde, which I haue laid vp for thee, O my beloued.

† Heb. mixture.
* Chap. 4.5
|| Or, crimson
† Heb. bound
† Hebr. streightly.
|| Or, of the ancient.
* Chap. 2. 16. and 6. 3
† Heb. open.
* Gen. 30. 14.

CHAP. VIII.

1 The loue of the Church to Christ. 6 The vehemencie of loue. 8 The calling of the Gentiles. 14 The Church prayeth for Christes comming.

O That thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother, when I should find thee without, I would kisse thee, yet †I should not be despised.

† Hebr. they should not despise me.

2 I would leade thee, and bring thee into my mothers house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drinke of *spiced wine, of the iuice of my pomegranate.
3 *His left hand should be vnder my head, and his right hand should embrace me.
4 *I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, †that ye stirre not vp, nor awake my loue vntill he please.
5 (*Who is this that commeth vp from the wilderneſſe, leaning vpon her beloued?) I raised thee vp vnder the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth, that bare thee.
6 ¶ Set mee as a seale vpon thine heart, as a seale vpon thine arme: for loue is strong as death, iealousie is †cruel as the graue: the coales thereof are coales of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.
7 Many waters cannot quench loue, neither can the floods drowne it: if a man would giue all the substance of his house for loue, it would vtterly be contemned.
8 ¶ We haue a litle sister, and shee hath no breasts: what shall we doe for our sister, in the day when she shall bee spoken for?
9 If she be a wall, we will build vpon her a palace of siluer: and if she bee a doore, we will inclose her with boards of Cedar.
10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found †fauour.
11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon, hee let out the vineyard vnto keepers: euery one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of siluer.
12 My vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou (O Solomon) must haue a thousand, and those that keepe the fruit thereof, two hundred.
13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to heare it.
14 ¶ †Make haste, my beloued, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a yong Hart vpon the mountaines of spices.

* Prou. 9.2.
* Chap. 2.6
* Chap. 3.5. and 2.7.
† Heb. why should yee stirre vp, or why, &c?
* Chap. 3.6
† Heb. hard.
† Heb. peace
† Heb. flee away.

Fordley Towne booke ¶ THE

From 1547 onwards the crown seized parochial assets which had been given in late-medieval times to endow various catholic practices, many of them commemorating the dead. They had been founded not only to maintain the fabric of the church, but also to support local institutions such as guilds, chantries, obits, sangreds and lights which to Elizabeth and her advisors were irredeemably tarred with the brush of superstition and idolatry.[148] These assets took three main forms. They were either (1) separate funds of money usually known as 'stores' or 'stocks', and earmarked for particular purposes; (2) rentable residential or commercial properties within or outside the parish, in the form of houses, tenements, shops and cottages; and (3) rent-yielding farmland usually in small acreages, whether arable, pasture, meadow or woodland. The Chantry Certificates of 1546 contain numerous examples of these early endowments of parishes. Thus, at Debenham a close of unknown size worth 3s a year had been used 'aboute the fynding of the Roodelofte light', while lands at Kettleburgh worth 8d a year were used to provide 2 lbs of wax for the 'candelbeame Light'.[149] In 1565 Bungay St Mary gave the queen 19s 4d which had been 'dispended yerlye in keepyn obbytts [annual Masses commemorating the dead]'. In 1574 the same parish paid 6s 8d for documentary research in London at the Exchequer, in an attempt to find 'the first presentment of the obytt Lands'.[150]

In many cases these changes in response to pressure from higher authority appear to have been made sporadically, because in the last resort they were crucially dependent on the changing attitudes and opinions of successive incumbents, churchwardens, lay-rectors and laymen. Finally, it should never be forgotten that in the 1640s another round of iconoclasm was to follow, steered by puritan fanatics like William Dowsing who still found plenty with which to be offended.[151]

New furnishings

The interior of each parish church in the newly resurrected Church of England was expected by the queen's authority to have five main pieces of liturgical furniture. Two were new (the communion table and minister's desk) and three were traditional but given new emphasis (pulpit, lectern and font). Put together, these fittings emphasised the essential tenets and compromises underlying the mainstream protestantism of Elizabethan and Jacobean times, and by extension the supervisory work expected of churchwardens:

1) Traditional stone altars containing relics were replaced by 'convenient and decent Tables' made of wood (Pl. 30). They were made for the celebration of Holy Communion in English rather than the Mass in Latin. Each table was to carry a frontal of silk, buckram or similar fabric,

[148] A 'sangred' or 'certain' was the celebration of Mass once a week for a year, to commemorate a dead person.

[149] Redstone, 1904, p. 62; TNA, E301/45.

[150] Mann, 1934, pp. 62, 64. The parish may have been reacting to agents appointed by the Crown to look for 'concealed lands'; see Kitching, 1978.

[151] Thus, in 1643 Bardwell paid £5 11s 5d to a glazier, mason, joiner and others 'for worke done in the Church, about pulling downe the ymages, defaceing the pictures \in glasse & wood/....': SROB, FL522/11/22/145. At Weybread in 1641 a craftsman was paid 16s for taking down scandalous pictures in the church windows; in 1643 more unlawful items were taken away by order of the earl of Manchester: *East Anglian*, II, 5-6. See Cooper (ed.), 2001.



Pl. 30: In reformed churches a wooden table 'decently made' for Cranmer's service of Holy Communion replaced the stone altar of the catholic Mass. This Elizabethan example at Blyford with its bulbous legs and heavy stretchers is typical of the period.

and a 'fair linen cloth' on which the vessels bearing the sacramental bread and wine were placed during the service.[152] This cloth was to be washed at regular intervals.[153] By royal order the table was to be 'set in the place where the altar stood', but could be moved so that 'the minister may be more conveniently heard'. After communion it was to be put back to its former position.[154] Canon 21 of 1604 confirmed that communion had to be taken 'at the least thrice in the year, whereof the feast of Easter to be one'; the clergy had to arrange services so that the laity could conveniently attend three times a year. This was easily achieved in the large parish of Mildenhall in 1601, when three communions were celebrated at Christmas and eight at Eastertide; by contrast Cratfield in 1564 celebrated only three communions at Easter, Pentecost and Christmas.[155] In this period, parishes needed communion cups larger than their previous chalices, because the wine was now given to the laity. Some visitations revealed that cups in Suffolk's churches lacked the covers (or patens) which they should have had for distributing the bread or wafer.[156] In 1603 parishes were ordered to provide themselves with flagons, to contain the larger quantities of wine that were now brought to the table. At first they were often of pewter (Pl. 31), but later of silver. In 1612 Metfield was fined 5s 4d 'for want of a flagon', and in 1614 responded by buying one for 9s 3d. Mendlesham appears to have purchased its first flagon for 9s in 1618-19.[157]

[152] At Mildenhall in 1597 a carpet was bought for 5s, as required at a court in Bury St Edmunds: SROB, EL110/5/5/ 23b(r). At Melford in 1602 a new carpet for the communion table was bought for £1 3s 0d: SROB, FL509/5/1/ 22 (2nd face).

[153] Melford regularly washed its communion cloth and surplice for 8d: SROB, FL509/5/1/17 (2nd & 5th faces).

[154] Frere, 1910, 27-8.

[155] SROB, EL110/5/5/ 31v-32r; Holland, 1895, p. 95.

[156] Williams, 1946, pp. 115, 124.

[157] SROI, FB159/E7/42; Bower, 1938, p. 129.



Pl. 31: Church plate at Badley after the Reformation, consisting of silver communion cup donated in 1630, a silver paten and a pewter flagon.

2) A traditional feature which gained importance at this period was 'a comely and honest pulpit....in a convenient place....for the preaching of God's Word'.[158] Some pulpits of wood and stone have survived from the pre-Reformation period, but the majority in use in Elizabethan and Jacobean times were newly made and of wood (Pl. 32). Approached by stairs, they were physically commanding so that the preacher had a good chance of being seen and heard from the nave and aisles. George Herbert, when he was describing the life of a country parson in 1652, significantly affirmed that 'the pulpit is his joy and his throne'.[159] Pulpits of this period were stabilised by iron bars, and often surmounted by a tester (canopy) for projecting the preacher's voice.[160] At Cratfield in 1617 one craftsman was paid £10 for making a pulpit, and another received 7s 'for irons for the pulpit'.[161] In 1622 Melford commissioned a craftsman from Hartest to make a new pulpit: its recorded cost came to just over £4, and in 1622 it was painted for 12s.[162] To make preachers more audible and visible, pulpits were sometimes moved within the church as happened at Cratfield in 1566, Mendlesham in 1593 and Boxford in 1618.[163] At this period pulpits had soft furnishings, and accounts therefore mentioned cushions, cloths, fringes and tassels. In 1616 Great Waldingfield bought 'greene cearssey [kersey] for the pulpit and for frindge and nayles for the same & for 3 skines & fethers for the cushin and the making of it'.[164] For its pulpit cushion Metfield in 1622

[158] Injunctions of Queen Elizabeth, 1559, no. 24; Canons, 1604, no. 83.

[159] Herbert, 1652, ch. VII, p. 13.

[160] In 1586-7 Melford paid 9s for making 'the tastar over the pollpet': SROB, FL509/5/1/6 (4th face). Testers were commonly suspended from an adjacent wall by an iron bar or chains.

[161] Holland, 1895, p. 148.

[162] SROB, FL509/5/1/41 (2nd face), 42r. Gt Waldingfield in 1616 paid for 'culeringe the pulpite and the wales': SROB, FL514/4/8/p. 53. In 1588 Bardwell's [?stone] pulpit was whitened for 4d: SROB, FL522/11/22/20.

[163] Holland, 1895, p. 96. Over three days in 1618, Boxford paid two men 9s 'to remove the pulpitt and finishinge the stayres': SROB, FB77/E2/3/p. 20.

[164] SROB, FL514/4/8, p. 53. In 1621-22 Bardwell paid 2s 6d for 3 lbs of feathers for a pulpit cushion, and 1s 8d for its making: SROB, FL522/11/22/101-02. Post-medieval Lists of Church Goods are commonly attached to glebe terriers; see Dymond & Paine, 2012, pp. 67-79, 154-5.



Pl. 32: The elegant Jacobean pulpit of 1619 at Great Ashfield, with its backboard and tester, illustrates the increasing emphasis on regular preaching by trained and licensed clergy.

bought 'one ell of grene perpetuane', three yards of fringe and two buttons: the total cost including the making of the cushion came to 6s.[165]

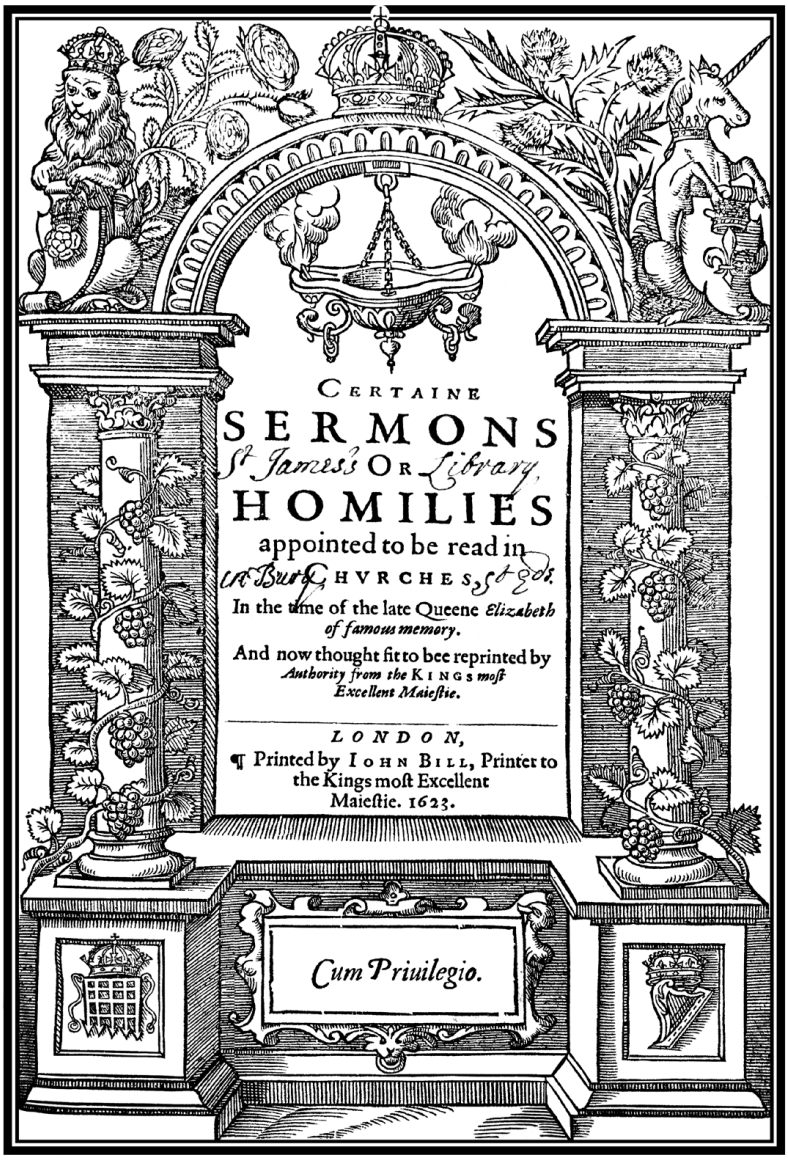
Connected with preaching was the public reading of homilies, which were officially approved sermons available in print. Clergy licensed to preach were expected to deliver at least one sermon each month, but those that were unlicensed had instead to read a different homily every Sunday. For this reason all churches were required to have copies of the homilies, issued in two volumes in 1547 and 1563 (Pl. 33). On the other hand parishes were increasingly visited by well-paid 'preachers' or 'lecturers', who became specially influential in the puritan cause. They were licensed and their visits were registered in special books. At Aldeburgh *c.* 1572 the rector of Orford was given a dinner costing 2s 'when he preached', and in 1580 a joiner there was paid 2s 'for settinge of the prechers pewe'.[166] In 1611 Great Ashfield was accused of not having 'a register for the registering of strange preachers'.[167]

3) Lecterns for the reading of biblical lessons and musical notation had been a feature of parish churches since medieval times. Indeed, some medieval lecterns have survived until the present-day, both single-sided and double, and made of both wood and metal.[168] The major change caused by the Reformation was in the actual positioning of lecterns within the church. In earlier times they had been in the chancel, beyond the roodscreen and close to the high altar. A list of church goods at Melford in 1529 mentions '2 great lectorns of lattin [alloy of copper and tin] in the quere'.[169] By the 1560s, however, it is probable that a single lectern, whether old or new, was placed at the east end of the nave, on the parishioners' side of the decapitated screen. In 1563 Melford's churchwardens spent 3s on the 'makinge

[165] Bower, 1938, p. 132.
[166] Winn, 1926, pp. 36, 39.
[167] NRO, DN/VIS/4/3 (Blackbourn Deanery).
[168] Good examples are at Ranworth, Nfk (wood) and Clare, Sfk (metal).
[169] Dymond & Paine, 2012, pp. 72, 89, 102. By 1541 a lectern with broken feet had been removed to the vestry.

of the lectorne' which thereafter was regularly 'scoured'. From at least the 1580s it was described as the 'falcon' because it took the familiar shape of a large bird with outspread wings.[170]

4) Early in the reign of James I, Canon 82 of 1604 confirmed that 'a convenient seat be made for the Minister to read service in'. Therefore, a minister's seat or desk, from which he read the regular offices of *The Book of Common Prayer*, was also prominent at the eastern end of each nave.[171] Aldeburgh in about 1567 paid 4s 6d 'for makynge of the priests pewe for ix dayes worke at vjd the daye', while Bungay St Mary in 1572 paid 3s for 41½ feet of one-inch board and 16 feet of two-inch plank 'for the prists seat in the church'.[172] This feature was either separate from the pulpit, or integrated with it in a two- or three-decker arrangement.[173] In 1614-15 Bardwell paid a deposit ('earnest') of 6d to a joiner of Botesdale 'to make the ministers seat & pulpett'. This wording suggests that the two pieces were attached; when they were eventually installed, the final bill included £3 for the joinery and 20d for the carriage.[174]


CERTAINE
SERMONS
St James's OR Library,
HOMILIES
appointed to be read in
CHVRCHES, &c.
In the time of the late Queene *Elizabeth of famous memory.*
And now thought fit to bee reprinted by *Authority from the* KINGS *most Excellent Maiestie.*
LONDON,
¶ Printed by IOHN BILL, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie. 1623.
Cum Priuilegio.

Pl. 33: *Book of Homilies* edition of 1623. The *Homilies* originally appeared in two volumes dated 1547 and 1563. All churches were expected to have copies, to be read aloud by those clergy who were not licensed to preach. This volume belonged to the parish of St James in Bury St Edmunds.

[170] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 126. Melford's Elizabethan falcon was spelt variously as 'facon', 'Falkon', 'fawcon', 'fulcon' and 'Phakon'. In 1579 Aldeburgh spent 3s on a 'Lector for the Churche': Winn, 1926, p. 39.

[171] In 1569 at Cratfield 5s was paid 'for makynge a Seate in the Church [nave] for the Vicar': Holland, 1895, p. 97. At Mendlesham in 1593 a 'sete' was made for the vicar: SROI, FB159/E7/18. In 1618 Boxford paid 7s 8d 'for Cloth and Fringe for Mr Burdes Descke':SROB, FB77/E2/3/p. 20.

[172] *East Anglian*, III, 198.

[173] Addleshaw & Etchells, 1948, pp. 68-84. The word 'desk' can mean lectern, minister's seat, or a reading slope on a pulpit. In 1621 Melford paid 4s 'for making the Deske of the pulpitt' : SROB, FL509/5/1/42v.

[174] SROB, FL522/11/22/78-80.



Pl. 34: The 16th-century wooden lectern at Cavendish with its four miniature legs and turned stem. It once carried chained copies of the *Homilies* and of the *Paraphrases* of Erasmus.

5) Stone fonts had been used for centuries and were revered as sacramental vessels. In some churches they are the earliest part of the church's fabric, dating from Norman or even Anglo-Saxon times. Unlike stone altars of the medieval period, they normally survived the changes of the sixteenth century and indeed emerged with an enhanced significance. Traditionally the church had taught the existence of seven sacraments, defined as 'outward signs of inward grace', but at the Reformation that number was reduced to two, Holy Communion and baptism, because they alone had biblical foundation. In 1561 the queen ordered 'that the font be not removed from the accustomed place', that is, from the western end of the nave and near the entrance–an emphasis which symbolised the welcome given by the Christian congregation to new members.[175] Nevertheless, where objections were raised to carved imagery on fonts or on their lockable wooden covers, they were often mutilated.[176] At Risby, however, images on the font were merely plastered over, perhaps in the hope that they could be recovered later (as indeed they were, by accident, in the 1890s) (Pl. 37). At Bungay St Mary 1s 10d was paid 'for takyng downe of the Font cover' as commanded by the queen's commissioners; the act was later certified in the bishop's court at Norwich.[177] On the other hand, the telescopic font-cover at Ufford, eighteen-feet high, has survived to this day, presumably because the parish fought or schemed to retain it. It has lost some carved detail, but still remains a breath-taking masterpiece of fifteenth-century carpentry (Pl. 39).

By 1597 scores of Suffolk clergy when conducting baptism were refusing to make the sign of the cross which they regarded as idolatry. They therefore ignored or removed fonts, especially if they or their covers bore offensive images. Instead they preferred to put the baptismal water into a plain basin. In 1597 the rector of Sudborne baptized children 'in a

[175] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p.173. After the Reformation Melford's font was moved three times, but always within the western end of the nave.

[176] Font covers were lockable to prevent the abuse of baptismal water in witchcraft.

[177] Mann, 1934, p. 63.



Pl. 35: Special boxes were required for the safe-keeping of bibles, such as this dated example from Hadleigh, dated 1626. The wear-and-tear on bibles owned by churches is sometimes recorded in accounts (p. 39).

porrenger or bason....set in the funt', while claiming that the font itself was broken.[178] In 1569 Cratfield paid two men 8d 'for takyng downe of the Fonte', presumably aiming to get rid of it altogether. Nevertheless, a seven-sacrament font of fifteenth-century date still survives today at the western end of the nave, and is a magnificent example of its type.[179] The apparent change of policy here suggests a dispute between parishioners who were bent on iconoclasm and those (a majority?) who wished to comply with the queen's order.

Who drove this phase of the Reformation?

Clearly the queen herself as Supreme Governor of the new Church, supported by hard-working ministers like William Cecil and Francis Walsingham, was the principal force behind the abandonment of Mary's catholicism. Through her various orders and injunctions, Elizabeth tried to create a broad and middle-of-the-road protestantism which most people, regardless of wealth or rank, might be expected to attend and support. It was to be distinguishable by the very English virtues of 'moderation', 'decency', 'comeliness' and 'convenience'. Parliament also contributed by passing key pieces of legislation such as the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, both made law in 1559. Meanwhile, the reformed hierarchy of the new church issued instructive homilies and canons, and bishops drew up articles to guide their flocks. In individual towns and villages it was incumbents and churchwardens, under the supervision of archdeacons and civil magistrates, who were largely responsible for implementing the required liturgical and physical changes. Wishing to avoid prosecution, ordinary lay parishioners who in Suffolk ranged from well-off yeomen and clothiers to relatively poor weavers, husbandmen and labourers were mainly content to follow the official line, and to

[178] Williams, 1946, pp. 137, 140.

[179] Holland, 1895, p. 97; Munro Cautley, 1982, p. 68. In Cautley's judgement, Cratfield's font is 'probably....the most beautiful in the kingdom'.



Pl. 36: Up to the vaulting, this screen at Eye is 15th century in date. In 1923-25, Sir Ninian Comper restored the loft with its figures of Christ, St Mary and St John. From this and other lavish restorations, we can appreciate how roodscreens impacted on medieval worshippers, especially when they were artificially lit.



Pl. 37: Risby's font has deep carvings around the outside of its bowl, including signs of the four evangelists. They survive well because at some point, probably in the later 16th century, they were plastered over to hide them. In *c.*1895 they were accidentally re-discovered and the plaster was removed. By contrast, other carving around the shaft and base had been deliberately destroyed.



Pl. 38: In churches where roodscreens had been fully demolished, royal orders required the making of a new partition separating nave from chancel. This unusual folding example at Kedington is dated 1619.



Pl. 39: Above the font at Ufford, this intricate wooden spire, mid-15th century in date and about 18 feet high, has been called 'the most beautiful cover in the world' (Cautley, p. 86). Its very survival, however, still suggests a history of heated discussion and tense negotiation: although the framework remains, the original figures are mostly missing.

contribute towards the costs of the local reformation.[180] It cannot be denied that some of them profited personally from these changes. Men like Edward Molle of Bungay and Ralph Borom of Melford represent battalions of local craftsmen who, under orders, wielded the transformative saws, chisels and tubs of whitewash, and then contributed positively by making new furnishings like communion tables and commandment boards (Pl. 53, p. 118).

All these people, actively and passively, from the queen herself down to local labourers, played their parts in this nationwide revolution. It does not follow, however, that their ideas of acceptable change were identical or immutable. With every rule imposed from above we find cases of its flouting or total rejection. A good example is the requirement that during church services ministers wear a 'comlie' surplice, not too short and with sleeves, clean and not torn. Although most clergy seem to have conformed, a considerable number refused because they saw the surplice as a superstitious relic. The episcopal visitation of 1597 found 37 parishes in Suffolk where the surplice was never worn, and 40 others where the surplice was 'not usually' or 'seldom' worn.[181]

In a period when fundamental change was enforced, it was not always easy for parishioners to find out what was expected of them. For instance, the royal order of 1561 was complicated and somewhat confusing. Inside churches it attempted to impose new standards, while acknowledging that in some places change was already happening. After

[180] Dymond, 2015, 178-94.

