

## BLEDLOW: II—CHURCH AND PARSONS

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THE story of the early landowners in Bledlow and the tenure of the Norman Abbey of Bec-Hellouin has already been told.<sup>1</sup> Some account may now be given of Bledlow church (Pl. IV), its successive patrons and the parsons who served the parish.

Thanks are due to the Provost and Fellows of Eton College for access to documents and to the specialists whose contribution is acknowledged in the relevant footnotes. Again I have to thank K. M. Richardson for her continuing help in documentation.

Having invested the capital by a wide flanking movement, William the Conqueror accepted the capitulation of the citizens of London at Berkhamsted. In due course Duke William rewarded his compagnons and followers with estates confiscated from the Saxon landowners.

The Honour of Berkhamsted, with outlying properties, including Bledlow, was originally held under Edward the Confessor by the thegn Edmund Atule. These lands were granted to Robert of Mortain, the Conqueror's half-brother.<sup>2</sup> Following the practice, not unknown in Saxon England and then customary in Normandy, of endowing religious houses with gifts of land, Count Robert bestowed a part of his newly acquired possessions on the Abbey of Notre Dame de Grestain, where he also chose to be buried. This Benedictine community had been founded in 1050 near Honfleur, at the mouth of the Seine, by Mortain's father, Herluin, Conte de Contaville. The original text of the charter survives in a thirteenth-century copy, now in Eton College archives<sup>3</sup> which records the gift, completed before Count Robert's death in 1091. (Pl. V.)

"Let all present and future know that I, Robert Count of Mortain, have given and conceded, and by this my present charter confirmed, to God and the Blessed Mary of Gresteign and to the monks of that place, the servants of God and the Blessed Mary, for the salvation of my soul and that of my father and mother and ancestors, in pure alms, all the churches of Berkhamsted and the church of Bledlow, with one hide of land in Bledlow and all pertaining to it. Moreover I give and grant to the said church of Bledlow a cotland from my demesne and two parts of one tenth acre of all my demesne in Bledlow with tithes in crops and other things and husbote and heybote from my demesne woods in Bledlow, and this subject to the inspection of my forester, and pasture of their flocks with my flocks in the demesne and other pastures. And lest anyone presume to challenge this free gift I have confirmed it by affixing my seal before these witnesses: Rudolph de Chaynes, Alban de Grostest', William de Mortein, Robert Franceis, Geoffrey de Bocchebroc and many others."

During the reign of Henry I, William, Robert of Mortain's son, joined Robert de Bellême in rebellion against the King and his lands were forfeited, including the manor of Bledlow, which was conferred on Hugh de Gurnay, a ward of the King. By 1108 Hugh de Gurnay's son had exchanged his manor of Bledlow for tithes and dues held by the Abbey of Bec in Normandy; the rectorial manor, however, already granted to Grestain, was not affected.

The English benefactions of Grestain were administered from the Priory of Wilmington in Sussex until the reign of Edward III, by which time such lands were known as Alien Priors.

Apart from its value as testimony to the grant made by Robert of Mortain,<sup>4</sup> the charter gives details of the benefits attached to the parson's living. These included a hide of land for his glebe and a "cotland" for his house and garden, the right to take wood from the lord's forest to repair his house, and thorns to mend his fences; he was to receive tithes of the manor's crops and "other things", that is lambs, pigs, milk, and he was entitled to pasture his flocks with those of the lord of the manor.

The first mention of tithes in England is in the seventh-century *Penitientiale* of Theodore of Tarsus, though they did not become a legal impost till the eighth century, and appear as an accepted form of taxation in the laws of Edmund (944) and Edgar (958).<sup>5</sup> The Greater Tithe or Garb was imposed on anything growing from the ground, corn, hay, wood; the Lesser Tithe covered the beasts of the field and their produce, gain from mills and fisheries and the earnings of daily labour. The Greater Tithe was the perquisite of a rector, who in turn rendered certain dues to his overlord; a vicar only received the Lesser Tithe with the offerings at the altar. In the Lincoln Bishop's Registers Bledlow appears as a rectorial manor until 1414. Buckinghamshire was originally in the See of Lincoln and so remained till 1845.

#### THE PARSONS

With the exception of the first five incumbents, the list of parsons (see Appendix 1) is based on information obtained from the Bishops' Registers kept in Lincoln.

The earliest mention of a priest at Bledlow is in the Thame Cartulary, compiled in 1203, which lists grants made to the Abbey of Thame, where "Johane sacerdote de Bledlawe" appears as witness to a gift of land made by Osbert de Saunderton in c. 1160, during the reign of Henry II.<sup>6</sup>

The next three priests cannot be given a date, but their names appear in two documents relating to their successor, John Oudenarde, who, in 1285, became embroiled in a lawsuit with the lord of the manor, the Abbot of Bec.

Master John claimed the two parts of the crop of a tenth acre of the lord's demesne, granted by charter, as his predecessors, Thomas de Gunneys and William de Boys, were accustomed to take and to hold, protesting loss of revenue to as much as £100 and brought suit. The Abbot of Bec contested the claim through his attorney.<sup>7</sup> There is no record of the judgement, but a document of the following year, renewing a lease for two parts of

the crop of the tenth of all demesne land "as enjoyed by Gilbert de Norton, former parson, fine 100s."<sup>8</sup> suggests an amicable settlement of the dispute.