[181] Williams, 1946, pp. 19, 131. In 1582 Cratfield bought 8 yards of Holland cloth for 18s to make a surplice; the making of it cost another 2s: Holland, 1895, p. 106.

the removal of the rood depicting Christ's crucifixion,[182] it called for the demolition of the upper parts of roodscreens, including the solar or passageway, leaving only a crested beam above the vault. Where new partitions were being built they had to be no higher than the original beam, and where everything above the panelling had already been removed, 'no alteration [was to] be otherwise attempted'. Finally, where no partition survived, 'there to be one appointed'.[183] In addition, the tombs of 'noble or worshipful' persons and any steps in the chancel were to be left unchanged. If chancel steps had already been removed, they were to be replaced by decent paving. No destruction or disposal of bells, steeple or porch was allowed without approval from above. Meanwhile, genuinely necessary repairs were always admissible. In the light of such complex orders, it is little wonder that parishes responded in different ways and at different speeds. In February 1564, Secretary Cecil pointed out to the queen divergences of ecclesiastical practice in, for example, the positioning of the communion table, its orientation, its actual structure, its covering, the kind of bread used, and the way the laity knelt, stood or sat to receive the sacrament.[184]

Personal attitudes

Attitudes to church buildings varied in response to personal beliefs. In spite of all the changes wrought in churches in the mid-sixteenth century, people such as George Herbert still saw holiness and beauty in them, and still regarded them as 'The house of God'. On the other hand a growing minority of the more puritanical or evangelical kind viewed churches as little more than utilitarian preaching-boxes. Using Suffolk examples, two historians have already discussed evidence pointing to deepening protestant conviction at parish level.[185] John Craig suggests that at Mildenhall in the 1580s a radicalisation of local opinion might be inferred from the sale of 'the old Byble' and surplus wax, the purchase in London of a Geneva Bible and the disposing of an organ-case ('orkyncasse'). Similarly, Ann Nichols argues that Cratfield was influenced by two father-and-son vicars called Francis and Gabriel Eland. Eye-catching details in the churchwardens' accounts include in 1559 the prompt pulling down of a stone altar; in 1561 the removing of the roodloft; in 1562 the raising of a commandment board; in 1569 the order to dispose of the font; in 1576 the dismantling of an organ-case; in 1583 the painting of scriptural texts on whitewashed walls; and in 1590 the purchasing of an hour-glass. To this day the tower at Cratfield contains a large clock-case which may once have been part of a pre-Reformation organ-loft.[186] Behind these changes we may sense a determined rejection of superstitious imagery and elaborate church music, and conversely an increasing devotion to preaching.[187]

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[182] Allegedly, only one fragment from an English rood is thought to have survived, a carved head from South Cerney (Glos.)

[183] At Bungay St Mary in 1572 a plumber was given 2s 6d 'for his paynes comyng & goying and for takyng down the yrons in the Church wer the Roodlofft was': *East Anglian*, III, p. 198.

[184] Holland, 1895, p. 95.

[185] Craig, 1993, 370-78; Nichols, 1989, pp. 176-81.

[186] Bettley, *Suffolk: East*, 2015, p. 182.

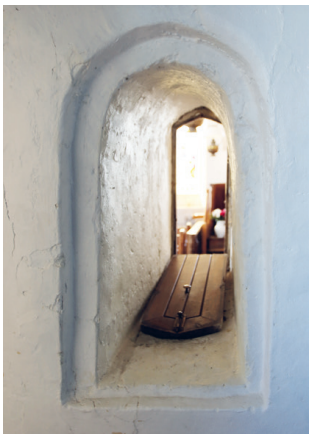
[187] EL110/5/5/ 4v, 9v, 10r. In 1585 Mildenhall paid £2 6s 8d for 'a Geneva Byble of the largeste volome', another 3s 2d 'for the Bossinge of it', 2d for 'Carringe of it from fletstrete to the dolphin withoute Byshopes gate' and a final 1s 'for the bringing of it home'. Cratfield in 1576 paid 4s 'for takyne downe the organ case': Holland, 1895, p. 101. In 1577 Bungay St Mary received £1 1s 6d for 51 lbs of 'Tynne that were pipes of the great organes': *East Anglian*, III, 199. In 1617 Melford sold 'ould Organe pypes': SROB, FL509/5/1/40r.

Lay parishioners sometimes expressed their opinions publicly in church, and in so doing caused disruption to services and sermons.[188] Whatever the leanings of a congregation and its resident minister, it was always possible that parishioners were shaping their own beliefs individually or in small groups, especially as more books were in circulation and more people were able to read for themselves. Some of the interventions during services, however, were grossly insulting. Richard Wakeling of Stanstead in 1593 called his rector a 'knave', while at Burgh in 1606 Henry Yorke called the minister 'fool & ass' and 'lying busarde'.[189] At Clopton in 1606 James Mayhewe interrupted the preacher saying he had 'made a sermon of a swill tub'.[190] Such interventions could lead to the abandonment of services. In 1597, James Huntman of Metfield was accused of disturbing the minister and refusing to leave the church, so that 'the parishioners went from church without hearinge devine service'.[191] Then, as a further consequence, such disorder could lead to legal action. In 1618-19 Bardwell allowed the large sum of £4 'for prosecuting of malefactors for disturbance in the Church in the tyme of devine service'.[192] Where detailed points of disagreement are revealed, they tend to be about the use of the cross in baptism, the wearing of hats in church, refusing to kneel for the gospel or communion, the wearing of surplices, and organising conferences of clergy and laity in private houses. Against this background it was often recorded that individuals, couples and households were neglectful in the way they attended their parish churches and took communion. For example, at Stowmarket and Stowupland 41 individuals, including wives and servants, were accused of not receiving communion at Easter 1611.[193]

Evidence has extra value when those who rejected the Church of England were positively assigned to an alternative allegiance. In 1597 Sybil Hawe of Kenton had not attended her parish church for seven years and was identified as 'a notorius Browniste', or follower of the separatist Robert Browne who migrated to Holland in 1582.[194] In 1627 Johanna Marshe, widow of Redgrave, was presented 'for leavinge her owne parishe Church to resort to a private conventicle at Thrandeston at the house of Thomas Case'.[195] At the other religious extreme were others who, like the gentry couple Thomas and Susan Bedingfield of Denham, were 'known for popish recusants'.[196] A particularly graphic example of the survival of catholicism was recorded in 1597 at Hemingstone, where Mr Ralph Cantrell and his wife were said to 'repaier not into the church to heare divine service, but they sitt usually in a lytle newe howse built by him to heare divine servyce'.[197] In an attempt to escape the penal legislation which bore increasingly heavily on those refusing to attend their parish churches, this catholic couple had built, against

[188] Breaking the injunction that 'no man shall willingly let or disturb the preacher in time of his sermon': Hughes & Larkin, II, 1969, p. 126.
[189] NRO, DN/VIS/2/1 (Sudbury Deanery); NRO, DN/VIS/4/2/2 (Carlford & Colneis Deanery).
[190] NRO, DN/VIS/4/2/2 (Carlford & Colneis Deanery).
[191] Williams, 1946, p. 120.
[192] SROB, FL522/11/22/92.
[193] NRO, DN/VIS/4/3 (Stowe Deanery, on loosely inserted sheet).
[194] Williams, 1946, p. 120.
[195] NRO, DN/VIS/5/1/3 (Hartismere Deanery).
[196] NRO, DN/VIS/5/1/4 (Hoxne Deanery).
[197] Williams, 1946, p. 149. The 'house' of the Cantrells has been used as a vestry since the 1870s.





Pl. 40: Against Hemingstone's nave, Ralph Cantrell and his wife in *c*.1597 built a 'room' (the further brick structure, arrowed above). From this they cut a hole through the Norman wall. As a result, this catholic couple could worship as they pleased in their own space, while claiming that they attended services of the Church of England. (*Right*) 'Ralph's Hole' from inside the added room. Notice the rebate which shows that the Cantrells controlled a shutter on their side of the 'Hole'.

the north wall of the nave, a small box-like extension of brick with its own external door (Pl. 40). From that little room, which still survives, they had cut a slot through the thick Norman wall which gave them a glimpse into the nave. This feature, closable on their side by a rebated wooden shutter, was known locally as 'Ralph's Hole'. It enabled the Cantrells to claim that they were still attending the established church, whereas in fact they were reserving to themselves the freedom to worship as and when they pleased. They therefore fall into the category of people whom some modern historians call 'church papists'–those who contrived to 'have it both ways'.[198]

Bells, clocks and chimes

Medieval parishioners had long been proud of their church-bells, often supplemented by clocks and chimes, and spent considerable sums on installing and maintaining them.[199] After the accession of Queen Elizabeth these familiar and distinct voices still called parishioners to worship, and at the same time marked the passage of the religious and secular calendars.[200] The accounts of churchwardens routinely mention the costs of maintaining the complicated machinery of clocks and chimes, and of finding clocksmiths and other specialists to do the work. Thus, Mendlesham in 1613-14 paid Gyford the roper for twelve fathoms of 'threade line for the greate wayght of the clock', and in 1616 a new clock at Melford cost £3 6s 8d.[201]

Because bells were heavy swinging objects, they needed regular attention and frequent replacement of worn parts. Each bell was attached to a wooden 'yoke' or beam, which in turn was connected to a wooden wheel; at intervals both yokes and wheels needed repair

[198] Walsham, 1993.

[199] Raven, 1890, ch. VI; Dymond, 2004, pp. xlii-vi; Middleton-Stewart, 2011, pp. liii-lv; Beeson, 1971; Ovens & Sleath, 2002. Beeson (pp. 22-24) claims that in Suffolk, 'many clocks were acquired by towns and villages from 1400'.

[200] Some bells were housed in a separate single-storey bell-house, as at East Bergholt and Langham: SROB, FL599/5/2 (*sub* 1674), 'for Thatching the bell house and the Church'.

[201] SROI, FB159/E7/35; SROB, FL509/5/1/39 (2nd face).

or replacement.[202] Iron fittings such as bands, dogs, wedges, bolts, staples and gudgeons demanded the attention of blacksmiths. Among the most common maintenance chores were the oiling or greasing of moving parts, the fitting of new bell-ropes and the replacement of leather baldrics suspending the heavy clapper inside each bell.[203] The sanctus bell, perched on the eastern gable of Melford's nave, which had long been rung to mark the climax of the pre-Reformation Mass, was by 1620 put to new protestant use as the 'sermon bell'.[204]

To hoist, take down or transport bells was expensive and called for manpower and strong equipment. In *c.* 1576 Wattisfield paid 2d 'for fetching of father smythes gear At Reckynghel to wynd up the bell'.[205] In order to undertake major work on its bells in 1611, Great St Mary's in Cambridge raised £41 10s 6d by a special rate. All five bells were let down and weighed, and £18 was paid to the bellfounder for recasting them.[206] At the same time, carpenters were paid £7 8s 0d for three new yokes, timber for the frame, hanging the bells, making three new wheels and mending the other two. At Bungay Holy Trinity in 1566, the costs of re-casting a single bell ('shotyng the belle') included signing a contract with a Norwich bellfounder, buying waste pewter and lead from local people,[207] weighing it, carting heavy loads to and from Norwich, estimating the wastage of metal, and at intervals recharging themselves with beer and food. Just before the bell was finally re-hung, 4d was spent on 'drynke at home in the Churchyarde when the bell was uncartyd'.[208]

In 1574 the ringers of Mendlesham received 12d for drink 'when they Ronge for Joy of that day that the quens maiestye was Crowned'.[209] On this day, 17th November, the ringing of bells was often accompanied by the firing of guns and beating of drums in a display of patriotic and protestant fervour. Hard-working ringers were paid in money, beer, bread and cheese; sometimes they rang in the morning and again at night. At Mildenhall in 1600 ringers were paid 2s 4d for their efforts in the morning of coronation day, and another 18d 'the same night for the like'.[210] In the 1570s Wattisfield spent 15d on 'fyve of the ringers suppers the Crownacion daie at night'.[211] Understandably, another important mark in the protestant calendar was, and still is, the 5th of November or 'gun-powder treason day', which commemorates England's escape in 1605 from a catholic plot to blow up king and parliament.[212]

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[202] In 1594 Exning paid 6s 'for makinge of a whele for the third bell': SROB, FL567/5/1/15.

[203] SROB, FL522/11/22/47-48. In 1602 Bardwell paid 1s 2d 'for a pound & halfe of hempe and makinge of a bell roope'.

[204] SROB, FL509/5/1/41 (2nd face). At Melford the sexton was paid 4d 'for Ryngeenge of the balle to the sarman the quartar ended at ouer ladiday laste paste the year 1588': SROB, FL509/5/1/6 (6th face).

[205] SROB, FL668/5/9/9r. Either Rickinghall Superior or Inferior.

[206] Foster, 1905, pp. 317-19.

[207] In 1617 Melford commissioned a new bell, and paid £2 14s 4d for 'Mettell bought of the Inhabitauntes of Allpheaton', a small adjoining parish: SROB, FL509/5/1/40 (3rd face).

[208] SROI, 115/E1/1 (*sub* 1566); FL668/5/9/10r.

[209] SROI, FB159/E7/4. Elizabeth was crowned on 17 Nov. 1558.

[210] SROB, EL110/5/5/29r.

[211] SROB, FL668/5/9/9, 10r.

[212] See Cressy, 1989.

Security



Pl. 41: Wooden chests with multiple locks continued to be used and made in churches for the safe storage of parish property. This example, dated 1599, is at Combs.

An important aspect of maintaining the church was keeping it secure from intruding humans and animals. After the Reformation, as before, churchwardens regularly employed craftsmen to mend or replace locks, keys and wooden bars on external and internal doors. Another major symbol of the need for security was the making and repair of numerous wooden storage chests or 'hutches' which were invariably lockable. Their total number probably declined after 1558, because fewer vestments, plate and manuscript service books were in use, but those that remained were solidly made and provided with multiple locks and keys.[213] In a canon of 1603 every church was to have 'a strong chest, with a hole in the upper part thereof....having three keys' (one for the minister and two for the churchwardens). In this way the parish continued to protect its cash, communion plate, archives or 'evidences', and current documents.

Often these important possessions were further guarded by being kept behind strong, iron-bound doors with protective flanges, as can still be seen in the vestry at Walsham le Willows and in the tower at Wyverstone. In 1578 Mildenhall's accounts refer to 'the ledded dore', and at Bardwell in 1591 the parish paid 8d 'for a keye for the dore wher the bookes are laide'.[214] In 1600 Mildenhall paid considerable attention to security: three new keys were provided for the 'great chest' in the vestry, and its hasps were mended; the tower door was re-hung and made 'fitt to lock & unlock'; and a lock was put on the upper door of the tower.[215] Yet in spite of such precautions, serious thefts did occur which are not dissimilar to the crimes inflicted on churches today.[216] At Mendlesham in 1612-13 a plumber was paid 9s for 'solderinge 13 places of the Church leades & putinge in of newe flashes above the saide leades wher thould [the old] have beene cutt & stolne awaye'.[217] Another obvious hazard to the fabric and contents of churches was fire. In 1602 Woolpit church was described as 'latelye decayed in Lead and tymber, by casualtie of thunder and liteninge and almost burnt downe'. The normal way of preventing and combating fire was to provide buckets, ladders

[213] Sherlock, 2008, *passim*. In 1610 Bardwell paid 6d 'for setting one ij lockes on the church chest': SROB, FL522/11/22/66.
[214] SROB, EL110/5/5, fol. 1v; SROB, FL522/11/22/26. At Metfield in 1590 Francis Edwards was paid 18d 'for trimminge of the locke and makinge of keies for the chest upon the Steple': Bower, 1938, p. 134. At Hemingstone, an indoor door into the tower is completely iron-bound.
[215] SROB, EL110/5/5, fols 29r & v.
[216] Dymond, 2004, pp. xlv-vi.
[217] SROI, FB159/E7/32.

and long-handled cromes to rake thatch from burning buildings.[218]



Pl. 42: Iron-bound and flanged doors to vestries and towers, as here at Stowlangtoft, underline the importance of church security in medieval and later times. They also demonstrate the skills of contemporary blacksmiths and locksmiths.

Sitting in church

From at least the fourteenth century, and usually with the financial help of wealthier inhabitants, parishes had begun to install wooden seating for the laity in the naves and aisles of local churches. This work too was supervised by churchwardens and recorded in their accounts. The process continued well beyond the accession of Elizabeth, usually in a piecemeal fashion until the whole congregation was able to sit.[219] One motive for doing this was to keep parishioners under control and stop them from walking about and talking during services, as had previously been common behaviour. The words normally used in accounts were 'stools' and 'forms', which could imply either parallel benches or box-pews.[220] In 1591 a churchwarden of Exning recorded the purchase for 10s of 'one hundrethe & a halfe unche borde to make certaine stoles newe in the churche & to mende oulde ones'. Another 7s was spent on 17 feet of timber, with 'mor then xx Carte spockes [spokes] to make pinnes & to occupie aboute the sayde stoles'.[221] The other churchwarden at Exning accounted for 9s laid out 'for xj Dayes worke & a halfe to make & mend stoles in the Churche'.[222] This is a regular theme elsewhere: when new seating was installed it was usually accompanied by repairs to older benches and to their timber substructure which was prone to rot. In 1616 Great Waldingfield spent £3 7s 8d on 'planceringe of stooles and layinge of new selles [cills] in all the stoles whear need was and for geese [joists] and the long selles by the wales ....' This was followed by the 'makinge of 7 new stooles and mendinge of 2 ould stoles'.[223] Occasionally accounts mention pews for special purposes: for example, in 1563 Melford spent 5d on 'a matte for the wives stole'

[218] *East Anglian*, I, 371. In 1683 Melford stored 36 leather buckets in the church and in three private houses, as well as ladders and cromes at a local inn: Dymond & Paine, 2012, p.155. The church at Haughley still displays 30 leather buckets dated 1725.

[219] See Flather, 1999.

[220] At Bungay Holy Trinity in 1566 Edward Molle and his son spent six days making 'the newe stoolys in the Church': SROI, 115/E1/1. At Melford in 1620-22 payment was made for 'working up the pue under Sir Thomas Savage his seat'; this pew was probably in the chancel: SROB, FL509/5/1/41v.

[221] The spokes may have been used as hat-pegs in box-pews.

[222] SROB, FL567/5/1/9-10.

[223] SROB, FL514/4/8, p. 53.



Pl. 43: Although many benches in Suffolk are 15th century in date, accounts after 1558 still mention the costs of new benches and the repair of old ones. Icklingham All Saints has several different kinds of bench, made or replaced at different dates, and many of its bench-ends crudely copy medieval poppy-heads. In general, post-medieval benches are more difficult to date because of their lack of decoration.

[used for thanksgiving after childbirth],[224] while Aldeburgh in 1589 paid 7d 'for a matt for the marieinge stoole', on which newly married couples knelt to receive a blessing in front of the communion table.[225]

Ironically, the emphasis on seating the whole congregation led to new problems and tensions. For example, at Mendlesham in 1614 an archdeacon's official wrote to the minister, churchwardens and parishioners, objecting that 'both men and women are inconveniently and intermingedly placed contrary to all good order and decency as becometh the temple of God'.[226] In places such as Stowlangtoft this particular problem was solved, or at least minimised, by grouping women on one side of the nave and men on the other.[227] A further complication was that the places where people sat in church inevitably reflected their changeable wealth and social standing, and such matters could easily lead to competition and conflict.

More important parishioners were normally seated at the eastern end of the nave, closest to the chancel, and it was not uncommon for lay rectors, squires and aristocrats to have

[224] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 126; Winn, 1926, p. 41.
[225] Winn, 1926, p. 53.
[226] SROI, FB159/E4/1.
[227] Dymond, 1996, pp. 215-22.



Pl. 44: The churchyard at Wetheringsett where in 1611 a group of young friends played a game of 'camping'. In a similar game at Exning in 1595, windows in the church were broken.

special seats in the chancel, as was recorded at Weybread in 1622. With the alleged consent of the minister, churchwardens and inhabitants, 'Mr Samuel Marten hath built a Pwe, wth a double seate for himselfe, his wife and his children, on the south side of the Chancell'.[228] At Palgrave in 1606 William Blomefield had 'buylte a pewe in the Church by the sufferance of Mr Chauncellor so bigg that it is troublesom to the rest of the parishioners by reason of the smallnes of the Church'.[229] In the nave and aisles, presentments show that parishioners squabbled about status and seating, and objected to the places allotted to them by the clergy and churchwardens. Two women of Easton Bavents were in 1606 accused of committing disturbance 'by striving for a seat', while at Kirtling (Cambs) Thomas Cretinge refused to sit where the churchwardens had indicated, 'whereby there is disorder in the church'.[230] Worse was to happen at Eye in 1611, when Nicholas Kyrke allegedly pulled down the seat of John Roger's wife without authority, 'she & her predecessors having been possessed thereof this 50 or 60 years'.[231] Less confrontationally Stephen Smyth of Wortham illustrated another disadvantage of providing seating for all: in 1627 he was presented 'for a notorious sleeper in the church in the time of Devine service & sermons'.[232]

The churchyard

The consecrated ground around the church, often known colloquially as 'God's Acre', gave rise to other regular costs faced by churchwardens. This ancient enclosure where most of the community's population over centuries lay buried was either walled, ditched, hedged, fenced or paled, or any combination of these. It had to be kept in repair to preserve the grassy burial ground from the damage and defilement of animals such as pigs and cattle.[233] At Bardwell in 1617-18 four loads of timber costing the large sum of £6 8s 0d were bought 'to fence

[228] *East Anglian*, I, 411.

[229] NRO, DN/VIS/4/2/3 (Hartismere Deanery). A similar dispute broke out at Melford in the 1670s: Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 137, fn 610. Another irritant in churches was dogs; at Blythburgh in 1597 Mary Knights 'do bringe maistifes to church into the stoole with her'; other parishioners were deprived of their seats; Mary also 'useth to chide and braule in the churche': Williams, 1946, p. 127.

[230] NRO, DN/VIS/4/2/2 (Dunwich Deanery); NRO, DN/VIS/4/2/3 (Fordham Deanery).

[231] NRO, DN/VIS/4/3 (Hartismere Deanery).

[232] NRO, DN/VIS/5/3/3 (Hartismere Deanery).

[233] In 1572 the churchyard of Boxford was hedged, paled *and* ditched: SROB, FB77/E2/2/173-75. In 1597 the rector of Witnesham had 'made a swinesty adjoyning to the churchyard wherby the churchyard is most unseemly annoyed with swine': Williams, 1946, p. 143. Regrettably, some ancient churchyards have been deprived of the feeling of enclosure in modern times by the removal of walls, hedges, *etc.*

the Church yeard'; they were carried from nearby Stanton for an extra 7s, and a man was paid 40s 'for Raylinge the church yeard'. Sometimes the responsibility for maintaining the boundary was shared. In 1616 two men of Mendlesham were fined 3s 8d for 'note rayelen in the Chorch yard'.[234] Gates and stiles giving entry to the churchyard also needed to be strong and well maintained; the former had to be securely latched, and were sometimes associated with iron gratings.[235] At Wattisfield in 1616 an unknown sum was spent 'taking downe the stille & setting it up', and the gate was mended.[236] In addition, internal paths or 'alleys' needed cleaning, gravelling and the occasional cutting of gutters, especially when important visitors such as the bishop were due. Accounts show that scrub and nettles were cut down, new soil was sometimes imported, hayseed was scattered and the surface of graveyards levelled or raised.[237]

Some gravestones may have appeared in urban churchyards before 1600, but rural churchyards usually remained hummocky grassland, dotted with perishable grave-markers such as wooden crosses and posies of flowers.[238] In these surroundings, for centuries, a major problem facing parish officials was the habitual use of churchyards by the young for games and other recreations. In 1595 Exning spent 2s on 'mendinge of certaine wyndowes about the churche that weare broken by Mr Rauraunce his sonn, & by Robart bridgeman his sonne & by the wydowe Disborowes sonne ....'. We need have little doubt that these three lads broke the church windows while using the churchyard for a ball-game such as fives, cricket or 'camping' (a form of football-cum-handball).[239] At Wetheringsett in 1611 Isaac Lockwood with others was straightforwardly accused of 'camping in the churchyard'.[240]

Town properties

As already indicated, most parishes owned 'town lands' and 'town houses', lying both within their boundaries and outside. They brought in valuable rents and called for regular management. At Clare in 1612 the parish's portfolio of property included a meadow, a croft and a pasture, at least seven houses, five shops, an inn, a stable and a barn.[241] Many town-owned houses were used to accommodate the poor, as in 1642 when Boxford spent 14s 'for strawe & thatching of the widdow Powels howse'.[242] In 1614 the same parish had repaired a town house in 'Olyward

[234] FB159/E7/40.

[235] Melford had at least two stiles into the churchyard, as well as a main gate from the green: SROB, FL509/5/1/42v. Wattisfield in 1608-09 paid 3d 'for putting of twoo steppes into the Church still': SROB, FL668/5/9/60 (4th face).

[236] SROB, FL668/5/9/65r. In 1571 Bungay St Mary had 41 iron bars of varying weights 'taken from the church grats': *East Anglian*, III, 43.

[237] Mann, 1934, p. 60 (1561).

[238] In 1596 at Mildenhall the 'grave macker [?marker]' of John Hart cost 4d: EL110/5/5/23b, 23bv. In 1638 at Weybread 6d was paid 'for taking away a toome stone in the church yard defaced': *East Anglian*, II, 5. In 1602 at Bardwell 5s was paid 'for the taken up of his man being buryed before Crowner [coroner] had knowledge of his death', probably a case of suicide: SROB, FL522/11/22/48.

[239] SROB, FL567/5/1/18. In 1575 at Hackness in Yorkshire 'the churchyeard is abused with yonge people for that they make it their common sportinge place': Sheils, 18; Dymond, 1999, pp. 476-97.

[240] NRO, DN/VIS/4/3 (Hartismere Deanery).

[241] SROB, FL501/5/1.

[242] SROB, FB77/E2/3/pp. 95-96.

strete', which involved the renewal of a groundsel, re-daubing of walls, and the insertion of a dog (iron tie).[243] Farmers of town lands were often forbidden by their leases from ploughing up pastures and from taking timber without permission; in addition they were sometimes required to do specified lengths of ditching and hedging, or face financial penalties.[244]

Many parochially-owned properties were bequeathed by parishioners in their wills both before and after the Reformation, and their rents were commonly dedicated to repairing the church, maintaining roads and bridges, and relieving the poor. A few others were deliberate investments such as Melford's purchase in 1575 of the 21-acre Osmonds Farm in Stoke by Nayland.[245] On a smaller scale, Cratfield in 1581 recorded 'a stabell that was bought by the consent of the inhabitants', perhaps as a new facility for parishioners coming to church on horseback. In 1608 Boxford's town properties included houses, shops and individual rooms let annually, and farmland leased with specific conditions for a term of years. When shops and individual rooms were let, it was stipulated that no working or trading was to take place in them on Sundays: otherwise the churchwardens, constables or six of the chief inhabitants could lawfully evict the tenants. Here we are probably witnessing the influence of Boxford's rectors William and Joseph Byrde, who were of a strongly puritanical or 'godlie' persuasion.[246] Furthermore, no town properties were to be sub-let to tenants who might become chargeable to the parish, without again getting the approval of the six chief inhabitants. Another parish possession came in the form of live animals. For example, in 1589 the parish of Elmsett owned twelve cows known as 'the towen neat', which were farmed out to eight local individuals. The profits made on these animals went towards poor relief, but in 1606 the ten remaining neat 'by the generall consent of the whole parish were all turned into money [£14 8s 0d] at the reckoning day'.[247]

Churchwardens' accounts occasionally give useful details about building projects–in addition, that is, to work on the church itself. At Mendlesham in 1583-84 a 'newe house' was built for an unstated purpose, probably to add to the stock of town houses.[248] After an oak and an elm had been felled, large amounts of other materials were bought including bricks and nails by the thousand, sap lathes, hemp-ropes for binding the splints, stone for the foundation of a chimney, oak and elm boards, locks, hooks, hinges and loads of straw. Clay was cast, elm boards sawn and a sawing-pit dug. Lime was brought in from Stanton kiln (10 miles distant) and bricks from Westhorpe (4 miles). Throughout the project, Mr Reeve of nearby Thwaite was heavily involved: he supplied bricks and was paid three separate amounts of £2. Several craftsmen were named. For instance, a man called Dunne was paid 15s 9d for his victuals when the timber frame was raised ('at the rearinge of the newe house'), while John Jesoppe

[243] SROB, FB77/E2/3/p. 8.
[244] SROI, FB159/A1/1, *sub* 1584 and 1601.
[245] Dymond & Paine, 2012, pp. 134-35. In 1600 Mr Martyn paid £2 14s 4d for a half-year rent of Osmonds: SROB, FL509/5/1/21r.
[246] Bremer & Webster, I, 2006, p. 25.
[247] SROB, FB61/A/1/1.
[248] SROI, FB159/E7/9-10. Metfield in 1621-25 recorded in detail the pulling down of an old house and the building of a new: Bower, 1938, p. 146.

and Roger Aggis got £1 4s 0d for daubing the timber frame. The total cost of this new building was at least £18. Two other good examples of building projects appear in Melford's accounts, for the erection of a barn at Stoke by Nayland in 1577[249] and the extensive repair of a tenement at Cuckoo Tye in 1610-11. The latter, which cost a total of £16 6s 1d, required the purchase of timber, brick, sand and lime, the erection of scaffolding and the provision of ovens.[250] Among the more common types of repair done to town properties were thatching with straw or reeds, and replacing the rotting groundsels of timber frames.

Purveyance

The custom of purveyance gave the Crown the right to purchase, at below market prices, food, fuel and services for the royal household, stables and navy.[251] Run by officials known as purveyors, who were often accused of dishonesty, this irksome practice went back to at least the eleventh century, although the extent of its use varied from one monarch to another. It was finally abolished in 1660.[252] Typical examples were recorded at Mendlesham in 1573-74 when the two constables were paid 12s 2d 'for the alowance of a wey of chese & half a Barrell of butter taken for the quene', and in 1610 when a constable was paid the large sum of £5 14s 0d 'for the kings Maiestys provision'.[253] Food producers were compensated for the lower prices received from the purveyor, bringing their income back towards normal levels. Hence the usual expressions recorded in the accounts, 'above the quenes prys' or 'more then the quens price'. The system became even more complicated when debts accumulated. In 1615 the wardens of Mendlesham paid £2 3s 6d to compound for four years with the purveyor Mr Greene for '4 comb otes a year unserved behind, with this year'.[254]

Among goods requisitioned at Mendlesham during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I were cheese, butter, calves, hens, capons, wheat, oats, timber and charcoal. Costs accumulated as the result of meeting purveyors or their deputies, and paying for horses, carts and men on numerous journeys within the region. For example, in 1612-13 it cost Bardwell 18d 'for hiringe three horses for carienge wheate for the kinges provision'.[255] At Wattisfield a picturesque but undated entry records 4d spent 'for Caring [carrying] of the pulletes & shortspord [short-spurred] Cockes to the Quenes perver [purveyor]'.[256] Among the destinations to which Mendlesham sent goods were Ipswich, Botesdale and especially Newmarket where in the 1610s James I was building his new palace designed by Inigo Jones. Thus in 1616-17

[249] Dymond & Paine, 2012, pp. 134-35.

[250] SROB, FL509/5/1/30 (3rd and 4th pages): repair of Mother Chinery's house at Bardwell in 1622-23 involved the purchase of laths, lime, nails, tile pins, sand and tile; a mason and man were paid 10s 6d for 4½ days work: SROB, FL522/11/22/102. Repairing almshouses in Mildenhall in 1599: SROB, EL110/5/5, 24v.

[251] At Bardwell in 1603-04 Mr Bidwell was paid 13s 3d 'for a waye of Cheese & thre firkins of butter for the Kings provision for the Navye': SROB, FL522/11/22/51.

[252] For the detailed workings of purveyance, see *Bacon Papers*, III, 143-46.

[253] SROB, FB159/E7/3, 28.

[254] SROB, FB159/E7/37.

[255] SROB, FL522/11/22/74.

[256] SROB, FL668/5/9/10v.

Mendlesham paid £4 17s 3d, 'carrying materials to His Ma'ties buildings at Newmarket'.[257] This whole system of purveyance was normally called composition ('composyscyon for the provysyon off hys Maiestyes most honorable howsehoulde'). It must have complicated the workings of the agricultural market, principally by delaying full payment, and certainly gave the churchwardens a great deal of organising to do.[258]

Biographical evidence

Churchwardens' accounts consist of thousands of financial transactions, large, middling and small. Sometimes the detail is sufficient to reveal something of the lives of named individuals. This is clearly possible for churchwardens who compiled the accounts, and for magistrates who are often mentioned in them. However, the same sources also enable us sporadically to piece together information for quite humble local people. Three examples are given here to illustrate this welcome biographical dimension. One relates to a probable parish clerk and the other two to paupers who were given relief by their parishes over decades.

The actual role or office of Father Wylbe of Wattisfield is not stated, but certainly he was a much trusted official who was given over fifty entries in parish accounts between 1574 and the mid-1580s. He might have been parish clerk for, more often than not, he received quarterly payments totalling about £1 each year. He represented Wattisfield at several events for which he was paid expenses: at the fairs of Woolpit (Suffolk) and Diss (Norfolk), at the Blackbourn hundred court which met in neighbouring Stanton, and in discussions with magistrates about paying a lay subsidy. In addition he was paid 'for mendyng of the toun pond', and for buying 1½ lbs of lead to mend a bell-clapper and 'grese for the beles'. Most intriguing of all, in 1574 'he went to the playe at Stanton', which may have been a ball-game but is more likely to have been a theatrical production.[259]

Elizabeth Morwell is mentioned at least twenty-one times by the churchwardens of Mendlesham in the years 1588-1603. Because the record has gaps in it, she probably featured at other dates within the same period. One early reference in 1589-90 shows she derived some income by working as a carder of wool, for in that year the parish supplied her with a pair of cards costing 13d.[260] She was obviously on the edge of poverty for in the same year she received from the parish a loaf worth 2d. Sixteen other references relate to pieces of clothing supplied to her at parish expense: these included the making or mending of petticoats, smocks, smock sleeves, a waistcoat, an upper body for a petticoat, shoes and 'hosen'. In addition her shoes were re-soled twice. On two occasions she received cloth (linen and russet) rather than made-up garments. Because of the relatively small sums of money paid by the parish, it is likely that some of the clothes she was given were already second-hand. By

[257] SROB, FB159/E7/41.

[258] SROB, FL522/11/22/55.

[259] SROB, FL668/5/9/3v. Since the 15th century Stanton had possessed a Camping Land for recreational activities: SROB, HA522/2/1. Letter of administration for Wylbe, SROB, IC500/5/2/102; he died 1588, had a wife Joan and probably a son Robert.

[260] A card was a toothed instrument resembling a wire-brush, to disentangle fibres and raise the nap of cloth.

1600 she was described as 'sceke', and was receiving payments of 4d a week as a pauper dependent on the parish. Her sad life came to an end in 1603 when Mendlesham spent 5s 8d on her burial, her shroud ('shete'), her keeper, her bearers, and other unspecified charges which had been paid by the sexton.



Pl. 45: Poor-boxes, locked and often iron-bound, signal that for centuries poverty was relieved by voluntary alms-giving. In the later 16th century voluntarism was supplemented by the raising of special poor-rates and the appointment of new parochial officers. This example is at Blythburgh.

Nine references in the townwardens' accounts of Bardwell relate to Lidea Gore (or Goore) and her family during the years 1616-31. The parish regarded her not just as a recurrent expense but also as a petty criminal and general nuisance. In 1616 she was sent to gaol by a warrant costing 6d, and someone was paid to go to Rattlesden to fetch her. In 1615 at the cost of 12d she was again gaoled. In the next year 18d was spent on burying the Widow Gore, who was probably Lidea's mother, and Lidea herself was paid 12d for the lock and key of the town house which presumably was the family home. A decade later in 1628 a warrant costing 8d was issued to send Lidea to the house of correction (Bridewell) at Botesdale: 6d was given her when she went, and two men who accompanied her were paid 1s 4d. In the next year the large sum of £6 was spent to maintain George Gore, Lidea's illegitimate ('base') child, as an apprentice until he reached the age of 24; John Craske was paid 10s for clothing the new apprentice. In the same year Lidea, at the cost of 4d, was carried once more to the house of correction. Finally, in 1631 another £6 was paid to Edmund Doe for bringing up George Gore until the age of 24, and 'appareling' him for 13s 4d. Presumably George's first apprenticeship had somehow broken down.

Relieving the poor

In the second half of the sixteenth century, poverty increased markedly throughout England. Among the reasons for this were population growth, inflation and poor harvests, as well as the loss in the 1530s-1540s of the religious orders as a traditional source of charity.[261] To encourage voluntary alms-giving, the queen's injunctions of 1559 required every parish to have a 'poor man's box' in a convenient place in the church.[262] Even with this encouragement, simple voluntary charity was no longer enough to cope with the problem, whether by gathering in churches, leaving legacies or endowing almshouses. While those and other methods retained

[261] See McIntosh, M.K., 2012.

[262] Bramford's poor-box carries a painted inscription: 'Remember the pore the scripture doth record what to them is geven is lent unto the Lord 1591'.

undeniable value,[263] it was only by the regular collection of poor-rates in each parish that poor individuals and families could be properly identified and then given the basic relief that they needed for survival.[264] The effect of new legislation, passed mainly from 1552 to 1601, was to divide each community into two broad but sometimes overlapping groups: ratepayers who had houses, land and other forms of personal wealth, and recipients who needed help to survive either permanently or seasonally (especially through the winter). One consequence of this important innovation was that from the late-sixteenth century onwards increasing numbers of civil responsibilities were put on the ecclesiastical parish by central government. As a by-product documents were written which reveal better than ever before the lives of the poor and underprivileged in English society. Of these the most important, where they survive, are the accounts of churchwardens, constables and newly created overseers of the poor.[265]

The setting of local rates, for whatever purpose, was a heavy burden, and from it disputes could easily arise. In 1688 at Stoke by Nayland, it was recorded that 'there have ben severall contestes and disputes about the valluations and rateing of the landes in this towne ....'. Some parishioners had been rated on the basis of their old rents, and others according to present levels. Using a survey of 1673 which had been done with 'great deliberation & Consedration in severall parish meetings', a standard rate of 4d in the pound was imposed. The adjustment was made 'to prevent all frauds for the futer in rating & that there may be quiet in the parish'.[266]

In each parish from 1552 onwards new officials were elected who at first were known as 'collectors of the poor', and later as 'overseers of the poor'. Thus at Poslingford in 1563, in language reminiscent of the old voluntary system, it was recorded that two collectors were chosen 'to gather the devocion of the people Evere Sunday for to dystribute to the pore'; any surpluses were to be stored in 'the pore mens boxe'.[267] More detailed accounts survive for Drinkstone, starting in 1598. In a period of eight months in 1603, four overseers collected weekly sums ranging from 1d to 6d from about thirty-five 'gevers', 'outdwellers' and 'fermers'. They raised a total rate of £8 18s 11d which was then distributed in weekly amounts ranging from 3d to 6d among eight adults, four of whom were responsible for twenty-one small children and an older boy. These recipients, who were named with their ages, comprised two men aged over 80, a widow of 70, three other widows aged between 45 to 55 (each with five to seven small children), a lame man of 37 with six small children and a boy of 13 also described as lame, and a 'diseased' man of 72. Of the money collected from out-dwellers, 19s 4d 'was given to divers sicke folkes in the time of theire sicknes, and laid out for woode in the time of winter'. In the

[263] In 1610 Edward Appleton of Edwardstone willed 40s 'to be paid yearely for ever to the poore people of great Waldingfield': SROB, FL514/1/6. In 1594 Bardwell inserted into its accounts a prayer for benefactors, old and new: SROB, FL522/11/22/37.

[264] At Mildenhall in the 1590s, in parallel with the levying of rates, gatherings still took place at Christmas and other festivals; legacies and gifts were still received, some tied to repairs of 'the boodye [nave] of the Churche': SROB, EL110/5/5/fols 2v, 11r, 18r. Gifts and legacies were noted in 1616 at Gt Waldingfield: SROB, FL514/4/8/55, 62-5.

[265] For example, in 1603 the port of Cley in north Norfolk recorded 18 poor (including 5 children), and 30 ratepayers: *Bacon Papers*, V, 29.

[266] SROB, FB80/A1/1/87. See also McIntosh, 2014.

[267] SROB, FL615/7/1. Poslingford's town book lists the names of the poor and their children *c.* 1563.

same account it was recorded that a widow's son had been apprenticed to a husbandman, and that £8 of the town's 'stocke' remained in a churchwarden's hands.[268]

The market town and populous parish of Mendlesham was certainly stretched by the problem of poverty but not, it seems, overwhelmed by it. In its churchwardens' accounts, more space was devoted to poor relief than to any other single item of business. The system appeared to have been compassionate and, up to a point, effective. Among the groups given assistance were orphans, apprentices, young people going into service, abandoned wives, the sick and injured, the burnt, lame and blind, the unemployed, the mentally ill, travellers and vagrants, the bereaved and those on their death-beds. Other beneficiaries included people travelling from or to countries such as Ireland, Scotland, the Low Countries and Germany. In 1603 Mendlesham paid William Ellinger 3s at his coming 'out of Ireland at severall tymes', and another local man received 10s for his service in Ireland.[269] Understandably, relief took several different forms which included cash, payments in kind,[270] the provision of work and accommodation, the supplying of tools to support paid work,[271] the running of a poor house, almshouse and stockhouse,[272] the redemption of pawns, and the pursuit of legal cases involving paupers. In addition, parish officers often needed to travel within the region, and submitted their expenses accordingly. Contacts are recorded with the house of correction at Botesdale,[273] a prison at Ipswich, a hospital 'without St Stevens gate' in Norwich,[274] the homes of local magistrates and meetings of various courts of law, secular and spiritual.

Where a parish was overwhelmed by paupers, local magistrates could order the rest of the surrounding hundred to help. Thus, for a half-year period in 1610 Mendlesham paid 16s 8d to Rickinghall Superior for the poor there, 'being a charg laid upon us by the Justices'. This was understandably unpopular, and two men were sent on expenses to Eye 'to se if we could be discharged of the charg imposed upon us for Over Rickingall'. As it happened, Mendlesham was still supporting Rickinghall a year later. Another responsibility imposed on parishes was the support of their own poor who had moved away. In 1619 Mendlesham paid 4d 'to a pore man dwillinge in Harfordshire [Hertfordshire], havinge Authoryti from the Justices to be relevid'.[275]

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[268] SROB, FL562/5/1. 'Outdwellers' held land in the parish but lived outside it.

[269] SROI, FB159/E7/22.

[270] In 1654 Walsham le Willows received of John Wyndout 'the ten pounds was lent his father by the towne': SROB, FL646/5/1/10v. Mendlesham in 1600 insisted that loans were witnessed by at least six principal inhabitants; the borrower always had to lay in 'sufficient bonds with suertie for the repaying of the said Somme on the Even of the Reckning Daye at the furthest': SROI, FB159/A1/1 (*sub* 1600). In 1582 Mildenhall lent £5 10s 0d to Thomas Rolfe of West Row; it had to be repaid to two wardens on the 20th July: SROB, EL110/5/5, fol. 4r.

[271] Tools for work included tow combs, wool-cards and a scythe.

[272] The poor house and almshouse may have been a single institution created from the pre-Reformation guildhall. The stockhouse probably contained items ready for distribution to the poor, such as cloth, clothing, food or firewood, and materials to provide work like wool and hemp. By an Act of 1576 stores were to be set up in every town to provide the poor with work (18 Eliz. I, c.3). In 1579 East Bergholt created a 'store house' for food. Holt (Nfk) in *c.*1573 tried to adapt a game place into a poor house: *Bacon Papers*, I, 50-52.

[273] Houses of Correction or 'Bridewells' were also set up by the Act of 1576 (18 Eliz. I, c.3).

[274] SROI, FB159/E7/38, p. 2.

[275] SROI, FB159/E7/43.

In this field most expenditure took the form of cash payments. For example, in 1594 fourteen people in Mendlesham, eight of them women, received sums ranging from 3d to 20d a week according to their personal circumstances. The money came largely from the rents of town lands: six different holdings brought in a total of £25 10s 7d per year. Other relief came in the shape of clothing and lengths of cloth.[276] Two prosperous local drapers called Barnaby Barker and Peter Duck regularly supplied the parish with cloth for the poor, and sometimes made up garments for them. Over twelve different kinds of cloth, mainly at the cheaper end of the scale, were dispensed.[277] In 1591, 3 yards of 'frise' were bought for James Kob for a jerkin and 1½ yards of 'Russet' for 'a payer of Britches', making a total of 6s. The garments were then made up for a further 16d.[278] Among the items of clothing supplied to the poor were breeches, shirts, waistcoats, smocks, petticoats, jerkins, doublets, coats, hats, coifs, neckerchiefs, aprons, stockings and shoes (which were also re-soled at parish expense), as well as a few 'upper bodies' and sleeves for smocks and coats. In a few cases beds and bedding were provided, particularly for the elderly. In 1614 John Man junior was given 4s 8d for 8 yards of hempen cloth 'to make Widow Lovenis a bed'.

Firewood was another valued form of relief. In 1586 Jeffrye Jesop of Mendlesham was paid 5s 4d 'for stowinge & makinge of foure hundred woode for the pore'. This phrase implies that Jesop first stored the timber, then cut and split it ready for distribution. Moreover, the obligation to supply firewood featured in leases of town land. In 1594 William Gilbert, a major tenant who paid a significant rent of £42 a year, 'shall stowe and carye all such wood as the said churchwardens shall appoint for the pore'. In 1586 the same farmer received 18d for carrying wood 'to the strete' (the main settlement in the parish) with two horses, and carrying wood 'to the pore folke on horse'.[279]

Food given to the poor included beef, mutton, rye, wheat, loaves of bread, and cheese.[280] The latter was an important product of the largely pastoral economy which prevailed in that part of north-central Suffolk where Mendlesham lies. In 1610 Francis Cocke was paid 20d 'for a chamber to lay the Chese in for selling it out [to the poor], and his wif for tendinge it with rubbinge [salting] and turninge'. In that same year the parish bought ninety-eight cheeses for the poor costing the large sum of £10 6s 0d. Subsequently these cheeses 'wer wayed to see what was wasted'.[281] Some foodstuffs, including 'the towne corne', were bought in bulk, stored temporarily and then sold to the poor at favourable prices (although a certain proportion was lost to 'mesen'). In 1618 Samuel Pettoe was paid 2s 'for the use of his chamber wherein the towne corne was layde the last yeare'.[282] An unknown number of people fortunate enough to

[276] Some of the clothing was probably not new.