Yet another deed of about the same date records that "The parson of Bledlow shall pay yearly 7s. for a  $\frac{1}{2}$  virgate upon which are situated his barn and the house of Andrew Haked, and he owes pannage . . . to wit the third best pig, and for this he shall have his pigs fed in Bledlow quit, and he shall have in the lord's wood by delivery, husbote and heybote." According to the Ecclesiastical Valuation of churches carried out in 1291, which remained valid till the Reformation, Bledlow church revenues amounted to £20 per annum, which compares favourably with those of Princes Risborough, £14 13s. 4d., and equates with those of High Wycombe. £2 10s. deducted from the sum was rendered yearly to Grestain.<sup>10</sup>

During the reign of King John (1199-1216) relations between the Alien Priories and the Crown deteriorated through the loss of Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Touraine and much of Aquitaine. In Edward I's time the situation was aggravated when the kingdoms were at war between 1294 and 1298. However, the realm was once more at peace when in 1299 the authorities assured "Protection until St. Peter ad Vincula for Master John de Grenestead, parson of the church of Bledlawe, who, with William, Prior of Wilmington, attorney in England of the Abbot of Grestain, is going to the Abbot beyond the seas: the like for the said Prior."<sup>11</sup>

John de Grenestede is the first entry in the list derived from the Lincoln Bishops' Registers; the date of his admission to Bledlow church is not recorded. He appears to have been a person of some standing, as Letters of 1302 nominate him, with one Roger Lundreys as attorneys for William, Prior of Wilmington, for three years during the latter's absence overseas.<sup>12</sup>

While the two kingdoms were at war the Abbey's property was said to be "in the King's hands" and the Crown appropriated Grestain's revenue; in many instances priests appointed by the Alien Priories were replaced.

An exception was made for Ingeramus de Banvilla, priest of Bledlow, presented in 1316 by William de Banvilla, Proctor of the Abbot of Grestain. In 1324, under Edward II, the Sheriff of Buckingham was commanded "to take security for Ingelram de Bamvill, parson of Bledlawe church, an alien, that he will conduct himself well and faithfully to the King and that he will not send the goods of his benefice out of the realm under any pretext or eloin them in any way, and that he will not leave the realm without special licence from the King, and to release him if he have arrested him . . . and to restore to him his goods."<sup>13</sup>

The Hundred Years War, which broke out in 1337 under Edward III, severed the last links between the Crown and the Alien Priories. A "notification" of 1343 is yet another tribute to Ingelramus, the last priest to be appointed by the Prior of Wilmington. This states "That the King has seen fit to restore to Ingelram de Banvilla, parson of the church of Bledlow, born of the realm of France, who for more than 24 years had made a continual stay in his benefice and elsewhere in England, bearing himself well and expending the goods of his church prudently, his church and the fruit and profits thereof, which had been taken into his [the King's] hand among other

lands of aliens of France.”<sup>14</sup> He died in office the same year.

An entry in the Calendar of Patent Rolls for June 1338 records the presentation of Robert de Watford to the church of Bledlow “in the King’s gift by reason of the temporalities of the Priory of Wylmington being in his hand on account of the War with those of France”,<sup>15</sup> In a further entry of 1342, David Wollore receives Letters of Presentation from the King to Bledlow church.<sup>16</sup> The names of neither of these two men appear in the Lincoln Bishops’ Registers. Wollore was chaplain to Edward III, and, with, Thomas de Brayton and Andrew Offord, held custody of the Great Seal in 1352. A register of pluralists (priests holding more than one benefice) drawn up in 1366 by Simon Langham, Archbishop of Canterbury,<sup>17</sup> mentions David Wollore (Wollevere), apparently one of the three outstanding pluralists of the day.<sup>18</sup> As the parish was at this time served by Ingeramus de Banvilla, it is clear that both these appointments were merely sinecures.

The two parsons subsequent to de Banvilla, also presented by the King, are recorded in the Lincoln Bishops’ Registers as John Bryan, clerk (1343-53), and John de Bryene, priest (1353-61). It seems possible that two priests with such similar names were one and the same person: an entry of 1354 in the Close Rolls lends support to this theory: “John Brian of Bledelawe acknowledges that he owes to the same Priory [to Peter de Falco, Prior of Okebourne] 40 *l.* to be levied in the county of Buckingham.”<sup>19</sup>

By this time it had become increasingly difficult for the two Alien Priors of Bec and Grestain to transfer the revenues of their English lands to the mother houses in Normandy. Added to this, the properties of Wilmington Priory, mainly on the south coast, and the brethren, were subject to special restrictions. An effort to solve the problem is reflected in the following document addressed to the Bishop of Rouen in 1349, appointing a Commission “to enquire into and report on the proposal made by the Abbot and Convent of Grestain to sell their lands and churches in England, for which, owing to distance and wars, they get no revenue, by the agency of John de Molendino, Lord of Tancarville, a prisoner in England, who is ready to sell them certain neighbouring lands in France, including the patronage of twelve churches.”<sup>20</sup> Sir John had been captured at Crécy, and, as patron of the Abbey, hoped to use their English revenues as ransome money. An entry of 1359 in the Close Rolls records that “with the assent of Sir John de Melun, Knight, Lord of Tankarvilla and chamberlain of Normandy, and by special licence of the King . . . John the Abbot of Grestain and the convent of that monastery have demised at farm . . . certain of the manors in England”; Bledlow church lands, however, are not mentioned.<sup>21</sup>

During Edward III’s reign, when many of the Grestain estates were sequestered and bestowed on the See of Chichester, a charter of 1352 records the transfer of Bledlow church to the patronage of St. Stephen’s Chapel, Westminster.<sup>22</sup>

“Edward, by the grace of God, King of England, France and Lord of Ireland, Know that by our special favour we give and concede to our chosen in Christ, the dean and canons of our free chapel of St. Stephen, in our palace of Westminster, the advowson of the church of Bledlow in the county

of Buckingham, to have and to hold for him and his successors, from us and our heirs, in freedom and pure and perpetual alms, etc., Under my hand at Westminster, 20th day of September in the 25th year of our reign.”