[277] SROI, FB159/E7/32. The cloth bought and distributed to the poor included linen, woollen and hempen cloth, grey russet, 'granie russet', 'owelenne clothe', frieze, russet, 'ossumbriges', linsey-wolsey, 'welche Rugg', cotton, white cotton, 'hoose clothe', fustian, tammey, light medley and 'corse cloathe'.

[278] In 1582-3 linen cloth was also bought at Botesdale, for £1 15s 3d: SROI, FB159/E7/7.

[279] SROI, FB159/E7/11, 12.

[280] In 1608 at Exning herring were offered 'Towerdes the benifite of the poore': SROB, FL567/5/1/47.

[281] SROI, FB159/E7/28.

[282] SROI, FB159/E7/42.

be living in the almshouse also received meat and bread from the parish.

Mendlesham paid for the care of elderly adults for weeks, months and sometimes years. In 1609-10, it paid £1 10s 4d to a woman living in Dennington, 12 miles distant, 'for keping ould Jesop her father' for half a year. She was given an extra 3s 4d as benevolence 'because he had byne long sick'.[283] No doubt her father was legally a parishioner of Mendlesham. Sometimes bad winter weather contributed to local hardship: in 1615 'Ould Pope' and the widow Bugg were each given 6d 'in thextreme snow'.[284] In 1603 the parish paid for the burial of Elizabeth Morwell, who had been on relief for years.[285]

The parish also supported children of varied ages, including orphans, illegitimates and those going into service. For instance, in 1602 Mother Jesoppe, Mother Rysbye and Mother Bennet were paid for keeping illegitimate children for a year; the sums they received varied from £2 to £3 6s 8d for two children. At the other end of childhood, apprentices including a few girls were bound out to masters and mistresses who lived over a wide area of Suffolk including Eye, Stowmarket and Ipswich. In 1616, one Farthing of Creeting St Mary was paid £1 10s 0d for taking Cokerell's boy for three years, writing his indentures for 1s, and funding a pair of shoes for 1s 4d, plus another 4d at Stowmarket when the indentures were sealed. To clothe Mathew's boy in 1609-10, a total of 18s was spent on a range of cloth including grey russet, hosen cloth, fustian for a doublet, white cotton for 'lyninges', as well as thread and buttons.[286] In 1581 Mildenhall covenanted with John Hart to support John Wright with money over six years and 'doble aparell, on sute for the working daye and the other for the Sundaye'.[287]

Occasionally accounts unearth the tragic circumstances of whole families. For example, at Bardwell in 1602 the constable George Ive was paid 8d for obtaining two warrants 'for the Carrying away of thre of Mustes Children'. The phrase 'carrying away' perhaps implies that the parish had acted without the approval of the parents. Subsequently, no doubt, the children were placed with a local carer who was given an allowance. Then, shortly afterwards two warrants were issued 'to carrye Must to the Jayle'.[288] An equally sad case is recorded at Weybread in 1623. Relief of 6d was paid to Anne Johnson and Ellen Johnson, on being 'permitted by warrant from two Justices of the Peace to passe with their small children from Warikeshire to Winterton [in east Norfolk], their husbands beinge drowned, & all their goods lost at sea'.[289]

Another form of aid was the giving of personal loans, as if the parish were a bank. In 1566

[283] SROI, FB159/E7/28.
[284] SROI, FB159/E7/37.
[285] SROI, FB159/E7/22. (See pp. 62-63, above).
[286] SROI, FB159/E7/28 (2 Oct.).
[287] SROB, EL110/5/5/ fol. 16v.
[288] SROB, FL522/11/22/47-48.
[289] *East Anglian*, I, 411.

Bungay Holy Trinity recorded ten debts totalling over £11 that were owed to the parish by local men; some, if not all, were being paid off in instalments.[290] In 1614 William Ellinger senior of Mendlesham was given a loan of 10s, with his son William 'geving his word to the repaying at the Reckoninge daye, & soe to remayne at sonne William's ho[*illeg*] till then'.[291] A memorandum of 1600 had stipulated that the parish could only make loans when repayment was guaranteed 'on the Even of the Reckning Daye at the furthest'.[292] In 1600, the parish received £2 10s 0d which had been 'lente for binding forth of Certaine boyes' as apprentices,[293] and in 1616 Widow Howe was granted 10s 'to give to her daugters marredge'.[294]

Medical treatment

Parishes gave basic medical treatment to the sick and injured quite regularly. Thus, Mendlesham's churchwardens sometimes recorded the employment of surgeons and physicians, but in most cases did not name them.[295] For instance, in 1589 a total of 12s 2½d was paid to a surgeon 'for cuttinge & helynge of the wedow Wards lad', while in 1616 a physician was given 20s to cure William Ellinger 'in his tyme of sweating'. At Cratfield in 1612 the parish paid 13s to a man 'that did tryme his [a patient's] eyes and made for to see'.[296] Most treatments, however, were done by a small army of local women, particularly widows, who were untrained medically but had experience of basic care stemming from family life. They served their neighbours as 'watchers' or carers, and in return received payment and expenses. In 1593 Widow Nycould received 12s 'for washing & helpyng the wedow Whitynge vj wekes'. Such work could involve giving 'houserome' to the sick and elderly, helping women in childbirth, taking in orphan children, feeding the sick, washing their clothes, tending the elderly, and sewing the dead into their shrouds. Indeed, most treatment aimed at Mendlesham's poor centred on childbirth and death. Relief was also given to sick travellers or vagrants. In 1614 an allowance of 6d was made to Thomas Page of Benholt 'whoe lay sick in the barne of Mr Reve....he beinge directed by pasport to the constable of Brockford & soe from Constable to constable to the sayd towne'.[297]

Three specific illnesses were mentioned at Mendlesham in this period, two of them contagious. They were 'pockes' (smallpox or syphilis), the 'swet' (perhaps influenza) and 'falling sickness' (epilepsy). In the late summer and autumn of 1616 Mendlesham appears to have suffered from an infectious sickness; at least eleven cases were recorded in accounts.[298] In two cases of mental illness, Edmund Halle was given relief, his daughter 'being simple',

[290] Bungay Holy Trinity churchwardens' account, 1566: SROL, FC148/E1/1.
[291] SROI, FB159/E7/36.
[292] SROI, FB159/A1/1 (*sub* 1600).
[293] SROI, FB159/E7/20.
[294] SROI, FB159/E7/39, p. 2.
[295] In 1591 a medical man was named Camplyn; in 1610 a surgeon of Eye was named Mason: SROI, FB159/E7/28. See <Suffolkmedicalbiographies.co.uk>
[296] Holland, 1895, p. 143.
[297] SROI, FB159/E7/35, p. 3.
[298] SROI, FB159/E7/40.

and in 1601-02 Peter Ducke received 4s 6d for 'keping the gentelwoman that fayned hur selfe lunytyke'.[299] Physical injuries calling for medical attention included people falling from trees or off ladders, while an unfortunate child was described as 'grevously burnt'. Only a few treatments are specified: they include 'setting a shoulder', 'cutting' a widow's son, applying a salve to an injured leg, and providing a stone of beef 'to the sycke folkes'. One kind of salve mentioned was 'popillion', which was almost certainly poplar ointment.[300] Occasionally the accounts give us glimpses of real personal and family crises. In 1610 one Elliott was given 12d because his daughter was sick '& hea losing his worke', while in 1614 John Lord's wife was paid 5s to help 'hir eldest daughter lately taken blinde'.[301]

Education

The only formal education which many older boys, and to a lesser extent girls, ever received came in the shape of apprenticeship. The Statute of Apprentices of 1563 required that anyone entering a trade had to be properly apprenticed. By receiving seven years or more of verbal instruction from their masters (or mistresses) and by copying their manual techniques, they learned basic crafts and trades which gave them some hope of future employment. Churchwardens often contributed to the system, for example, by finding masters for parish orphans and by providing clothing for them. For instance, Mendlesham in 1600 lent 50s 'for binding forth of Certaine boyes', and in 1616 paid £2 towards John Brame's apprenticeship with Simon Thursby of Ipswich.[302]

On the other hand, some communities in Suffolk, such as Melford and Cratfield, had schools with small numbers of pupils well before the Reformation.[303] At Botesdale-cum-Redgrave a school and its master were mentioned as early as 1312, and a licence for a man to teach a grammar-school there followed in 1387-88.[304] Early teachers were often chantry priests like Edward Tyrrell of Melford who taught Roger Martin.[305] From the 1540s onwards, we find more frequent references in churchwardens' accounts to schools, schoolhouses and schoolmasters. For instance, at Bungay St Mary in 1565 the beginning of a school may be recorded when a chapel in the churchyard was thatched with reed 'for a gramer skole'.[306] In 1575 the small parish of Wattisfield laid out 2s in 'Caryinge of the scolemaster to the towne', and in 1591 Mildenhall spent 10d on 'fyve hundreth lathe nayll to lath the skolehowsse'. This scattered but significant evidence demonstrates that education was increasingly valued in the

[299] SROI, FB159/E7/21.
[300] *New London Dispensatory*, 3rd edn, 1685, p. 762; Halliwell, II (1847), 637. Poplar ointment, used for its soothing qualities, was made of 'fresh poplar buds' crushed with other leaves and berries, mixed in lard, boiled and dried.
[301] SROI, FB159/E7/28, 35.
[302] SROI, FB159/E7/20; FB159/E7/39, p. 3.
[303] Holland, 1895, p. 57.
[304] Doig, 2015, p. 1.
[305] Dymond & Paine, 2012, p. 20; ODNB, 36, 975-6.
[306] SROB, EL110/5/5/13r; *East Anglian*, III, 20.

second half of the sixteenth century, in communities large and small.[307] One overwhelming goal was to be able to read the bible, which was available in every church, if not a personal possession.

Mendlesham's accounts first refer to a 'scolemaster' in 1574 and to a 'Scolehowse' in 1591, but both may have existed at earlier dates. In 1591 Robert Bele agreed to become Mendlesham's schoolmaster at £4 a year; he was to 'provide at his owne charges a convenyent place to teach in, & winter fyerwood'.[308] By 1610 the school was accommodated in the chancel of the church. A craftsman called Bardwell was paid 3s 2d for fitting the ironwork of two chests, 'in the stoles of the chauncell for the Scolmaster and Scollers to lock up ther bookes paper ynk & other necessaryes'.[309] In 1614 a parlour was rented for the schoolmaster to live in. The next major development occurred in 1618 when the parish paid Peter Duck £10 for 'the house bought for the schoole'.[310] That same year the newly elected churchwardens agreed 'to build & finishe the scoole howse new bought' before St Bartholomew's day (4th August).[311] Across the years 1574-1614 the salaries of schoolmasters in this parish were paid quarterly and ranged in total from £4 to £20.

Law and order

In order to keep the peace and combat crime, parishes acting under the supervision of county magistrates retained the medieval concept of 'watch' by night and 'ward' by day. The immediate responsibility rested on the shoulders of parish constables who maintained look-outs and patrols. In 1585 Wattisfield paid 8d at Bury St Edmunds, 'after the watch and wardinge to gyve my sertificate to the Justice'. Gregory Rowse of Cratfield in 1576 was given 7s 'for his paynes being Constable aloene all this busey tyme', but others were involved such as 'the poore men that dyd watche' there in the same year.[312] In 1572 at a cost of 16d Mendlesham provided 'a elmen bou & a streng & iiij sheff aroues for the wache',[313] and in 1603 it gave 2s to the 'watchers & warders at the fayer'.[314] A watch bell or 8 o'clock bell is first mentioned about 1586, and in 1613 Edmund Pettall was paid 'for Ringing the Watch Bell morninge & Eveninge'.[315]

In 1641 Wattisfield built a new watch-house at the 'Towns end' at a total cost of £2 18s 8d. For a building which was probably little more than a large shed beside the main road, timber

[307] The first reference found to a girl being educated was in 1654 at Walsham le Willows ('for the schoolinge of woods sonne & warner girle'). The first female teacher occurred in the same parish in 1657 ('Paid Thomas Clarks wife 12s for teaching of poor Children').

[308] Mendlesham Town Book, I (*sub* 1591).

[309] SROI, FB159/E7/28.

[310] SROI, FB159/E7/37, 42. In 1844 Peter Duck's house was partly used for paupers and partly as a school; it still survives as a parish room.

[311] SROI, FB159/A1/1 (sub 1618).

[312] Holland, 1895, p. 100.

[313] SROI, FB159/E7/3.

[314] SROI, FB159/E7/22. In 1612-13 Mendlesham laid out 3s 4d 'to the watchmen at the fayer for theire suppers & for bere that night': SROI, FB159/E7/32.

[315] SROI, FB159/E7/32 (26 Oct.).

was felled, and irons and boards were bought (some for doors and windows). When it was finished, 3d was paid 'for Bringing of the Stoockes in to the Howse'.[316] The system is better revealed at Stoke by Nayland at the much later date of 1694, where it was ordered that watch and ward be kept at all the usual places in the parish: at a central watch-house which had been built in 1679, at a local bridge and in three subsidiary hamlets.[317]

An important disciplinary mechanism, inherited from the Middle Ages and fundamental to the life of all parishes, was the ecclesiastical 'visitation'. This occurred on a regular basis when the relevant archdeacon or bishop, known as the 'visitor', inspected in turn each part of his area of responsibility accompanied by legal officers and clerks. Having summoned representatives of every constituent parish to attend at some convenient church, his purpose was to ensure that churches were being kept in good order, services were conducted according to *The Book of Common Prayer*, and any deviant behaviour in church or community was brought to the attention of the relevant authority. In East Anglia the visitation of the archdeacon, usually twice-yearly, was known as the 'General'. For each parish, it necessitated the buying of articles of enquiry listing the visitor's expectations, the writing and putting in of a response or 'verdict' from the parish, as well as the payment of routine fees, and of course the purchase of food, drink and horsemeat (oats, the equivalent of modern petrol or diesel). Sometimes the distances involved in attending court could be considerable: for example in 1591 Mildenhall was cited before the bishop's court in Norwich 40 miles away. Equally important was the dimension of time. One parish officer of Mendlesham who accompanied a troublesome wench to a magistrate was away from home for 2½ days.[318]

Then, finally, came the expense of correcting whatever faults the visitor had discovered. In 1611 Weybread paid 18d to Mr Stiles 'for 3 defaults found by the Visitors' in June 1610. They were listed as, first, 'not having the booke of prayer appointed to be read the fift of november for the Kings preservation in the Parliament house [referring to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605]'; second, 'not having the books called the first & second tomes of Homilies'; and third, 'because the minister and churchwardens did not set their hands to every leaf in the register booke'.[319] In 1611 the costs of a visitation before the bishop's chancellor included 7s for six dinners, 1s 10d for delivering the verdict, and 2s for the 'Chauncellors Man for examyninge us'.[320] In 1614-15 Mendlesham paid for 'making new the Kings Armes & setting them up in the churche, the visitours inioyninge it...', and 'for a communion Carpett for the table of green Carsye enjoined by visitors'.[321] It is hardly surprising that the local laity occasionally showed their disapproval of this system. At Mettingham in 1575 two wardens 'threwe their verdite at the last visytacion into the court and departed contemptuously without paying of the fee'.[322]

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[316] SROB, FL668/5/9/68. In *c.* 1631 Aldeburgh had a watch-house on its church tower: Winn, 1926, p. 51. This implied a watch seaward as well as landward.
[317] Torlesse, 1877, pp. 71, 74. The parish provided the necessary gunpowder.
[318] SROI, FB159/E7/18. The officer may, of course, have enjoyed the wench's company.
[319] *East Anglian*, I, 410.
[320] SROI, FB159/E7/30.
[321] SROI, FB159/E7/30; FB159/E7/37. Mendlesham was over ten years late in exhibiting the arms of James I.
[322] Williams, 1946, p. 115.

To steer public and private behaviour in their parishes, incumbents of the Elizabethan and early Stuart church were expected to preach regularly, and to read aloud texts such as the royal injunctions and the litany. Every second Sunday the youth of the parish were to be instructed in the ten commandments, the articles and the lord's prayer, and had to learn the catechism preparatory to their confirmation. Emphasis was placed on 'sober and honest conversation', on kneeling when God was invoked, and 'curtseying' (bowing) at the name of Jesus. Each individual parish supported this moral training by providing the necessary books. Meanwhile, churchwardens and questmen tried to ensure that all parishioners 'duly resort to their church upon all Sundays and holy days', and that they stayed until the service was over. They were particularly anxious to ensure that 'no person shall, neglecting their own parish church, resort to any other church'. That would only encourage disagreement and lead to further schism.[323]



Pl. 46: Parishes paid for the upkeep of local instruments of punishment such as stocks and pillories. Here at Ufford, the stocks and whipping-post are located by the churchyard gate, adding public humiliation to basic punishment.

The parish through its churchwardens contributed in several other ways to the maintenance of peace and the punishment of offenders. For example, it paid for the disciplinary work of constables which included the whipping of rogues and the taking to gaol of suspects and convicts. Two or more constables were chosen each year, depending on the size of the parish, and their accounts were duly inspected on reckoning day with those of the churchwardens and other officers of the parish. Another responsibility which the parish had inherited from the manor was maintenance of physical instruments of punishment like the stocks, pillory, whipping post and cucking stool. In 1566 Cratfield paid a man 14d 'for makyne the Stockes', and a second man 'for eyern worke for the stockes'.[324] In 1615 Mendlesham spent 8d on 'a post to fasten to the Cookestoole, to keepe from breaking & setting it'. Also maintained by the parish at this time was the ancient manorial and hundredal custom of raising 'hue and cry' when a crime or felony had been committed and wanted persons were on the loose. By shouting and creating a general hullaballoo, victims and witnesses to the deed were expected to encourage as many inhabitants as possible to join in the pursuit and capture the suspects. Such noisy chases could lead pursuers across parish boundaries. Thus, in 1614 Wattisfield's constable owed 2d to the boy Arkingwoulde Hodgkyn, 'for Carring [carrying]

[323] Hughes & Larkin, II, 1969, pp. 126-27.
[324] Holland, 1895, p. 96. 'Making' the stocks probably meant 'mending'.

of a hewe & Crye to Hepworth the 4 of october'.[325] Sometimes the implications seemed more threatening. In 1602 Melford spent 2d on 'sending forth a hue & crye in pursute of the Soldiers which fled from Bury', and almost simultaneously received a warrant to pursue 'the prisoneres broaken oute of Ipswich Gaole'.[326]

In spite of such disciplinary mechanisms, parishes and their churchwardens were frequently embroiled with the law. They paid innumerable fees to lawyers for consultations, and pleaded their cases in civil and ecclesiastical courts ranging from petty and quarter sessions to Chancery and Queen's (or King's) Bench. Some minor courts met quite locally, for example in the houses of magistrates or in a local inn like the 'Pye' (Magpie) at Little Stonham on the main Ipswich-Norwich road, but attendance at other courts could necessitate return journeys of scores and even hundreds of miles. Sadly, the evidence for legal proceedings in parish accounts is by no means complete. Although wardens often hinted that parishes were involved in legal disputes, their primary concern was to record the expenses incurred. Only rarely did they reveal the full nature of the case and its ultimate outcome: those can only be gleaned, if at all, from the presentments and court books themselves. However, to gain some measure of the range of legal activity generated in local communities, the churchwardens' accounts of Mendlesham are used here because of their above-average detail. The fact that this parish in 1616 bought three boxes 'to pote in the towne ewedens [evidence]' may indicate that it was better organised than most.[327]

In the period under investigation, Mendlesham was involved in at least three cases in Chancery. One, in 1589, involved the drawing up of a 'Supplycacion' from the parish to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.[328] In 1614-15 Mr John Lane was paid 6s 8d 'for his paynes to Sir H[enry] Yelverton' and 'solicitinge as well the townes as the tenauntes business depending in Chancerye in Michaelmas term last'.[329] Soon after, a Mr Smyth was paid for searching in the rolls. Such cases could be very costly. In 1616 £13 4s 0d was spent on 'the tenauntes suit in Chancery', and £5 10s 0d was paid to Mr Bates 'for the decree under the brod sell in chanserey'. The latter dispute appears to have been between the parish and its major tenants holding town land. Then in 1616-17 Mr Sheppard was paid £12 for an agreement 'betwixt the Lord & the Towne', implying a dispute between the parish and the lord of the manor.[330]

Various other kinds of legal case and associated consultations are also featured. At the Ipswich Sessions in *c.*1590 Mendlesham was in dispute with neighbouring Wickham Skeith in a paternity case: John Smyth was accused of fathering a child on a wench. The parish in

[325] SROB, FL668/5/9/64r.
[326] SROB, FL509/5/1/65.
[327] SROI, FB159/E7/40, p. 3.
[328] Since the mid-16th century the Clare lands, including those in Mendlesham, were administered by the Duchy of Lancaster.
[329] SROI, FB159/E7/34. Sir Henry Yelverton (1566-1629), judge, MP and attorney general; see *ODNB*.
[330] SROI, FB159/E7/18, 39, 40.

1609-10 was said to be neglecting its obligation to repair roads: 'for the roode not doing ther work according to statute, two of us being arrested by an attachment'. In 1615-16, in a dispute over weights and measures, 18d was paid to excuse the town before the market-clerk of Botesdale. In the same year the parish sought the signed approval of justices for newly elected overseers and poor-rate collectors: 'getting the Justices hands nominating Overseers & other hands to the Rate for Colleccion & poor'. The payment of royal taxes was another important consideration. In 1594 two constables were given 2s 8d 'when they went before the Commissioners for the Subsidy at Eye', and in 1621-22 Mr Sheppard was paid £8 2s 6d for charges when 'hee obtayned abatement of the Subsidy of the towne land'. Jeremy Beale in 1609-10 was paid 6s 8d 'about the renewinge of the Charter', which presumably refers to an updating of the royal charter giving Mendlesham the right to hold its weekly market and annual fair.[331]

The costs of going to law were inflated by various factors. One was the specialist writing of formal documents such as agreements, leases, deeds and apprenticeship indentures. For example, in 1618, after the parish acquired 'the house bought for the schoole', Mr Brook was paid 5s 'for makinge of writinges betweene Peter Duck & the towne'.[332] Frequent travel was another important cost, for instance in going to courts and visiting magistrates and legal advisers. Then, on occasions the parish spent significant sums on entertainment and gratuities. No less than £1 4s 0d was spent in 1615-16 on a dinner 'for young Mr Eldred, Mr Tirrell ther companye, & all the cheefe Tenants then present being 25'.[333] In 1614-15, £4 2s 0d was spent on a piece of plate 'for a gratuitye' to Sir Henry Yelverton who had treated the parish generously. He had given two consultations over town land and copyhold tenants in a case pending in Chancery, and charged no fee.[334] In 1615-16 an allowance of £2 2s 5d was made 'for a calf & a lamb' given to 'Mr Solicitour',[335] while in 1621-22 one Marrett of nearby Cotton was paid 18s 6d as 'the Townes guift for his paines following a suite between the Lady Clere & feoffees for money due to the pore'.[336] After Sir Roger North had judged in their favour, £14 6s 5d was used to buy large quantities of cloth for Mendlesham's poor.[337]

Military defence

In an age before the creation of a standing army, the parish shouldered surprisingly wide responsibilities for the defence of the realm and, as their accounts indicate, churchwardens were strongly involved in this. Various medieval and sixteenth-century Acts of Parliament were intended to maintain the regular practice of archery. For example, an Act of 1514-15 obliged each parish to construct and maintain its own archery butts, 'to exercise shotinge in

[331] SROI, FB159/E7/16, 28, 38, 46.
[332] SROI, FB159/E7/42.
[333] SROI, FB159/E7/38.
[334] SROI, FB159/E7/37, p. 3.
[335] SROI, FB159/E7/38.
[336] SROI, FB159/E7/46. The Clere family were lords of Cotton-cum-Hempnalls. These feoffees held town land in neighbouring Cotton.
[337] Sir Roger North of Gt Finborough (1577-1651), MP; *ODNB*.

long bowes', and stipulated that every adult male below the age of 60 should have 'a bowe and [four] arrowes contynuallye readye in hys house'.[338] Furthermore, every boy between the ages of 7 and 17 was to be taught how to use bows and arrows, with the result that some parishes provided a separate practice ground for that age-group.[339] As the result of such legislation, churchwardens' accounts often mention the digging of 'flagges' (turves), and the associated transporting of timber. The former were used to build and repair the artificial mounds (the actual 'butts') on which, or in front of which, targets were fixed. In the interests of safety, the shooting range of at least 220 yards was demarcated by posts, rails and gates to separate archers from bystanders and grazing animals.[340] In 1619-20 Bardwell refurbished its butts for 10s 4d, buying 'nyne postes to rayle in the buttes', a half-hundred of paling, and four-pennyworth of nails. At least four men were employed in digging or carrying the turves, and clay also seems to have been brought in. A further 1s was spent on acquiring a copy of the royal proclamation for maintaining archery practice, perhaps because some local men were trying to avoid the obligation.[341] In 1585 Mildenhall paid 2s for 'halfe a thousande of turfes', while in 1622 Boxford spent 1s 6d on 'palles & Rayles for the Buttes'. Sometimes the ground itself needed attention. In 1618 Mendlesham paid Robert Ellot 1s 6d 'for levelinge the ground at the buttes'.[342] On the other hand, Cratfield in 1624 was indicted 'for want of a Butts': it paid a fine of 4s and signed a bond to ensure future compliance.[343]



Pl. 47: Another responsibility imposed on parishes in the Middle Ages, and continuing into the 17th century, was the building and upkeep of archery butts so that local men and older boys should, under instruction, regularly practice this military skill. (Luttrell Psalter, BL, Add. MS 42130, f. 147v).