No immediate action appears to have been taken, however, and Grestain was apparently still receiving dues in 1358 through an agent, as the following deed implies.<sup>23</sup> “Enrolment of grant by the Abbot of Grestain and convent of that place to John Talcworth, burgess of Wycomb, of 50s. yearly rent which they used to receive by the hands of the rector of Bledlawe church, Co. Buckingham; also of the advowson of Bledelawe church. Dated Westminster, All Saints day, 32 Ed. III. Witnesses: Sir William de Shareshull . . . Sir John Hamden, then Sheriff of Buckingham and Robert le Hwelere, then mayor of Wycomb.”

An entry in the Close Rolls of 1361<sup>24</sup> reaffirms the gift of the church to St. Stephen’s Chapel; nevertheless in the same year the King presented Roger de Otery as rector to the living.

This priest also appears in Simon Langham’s Register of pluralists, where he makes an impassioned defence for the holding of pluralities. He held six benefices, all of which, with the exception of Bledlow, were sinecures.<sup>25</sup> An echo of the earlier dispute between Bec and Grestain over tithes is to be found in a petition entered in 1368 by the Abbot of Bec against Roger de Otery concerning tenements in Bledlow.<sup>26</sup> Otery alleged “that the premises are parcel of the dower of his church, the advowson whereof the King has acquired . . . that he was admitted and instituted at the King’s presentation and so is the parson of the said church.”

Although on the death of Otery in 1387 the Dean of St. Stephen’s Chapel had assumed his privilege as patron in presenting John Cassels (1387-1414), the grant cannot have been implemented till after 1413, in Henry IV’s reign, as would appear from a document of this date.<sup>27</sup> “Licence, because a like licence by Letters Patent of Edward III has not yet been executed, and for 8 marks paid in the hanaper, for the Dean and Canons of the King’s Free Chapel of St. Stephen in the Palace of Westminster, to appropriate the church of Bledlow, Co. Buckingham, in mortmain in the King’s lifetime or after his death, when they please, provided that a vicarage be sufficiently endowed and a competent sum of money from the fruits of the church distributed yearly among the poor parishioners by order of the diocesan.”

The Act finally suppressing the Alien Priories was passed in 1414 under Henry V. In the same year Bledlow ceased to be a rectory and became a vicarage, which explains the proviso in the Licence of 1413 for the proper endowment of the vicarage. A Constitution of Archbishop Stratford, confirmed by Parliament in 1391, regarding appropriated churches, required this provision and obliged the appropriator to “distribute to the poor parishioners a certain proportion of their benefices in alms”.<sup>28</sup>

The next five priests, all presented by the dean of St. Stephen’s Chapel, bridge the reigns from Henry V to Henry VII.

On the North wall of the chancel, in a niche, is the brass of a priest apparelled in amice and alb, with stole, maniple and chasuble, the hands in prayer (Pl. VI). The Latin inscription reads “Here lies Master William Herñ, B.A.,

lately vicar of this church who died in the year of Our Lord 1525. May God have mercy on his soul." In the Lincoln Bishops' Registers he appears as William Herevi, admitted to the Bledlow living in 1506/7 on the death of the last vicar, Henry Tybbard; his successor, John Underhill, is there recorded as presented in 1531 "on the death of the last vicar" but the memorial bears the date 1525.

While William Heron held the cure of Bledlow, in the reigns of Henry VII to Henry VIII, an indenture of 1521 records that the Provost and College of Eton leased to William Frankelen, Thomas Egleton, Richard Bigge and John Frankelen "a piece of land, parcel of their manor of Bledlow, near the parish church of Bledlow, between the land of John Hampden, Knight, on the east and the Provost's land, which John Spyre holds by copy of Court Roll, on the west and south, and the King's Way [the Lower Icknield] on the north, on which has been built a new house called the Churche House, to be held for the use of the said church for 99 years, rent 4d."<sup>29</sup> Over a hundred years later, in 1635, the church house is held by Edward Tyler, for 21 years, at a rent of 4s. 4d.<sup>30</sup> The location of this building is uncertain, but there is mention again of the church house in the report made after Bishop William's Visitation of 1637 (see below, p 375).

The church house is not an unusual feature in documents relating to this period and was a parish room, apparently rented as a dwelling, in which "Church Ales" were held, a form of entertainment which perhaps followed on the earlier festivals of the church and the Mystery Plays of the Middle Ages. That some benefit accrued to the church may be deduced from the following description: "Keeping of church ales in which with leaping, daunsings and kissynge they maynteyne the profet of their churche." By the reign of Elizabeth I, it is ordained that "the church-wardens shall suffer no plays, feasts, banquets, suppers or church ale drinkings to be kept in the church, chapel or churchyard".<sup>31</sup> Presumably these were relegated to the church house.

John Barbor (1534-56), described as Chaplain in the Lincoln Bishops' Registers, was the last presentation to be made by the Dean and Canons of St. Stephen's College. His name appears in the Ecclesiastical Valuation drawn up at this time which shows that his stipend amounted to £14 16s. 5d after deduction of certain dues.<sup>32</sup>

On 4th April, 1536, an Act of Parliament was passed dissolving all monastic houses with a yearly income of £200 and in 1539 a second Act legalised the confiscation of plate held by monasteries. Henry VIII passed a further Act in 1545 for the dissolution of colleges, free chapels, chantries, hospitals, guilds and stipendiary priests. Three years later the College and Free Chapel of St. Stephen's, Westminster, patron of Bledlow church since 1361, was dissolved, in the second year of Edward VI's reign and the advowson, after reverting to the Crown, passed into lay hands.<sup>33</sup>

During the reign of Edward VI inventories were made throughout the land to assess the value of church goods. The Bledlow inventory is dated 23rd July, 1552.<sup>34</sup>

bledlowe

"Imprimis one Chalys of Syluer nott gylte with a patent.

Item one Cope of Crymson veluett.  
 Item one Cope of tawny Damaske.  
 Item one Cope of popyngeye sylke.  
 Item one vestement of Crymson veluett.  
 Item one vestement of darke tawny Sylke.  
 Item one vestement of Dune sylke.  
 Item j vestement of Changabull Colar with all thynges to them.  
 Item alter Clothe of Crymson satyn.  
 Item 6 other paynted Clothes.  
 Item iij corpys and Clothes with Cassys.<sup>35</sup>  
 Item 5 lynnen alter Clothes one of Dyaper.  
 Item iij towells one of Diaper.  
 Item a holye water stoke of leade with ij little bells.  
 Item iiij Belles in the stepull.  
 Item a Crosse of Coper gylte.  
 Item a Funt Clothe and vayle Clothe.<sup>36</sup>  
 Item a Blewe alter Clothe.  
 Item ij Surplys and a Funt Clothe.  
 ij candell stykes of latyn."

On the death of John Barbor in 1556, in the reign of Queen Mary, William Forrest, clerk, was presented to the living of Bledlow by the first lay patron, Anthony Lambesonne (Lampson). An Edward Forrest was Groom of the Chamber to Queen Catherine of Aragon, and Miles Forrest "held the same place about the King". In 1538, Father John Forrest, Prior of Greenwich and Provincial of Franciscans in England, was martyred for denying the Supremacy of Henry VIII. William Forrest, it has been suggested, came of the same family, and was Chaplain to Queen Mary. This information is given in the preface to *The History of Griselda the Second*, a narrative poem by William Forrest, based on the divorce of Queen Catherine of Aragon.<sup>37</sup>

While his verse is not of a high order, it reflects a deep concern in the social economy of his time and the welfare of his fellows. In another work, *The Governace of Princes*, Forrest urges "Children to be sent to school at four years old, none to be set to work under eight, the school be free in every town, the curate to teach them to say, sing and write, and he to have an honest stipend". He also comments on the high rates and the soaring price of meat, calling for a rise in wages to offset the burden of the working man.<sup>38</sup> In the same work he gives his views on the development of the wool industry.

"No town in England, village or borough,  
 But thus with clothing to be occupied.  
 Though not in each place clothing clean thorough,  
 But as the town is, their part so applied.  
 Here spinners, here weavers, there clothes to be dyed  
 With fullers and shearers as be thought best,  
 As the Clothier may have his cloth drest."

and again :

"The wool the Staplers do gather and pack,  
 Out of the Royalme to countries foreign,  
 Be it revoked and stayed back,

That our clothiers the same may retain,  
All kind of work folkes here to ordain,  
Upon the same to exercise their feet  
By tucking, carding, spinning and to beat."<sup>39</sup>

During the Counter Reformation, in the last year of Queen Mary's brief reign, an enquiry under Cardinal Pole into the state of the church had revealed that "very many vicarages are at present void and from the slenderness of their revenues are unable to support able and learned curates". As a result an edict was issued in 1558 for a "Grant in frank almoign to Thomas Bishop of Lincoln and his successors" of the advowsons of the vicarages, rectories and churches of many villages, including Bledlow, "that certain rectories, impropriate benefices and other ecclesiastical and spiritual emoluments, which had been in the Crown's hand since 20 Henry VIII, should be applied to the augmentation of poor livings, the maintenance of preachers and the bringing up of scholars within the realm."<sup>40</sup>

Two years later under Elizabeth I, Archbishop Parker inaugurated an inquiry into the state of the Church which also revealed the fact that many cures were vacant, so that Bledlow, a village of "lxiiij families", according to the census ordained by the Privy Council and carried out by the Diocese of Lincoln in 1563,<sup>41</sup> was fortunate in having a vicar at this time. An entry in the Calendar of Patent Rolls for the same year<sup>42</sup> records the annual value of Bledlow vicarage as £12 "bells and lead reserved", and the patron is charged with the following yearly payments, "7s. to Eton College, 40s. to the Bishop of Lincoln, 5s. to the poor of the parish, 13s. 3d. to the Archdeacon of Buckingham for proxies and synodals, and £5 to the vicar of Bledlowe".

When in 1553, under Edward VI, the Commissioners seized the remaining church plate, one chalice and one paten were allowed to the smaller churches. Queen Elizabeth sanctioned the use of the Communion Cup by the laity in 1559, and in the following year Archbishop Parker gave verbal orders to convert the chalices into cups within a limit of ten years. The Elizabethan cup followed the pattern used by Continental reformers, which is described as "a beaker raised upon a stem and foot", the size depending on the amount of silver available.<sup>43</sup> It may be assumed that the "chalys of Sylver nott gylte" mentioned in the 1552 Inventory was converted into the Bledlow Communion Cup, in use at this day (Pl. VII (b)).