Muster rolls surviving for a few Suffolk hundreds in this period show how information was systematically gathered about able-bodied men aged between 16 and 60 who were to be trained at musters, and the weapons and armour that were available to them.[344] For example,

[338] 'An Act for maintenance of archers' (1514-15), *Statutes*, III, 1963, 123-4.
[339] Ufford's terrier of 1613 lists a piece of glebe called the 'Childrens Buttes': SROI, FAA2701/19/133.
[340] SROI, FB159/E7/18.
[341] SROB, FL522/11/22/94.
[342] SROI, FB159/E7/41.
[343] Holland, 1895, p. 155.
[344] In 1614 a churchwarden of Wattisfield paid 9d for dinner and horsemeat 'when I went to Burye to gyve in a bill of thenhabitantes unmustered above sixteane & under sixtye': SROB, FL668/5/9/64r. See Banks, 1931, *passim*.

at Boxford in 1579 men available at one hour's notice included six with longbows, three with corslets and seven with calivers. Eight other men were ready to provide longbows, five to produce corslets, and twelve to provide calivers. Another four men were listed as 'pioneers' who dug and built defences, and for whom Boxford's constables were to find spades, shovels and pickaxes. Finally, the parish was to provide victuals for seven days, and find a cart to carry them.[345]

From a different angle, the churchwardens' accounts for Mendlesham and Bardwell give greater detail of the system. After sending men to Framlingham in 1553 to support Queen Mary's claim to the throne against that of Lady Jane Grey (p. 84), Mendlesham spent substantial sums of money on military equipment for the rest of the century and well beyond. Armour at this period included harness for horses, body armour such as corslets, splints and helmets, traditional weapons like bows and arrows, black and brown bills, swords and daggers, and firearms such as calivers with their accessory scouring sticks, powder flasks or horns, bullet bags, touchboxes and match line. Exning was mending its muskets in 1590, whereas Mendlesham first referred to a musket, an improvement on the caliver, in 1614.[346] In 1594 Bardwell mentioned 'presse [impressment] monye' and costs rose when constables were 'at the presse of souldyers'. In 1600 it paid 1s per soldier for 'presse monye', and 14d for the equipping or 'setting forthe of Austen Cage for a souldier'.[347] An inevitable consequence of all this military activity was injury. Wounded and injured soldiers and sailors formed a significant part of the vagrant tide, and money was regularly raised at parish and county level for the relief of 'maymed' soldiers.[348]

Military equipment often needed cleaning and furbishing.[349] It was also repaired, oiled and sometimes painted, blackened or varnished. This gave welcome employment to blacksmiths, carpenters and other craftsmen. For example, at Mendlesham in 1588 when England was under dire threat from the Spanish Armada, six swords were hilted and shortened, a helmet was fitted 'with a new eare', four other headpieces were re-lined, a caliver was given a new 'stock' (butt), and arrows were re-feathered. In addition the parish purchased new equipment: five swords, five daggers, six new bills and other supporting items like scabbards and bullet moulds.[350] Churchwardens' accounts often refer to armour and weapons as belonging to the parish (for example, the 'towne corslett' and 'towne calyver'), while other equipment was supplied by individuals. Clothing mentioned in Mendlesham's accounts were 'the souldgeres Cotes', scarves, ribbons and two red caps which probably distinguished men of higher rank. In 1588 one entry revealed that nine scarves, sewing silk and ribbons cost the very large sum

[345] *PSIA(H),* XIX, 1927, 214 (Babergh Hd, part of). For other hundredal surveys transcribed by Edgar Powell from Harleian MSS, see *PSIA(H)*, XV, 1915, 238-52 (Risbridge Hundred); XVIII, 1924, 180-210 (Blackbourn Hundred).

[346] SROB, FL567/5/1/8; SROI, FB159/E7/35. Bardwell's accounts for 1588 include costs of carting the town's armour to Tilbury in Essex: SROB, FL522/11/22/19-20. Metfield paid at least £6 'for charges of the soldiers at Tilberie': Bower, 1938, p. 147.

[347] SROB, FL522/11/22/34, 41.

[348] SROB, FL668/5/9/52r.

[349] SROB, FL522/11/22/14; SROI, FL668/5/9/52r.

[350] Jones & Dymond, 1998.

of £10 8s 7d. In 1619-20 Bardwell paid 4s for 'fringing and tryming the two head peeces and the pike for the towne'.[351] Men attending musters were given sustenance in the form of bread, cakes, meat, beer, the 'breckfast of souldiers' and 'sogers dinners', while oats were provided for horses. In 1614 Mendlesham spent 2s 8d on 'cakes & bere at Mellis greene for the soldiers that served then for the towne', while Wattisfield in 1609 laid out 2s 9d 'for halfe the Shott [young pig] for the souldgers Diners at the muster ....' and a further 7d 'for that we Druncke & my horse then moore vijd'.[352]

Musters for the hundred of Hartismere, in which Mendlesham lay, usually took place on the two-mile length of Mellis Green, and less frequently at Eye and Botesdale.[353] They were organised by so-called 'muster masters' appointed by the high constable of each hundred.[354] Horses and carts were hired to transport heavy and bulky equipment, and money was paid to each high constable to pay the costs involved. At an unstated date Wattisfield typically paid 'for caring [carrying] the Towne armer to Buddisdale and Fetchin of it againe'.[355] Similar payments were made when military exercises took the enlisted men further afield, for example to Halesworth or Ipswich. Bardwell's accounts for 1593-4 reveal that parishes shared the costs of getting firearms reviewed by commissioners of artillery.[356] The frequency of musters varied according to the perceived threats, but in 1588 Mendlesham appears to have sent its troops to at least five musters. Occasionally it sent its soldiers more than 20 miles to the Suffolk coast. In 1588 a man called Spinke took his shovel and mattock 'to the Coast', presumably to help strengthen the seaward defences. By 9 a.m. on the 9th August 1596, Mendlesham's constable was ordered to bring to Botesdale the men who previously had been impressed ('prest') before Sir Nicholas Bacon of Redgrave Hall. He was also required to 'bringe your towne Corslet with the furniture fitt and prepared for presant service'.[357]

Some accounts suggest how many soldiers a parish was maintaining at a particular date. However, these numbers will have fluctuated according to the size of local populations, and in response to the overall military situation. For example, in the desperate year of 1588 Mendlesham had paid £1 6s 0d to thirteen men. By comparison the smaller parish of Wattisfield recorded in 1616 a total of seven trained soldiers.[358] Other payments indicate where individuals were sent to serve. At least two men from Mendlesham served in Ireland. In 1603 William Ellinger was paid 3s 'at his coming out of Ireland at severall tymes', and a man called Mowse was also paid 10s for service there.[359]

[351] SROB, FL522/11/22/93.
[352] SROB, FB159/E7/35; SROB, FL668/5/9/60v.
[353] In 1595 Wattisfield sent its armour to Thurston 'Plash' (now Planch): SROB, FL668/5/9/53r.
[354] From the 1540s onwards, Lords Lieutenant were appointed in each county to supervise the military system; later the office became ceremonial.
[355] SROB, FL668/5/9/32r.
[356] SROB, FL522/11/22/32, 33.
[357] SROI, FB159/I1/16. Sir Nicholas Bacon of Redgrave Hall, lawyer, knighted 1578, high sheriff 1581, MP for Suffolk 1572-83, baronet 1611 (died 1634; monument in Redgrave church).
[358] SROB, FL668/5/9/65 (4th face).
[359] SROI, FB159/E7/22.



Pl. 48: A parish armoury survives at Mendlesham in a vestry above the north porch. In 1588 when England was threatened by a Spanish Armada, an inventory was made of armour stored 'on the vestre'.

Parish armour represented a considerable investment which had to be protected from falling into wrong hands. The church at Mendlesham has a securely locked room above the north porch, built in pre-Reformation times as a vestry, which provides one of the best surviving examples in England of a parish armoury (Pl. 48). It was certainly being used to store armour by 1588, when its contents were listed in an inventory. A few years later, in 1594, Bartholomew Knighte was paid 1s 4d for making 'tymber worke in the Vestrie for the well hanging up of the Towne Armour with the furnitur, he fynding the tymber'. The furniture in question consisted of panelling, shelving and pegs. In spite of this special provision, some pieces of military equipment were still being stored in private premises. The inventory of 1588 mentioned a corslet bought by divers men and kept 'in thandes of Wylliam Whityng of the Long Strete', for which he was paid 9s 10d.[360] Similarly, when soldiers were away from home, they paid for the safe storage of their equipment. In 1583-84 one shilling was paid at Ipswich 'for a house to lay in the towne armor'. Another relevant cost was the building and maintenance of beacons to warn local populations of impending invasions or insurrections. The churchwardens of Mendlesham contributed to the repair of Yaxley Beacon, five miles to the north and adjacent to the high-road between Ipswich and Norwich.[361] In 1574 they gave one shilling towards its repair, while in 1591 three local men were paid 4d per night for watching at the 'beckon'.

Roads and bridges

The accounts of churchwardens often refer to journeys into and out of parishes, so it is not surprising that money had to be spent on maintaining local roads and bridges, to keep them at least to a basic standard of repair. For centuries the nation's roads had been under the control of manorial courts-leet that had prosecuted offenders who, for example, narrowed highways by digging new ditches and planting new hedgerows, or had blocked them by digging pits or dumping building materials. By the Highways Act of 1555 this responsibility was officially transferred to the parish, which levied specially dedicated highway rates and each year appointed surveyors of highways. The latter were usually elected at the reckoning

[360] SROI, FB159/E7/19; SROI, FB159/13/1. In 1596 at Exning the constables received 3s 'for squoringe & kepinge of the towne armor for the hole yere': SROB, FL567/5/1/21. At Wattisfield the accounts for 1573 include an inventory of the town's armour: SROB, FL668/5/9/2.

[361] The beacon at Yaxley Common is depicted in John Ogilby, *Britannia*, 1675, pl. 74 (on road Ipswich-Norwich). A fire-barrel mounted at the top of a long pole was reached by a ladder.

day in pairs or in fours; they organised and supervised work on the roads to be done by all able-bodied men on four or more nominated days in each year. At Langham in 1640, it was ordered that 'The daies that are appointed for the working in the high waies are those that Followeth: Aprill 14th, 16th, 21th[*sic*], 28th, May 12th, 19th'.[362] When parishes were lax in looking after their roads, they were fined. For example, in 1623 Cratfield paid 4s 6d for 'their negligence in not working in the ways *Anno* 1622'.[363]

The churchwardens of Mendlesham regularly accounted for routine repairs of roads and bridges in heavy clay country. In 1610, for example, two men were paid 2s 4d 'to dig downe the holly places of the caunsye from Pitmans stone toward Freelond gate', and Jeremy Beale received 7s 6d for five loads of stone including carriage, 'to amend the caunseys from Pitmans stone towards Mendlesham Grene'.[364] Even so, in the same year the parish faced an indictment at quarter sessions 'for not repairinge the roode way'. The key word 'caunsey' or 'carnser' implied a road where the surface was to an extent maintained and perhaps raised. Potholes and ruts were filled with sand, stones and bundles of faggots, surfaces were levelled and drained, important lengths of roadway were paved by stone-setters, probably with flint cobbles, and edges were sometimes railed.[365] Pits dug to extract sand were subsequently backfilled.[366] Another important technical term in this connection was 'stulp', meaning a stout post rammed into the ground like a modern pile. Most local bridges appear to have been of timber, and consisted of sawn planks and riven posts and rails. A related activity was trying to control flood water. References are given to



Pl. 49: Connecting the town of Needham Market to its parish church 1½ miles away at Barking, this green lane was known as the 'Carnser'. For centuries it was used as a 'corpse road', taking those who died in Needham for burial at Barking. It was not until 1901 that Needham's medieval chapel achieved parochial status, and the town went on to acquire its own cemetery.

[362] SROB, FL599/5/1, p. 20. Road repairs were usually done in the spring, after the ravages of winter.
[363] Holland, 1895, p. 153.
[364] SROI, FB159/E7/28.
[365] In 1611 Mendlesham paid a 'stone setter' who paved 117 yards for £1 9s 4d: SROI, FB159/E7/30, 31. For the word 'caunsey' or 'carnser', see <keithbriggs.info/The_Karnser_Stowmarket.html>
[366] SROI, FB159/E7/32.

'turnyng the water at the stone krosse' in 1591, 'casting the great water on the grene' and 'pylyng the ponde heade on the grene', both in 1603.[367] At Wattisfield in 1608, two labourers were paid 2s 4d for 'mending the Way leading towardes hepworth greene where the watter had guld [rutted] it'.[368] Another expense was the maintenance of gates across public roads. For instance, Bardwell in the 1610s paid for the repair of Bowbeck Gate, Cock's Lane Gate, Heath Gate, Norwich Gate and Pisdale Gate, which were presumably erected to control the grazing of stock along green lanes and on commons.[369] Wattisfield also paid for 'menden of the toun gates', including a 'grundyll gate [Grundle Gate]' which commanded entry into a small but steep ravine.[370]

Finally, it is important to note the cost of maintaining major strategic bridges within the county or on its boundary. These are sometimes referred to as 'county bridges' because responsibility for them fell on the county's magistrates, who in quarter sessions raised a rate from constituent parishes to get the money required. Among frequently quoted examples are Cattawade Bridge, Bourn Bridge near Ipswich, Wilford Bridge near Woodbridge, Cosford Bridge near Hadleigh, and Bungay Bridge. Not surprisingly, some of these more important strategic bridges were built of brick or stone.

Over the parish boundary

It should never be overlooked that every parish, regardless of size and situation, witnessed the movement of people in and out, some on foot and others on horseback or in wheeled vehicles. Churchwardens were probably aware of this constant movement more than most, and indeed they generated some of it themselves. For example, the churchwardens of Mendlesham regularly travelled outside the parish, or sent others instead.[371] They bought raw materials and manufactured goods, such as sand from Coddenham, bricks and pamments from Woolpit and communion wine from Eye and Debenham. In addition, they visited local markets, paying their dues to each relevant market-clerk.[372] They attended fairs; administered town properties lying locally or further afield; attended the visitations of archdeacons and bishops; dealt with justices of the peace at petty and quarter sessions; took young people over a wide area to be bound apprentice; escorted vagrants to houses of correction and criminals to prison; met men from different hundreds at military musters; and were involved in numerous legal disputes heard away from home. In 1589-90 a pursuivant arrested Mendlesham's constable, Richard Man, for an unstated offence. With legal assistance the parish put its case to the chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and gave £5 to Man 'when he Ryde to London'.[373] Meanwhile, in the opposite direction every parish was regularly visited or traversed by outsiders

[367] SROI, FB159/E7/17, 22.
[368] The main road from Wattisfield to Hepworth Green (now A143).
[369] SROB, FL522/11/22/68, 70-71.
[370] SROB, FL668/5/9/1.
[371] In 1612-13 William Poope carried an indenture to Mr Barrowe 'for his hande': SROI, FB159/E7/32.
[372] In 1590 Wattisfield paid expenses of John Seman 'when I went before the Clarke of the markett' at Ixworth: SROB, FB668/5/9/42r.
[373] SROI, FB159/E7/15.

such as peddlars, specialist craftsmen, travellers with official passes, and soldiers and their families.[374] In 1597 Melford paid 8d to Goodman Chenerye of Hadleigh 'for his Jornye to Looke of the Clocke'. A little later, perhaps after a change of mind, it employed a clocksmith from Sudbury called Cowper to make a new bell-wheel.[375] In 1612-13 Mendlesham paid 4d 'for whippinge Stephen Hall & Joane Cock woe [who] wandrid contrarye to lawe & were by pasport directed, the man to Chelmsforthe & woman to Hoxton whereat they saide theire Chieffest abod was'. In 1615, the same parish gave 2d to 'a poore man with a passe to travayle in 30 dayes from London to St Faythes [4 miles north of Norwich]'.[376] Changing its tone, the record sometimes mentions important national figures. In 1584 Bardwell spent at least 3s when John Whitgift archbishop of Canterbury made an official visitation.[377] In 1578 Wattisfield spent over £4 to meet various expenses 'whilest the quenes Majastie was in progreis' across Suffolk and Norfolk.[378] She did not come through Wattisfield itself, but visited several major houses a few miles away at Melford, Rushbrook, Hengrave and Euston.[379] Her presence in the vicinity clearly triggered 'dyverse charges' throughout the county and heavy use of purveyance (pp. 61-62).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries one of England's greatest social problems was coping with large numbers of vagrants and 'pore wandring people'.[380] All this pressure encouraged parish authorities to keep vagrants moving, for fear that they would gain settlement and become permanently chargeable on the local rates. For example, Great Waldingfield in 1609 paid 1s 6d 'for carrying away soldyers & other poore folke....'.[381] The two constables of Melford in the year 1601-02 dealt with at least 87 vagrant men, women and children, and 15 soldiers; of the latter at least seven had extricated themselves from the murderous siege of Ostend in Flanders, which lasted from 1601 to 1604. Similarly, in 1622-23 John Sillott the constable of Bardwell laid out 4s to 68 'poore foolkes which travelled by passe & otherwise', while his fellow constable laid out 3s to a further 18 travellers. These, of course, are minimum figures.

The small village of Wattisfield lies on the main north-east to south-west road (the modern A143) connecting Great Yarmouth, Diss and Bury St Edmunds. From the 1590s onwards its churchwardens and constables worked hard to control the flow of vagrants in both directions. The larger community of Bardwell lay just off the same road, four miles to the west, and faced similar problems. The travellers themselves were variously described as vagrants, vagabonds,

[374] Poor travellers passing through Bardwell in the 1590s were licensed to 'gather' under the chancellor's broad seal, the lord admiral's seal, and Her Majesty's licence: SROB, FL522/11/22/31.

[375] SROB, FL509/5/1/17 (3rd face), 18.

[376] SROI, FB159/E7/32, 37.

[377] SROB, FL522/11/22/14.

[378] SROB, FL668/5/9/20 (3rd face).

[379] Dovey, 1996. The churchwardens' accounts for Melford in 1578 do not survive.

[380] SROB, FL522/11/22/48. 'Sturdy vagabonds and beggers' were not a new social problem: *Statutes*, III, 11 Hen. VII, c.2 (,) and 11 Hen. VIII, c.25 (1535-36).

[381] Vestry book, FL514/1/6. In 1610 Mendlesham spent 15s on 'watching the Irish at Ipsiche': SROI, FB159/E7/28.

passengers, walking folk, travelling people, gypsies,[382] former prisoners, rogues (who were usually whipped), soldiers, sailors, cripples, and in one case an 'impotent Creter'.[383] A significant minority were described as 'pore Irish people', and a few others came from Scotland and the continent.[384] While the majority walked alone or in pairs, some were in larger groups of up to a dozen. This sad human spectacle included many women 'big with child' and accompanied by older children.[385] They were soon conducted over parish boundaries, along with vulnerable young 'wenches' who were thought likely to get pregnant.[386] In describing this exodus, wardens normally used the verbs 'carried' or 'conducted', which presumably imply that the vagrants were taken away on horseback or in horse-drawn carts or tumbrels. Although they were sometimes described as 'sturdy', a few were clearly at death's door: in 1590 Bardwell paid 6d 'for makeing of a grave for a walkinge man'.[387]

Some vagrants were being hustled across boundaries so quickly and without proper assessment that they appeared to be wandering around in circles. In 1609 Wattisfield paid 2s 8d 'for carring of one woman foure tymes with my horse and cart'.[388] The same parish sent vagrants to justices, certifying those who had been intercepted by the system of watch and ward. To others it gave small sums of conduct or 'condict' money, as well as supper, breakfast and overnight shelter.[389] It is occasionally stated that some travellers were taken to the next parishes of Hepworth to the west and Rickinghall Inferior to the east.[390] Injured soldiers received small sums of money to encourage them to move on and to deter them from begging. Thus, in 1609 two soldiers were given 2d 'that they myght not gather the Towne.'[391] The whole system, although a drain on the parochial purse, must be viewed as a means of controlling vagrants and preventing them from becoming permanent liabilities. In 1642, early in the civil war, a warden of Wattisfield wrote revealingly that he had lodged a man, wife and two children; on the next day he gave them 6d 'to git red of them'.[392] On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the records contain touches of genuine compassion. At Melford in 1598-9, Mother Shanfyld was 'threnne oute of her house....being very weke and not lyke to leve'. A local man, when asked for help, found her a dwelling at a rent of 7s a year, which was then paid by the parish. Similarly, in 1617 a constable of Wattisfield spent 4s 6d on 'a woman great with child & two Children, ther supper & breakfast, carried in a Cart, & two woeman to goe with her' (Pl. 50).[393]

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[382] In 1609 Wattisfield paid 12d 'to twelfe Jepsis' passing through the parish: SROB, FL668/5/9/63r.

[383] SROB, FL668/5/9/42v. In 1619-20 Bardwell gave 3d to a 'Grecian' (Irishman): SROB, FL522/11/22/94. Mendlesham in 1602 whipped a rogue and gave him dinner: SROI, FB159/E7/21.

[384] SROB, FL668/5/9/42v; FL522/11/22/95. Wattisfield in 1605 gave 3d 'to 5 Irish people': SROB, FL668/5/9/55 (9v); 6d in 1606 'to the scotes man': SROB, FL668/5/9/57 (3rd face).

[385] SROB, FL668/5/9/66r.

[386] In 1618 Mendlesham paid 4s 6d at the Ipswiche sessions 'for avoydinge of Dinnington wench': SROI, FB159/E7/42. At Weybread in 1616 a warrant was issued 'for attachinge of the bodye of the wench which lyeth in of a bastard at Balles his house': *East Anglian*, I, 411.