The cup,  $5\frac{3}{8}$  inches in height, is engraved with a pattern of conventional design characteristic of the period. Dated 1569/70, it bears an unidentifiable London mark. The original Elizabethan paten-lid, also with a London mark, has had a foot added in the second half of the seventeenth century which shows an engraved cross, certainly not original and probably the work of a Victorian silversmith.

William Forrest, whose ministry continued into the reign of Queen Elizabeth, resigned in 1577.

John Smithe (1577-92) was presented by William More, clerk, and the following three vicars, William Dyere, Edward Stevens and Robert Evans, were presented between 1592 and 1622 by Queen Elizabeth I and James I.

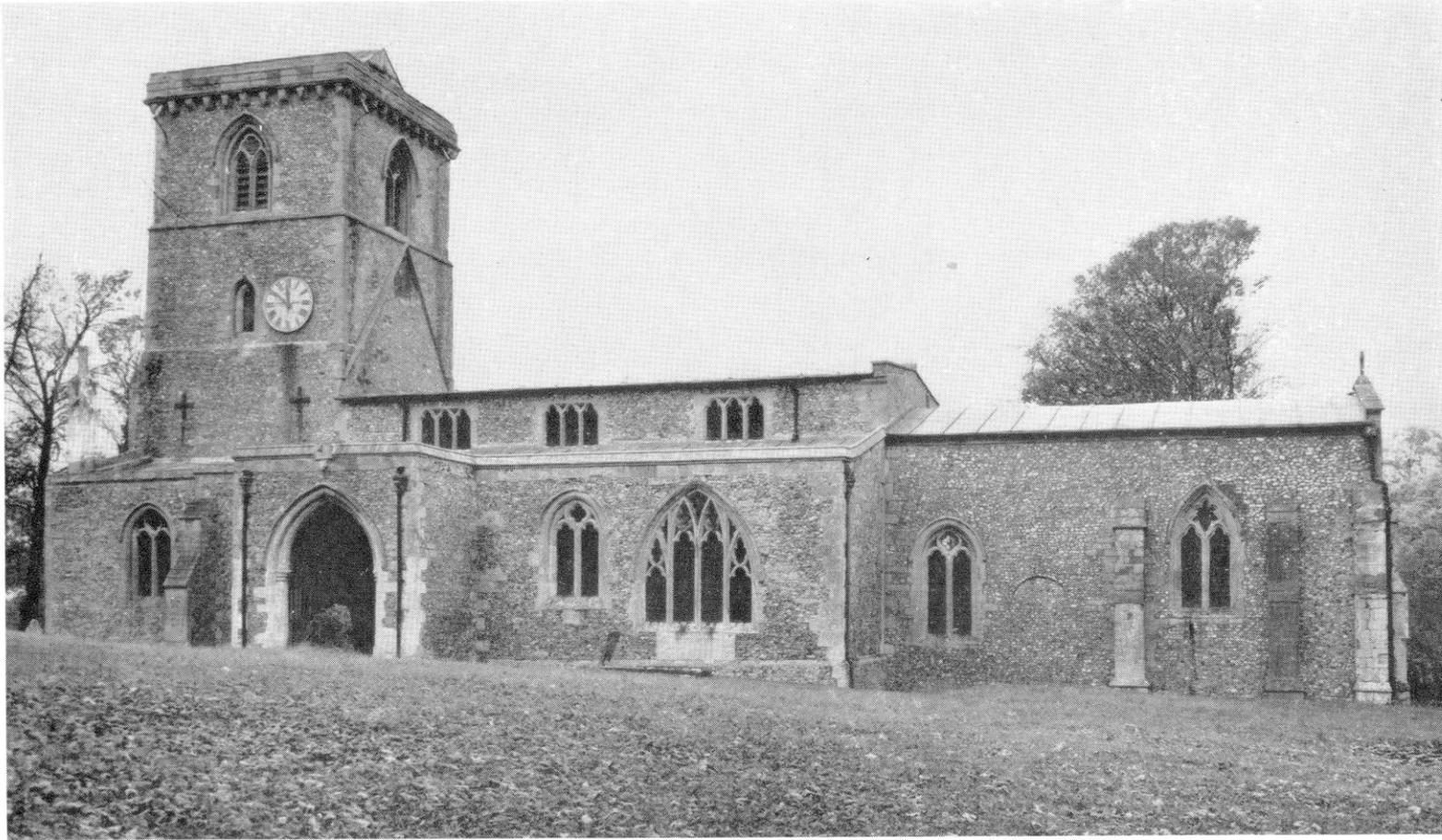


PLATE IV. Holy Trinity Church, Bledlow.

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Society of Antiquaries

PLATE VI. Brass of Master William Hern.



PLATE VII (a). The Norman font, Bledlow.



PLATE VII (b). The Elizabethan chalice.

A survey made in 1595 during Elizabeth's reign concerning the state of parish churches had revealed that many were fallen into decay. From a return made after Bishop William's Visitation of Buckinghamshire churches in 1637, in the reign of Charles I, it is manifest that little had been done in the past sixty years to repair the ruinous state of the buildings. The report on Bledlow church<sup>44</sup> mentions "the buttresses of the Chanc. in decay and the steeple in the stone worke, and coping of the Church round about . . . The South Isle in decay in leads, so that it raineth in . . . The South window in the Chanc. is partly stopt up and the windowes broken in Church and Chancell; the seiling over the Comm: table broken . . . The seats in the Church in decay."

No date is given by the Lincoln Bishops' Registers for the termination of Robert Evan's ministry, nor is it known when Adam Langley, his successor, was admitted. The lack of documentation may be attributed to the troubled times spanning the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth. In 1643 the House of Commons appointed a "Committee for the removal of Scandalous Ministers", in other words orthodox clergymen loyal to the Crown. At the same time another Committee was formed "for the Relief of Plundered Ministers", who, allegedly, had suffered loss in opposing the King. As a result many clergymen were dispossessed of their livings which were assigned to Dissenters.<sup>45</sup> It is possible that in this manner Robert Evans was removed from office by one William Starbuck, self-styled "Minister of Bledlow" whose dealings with the Plundered Ministers' Commission between 1647 and 1660 have already been mentioned in connection with the Rectorial Manor (see *B.L.T.*, p. 269).

Adam Langley's appointment to Bledlow church may have coincided with the Restoration under Charles II (1660); he died in 1663 and was succeeded by Brian Emmott, presented by James Blancks, by this date patron of the living. The four incumbents appointed by the widow of James Blancks and successive members of his family, between 1674 and 1732, include the reigns of Charles II and George II.

Of these, Timothy Hall (1674-8) may be mentioned. He held the livings of Horsenden, Princes Risborough and Bledlow in succession. On his resignation in 1678 he went to the church of All Hallows, Barking, where, in 1687, he was instrumental in publishing the *Royal Declaration for the Liberty of Conscience*. The following year he was consecrated titular Bishop of Oxford, but the canons of Christ Church refused to install him; he nevertheless retained his bishopric till his death.

The nucleus of the present vicarage was built in the reign of Queen Anne (1702-14), during William Stevenson's tenure of the parish.

John Taylor (1732-75), presented by Henry Crosse, great-grandson of James Blancks, kept a book with details of the tithes collected from each of his parishioners for the years 1742-44.

At the time of the Reformation the Greater Tithe was transferred to the lay proprietors, though the Lesser remained in the hands of the clergy. Throughout the Middle Ages the tithe was paid in kind, but during the eighteenth century a money due was substituted. Parson Taylor's accounts book reveals the laborious system used in the collection of tithes and the modest stipend resulting. Bledlow living qualified for Queen Anne's Bounty,

an award made to clergy in need of supplementary income, from a fund set aside in 1703, to which Taylor added the proceeds of the sale of apples, eggs, wool and the rent of his orchard and the churchyard. There is a certain shrewdness in his note on discovering the underpayment of one shilling a year due to him: "Mem. Thro' mistake I've all along Recd. one shilling Short in Mr. Crosse's Tythes as appears by my Receipts Entered in his Book, Vide the Particulars in the year 1742 in this Book. N.B. This ought to be rectified." The sum total of tithes for the years 1742-44 will be found in Appendix II.

During his ministry the Churchwardens' Accounts Book (1702-82) includes this item under the year 1745: "Gave to ye Ringers for Ringing for victory over ye rebels—10s.", thus ringing the knell to Jacobite hopes.

The Lincoln Bishops' Registers give 1775 as the year for the induction of John Davey, but it would appear that the repairs to the chancel of Bledlow church undertaken in 1773 were carried out while he was vicar. The Churchwardens' Account Book under the years 1772/4 notes that "A violent storm of wind in 1773 having blown off the lead from the South side of the Chancel and the Copping Stones from the East End of it, A Rate was made on several Improrietors for the repair thereof and for other necessary Articles of Disbursement, at 1s. 6¼d. in the Pound as under". Davey's signature is appended. There is also an item on the following page which notes "To Mr. Davey for five visitations . . . £1 5s." The Inventory of Church Goods carried out in 1783 (see pp. 379-80) bears the same characteristic signature and *rubrica* or flourish. In 1785 he was elected Master of Baliol and died in office thirteen years later, having retained the cure of Bledlow. His successor, Nathaniel Gilbert, was presented by Samuel Whitbread, the last descendant of James Blancks.

The Enclosure Awards Map of 1812, which provided the basis for establishing the Three-Field system at Bledlow, was drawn up during the ministry of William Stephen, presented by the Right Hon. Lord Carrington and vicar of Bledlow from 1808 till 1867.

## THE CHURCH

The architectural history of Bledlow church has been fully described in vol. II of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for Buckinghamshire, but there are certain features which warrant further consideration.<sup>46</sup>

The gift of the church to the Abbey of Grestain in 1086/91 implies a pre-conquest building, probably a simple structure of which no visible trace now remains; of the succeeding Norman church, built under the patronage of Grestain, and originally dedicated to the Holy Spirit, some evidence survives.

Built mainly of flint, with dressings of limestone and clunch, the present structure has undergone at least two periods of major alteration.

The two side chapels at the E. end of the N. and S. aisles may indicate that the Norman church was cruciform, though subsequent additions have obliterated the original plan (Pl. IV).

Of this period is the font (Pl. VII (a)), a fine example of the Aylesbury group, and possibly the earliest in the series. The fluted bowl has a band of foliated interlace and is set on a scalloped base decorated with foliage. A small square recess or chrysmatory, in the S. wall adjacent to the font, originally held the

holy oils used in baptism.

The nave arcades are of *c.* 1200. The chancel arch is in the same style, but the inner square order rests on plain moulded capitals; below these are corbel heads, with flowing hair, the work of a later craftsman.

In the N. wall of the chancel is a thirteenth-century lancet window with trefoiled head, the sill widely splayed, this has a hinged lower panel, now closed, separated by a transome; from such "low-side" windows a bell was rung during Mass, at the Sanctus and at the Elevation of the host, a custom ordained in 1281 by an injunction of Archbishop Peckham. Bishop William's Visitation of Bledlow church in 1637 (see above, p. 375) records "4 bells and Sts. bell".