[387] SROB, FL522/11/22/24.

[388] SROB, FL668/5/9/63r.

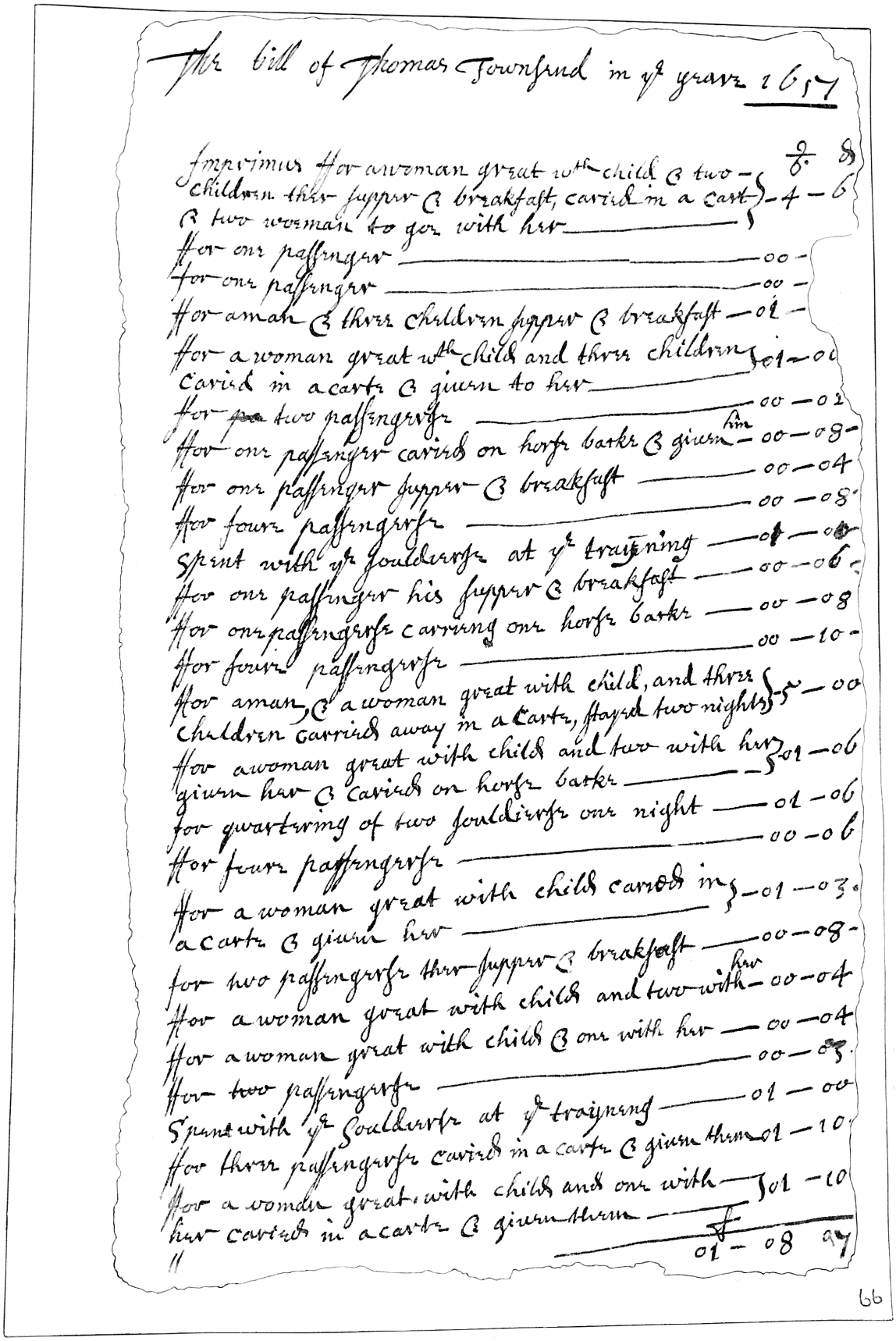
[389] SROB, FL668/5/9/64 (3rd page).

[390] The larger flow may have been towards the interior, but quantification is impossible.

[391] SROB, FL668/5/9/60 (3rd face).

[392] SROB, FL668/5/9/69r.

[393] SROB, FL668/5/9/66r.


The bill of Thomas Townsend in yᵉ yeare 1617

Imprimis ffor a woman great with child & two children ther supper & breakfast, caried in a cart & two woman to ger with her — 4 — 6

ffor one passenger — 00 —

for one passenger — 00 —

ffor a man & three children supper & breakfast — 01 —

for a woman great with child and three children caried in a carte & giuen to her — 01 — 00

for two passengers — 00 — 02

ffor one passenger caried on horse barke & giuen him — 00 — 08

for one passenger supper & breakfast — 00 — 04

ffor foure passengers — 00 — 08

Spent with yᵉ Souldiers at yᵉ traineing — 01 — 06

ffor one passenger his supper & breakfast — 00 — 06

ffor one passengers carrying one horse barke — 00 — 08

for foure passengers — 00 — 10

ffor a man & a woman great with child, and three children caried away in a carte, stayed two nights — 5 — 00

ffor a woman great with child and two with her giuen her & caried on horse barke — 01 — 06

for quartering of two Souldiers one night — 01 — 06

ffor foure passengers — 00 — 06

ffor a woman great with child caried in a carte & giuen her — 01 — 03

for two passengers ther supper & breakfast — 00 — 08

ffor a woman great with child and two with her — 00 — 04

ffor a woman great with child & one with her — 00 — 04

ffor two passengers — 00 — 02

Spent with yᵉ Souldiers at yᵉ traineng — 01 — 00

ffor three passengers caried in a carte & giuen them — 01 — 10

ffor a woman great with child and one with her caried in a carte & giuen them — 01 — 10

01 — 08 — 07

66

Pl. 50: At Wattisfield a churchwarden's account for 1617 illustrates the urgent problem of vagrancy. This page alone lists seven pregnant women accompanied by older children.

All parishes, whatever their geographical situation, sizes and wealth, had occasional contact with national and international affairs. These involvements were often economic and fiscal in nature, but they could also be political and military. For example, in 1553 Mendlesham paid 12d 'for a dosen breade for our men that servyd the Quenes maiestie at Framyngham'. This indicates that in the political crisis of that year, and during the brief reign of Lady Jane Grey, the parish supported the cause of Mary at Framlingham castle before she was proclaimed queen on 19 July.[394] Similarly, during the Armada crisis of 1588 Bardwell spent a substantial sum on training and military equipment; it also sent soldiers and carted its armour to Tilbury on the Thames estuary.[395] In 1594 it gave £2 when English soldiers were sent to help protestant rebels in Britanny,[396] and in 1612-13 it paid 16d when the justices at Bury St Edmunds were considering 'the aide of the Ladie Elizabeth', James I's daughter and later 'winter queen' of Bohemia. The tax was raised to help the king pay for Elizabeth's opulent wedding in Whitehall Palace to Frederick V, count palatine of the Rhine.[397] By contrast, in 1614 Mendlesham gave two women 1s 6d 'towardes the redeeming theire husbandes out of the captivitie of the Turke'. Their men had been captured by Barbary pirates who from bases in north Africa infested the western Mediterranean and the south-western coasts of England; their main aim was to capture Christians who could be ransomed or sold as slaves.[398] Then in 1616-17 the vicar and parish of Mendlesham made several payments in support of the new English colony of Virginia, which was chartered and settled in 1606-07 over three thousand miles away on the far side of the Atlantic.[399]

In truth, parish communities were never wholly 'parochial' (in the pejorative sense of that word) because inhabitants at all social levels were aware, if only dimly, of what lay beyond their own parish boundaries–the receding and overlapping layers of their own extended families, districts centring on market towns, distinctive farming regions, administrative hundreds or wapentakes, deaneries and archdeaconries, counties and dioceses. Beyond those and still to a degree discernible were nations, empires, continents and mighty oceans. Moreover, in this period a greater geographical awareness was filtering through English society, thanks to map-makers like Christopher Saxton whose *Atlas of the Counties of England and Wales* was published in 1579, and to explorers like Thomas Cavendish of Trimley St Martin (?1555-92) who in 1586-88 circumnavigated the globe.[400]

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[394] SROI, FB159/E7/1; MacCulloch, 1986, pp. 79-80. In 1561 Mendlesham's vestry contained the equivalent of 9s 9d 'in pystalys and Spaynyshe money': SROI, FB159/A1/1. In 1549 Mildenhall through its wardens had supplied bread to a camp of rebels at Bury St Edmunds, thus joining widespread discontent over rising rents and the enclosure of common land: Middleton-Stewart, 2011, pp. 109, 112.

[395] After the crisis was over, Bardwell spent another 5s 'for a horse to fett home the armor from Chenfforde [Shenfield, Essex]: SROB, FL522/11/22/19. Shenfield is ten miles north of Tilbury, which was in Chafford hundred.

[396] SROB, FL522/11/22/33.

[397] SROB, FL522/11/22, p. 74. Mendlesham paid 10s towards the same aid: SROI, FB159/E7/33. See Jurkowski, Smith & Crook, 1998, p. 176.

[398] In 1628 Boxford gave 2s 6d 'to a marchant that was taken prisoners by the Pagones': SROB, FB77/E2/3/43. In 1621 Metfield gave 12d to a gentleman 'who was ransomed from the Turke': Bower, 1938, p. 140. Another threat came from Dunkirkers or freebooters who from Dutch and French coasts attacked English merchant shipping: SROB, FL522/11/22/31.

[399] SROI, FB159/E7/40, 41, 42; SROB, FL509/5/1/39r; *East Anglian*, I, 411; Doran, 2003, 134-72. Melford in 1620 gave 6d to a man 'that came from Virginia for necessitie sake': SROB, FL509/5/1/39.

[400] *ODNB.*

Leisure

In the field of recreation and leisure, medieval practices persisted through Elizabeth's reign and beyond. One major reason is that such activities were still intimately associated with the raising of money for time-honoured good causes like church repairs, the installing of new bells and the relief of poverty. Furthermore, the parish through its churchwardens regulated and financially supported the recreational events of its inhabitants. Symbolic of this involvement is the payment of 4d which Cratfield made at an unknown date in the fifteenth century, 'for a ball to camp wyth'.[401] Before and after 1558 the dominant forms of communal recreation went under the names of 'plays', 'games', 'interludes', 'merriments', 'hockpots' and, most commonly, 'ales'. Some of these were associated with traditional feasts like Plough Monday, held on the first Monday after 6 January. Thus, at Bungay Holy Trinity in 1566, the 'plowghe collection' raised the sum of £4 1s 1d. Other important outlets were local fairs, which were mostly established by royal charter in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, and tied to particular times of year. These had economic significance for the sale of unusual and exotic wares not found in weekly markets, coupled with the opportunity to enjoy a range of entertainments and to meet people from a widely-drawn district. For example, in 1290 Edward I granted the lord of Mendlesham a charter authorising him to run a weekly market and an annual fair. The latter took up at least two days, and in Elizabethan and early Stuart times was still an event of some importance. For example, churchwardens' accounts record payments in 1589 'to the wyche man at the fare-teime' and in 1603 'to the watchers & wardens at the fayer'.[402] Although all these events involved eating, drinking and entertainments, as well as the collection of money, their precise nature in any particular record is not always clear. Thus, the 'playe at Stanton' mentioned in 1574, and to which Father Wylby was sent by his parish of Wattisfield, may have been a theatrical performance or a ball-game. Either way Wattisfield paid Wylby's expenses, and the venue used was probably Stanton's fifteenth-century recreational area or Camping Land.[403]

Before the Reformation, the most widespread form of communal recreation was the 'ale' or 'church ale', or the 'drinking' (*potacio*).[404] These English and Latin words refer directly to the consumption of ale or beer which gave three benefits: some nourishment, social lubrication and a way of dulling the mind and obliterating harsh reality. However drink was not the only pleasure on offer. For example, in preparing a churchale in the fifteenth century Huntingfield not only bought malt and hops but also wheat, honey, cream, milk, spices, 'hoggys', veal and mutton.[405] No fewer than eight surrounding parishes contributed to costs, and therefore many people from outside the parish must have attended the event. In the course of a year many parishes organised several ales, some more profitable than others.[406] After Elizabeth's

[401] Holland, 1895, p. 51 (undated). For the ball-game of camping, see Dymond, 1990.
[402] SROI, FB159/E7/12, 22.
[403] SROB, FL668/5/9/3v.
[404] Middleton-Stewart, 2011, lv-lviii.
[405] SROI, FC57/A1/1, 35.
[406] Tables 3 & 4, Middleton-Stewart, 2011, lvi-lvii.

accession, the number of ales and drinkings fell away, and they had largely ceased by the middle of the seventeenth century. This decline was also caused by the general reduction of feastdays and religious festivals, which was another important social and economic effect of the Reformation. In 1617 Weybread paid 2s 'for a merriment uppon the towne close', which may have been the last such event in that parish.[407] Yet by contrast, an annual 'drinking' at Bardwell was first mentioned in 1579 but continued until at least 1688. For its celebration in 1605 the churchwardens spent 12s on bread from 'Greene the baker', 10s on beer from 'Nycolas Greene of Thetford' and 7s on cheese from 'the goodwyfe Rushbroke'.[408]

Other important sources of alcohol and food in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were inns, taverns and hostelries normally situated in towns or on major highways. In general they were respectable establishments where *bona-fide* travellers could find food, drink, accommodation, stabling, and agreeable rooms for holding business meetings.[409] On the other hand, many smaller alehouses, tippling houses and victualling houses became persistent sources of anxiety to parish officials, magistrates and the clergy.[410] Proliferating generally during this period, they needed regular inspection and licensing to prevent them from becoming dens of drunkenness, gambling, crime and immorality, especially in the more remote corners of parishes. An Act of 1551-2 required such premises to be bound in the sum of £10, and to produce two sureties to the value of £5 each. In 1597 a local magistrate ordered the constables of Mendlesham to warn those keeping 'common Alehowses & vittling howses', that they must either get properly licensed or face prosecution. The next year Widow Godderd was warned that if she 'do hereafter abuse herself by taking any evell company into her house that she shall departe the Mighelmas after'. In 1618 in the same parish 15s was levied on people 'taken at the alehouse'.[411] Such details remind us that villages and market towns, like major towns and great cities, also had parishioners of lower social and economic status whose way of life was increasingly frowned upon by their neighbours.

A good record of larger-scale recreational events persisting into the reign of Elizabeth can be found in the churchreeves' accounts for 1557-91 in the urban parish of Bungay Holy Trinity.[412] At the centre of this activity was a frequent, if not annual, theatrical performance coinciding with an ale which offered food, drink and entertainments. The record is uneven, but the general impression conveyed, especially in the years 1566-68, is that this market town enjoyed a considerable amount of recreational activity on a regular basis. The programme was sustained by private and public investment, by interest deliberately generated in the surrounding district, and by the organisational and financial involvement of the parish and churchwardens. The dramas themselves are described interchangeably as 'interludes', 'plays'

[407] *East Anglian*, I, 411.
[408] SROB, FL522/11/22/56.
[409] The Magpie or 'Pye' inn on the main road between Ipswich and Norwich was used by magistrates in central Suffolk for business meetings: SROI, FB159/E7/36, 37.
[410] An Act of 1607 made tippling a criminal offence, and defined it as drinking for over an hour. For comparison see Clark, 1983.
[411] SROI, FB159/I1/29; FB159/A1/1 (*sub* 1598); FB159/E7/42.
[412] SROI, 115/E1/1; Lancashire, 1984, pp. 90-91; Galloway & Wasson, 1984, pp. 143-45.

and 'games' but, regrettably, no mention is made of their subjects or titles. The account for 1558 refers only to 'the Interlude & game Booke', and the writing out of parts for actors to learn or read from. The entries for 1566 do, however, make it clear that this game-cum-ale was held on Trinity Sunday one week after Whitsun, reflecting the church's dedication. On this occasion £17 1s 1d was collected, and efforts were clearly made to find support over a wider district: 'Mr Harper dyd procure his neyburs of Beckylls and other places to come'.[413] The more general collecting of money is shown in 1567 by £2 17s 10d 'gatheryd abrode in the castle yarde by the Inhabitaunts', and £20 0s 11½d collected 'at the game in the castle yard in the Boothes & elles wher'.[414]

In 1566 Bungay Holy Trinity's play was held over two days on a 'skaffollde' or 'stage' in the churchyard. It significantly coincided with the expensive repair at Norwich of one of the church's bells, which itself cost over £20. Edward Molle and his son were paid 5s in 'meat and wages' for four days work when they hung the new bell and put up the stage. In the next year, however, the equivalent event took place in the town's Castle Yard. The ruinous medieval castle must have provided a dramatic backdrop, especially when artificially lit at night. However, the real reason for changing the venue may have been damage done to the churchyard the year before, when 2s had to be paid 'for pottes that were lost and brokyn', 12d laid out on 'mending the glasse windows that were brokyn' (almost certainly at the church), and 4d paid for repairing the church gate. Payments were made for erecting the stage, watching it overnight and finally taking it down. In addition, temporary booths were erected around the edges of the arena, no doubt offering a range of entertainments, refreshments and cheap goods to buy. In 1568 alder trees costing 3s were bought for making the booths.

A few clues can be found about the performers and their roles. 'Kelsaye the vyce' was paid 2s in 1566 'for his pastyme [performances] before the plaie and after the playe bothe daies'. He was probably both a comic entertainer and director of the play. In 1567 Benet Kyng performed a similar role and was paid 5s 'for servyng the Interlude'; in the following year his pay rose to 6s for 'serving the game'. In the margin of the 1567 account, a later writer revealed that 2s was given to two players called 'Metcallf and William'. They may have been professional touring performers, working with local volunteers who were unpaid and therefore not mentioned in the accounts.

Bungay's accounts also itemise properties and equipment used in the productions. In 1566, expenses for costumes included 4d for visors (masks), 2d for 'dying heares [hair] for the Interlude players', and 4d for a player's shoes. In 1568 nine planks costing 6d were painted to resemble 'a clowde'. In 1567 two local men lent 225 stone pots, but on this occasion we are not told how many got broken. Other items purchased to enliven the play with special effects included two

[413] For a similar case at Bassingbourn (Cambs), see David Dymond, *The Churchwardens' Book of Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, 1496-c.1540*, Cambs Record Society, 17, 2004, pp. lxi-lxiii.
[414] SROL, 115/E1/1 (*sub* 1567).

dozen 'Tynne fyle' (tinfoil) for 10d and 6 lbs of gunpowder costing 3s 8d. Another important feature showing strong regional links is the borrowing or hire, over considerable distances, of costumes and theatrical properties. In 1558 Bungay Holy Trinity paid a man 12d 'for Rydyng to Yarmouth for the game gere'. Then in 1566, it spent 2s 2d at Norwich 'when my lord of Surrey his apparell was borowed for the Interlude'.[415] Similarly in 1568 it cost 7d to return apparel borrowed at Wymondham in Norfolk. However, in this new protestant world it was revealed in 1577 that 'all the game players gownes & coates .... were made of certayn peces of ollde copes', and that John Edwardes had paid at least £2 for other remaining pieces of former vestments. We are invited to believe that this transaction, symbolic of the new order, was done 'by assent of the Inhabitauntes of the parishe' (implying all of them).

The food and drink provided and consumed at games and ales are sometimes listed in considerable detail. The normal ingredients bought or otherwise acquired at Bungay were wheat, eggs, pepper, salt, vinegar, saffron (usually 7d an ounce), raisins, currants, redcurrants, honey, butter, cream, beer and veal. In 1566 the sum of £1 14s 6d was paid for five barrels and three firkins of beer, and £1 17s 0d for four calves and six lambs. Five named men and women each supplied a gallon of cream, and a sixth gave 1½ gallons. Meanwhile, an enterprising boy was paid 1d 'for turnyng of [the] speete'. In 1567 purchases of meat included two sides and eight quarters of veal. In the next year Robert Smythe was paid 3s 6d for 'Breade, gustardes & pastyes'.

The same accounts reveal that the parish was prepared to continue other medieval practices. On at least three occasions in 1568, the married women of Bungay Holy Trinity acted as a quasi-guild known as 'the wifes'. They collected money in their purses as their predecessors had done before the Reformation, and were given beer for their efforts. Altogether, twelve named women collected sums ranging individually from 8s to £2 1s 7d. A similar survival is mentioned for Exning in 1593 when money was raised for repairing a bell-wheel. Of the total collected, 3s 9d came from the young unmarried men of the parish known as 'the bacchelers'.[416] It is clear that such associations or clubs survived long after more formal socio-religious guilds had been suddenly and brutally abolished by Acts of Parliament in 1545 and 1547.

Although unconnected with churchwardens' accounts, another rare and precious piece of evidence, part-documentary and part-archaeological, is worth mention at this point. A 'Game Place' lay close to the church of Walsham le Willows, and is described in a manorial survey of 1577 as 'a place compassed rownd with a fayer banke....made of purpose for the use of stage playes'.[417] In other words, the game place was a circular structure of earth and perhaps flint walling, covering about half an acre and purposely designed and built as an open-air theatre-in-the-round. Actors performed in the central area, while spectators stood or sat on the surrounding bank. The layout is essentially similar to that shown on the stage

[415] SROL, 115/E1/1 (*sub* 1566). After the event it cost 12d to take the apparel back to Norwich.
[416] SROB, FL567/5/1, p. 15.
[417] Dodd, 1974, 92.

diagram for performing 'The Castle of Perseverance', a fifteenth-century East Anglian drama employing five surrounding scaffolds and internal properties.[418] It is unfortunate that the writer of the 1577 survey did not say how old the Game Place was, or whether performances were still being held at the time he was writing. Sadly this fascinating site, which cannot be unique, has never been excavated and was built over soon after the end of World War II.

Similar problems of interpretation and dating surround recreational sites often called Camping Closes, after the dominant ball-game of the region called 'camping' or 'campball' which was an cross between football and handball. Scores of these sites are known to have existed in the villages and market towns of medieval East Anglia, many of them hedged fields immediately adjacent to the churchyard, or very close to it. This positioning strongly implies that activities once allowed in consecrated churches and their churchyards were later, for the sake of seemliness, pushed further away. This shift, and the resultant creation of Camping Closes, happened well before the Reformation, but at least some of these recreational sites were still being used in Elizabethan, Stuart and even later times.[419]

Conclusions

After her accession in 1558, Elizabeth promptly rejected her sister's catholicism, and replaced it by a middle-of-the-road, protestant Church of England (and Ireland) which nearly everyone, regardless of wealth or rank, could be expected to attend and to support. Once more, the authority of the 'Bishop of Rome' was rejected, and the queen became Supreme Governor of the new church established by English law. At parish level the traditional Latin Mass with its colourful ceremonial, its all-pervasive imagery, and its heavy emphasis on purgatory and commemoration of the dead, was again replaced by the simpler sonorities of Thomas Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*. The emphasis was now on a plainer form of worship reliant on the native language and the growing power of the pulpit. The practical work behind these changes was paid for by parishioners and organised by churchwardens, but the pace of change was variable and sometimes it took years to reach the standards expected by higher authority. Although churchwardens were the principal lay officers of the parish, they were not necessarily at the top of local society, and for that reason needed to be sensitive to the opinions of the gentry, clergy and higher professionals who were their neighbours and social superiors.

Both before and after 1558 the work of churchwardens called for men, and the occasional woman, who were qualified in several basic ways. To be successful in the job they had to be reasonably good communicators and negotiators, knowledgeable about local affairs and financially competent. They needed enough spare time to cope with the demands of office and, although they sometimes got others to engross their accounts, had to be basically literate. At least it was necessary for them to deal with a rising tide of incoming communications, for

[418] Lancashire, 1984, p. lxx, pl. 11.
[419] Dymond, 1990, 163-92.

example the warrants of justices and high sheriffs, and to write their own record of receipts and disbursements. It is regrettable that so many local documents from this context and period have been destroyed, but enough survive to show the increasingly demanding nature of the churchwarden's task, and what in uncertain times were likely to have been the main talking-points and anxieties of parishioners.

Certainly the human contacts of churchwardens when in office were remarkably wide-ranging, and that of itself probably enhanced their social standing. In the home community, for example, they had to deal with resident clergy, fellow officials such as constables and overseers of the poor, tenant farmers, and increasing numbers of the poor needing relief. Beyond the parish boundary, they did business with a larger and more varied number of people, including those who represented the higher levels of ecclesiastical and civil government–magistrates, archdeacons, commissaries, civil lawyers, royal commissioners, coroners, sheriffs and their deputies, market-clerks, purveyors, bailiffs, muster-masters, craftsmen and tradesmen of many sorts. Although wardens received no official salaries for their public work, they were awarded expenses for frequent travel: meals for themselves and their companions, oats for their horses, and accommodation when away overnight.

As has been mentioned, the traditional religious responsibilities of churchwardens, going back to medieval times, were basically two. First, they had to maintain the fabric of the church and keep it weather-tight and secure. This time-consuming and costly commitment involved the employment and supervision of specialist craftsmen and the purchase of expensive raw materials, for example limestone, glass and lead. Second, wardens had to ensure that parishes had the minimum liturgical equipment required by ecclesiastical law, so that services were conducted in a regular, complete and dignified manner. These obligations of course continued into the early modern period, and after 1558 were complicated by the need to convert church interiors to the stern demands of protestant worship, which were both destructive and constructive.

Then, in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries new Acts of Parliament required parishes to intensify existing commitments and take on new ones.[420] Most of the new duties and responsibilities were of a secular kind, confirming the position of the parish as the major arm of civil government at local level. Accounts analysed in this survey for the period 1558-1625 show that the regular activities of churchwardens included at least the following:

- supervising the relief of poverty and control of vagrancy, based on the payment of hypothecated rates
- also supervising the maintenance of roads and bridges, with the support of special rates
- raising, equipping and training local men as soldiers, especially when England was at

[420] Some of these obligations formerly belonged to the parish's ancient rival, the manor, which now operated principally as a landed estate belonging to a particular lord and farmed by tenants of different wealth and status. In 1605-06 Mendlesham in a diplomatic gesture spent 40s for 'the Lordes entertainment at his first court': SROI, FB159/E7/26.

war with Spain, France and catholic rebels in Ireland

- maintaining and administering various non-religious buildings belonging to the parish (especially town houses, former guildhalls and church-houses)
- administering farmland belonging to the parish (rents, leases, *etc*.)
- liaising with representatives of higher authority (archdeacons, bishops, magistrates, sheriffs, royal commissioners, *etc*.)
- collecting county rates (for maimed soldiers, prisons in London, houses of correction, *etc*.)[421]
- helping to assess and gather national taxes, and dealing with 'them that will not pay'[422]
- running and repairing of schools (grammar or elementary)
- running and repairing of almshouses (usually founded and endowed by private individuals)
- stimulating and controlling social and recreational life (ales, games, plays, *etc*.) in an increasingly censorious age.

The full extent of churchwardens' financial and administrative responsibilities varies from parish to parish. For example, Wattisfield spent 8d in 1575 on mending the 'toune chymny' (perhaps belonging to a communal bakehouse). It also met costs relating to a town gate, a town pond and a town grove.[423] By contrast, Mildenhall in 1578 spent 30s on 'mendyng the market Cross', and in 1621-22 paid 10s rent for the town's 'bullock markett'.[424] Moreover, as already indicated, the detailed work of churchwardens cannot be quantified easily (whether in terms of prices, rates of pay, hours of work, *etc*.), because accounts are too often broad-brush or irregular in the amount of detail given. Nevertheless, in this period the work of churchwardens on both the religious and secular fronts was clearly becoming more burdensome, which helps to explain why some individuals were reluctant to stand for office. New kinds of parish official, such as overseers and surveyors, certainly helped to distribute the load, but their work needed supervision and was often shared by the wardens. Newly-chosen churchwardens were given no special training, but had to 'learn on the job', largely by word of mouth. No doubt this is why they commonly served in parallel with those who had been in office before. In spite of the demands made on them, most serving wardens appear to have been tolerably competent in their accounting, for their annual reckonings were challenged only rarely.

[421] Mendlesham in 1602 paid £2 5s 4d to the King's Bench and Marshalsea prisons (both in Southwark, London), a house of correction and to lame soldiers: SROI, FB159/E7/21. In 1606 Wattisfield paid 8s for 'the Lame shoulders' [*sic*]; 5s 5d 'for the prisoners in the Kinges Bench & Marshallsea'; and 2s 10d for 'the house of correction'; they made two separate payments of 22d 'for the prisoners at Burie Gayle': SROB, FL668/5/9/57r & v. Wattisfield's county rate for the year 1616 amounted to £3 3s 1d: SROB, FL668/5/9/65v. Bardwell in 1589 paid 3s for the upkeep of 'the shere [shire] house at Burye': SROB, FL522/11/22/21.

[422] SROI, FB159/E7/30.

[423] SROB, FL668/5/9/5r.

[424] SROB, EL110/5/5, fol. 1r; SROI, FB159/E7/46.

In the late Tudor and early Stuart period England seemed a distracted and beleaguered nation, embroiled in a great European and Atlantic battle between the forces of the protestant Reformation and those of the catholic Counter-Reformation. It faced plots to assassinate both Elizabeth and James, as well as internal rebellions and repeated threats of foreign invasion. In addition England was itself a cockpit of endless religious controversy. Compared to their predecessors in the first half of the sixteenth century, churchwardens now operated in an environment which was more divided and riddled with suspicion, more censorious and deeply militarised. In the meantime, because it was a time-honoured and well-rooted institution, the parish not only survived as the basis of local government, but had to assume an expanding and evermore complicated agenda. Parliamentary legislation was slowly transforming the English parish into a major agent of religious, political and social change.



Pl. 51: John Daye, of Aldersgate in London was a major figure in disseminating protestant literature, especially Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. He died in 1584, and his inscribed brass in Little Bradley church in west Suffolk carries a punning verse which starts: 'Here lies the Daye that darkness could not blynd, When popish fogges had over cast the sunne...'.

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Pl. 52: Interior of Hadleigh church from west, a mural in the Deanery Tower painted 1629 by Benjamin Coleman. This unusual evidence shows a floor of black-glazed pamments, royal arms over a south door, and a western gallery. Of particular interest is the painting of the arcade pillars in black, yellow and orange-brown. The total absence of seating is hard to explain.

GLOSSARY

This is a two-way listing giving both modern and historical spellings; the latter are in inverted commas. Occasional Latin words are italicised. Books consulted in the compilation of this glossary, apart from *The Oxford English Dictionary* are as follows:

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A

acolyte: one who assisted a priest during services and in processions.
aid, 'ayde': a one-off grant to the Crown (*eg* to help pay for a royal wedding).
alabaster: a natural stone, sulphate of lime, cut and polished to make images and monuments.
alehouses: basic public houses selling ale or beer; regarded with suspicion by the authorities.
ales: convivial parochial gatherings to raise money for the church (*cf* **churchales** and **hockpots**).
alleys: paths running across churchyards.
almain rivett: armour of German origin, with overlapping plates sliding on rivets.
almshouses, 'amysse howsses': dwellings to accommodate the aged poor, founded by private charity.
amercement: a fine levied for an offence.
anniversary: same as **obit** (*qv*).
apparitor, 'parator': official who summoned people to an ecclesiastical court.
apprentices: young persons bound to masters or mistresses for a period of years in order to learn a craft or trade; hence apprenticeship indentures.
archdeacon: a cleric having administrative and judicial authority over part of a diocese; he exercised this authority largely through **visitation** (*qv*).
armiger: one entitled to bear heraldic arms; later, an esquire (a mark of gentility).
'aroues': arrows in a sheaf ('sheff').
articles: summaries of basic tenets of the Church of England, mostly drafted by Thomas Cranmer. Also instructions issued by bishops.
'ashet': a sheet or a shroud.
attachment: a form of arrest to make a person comply with a court order; hence **'attachinge'**.

B

bachelors, 'bacchelers': young unmarried men, members of a club or quasi-guild who raised money for the church (*cf* **wives**).
bailiff, 'balye': an officer who managed a manor or estate on behalf of a lord.
baldricks, 'badrexe': leather strap suspending a clapper from a bell; needed frequent replacement.
'banddleres': bandoliers carrying ammunition, worn across the body.
bands: metal strips used to bind and secure bell-frames.
'bankitt': banquet.
Barbary pirates: Muslim freebooters based in north Africa who infested the Mediterranean and elsewhere, capturing Christians and making them hostages.
base: base-born, illegitimate.
beacon: combustible tar-barrel on tall pole, reached by ladder; part of a signalling system in times of invasion

and war.

'beare', 'beere', 'bere': 1) beer to drink; 2) bier for carrying the dead.

bearers: carriers of a bier or coffin to the church and grave.

beating the bounds: perambulating the boundary of a parish, to perpetuate knowledge of it among the young; regarded as a religious procession in the Middle Ages, but secularised in Elizabeth's reign.

bede-roll: pre-Reformation practice of reading out each week, from the pulpit, the names of people to be prayed for.

bell-house: single-storey structure, separate from the church, to house bells (*eg* East Bergholt).

bells, 'beles', 'byles': bells in churches.

benevolence: an act of kindness or goodwill.

besoms: brooms made of bundles of rods or twigs bound around the ends of poles.

bible: single volume containing the Old and New Testaments; several different translations and editions in 16th and 17th centuries: *eg* **Great Bible**, **Geneva Bible** and **King James Bible**.

bier: wooden frame for carrying a corpse to the church and grave; parishes usually owned their own biers.

***bileg*':** by-law.

bill: weapon with long wooden handle and metal blade, with spike at the back (same as halberd); often described as black or brown.

'bindinge forth': apprenticing.

'boke': book.

bonds: bounds, limits.

'boodye': body of church, or **nave** (*qv*).

***Book of Common Prayer*:** the service book of the Church of England issued in 1549 and extensively revised in 1552; includes matins, evensong, communion, *etc*.

'boothes': stalls erected during major festivals for entertainers and for the sale of refreshments and knick-knacks.

'boot leggs, a payer of': unofficial alcohol costing 6d, consumed by masons when in 1605 the tower at Metfield was being repaired.

Breckland: a region of light sandy soils including north-western Suffolk.

'brege': bridge.

Bridewell: or 'house of correction' for those who refused to work, set up by an Act of 1576; named after the Bridewell prison in London, formerly a royal palace.

brief, 'briffe': brief; an appeal for charity to help those in misfortune.

'broaches': rods of flexible wood, used to secure thatching (hence '**broachwand**', '**brochwonds**').

'brod sell': the broad seal of the court of Chancery.

Brownist: follower of Robert Brown, an independent protestant who had migrated to Holland by 1582.

burning: a destructive fire which called for a generous response to a **brief** (*qv*).

burse: a bag in which to keep a **corporas** (*qv*); also known as a **corporas case**.

bushel: measure of capacity, equal to 4 pecks or 8 gallons.

'busshup': bishop.

butts, 'buttys': a range for the practice of archery, with a turf mound at each end to which a target was attached; from the 15th century all parishes were required by law to have their own butts.

by-laws: ordinances of a manorial court concerning the regulation of local farming, grazing, etc.

C

caliver, 'colyver', 'kalyver': muzzle-loading firearm, with smooth bore and matchlock action; fired without a rest.

calvinist: follower of John Calvin (1509-64), influential French reformer who wrote *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

camping, campball: a ball-game popular in eastern England; hence Camping Land ('Campynglond') as a field-name, and the verb 'to camp'.

candlebeam light: candles on a beam throwing light on the **rood** (*qv*) for dramatic effect.

candle house: a cupboard in a church for the storage of candles, tapers and torches (see **lights**).
canons: rules of the Church of England for its organisation and administration, published in 1603-04.
capons: castrated cocks, bought by a royal **purveyor** (*qv*).
carder: one who cleans and disentangles wool preparatory to spinning, using a special wooden bat (card) with iron teeth; hence **carding**.
'caren', 'carringe': carrying; a troublesome word with many different spellings.
carpet: a thick cloth for covering the **communion tabl**e (*qv*); usually of wool and embroidered.
'carsey', 'cearssey': see **kersey**.
casting: plastering or daubing walls.
catechism: a series of questions and answers about the fundamentals of Christianity, to be learnt by young people before their confirmation by a bishop.
caunsey: a road kept in regular repair; a raised and paved way.
censers: metal containers in which incense was burnt, suspended by chains and swung from the hand; used in the **Mass** and in processions.
certain: weekly reading for a whole year of a person's name from the **bede-roll** (*qv*); same as **sangred**.
'cessement': assessment, rate, tax.
chalice: a goblet for the wine used in the **Mass** and **Holy Communion**; larger after 1558 as the laity were now allowed to drink the consecrated wine. Hence, communion cup.
chancel, 'chansylle': east end of a church used predominantly by the clergy; originally separated from the rest by a screen; now called the 'sanctuary' (see **nave**).
chancellor: 1) a bishop's official representative who often presided over his **consistory court** (*qv*); 2) principal officer of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Chancery, 'chanserey': court of Lord Chancellor; highest court in England after the House of Lords.
chantry: an endowment to support a priest to pray and sing Masses for the soul of the founder, suppressed by Act of 1547; hence **chantry chapel** and **chantry priest** (*qv*).
chantry chapel: the wealthiest chantries provided for a purpose-built chapel in, or attached to, a parish church.
chantry priest: a priest appointed to a particular chantry to say or sing regular Masses for the founder.
charter: a document by which the Crown granted specific rights or privileges (*eg* to run a weekly market and annual fair).
chrismatory: a vessel for storing the three kinds of holy oil; kept in a locked cupboard.
Christmas, 'cresmas', 'crystide': Christmas(tide).
Christopher, 'Christover': image of St Christopher carrying the Christ child, usually painted in nave opposite south door.
church (as opposed to **chancel** *qv*)**:** western parts of a church, including **nave** (*qv*), aisles, porch and tower, all maintained by parishioners.
church-ales: convivial social gatherings to raise money for the church (see **ales** and **hockpots**).
church-house: a substantial building, often close to the church, owned and maintained by the parish; for holding social and recreational events which were deemed unsuitable for the consecrated church or churchyard (*cf* **guildhall**).
church papist: an adherent of the catholic church who minimally attended services of the Church of England.
churchreeves: another name for **churchwardens**.
'chushin': cushion.
cills, sills: strong horizontal timbers supporting 1) the walls of timber-framed buildings; 2) benches in a church.
claret: red wine used in **Holy Communion**.
clerk of the market: an official who, on behalf of a manorial lord, administers a local market.
clunch: a harder form of chalk used in the fabric of some churches.
'coell', 'cooles': coal, charcoal.
coif: a close-fitting cap worn by both sexes.
comb: measure of capacity for grain; equals 4 bushels.

commandment board: a panel on a church wall carrying the **Ten Commandments** or Decalogue.
commencement: the formal public ceremony of conferring a university degree.
commissary: person having a commission from a bishop or archdeacon to perform a particular action.
commissioners for the subsidy: persons who supervised the levying of a grant to the sovereign.
commissioners of artillery: persons responsible for the provision and maintenance of cannons and other guns.
common fine: annual payment made by members of a **frankpledge** (*qv*) to the holder of a **court-leet** (*qv*).
communion rails: rails enclosing the area around a communion table; a **Laudian** (*qv*) feature of the 1630s.
communion table: wooden table used for the **Holy Communion** in the Church of England, in place of the stone altar of pre-Reformation and Marian times.
composition, 'compossission': the provisioning by parishes of the royal household, stables or navy (see **purveyor**).
conduct money, 'condit money': spent by parishes on vagrants and travellers, encouraging them to keep moving.
consistory (court): general court of a bishop administering ecclesiastical law in his diocese.
constable: a parochial officer with responsibilities for keeping the peace; formerly a manorial appointment; each hundred had a high constable responsible for military training.
conventicle: illegal protestant gathering in private houses, barns, etc. for worship and bible study.
cope: an ecclesiastical vestment, semi-circular in shape, elaborately embroidered.
copyhold: a customary tenancy whereby land is held by virtue of a copy of the court-roll recording an entry.
coralline crag: a natural stone found in south-east Suffolk, made of small organisms resembling coral.
coronation day, 'Croune Nacion daye', 'crownacion': the date of Queen Elizabeth's coronation, 17 November, popularly celebrated at parish level.
coroner, 'crowner': a royally appointed officer whose principal role was to investigate violent or accidental deaths, including suicides; this office had its origin in the 12th century.
corporas: a square linen cloth on which the bread and wine are placed for consecration in the **Mass**; hence, **corporas case**: a bag, often embroidered, in which the corporas was kept.
corslets, 'coslittes', 'kerstletes': piece of defensive armour protecting the body; consists of two plates connected by hinges and pins.
county bridges: bridges having more than local importance; in the early-modern period they came under the jurisdiction of quarter sessions.
'course': corpse.
court-leet: a manorial court which dealt with minor offences such as over-grazing and encroachments on roads; it regulated the view of **frankpledge** (*qv*).
cradle: wooden hoist with long ropes, used by masons to lift heavy materials.
Creed: a summary of Christian doctrine recited in churches as a confession of faith.
crome: a long implement for raking thatch from burning buildings.
cruet: a vessel of metal or glass which contains wine and water for use in the **Mass**.
cucking stool, 'cookinstole', 'kookestoole': an instrument of punishment; the offender was strapped in a seat at the end of a balanced pole, and then ducked into a pond or stream.
'culm': chaff.

D

'Danck': Danish.
daubing: applying wet clay to cover wattle panels in timber-framed buildings.
Decalogue: see **Ten Commandments**.
deanery: a group of parishes that formed a subdivision of an archdeaconry; usually the ecclesiastical equivalent of a civil **hundred** (*qv*).
degrees (of marriage): a board on church wall showing human relationships within which marriage is not allowed.
dismission: fee paid in a spiritual court.
'doble aparell': clothing given to apprentices, to cover both weekdays and Sundays.

dog: a metal tie or grappling iron.
dog-whipper: a minor parish official charged with the duty of controlling dogs in church and, if necessary, expelling them.
Domesday Book: a written survey of England ordered by William the Conqueror and completed in 1086; divided into two volumes.
dormer: an upright window on a sloping roof.
dornix: a kind of cloth which originated in Doornijk (Tournai), mainly used for hangings and coverlets.
'dosse': a hassock for kneeling.
drinking, *potacio*: a social gathering which raised money for a church (see **ales** and **hockpots**).
duchy: estate belonging to a duke or duchess, especially the royal duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster.
Dunkirkers: freebooters or privateers based on the Flemish coast who attacked English ships and coastal ports (see **Barbary pirates**).

E

earnest: part-payment given in advance to secure a commission; a deposit.
Easter Sepulchre: on the north side of a chancel representing Christ's tomb, either a carved recess in stonework or a moveable piece of wooden furniture, used in the Easter ritual.
'effidens': evidence.
'eiele': aisle of church.
'eies': eyes (with hooks).
'elmen bou': a bow made of elm, used by the night-watch.
'ende': outlying part of a parish, hamlet (see **'Rowes'**).
engrossing/ingrossing: making a fair copy of a document in a large hand.
erratic: a stone or boulder which had been transported by glaciers.
esquire: see **armiger**.
Eucharist: same as **Mass**.
evidences, 'ewedens': important legal papers.
'eyern', 'eyrnes' 'ierons': irons.

F

fair, 'fayer': a chartered event of economic and social importance, which could be held over several days.
falling sickness: epilepsy.
farmer, 'fermor': 1) a tenant who rents land under stated conditions; 2) one who tills or grazes land to make it productive.
'fasgon': Shrove Tuesday.
fathom: a measure of length, about 6 feet.
'feyinge', 'fying': the cleaning of ponds, streams, springs, *etc*.
'ffeffees': feoffees, trustees.
fifteenth: a form of direct taxation levied on the laity, granted from time to time until the Civil War; based on an assessment of personal wealth, of which a proportion was then taken (*cf* **tenth**).
firkin: a small wooden cask for carrying various commodities.
flagon: a large vessel for carrying wine for **Holy Communion**.
flags, 'flagges': slabs of turf cut for the construction of archery **butts** (*qv*).
'flashes': lead strips or 'flashing' covering junctions between roofs and walls; they prevent rain from penetrating a building.
font: a stone basin on a pedestal holding the water used in the sacrament of baptism; the outside of the basin and the pedestal were usually decorated.
'foockes': folks.
forelock: the wedge or cottar in a bell-frame which secures the end of a bolt.
frankincense: an aromatic gum from fir and pine trees, used to perfume the church.
frankpledge: a medieval system whereby small groups of men called tithings took mutual responsibility for each others' actions; reviewed by **court-leet** (*qv*).

frieze, 'frise': a type of coarse woollen cloth with a nap raised by rubbing.
frontal: a movable cloth hanging in front of a communion table, usually embroidered.
furbisher, 'furbusher': polisher.
'futer': future.
'fyren': firing (for use of a glazier).

G

gallery: a sloping balcony usually at the west end of a nave; it contained seating and was approached by a staircase.
game: either a sport or a dramatic performance (hence, **game gear**, **game place**, and **game players**).
'gaoile', 'gayle': gaol, prison.
gathering: a voluntary collection made for charitable purposes.
General: the court of an archdeacon in the diocese of Norwich, held twice a year.
Geneva Bible: a English translation of the Bible influenced by Calvin and Beza, first printed in 1560 and popular in Elizabeth's reign.
'gesse': joists.
'gevers': givers (see **gathering**).
godly, 'godlie': a frequently used description of an evangelical minister or layman.
God's Acre: a popular name for the churchyard.
Goodman: a title for a man of substance who was not of gentle birth, such as a yeoman or clothier.
'goodwyfe': female equivalent of **Goodman** (*qv*); was shortened to 'Goody'.
grammar school: a school in which the classics and the Latin language were taught; pupils might proceed to an Inn of Court or to university.
'granie russet': an unidentified type of cloth; the use of the word 'granie' may indicate something basic and homespun.
grates, 'grats': a metal grill accompanying the gate or stile into a churchyard, to assist drainage and perhaps to clean boots.
'grave maker': may refer to an above-ground physical 'marker' for a burial, such as a cross.
Great Bible: issued by Thomas Cranmer in 1540; a copy was required in every church; based on Coverdale's translation into English.
'grecian': a term used to describe an Irish person.
grindle, grundle: a small ravine cut by a natural stream and deepened by human and animal traffic.
groundsel: horizontal timber forming the foundation of walls, benches, *etc* (see **cills**).
gudgeon: a pivot or eye on which something turned, as in a bell-frame.
guild, 'gild': socio-religious association which collected for the church and commemorated its former members who were both men and women; villages often had more than one such guild.
guildhall, 'yelde hale': the head-quarters of a medieval guild; a building which remained in common use after the abolition of guilds in 1547 (see **church-house**).
'guld': gulled, rutted (of road).
gun-powder treason day: the annual celebration on 5th November of England's escape from the gunpowder plot in 1605.
'gustardes': custards; a popular dessert based on milk and eggs, associated with Whitsun holidays.
gypsies, 'Jepsis': a wandering race of Hindu origin with its own language called Romany; the word gypsy is wrongly derived from 'Egyptians'.