The S. door, which was inserted in the late thirteenth century, is noteworthy for the iron strap-hinges with foliate ends, also for the draw-bar hole, 4 ft. 2 in. in depth.

Holy water stoups were normally set outside the church door, and when these are found inside the porch, as at Bledlow, it may be assumed that the stoup antedates the porch, which was added in the fourteenth century.<sup>47</sup> On the W. jamb of the porch, and on a buttress W. of the blocked-up priest's door in the S. wall of the chancel, scratch or mass dials may still be traced.

Two plain corbels on the W. face of the chancel arch and the cut back corbelling on the inner side, as well as infilled slots on the under side of the arch, suggest a pre-Reformation rood-loft, with lath and plaster tympanum as background for the rood figures, features which were probably suppressed during the reign of Elizabeth I, by the Order of 1561. There is now no evidence of a stair but access to the rood-loft may have been by ladder.

Two side altars are recorded in use during the fourteenth century, dedicated to St. Catherine and St. Margaret. These were apparently at the E. end of the N. and S. aisles, where their original position is indicated by the *piscina* in the wall of the S. aisle and by two basins with drain-holes in the sill of the nearby N. aisle window. The latter would equate with a phase in the thirteenth century when ritual required the washing of the priest's hands and the Communion vessels at separate basins. The chapel of St. Margaret is still in use.

Two recesses in the wall of the S. aisle, too shallow for effigies, perhaps originally adorned with wall paintings, may have been designed as memorials to James Freysel, Knight of the Shire, and his wife (see *B.L.T.*, pp. 273, 280, where he is mentioned as landowner and official of the Abbey of Bec). He died in *c.* 1341 leaving benefactions to the church. His will states that "he desires to be buried in the church of the Holy Spirit at Bledlow, by the altar of St. Margaret. He leaves 200 florins of Florence to the Abbot of Bec and other sums to the Prior of Okebourne . . . He leaves 20 *l.* for covering the chapel of St. Margaret at Bledlow with lead and other small sums for lights there and at the altar of St. Catherine".<sup>48</sup>

The window nearest to St. Margaret's altar, of Early Perpendicular style, is dated by contemporary heraldic glass.<sup>49</sup> The central arms are: *Old France and England* (one quarter has been replaced); these are the arms of Edward III, and the glass must be later than 1339 when Edward quartered the arms

of France. On the left are the arms of Henry, Earl of Derby, antedating 1345 when he became Earl of Lancaster. The shield on the right shows the arms of William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton, so created in 1337. In the head of a window in the S. wall of the chancel, nearest the altar, another shield of the same period shows the arms of Clare, Earl of Gloucester. These are all set in the remains of the original grisaille. Apart from Edward III's patronage of the church (1340-87), there is no manorial history for the presence of these blazons.

The fifteenth-century window in the E. wall of the N. aisle, of two trefoiled ogee lights, is of clunch; two leaves framed in the small upper lights are all that survives of the original glass. It seems likely that a recess for the N. aisle altar was suppressed in the seventeenth century, the window reset and the gap filled with masonry, including the gabled niche of clunch on the left, which was probably designed for a statue.

The brass of William Heron, priest of the parish, 1506-25 (see above, p. 371), now in a recess in the N. wall of the E. end, was removed from the original setting in the floor of the chancel when the present altar steps were added.

The majority of pre-Reformation churches were adorned with biblical scenes and conventional designs; many of these were obliterated at the time of the Reformation.<sup>50</sup> The earliest wall-paintings in Bledlow church are the thirteenth-century foliated patterns set on a masonry background to be seen in the spandrels of the nave arcades. Part of a wall-painting above the S. doorway, of fourteenth-century date, depicts the Angel of the Lord admonishing Adam and Eve, who are shown digging and spinning; Mr. Rouse has found evidence of scenes suggesting a Creation cycle such as may be seen at Chalfont St. Giles. A late fifteenth-century painting on the right of the N. door shows the familiar theme of St. Christopher carrying the Infant Christ over a river. On the left, the small figure of a hermit in a tower holds a lighted candle out of a window. The presence of St. Christopher, the patron saint of travellers, is appropriate in a church which lies between the two ancient trackways of the Upper and Lower Icknield. Post-Reformation "Sentences" are painted above the arches of the nave arcades and on the S. and N. jambs of the chancel arch. The last reads "I will wash my hands in innocency, Oh Lord, so will I go to thine altar". The Creed appears on the E. wall of the nave and the Ten Commandments on a blocked-up window behind the altar of St. Margaret in the S. aisle, described in the 1637 Visitation as "stopt up quite". The practice of setting up the Commandments at the E. end of the church is as early as the reign of Edward VI, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer were added later. The "Sentences" were commonly used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as subjects for meditation, explaining the meaning of liturgical practice and drawing attention to the special function of each part of the church.<sup>51</sup>

An Inventory dated 1783, made during John Davey's ministry, under Luke Heslop, Archdeacon of Buckingham, lists "Utensils, Books, Vestments, Ornaments Etc., in the Parish Church of Bledlow in the County of Bucks."; from this document certain items may be quoted.<sup>52</sup>

The first entry is "A Communion Table"; sanctioned by the Canons of 1603, this is now the S. aisle altar. Item 6 is "An Altar Piece of Mahogany

with a painting of a Dead Christ by Wale in a gilt frame under a Pediment ornamented with a Glory and furnished with 3 Sham Tepers in Candlesticks, carved and gilt". The Piéta is the work of Samuel Wale, an early member of the Royal Academy, who died in 1786. One of the three "Sham Tepers" still survives. During the early eighteenth century altar candles were no longer used, except for practical purposes at Evensong. At about this time wooden candlesticks, with flame carved and gilded to look as if alight, came into use, and two or three were fixed to the reredos. The fittings for three such candlesticks may be seen on the S. aisle altar-piece.<sup>53</sup>

The church plate, items 11, 12 and 13, includes, in addition to the Elizabethan Communion cup and paten already described (see p. 374), a silver flagon, the gift of John Blancks, dated 1672, and a silver dish or large paten, dated 1689, presented by John Crosse in 1693.