H

halimote, 'helement', 'helymoote': the name given to small rents and suits of court payable to the lord of the hundred.
'hare', 'heares': hair(s) of animal origin, used in whitening a church internally.
'harth tree': ?mantelpiece.
hasps: a hinged clasp of metal passing over a staple and fastened by a pin or padlock; used to fasten doors and lids.

hatchment: a lozenge-shaped or square panel displaying a coat of arms; hung on a gentleman's house after his death, and later transferred to the local church; derived from the word 'achievement'.
'hauppe': refers to an unknown animal or bird regarded as vermin.
hearse: a wooden framework or carriage on which a corpse was carried to church and grave; the pre-Reformation version was a more elaborate framework illuminated by tapers and candles.
hemp-ropes: ropes used in building work and in the ringing of church bells.
high constable: see **constable**.
hockpots: popular **ales** (*qv*) held at **Hocktide**, the second Monday and Tuesday after Easter (hence **'hoc Munday'**).
'hoddespyts': refers to an unknown animal or bird regarded as vermin.
Holland: a type of fine linen, originally made in Holland.
Holy Communion: the service which the Church of England devised to replace the Latin Mass of the catholic church.
holy days: feast days, of which the number was greatly reduced at the Reformation.
holy-water stoup: a stone basin holding holy water which had been blessed; usually sited in a church porch or near the entrance.
homilies: printed sermons to be read by unlearned and unlicensed clergy; two printed collections were issued in 1547 and 1571.
horsemeat: oats for horses.
'hosen': hose, hosiery, stockings.
Host: the consecrated bread or wafer used in the **Mass**.
hourglass: a glass vessel with a constricted neck and partly filled with sand; used to measure time, especially the hour, and attached to a pulpit.
house of correction: see **Bridewell**.
house-room: the ability of householders to take others into their homes, with parochial support.
hue and cry, 'hewe & Crye', 'huincry': a general obligation to aid the chase and capture of persons suspected of felonies; involved noise and shouting.
hundred: 1) unit of local government between the parish and the county; each hundred had its own court and **high constable**; 2) a quantity of wood.
hutches: chests or coffers, with or without legs, used in churches for the storage of money, silver plate, books, vestments, records, *etc*; important furnishings in churches before and after the Reformation.

I

iconoclasm: the destruction of religious images in the 16th and 17th centuries; literally, 'breaking of icons'; hence iconoclasts.
'idolls': disparaging term used by reformers for all forms of religious imagery.
impositions: see **composition**.
inch, 'unche': inch; a linear measurement, the 12th part of a foot.
incumbent: a rector, vicar or perpetual curate who held the living (benefice) of a particular parish.
indentures: documents binding young persons as apprentices to masters or mistresses, to learn their crafts or trades; two copies of each contract were written on a single sheet and then cut apart in a wavy line, so that they could later be convincingly reassembled to prove authenticity.
injunctions: royal orders or proclamations concerning church affairs.
interludes: dramatic or comic performances, sometimes in intervals between longer acts.
iron, 'eyern', 'eyrnes', 'ierons', 'yorns': iron(s). Refers to the material and objects made of iron
'issewes': issues, legal cases.

J

'jepsis': gypsies.
juniper, 'juneper': a small, coniferous, oil-bearing tree used to make incense, burnt in churches to perfume them.
justice of the peace: one appointed to the commission of the peace for a county or a town; sat in quarter

sessions (same as **magistrate**).

K

'kanepe': canopy or **tester** (*qv*) of a pulpit.
'kaye': ?key (costing 15s to cast).
kell, 'kyll': kiln (for brickmaking at Wicken).
kersey, 'carsey': a coarse and commonly ribbed cloth made of long wool; occurred in many varieties and colours.
'Kings Armes': the heraldic arms of the reigning monarch displayed in churches; symbolic of the royal headship of the Church of England.
King's Bench: a prison in Southwark, London.
'kookestoole': see **cucking stool**.

L

lantern: a feature added to the top of a church tower, often in the form of a spirelet or open-sided cupola.
Last Judgement: in Christian belief, a final judgement of mankind after the Resurrection of the Dead.
latten: an alloy made of copper, tin and lead; resembles brass.
lattices: lead framework in criss-cross pattern, containing **quarries** (*qv*) of glass and secured by twisted wire to iron bars.
Laudian: refers to William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury 1633-45, a ritualist and fierce opponent of puritan preaching.
lay rector: a layman who legally owned the rectory of a parish, leaving a vicar (substitute) to do the actual 'cure of souls'; had the right to sit in chancel with his family, and the responsibility to maintain the chancel.
lead-house, 'led howsse': a building belonging to a parish for the storage of valuable lead.
lecterns, 'lectorns': a wooden or metal stand from which lessons are read, sited in Elizabethan and later times at east end of nave; often took the shape of a bird with outspread wings.
ledger-stone: a flat gravestone embedded in the floor of a church; inscribed with the name of the deceased and date of death, often accompanied by eulogistic sentiments.
leet-court: see **court-leet**.
'lefetenants': lieutenants, substitutes.
Lenten veil: during Lent a large white cloth hanging across the chancel in front of the high altar; removed at Easter.
lights: as part of pre-Reformation worship, the use of multiple candles, torches and tapers on altars and images, often supported by specific endowments.
'linsywolsye': a coarse type of cloth mixing wool and flax.
Litany: a public prayer consisting of petitions, with the minister leading and the congregation responding.
longbow: in the 15th century men aged from 16 to 60 were required to have a bow of their own height; its importance as a weapon was fading by Elizabethan times.
lords-lieutenant: from the mid-sixteenth century, the Crown appointed nobles to this office, to take charge of the militia in each county; they became a valued link between local and central government; now a ceremonial office.
lucarne, 'lucome': a dormer window projecting vertically from a sloping roof.
'lyninges': cloth used to line garments.

M

magistrate: see **justice of the peace**.
manchet: finest-quality wheat used in bread for the **Holy Communion** (*qv*).
'mandel tree': mantelpiece.
'marke': unit of currency equivalent to 13s 4d; not a coin.
market-clerks: manorial officials charged by their lords with the running of weekly markets.
marrying stool, 'marieinge stoole': stool placed near the altar or communion table where couples were married.

Marshalsea, 'Marsasyse': a prison in Southwark, London (see **King's Bench**).
Mass: the central service of the Catholic tradition (also known as the **Eucharist**), commemorating the Last Supper, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.
mastiffs: dogs brought by their owners into churches were often disruptive; they were subject to the control of dog-whippers appointed by the parish.
match-line: hemp cord impregnated with saltpetre and lime, by which firearms were ignited.
mercer: a dealer in textiles, especially expensive silks.
'mesen': mice.
meta: mete, boundary.
muscatel, 'muskadine': a strong white wine made from the muscat grape; used in **Holy Communion** (*qv*).
musket: hand-gun carried by infantry and fired from a rest; ignited by a slow-match or combustible cord.
muster: military training , usually on areas of common land, organised by **muster masters**.

N
nave: the main body of a church where most of the laity worshipped, separated from the **chancel** (qv) by a screen and from aisles by arcades.
'neat': cattle.
'nedles': needles or piles beneath a building.
'norrege', 'norryghe': Norwich.

O
obit, 'obbytts': annual re-enactments of funerals as acts of commemoration; supported by an endowment; also called 'anniversaries' or 'mind-days'.
ordinary: a standard meal regularly provided at an inn or public house; same as 'commons'.
'orkyncasse': organ-case.
'ossinbriges', 'ossumbriges': a coarse linen or fustian; the name is derived from Osnabruck in Germany.
'ouer glase': see **hourglass**.
out dwellers, out-sitters: those who had economic interests in a parish, but did not reside there.
overbody: an upper or outer bodice for women in Elizabethan and Stuart times.
overseers of the poor: elected parish officials who from 1572 raised local rates and dispensed poor-relief.
'owelenne': an unidentified type of cloth.

P
pagans, 'pagones': another description for **Barbary pirates** (*qv*) who were Muslim.
pair, 'payre': the word 'pair' was applied to almost anything assembled from parts (eg stairs, chalices and organs).
pamments: floor-bricks or tiles made of local clays.
papist: disparaging word to describe a catholic believer (hence **papistry**).
'parater', 'pallater': see **apparitor**.
parish clerk: a parish official who helped the minister during services, chiefly by leading responses of the laity and by singing.
'parle': parley, speak with.
partition: a synonym for the screen dividing **chancel** from **nave**.
'pasport', 'passe': a written licence or permit from a competent source, allowing persons to journey from one place to another; often granted to soldiers and their families.
pastor: minister of religion.
'pastyme': a diversion or amusement.
paten: a small plate covering the chalice; it carried the bread or wafer representing Christ's body.
pentice, 'pentysse': a lean-to building with a single-slope roof; normally a later addition to a church.
perambulation: see **beating the bounds**.
'perk': a term used in East Anglia for the **roodloft** (*qv*) which ran across the top of the **roodscreen** (*qv*).
perpetuana: a long-lasting type of cloth, often used for suiting.

pest-house: a primitive isolation hospital used at times of infection, deliberately sited away from the main centres of population.
petty sessions, 'petiscitions': a sitting of two or more justices exercising summary justice for minor offences.
pew, 'pwe': another word for seating in churches.
pickling, 'picling': a coarse linen.
pillory: an instrument of punishment consisting of a post carrying a lockable frame, through which the heads and hands of miscreants were exposed to public ridicule.
pioneers: militia men who dug and maintained defences; their tools were provided by their parishes.
piscina: a stone basin and drain set in a niche, for cleaning vessels used in the **Mass**.
pistole: foreign gold coins, worth 16s 6d.
pit-coal: coal mined in Tyneside, and shipped to East Anglia (as opposed to 'charcoal').
pix, 'pyxe': a vessel, suspended over the altar and covered by a cloth, which housed the reserved sacrament or **Host** (*qv*) representing the body of Christ; hence **pix-veil**.
planking, 'planceringe': planking, flooring.
'playe': a dramatic production or a game.
'plomer': plumber.
plough-light: in pre-Reformation days an artificial illumination on Plough Monday (first Monday after 6 January), maintained in the church by local husbandmen.
poor man's box: wooden boxes in churches to encourage voluntary giving to the poor; some are bound in iron and are set deep into the floor; required in every church by the queen's injunctions of 1559.
'popillion': poplar ointment, a widely-used salve.
porringer: a dish or bowl with lugs, used for soup, porridge, *etc*.
'portengalle': Portugal.
pox, 'pockes': smallpox or syphilis.
predestination: by this doctrine, espoused by Calvin, some are seen as predestined to salvation and others to eternal damnation.
presentments: formal complaints or reports submitted to a court.
'presse monye': money given to men impressed into military service; hence **prest**.
progress, 'progreis': a royal tour which imposed considerable costs on hosts.
psalter: service book containing the Psalms of David.
pulpit: a raised platform for preaching used in the Middle Ages, and increasingly the focus of church services after the Reformation.
purgatory: in catholic belief the place where most souls went to purge their pardonable sins before entering heaven; time in purgatory could be reduced by prayers, Masses and good works.
pursuivant: a state or royal messenger who had power to execute warrants.
purveyor, 'perver', 'porver': a royal officer who bought foodstuffs, materials and transport at prices favourable to the Crown; hence **purveyance**.
'puter': pewter.
'pystalys': see **pistole**.
pyx, see **pix**.

Q

quarries, 'quarelles': small diamond-shaped pieces of glass cut from larger sheets.
quarterage: payments made quarterly.
quarter sessions: the court of justices of the peace in each county and borough, which met four times a year to deal with non-capital offences; also known as the 'general sessions'.
questman: a parish official who assisted the churchwarden and supervised church attendance; later known as a sidesman.
***quietus est* :** quittance, settlement of account.
quine: queen.

R

ragstone: a type of hard coarse stone, tending to break into flat slabs.

'randivoze': rendezvous.

rates: from the mid-16th century onwards, parliamentary Acts required parishes to raise money by compulsory annual levies, to support services such as the relief of poverty.

'rearinge', rerynge': hauling up and pegging together the frame of a pre-fabricated timber building.

reckoning day, 'reckninge daye': the day when each parish settled its annual accounts and chose its officers for the ensuing year; similar to a modern AGM.

recusant: a person who refused (L. *recusare*) the sacraments of the Church of England, especially one who remained catholic; hence **recusancy**.

'reder': reeder, thatcher.

red ochre, 'redde ockyr': a natural earth or pigment, used in the obliterating of medieval wall-paintings.

Reformation: the name broadly given to major religious changes in the 16th and 17th centuries, when protestant groups broke from Rome and established new interpretations of Christian belief and new liturgies.

register book: from 1538 onwards each parish was required to keep a record of christenings, marriages and funerals.

'reqasantes': recusants.

resin: rosen.

Rogationtide: the fifth Sunday after Easter was Rogation Sunday; the following Monday to Wednesday were Rogation Days when parish boundaries were perambulated. See **beating the bounds**.

'roocke': rook (bird); hence **roocke neete**.

rood: carving of the crucifixion of Christ, set above the screen dividing nave from chancel and facing the congregation.

'roode', 'roode way': road, needing maintenance.

roodloft: the narrow walkway or passage along the top of a roodscreen; known in East Anglia as the '**perk**' (*qv*).

roodscreen: wooden screen dividing **nave** from **chancel**, originally surmounted by the rood itself and the accompanying figures of St Mary and St John.

'Rowes': hamlets within parishes (*eg* Mildenhall).

Royal Arms: coat of arms of the reigning monarch displayed in churches; stresses the independence of the national Church of England and the break from Rome. Can be either paintings or wooden sculptures.

'rubbinge': salting cheese as part of its maturing.

'rushrop': rope made of rushes, used to tie scaffolding.

russet: a coarse woollen cloth, reddish-brown in colour, used in the clothing of the lower orders.

'rynners', 'rynning': ringers, ringing.

S

sack: a white wine from Spain and the Canaries.

sacraments: outward signs of spiritual grace; traditionally they numbered seven but were reduced to two in the 39 Articles of 1571 (baptism and **Holy Communion**) because they only had biblical foundation.

sallet: a protective helmet, with or without a vizor; curves outwards at back.

saltpetre: a constituent of gunpowder (with sulphur and charcoal); hence **saltpetre man** who traded in this substance.

salve, saw: a medical ointment.

sanctus bell, 'sance belle': a bell often on the eastern gable of the **nave** (*qv*); rung at the Elevation of the Host to remind those inside and outside the church that the climax of the **Mass** had been reached (see **sermon bell**).

Sandlings: a region of lighter soils running parallel with the coast in eastern Suffolk.

sangred: the East Anglian name for a **certain** (*qv*).

'sap lathes': thin laths of wood taken from the sap wood of trees; often used in wattle-and-daub.

'sarman': sermon.

sawing pit: a deep pit dug so that two men could cut a large timber with a single saw, one standing on top of the timber and the other working in the pit.
'scoreing', 'skowring': scouring, cleaning.
scouring stick: a stick for cleaning the barrels of guns.
scripture: scriptural quotations painted on the walls of churches (see **sentences**).
seal: wax seal to authenticate a grant (*eg* of the Lord Admiral).
seething: boiling, keeping on the boil.
'selles': see **cills**.
'senekkon': sinking (floor).
sensers: see **censers**.
sentences: scriptural quotations painted on church walls (same as **scripture**).
sepulchre: see **Easter Sepulchre**.
sermon bell: a bell which called parishioners to sermons; sometimes adapting the pre-Reformation **sanctus bell** (*qv*).
servers, 'sarvers': assistants and boys employed by tradesmen such as masons and glaziers.
service: 1) work done for a master or mistress in the household or fields; 2) time spent in the army.
'set secions': same as **quarter sessions**.
settcloth: see **vesses**.
setting: fixing in place.
'sewete': suit (legal).
sexton: parish official who took practical care of the church and churchyard.
'sheepes': ships.
sheet, 'shete': 1) lead in sheet form; 2) a shroud.
'sheff aroues': a sheaf of arrows, provided for the nightly watch.
'shere howse': the shire-house in Bury St Edmunds, administrative centre of the Liberty of St Edmund.
sheriff, 'shrefe': shire-reeve, chief medieval official in each county appointed by the Crown; hence 'undersheriff'.
shoes: 'schoose', 'shoose', 'shose', 'showes'.
'shortspord': short-spurred (cocks).
shot: young pig.
'shotyng the belle': the smelting and casting of bell-metal.
shreds, 'shreeds': small fragments of cloth, used in the making of whitewash.
sidesman: see **questman**.
sills: see **cills**.
'skaffollde': 1) scaffolding where building work and repairs were being done; 2) a stage for dramatic performances.
skeps: baskets used by masons to lift heavy materials such as stone or lead.
'skoote': Scot, Scotsman.
'smoke': smock.
softstone: softer limestone used in carved window tracery.
solder, 'shoulders', 'seder', 'sowder': a fusible metallic alloy for joining metal objects; hence '**sowldringe**'.
soldiers: 'sogers', 'sowlgieres'.
'somner', 'sumner': summoner, an official of an ecclesiastical court who delivered summons.
'Sould': Southwold (Suffolk).
Spanish white: finely powdered chalk used as a pigment or for cleaning.
'speete': spit (to be turned).
splints: 1) laths used in building; 2) plates of armour protecting the undersides of arms.
spoil, 'spoyle': Roger Martin's word for describing the destruction wrought during the Reformation in the church at Long Melford.
staging: scaffolding (see '**skaffollde**').
statute: Act of Parliament.
steeple: an East Anglian word to describe what elsewhere would be a 'tower'.
'stille': stile giving entry to a churchyard.
stock-house, 'stokehowse': a building in which the parish kept any kind of 'stock' (*eg* building materials, food

and clothing for the poor).
stocking: putting a new butt or stock on a firearm.
stocks, 'stoockes': 1) instruments of punishment clamping offenders' legs in a sitting position; 2) the butts of firearms; 3) money or materials accumulated by a parish, often as the result of endowments, rents, *etc*.
'stoles': stools or benches provided for worshippers in churches.
stone: a unit of weight which varied according to the commodity.
stone-setters: makers or repairers of road surfaces, using cobbles, paid by the yard.
'stoppe': stoup; a stone basin for water which had been blessed.
store-house: see **stock-house**.
'stowinge': the cutting of boughs from the tops of pollarded trees.
stulps: strong posts driven vertically in the ground, like modern piles.
'sturkes': stirks, yearling bullocks or heifers.
subpoenas: 'suppenies'.
subsidy, 'subsedy', 'supsede': a major form of national taxation, based on assessments and supervised by special commissioners.
surgeon: 'seacheon', 'surgyn'.
surplice: a loose-fitting garment with long sleeves, worn by clerics and choirs, used before and after the Reformation.
surveyors of highways: parish officials elected from 1555 to supervise the maintenance of local roads and bridges.
'sute': suit; 1) legal dispute ; 2) set of clothing).
'swet, the': probably a virulent form of influenza.
'swinesty': pigsty.
'sysings': sizing; use of a glutinous wash to prepare the ground for painting, gilding, etc.

T

tabernacle: a framework of stone or wood to contain and show off a religious image; originally painted and gilded.
table, 'tabell': 1) wooden table used in the **Holy Communio**n (*qv*); 2) a panel fixed to a wall displaying the **Ten Commandments** (**Decalogue**) or other important texts (see **commandment board**).
'tammey': a fine worsted cloth of good quality, often glazed.
tenth: proportion of taxation levied on the laity (see **fifteenth**).
tester: a flat canopy over a pulpit to project the preacher's voice, often suspended from an adjacent wall by a rod or chains.
'threnne oute': thrown out, ejected (from house).
tippling: drinking alcohol for over an hour; hence **tippling houses**.
tithing table, 'tythinge table': a panel on a church wall showing tithes that had to be paid in the parish.
torch-house: a cupboard in a church to store candles and torches; before the Reformation parishes commonly appointed torch-reeves.
touchboxes: a box to house priming-powder or touch-powder for guns.
tow-comb, 'towecombe': a wooden block set with rows of iron teeth, through which bundles of hemp or flax were dragged and thereby cleaned.
town: 'toune', 'twoune', 'twne'.
town lands: farmland and other property given as endowments to a parish and its church; a major source of parochial income.
townwarden: a parochial officer appointed to administer **town lands** (*qv*); in some parishes townwardens and churchwardens operated side by side.
'treinnen': training (of soldiers).
trimming, 'tryming', 'trymmeing': putting in order; hence '**tryme**' (of eyes).
trindles (of wax): wooden or metal chandeliers hanging before the **rood** to illuminate it.
tumbrilling, 'tumbrellinge': carting (*eg* of vagrants).
'Turke, the': another name for **Barbary pirates** (*qv*).

'twyes': twice.
tye: a small area of common land in southern Suffolk or northern Essex, often the focus of hamlets or isolated farms.
'tyning', tynnyng': pewter (vessels).

U

'upperbodies': see **overbody**.
usury: lending money at interest, or charging excessive interest.

V

vagrants, 'vagarons', 'wagerantes': wandering people who posed a social threat to local communities.
'vallering': valuing (for subsidy).
'vardites', 'wardet': verdicts.
'vayn scrybylyng': a description in the reign of Queen Mary of writing put on church walls during King Edward's reign.
verdict: given at **visitation** (*qv*) by parish in response to the demands of a visitor.
vesses: a light kind of cloth, fairly cheap; also called settcloth.
vestry, 'vesterye': 1) a room in, or adjoining, a church for the safe-keeping of vestments and other equipment used in services; most existing vestries are post-Reformation in date; 2) the 'parliament' of a parish which met to make decisions and choose officers on **reckoning day** (*qv*).
vice, 'vyce': a performer or entertainer representing one or more vices (see '**pastyme**').
victualling houses, 'vittling howses': low-class eating-houses (*cf* **alehouses**).
view of frankpledge: see **frankpledge**.
visitation: official inspection of a parish by a visitor (*qv*).
visitor (ecclesiastical): either an archdeacon or a bishop, or his representative, who did his rounds regularly to ensure that all was in order.
visors: masks used by actors in dramatic performances.

W

wapentake: unit of local government in northern England, equivalent to the **hundred** (*qv*) in the south.
warrant: written order from a superior requiring something to be done.
watch and ward: traditional policing system, watching by night and warding by day; hence **watch-house** (*qv*).
watchers: equivalent to modern 'carers' who looked after the sick, injured and dying.
watch-house: building used by those on watch during the night.
weathercock: a wind-vane in the form of a cock, usually on a church tower; turns its head into the wind; no doubt used for elementary weather-forecasting.
'welche rugg': a Welsh rug or quilt.
wench: a sexually mature and unmarried young woman who, it was thought, might become pregnant and therefore chargeable to the parish.
wey: a variable unit of weight for cheese; defined in Suffolk as 256 lbs.
wharfage: fee charged for handling goods at a port.
wheel of fortune: a medieval image illustrating the influence of chance in human life; personified as a female figure with a revolving wheel.
wives: married women of a parish who after the Reformation still met as a proto-guild, collecting money for the church (see **bachelors**).
wives' stool: a stall in the church where women sat for 'churching' or thanksgiving after childbirth.
'wyche man': an entertainer who performed at local fairs; ?conjuror.

Y

'yelde hale': see **guildhall**.
'yoke': the strong swinging beam to which a bell was attached.

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Pl. 53: A local incident during the Reformation, frozen in time. At Denston, looking southwards along the roodscreen, we see the saw-marks of a carpenter who, under orders, was cutting down the superstructure of the screen, leaving only a panelled base.



Pl. 54: Badley church looking west. This view, with its assortment of silvery oak, limewashed walls and plain glass, typifies the atmosphere of a ‘reformed’ church. Note that the pulpit is well to the west of the nave, among the congregation.