Part of the original "Septum" or altar rails still survives at the W. end of the N. aisle. The Churchwardens' Accounts of 1772-82 mention "A padlock and chain to fasten the altar rails" and these again appear in the Inventory (item 40) as "a small chain and padlock to secure the Septum". Altar rails, unknown before the Reformation, were introduced in the early seventeenth century, chiefly at Archbishop Laud's instigation, when Bishop Wren made an order in the Norwich Diocese that "the Rayle be made before the Communion Table reaching crosse from the North wall to the South wall, neere one yard in height, so thick with pillars that doggs may not get in".<sup>54</sup>

Item 27 is "A Wainscot Litany Desk with silk Covering, a Stool and Cushion and Litany Book in Qrto.". During the eighteenth century, Bishop Cosin of Durham ordained that the Litany be read from a Litany Desk, but the edict was not generally observed and the Reading Desk (item 26) was commonly used; the Bledlow Litany Desk, now standing in St. Margaret's chapel, is a rare survival.<sup>55</sup>

Listed as item 30 on the Inventory is "A Chest with three Locks for the Parish Writings"; this now stands against the N. aisle wall and still preserves the Parish records.

Item 38 is entered as "A Ring of five Bells". The Edwardian Inventory of 1552 records "iij Belles in the Stepull". In his will of 1622/3 Henry Knight, bell-founder, states that Bledlow owes him £4 2s., probably for recasting a bell. The report following on Archbishop William's Visitation of 1637 includes "4 bells and the Sts. bell;" the last would be run from the chancel window. At the end of that century the four bells were recast. Three of these are stamped 1683, a fourth has the numbers transposed, but from the similarity of the numerals, including a characteristic figure 3, this must belong to the same casting. RICHARD KEENE CAST THIS RING is stamped on one of the group. A fifth bell was apparently added between 1683 and 1714, as five bells are listed for Bledlow in Brown Willis' MS notes for Buckinghamshire Churches, vol. XXIV, 2, dated 1714. Next is the 1783 entry of five bells, item 38 in the Inventory. One of these was recast in the nineteenth century and is inscribed "Rev. William Stephen, vicar, Richard Piggott, James Hargreave, churchwardens, W. & J. Taylor, founders, 1842".<sup>56</sup>

Two further items of interest are "An Altar Pall of Green Cloth bordered

with a silk fringe" (item 2) and "An Alb" (item 17). The word "pall" is here used in the sense of an altar covering, as in the Coronation Service of William and Mary, where it is defined as a "pall or altar-cloth" and is likewise used in two Inventories of Winchester College taken in 1636 and 1649, at the time of the Parliamentary Visitation.<sup>57</sup>

In the Churchwardens' Accounts Book of 1702/83 there is a shortened version of the Inventory, including articles "many of which had been long in use, and others were provided against the Visitation" [of Archdeacon Heslop]. "An alb, a short surplice for funerals and another for the Clark without sleeves" are entered at 15s. That such a vestment was in use at Bledlow before this date is clear, for there is repeated mention of washing the alb in the Churchwardens' Accounts Book between the years 1772 and 1783. Its survival in use at this late date is of some interest.<sup>58</sup>

The eighteenth-century Accounts Books show that the Churchwardens, then, as now, were responsible for the care of the church fabric. There are items for the carting of stone, lime, sand and timber, and one for 4,000 eight-penny nails, as well as entries for the cost of "runing and laying" the lead on the church roof, and for glazing. A churchwarden has entered expenses for a horse, so that he may go to "Hedenton" quarry (?Headington, now closed) to choose stones for the coping of the roof. There are also recurrent payments for the destruction of vermin, which include sparrows, stoats, foxes, polecats, badgers, hedgehogs, kites and hawks. The church funds also cover the yearly cost of a bonfire on 5th November.

On the back of the Bledlow copy of the Inventory, written on a strip of parchment, may be found a list of the church Charities to which others were added later (see Appendix III).

From the churchyard, traces of the original high-pitched roof may be seen on the E. wall of the tower; at its apex is a small door, now blocked up, which would have given access to the timber roof-beams.

A sarsen boulder, 4 ft. in length, has been used as the foundation for one of the buttresses on the N. wall of the tower. Such sarsens, derived from the denuded clay-with-flints, which once overlay the chalk, occur naturally along the Icknield Way in the vicinity of Bledlow and are commonly found in this area built into the lowest courses of the older cottages and churches, an interesting custom, possibly some echo of pre-Christian usage.<sup>59</sup>

#### APPENDIX I

##### LIST OF BLEDLow PARSONS TO ENCLOSURE ACT OF 1812

1. John "sacerdote de Bledlawe", c. 1160.
2. Thomas de Gunneys.
3. William de Boys.
4. Gilbert Norton.
5. John Oudenarde, c. 1285.
6. John de Grenestede, died c. 1316/17.
7. Ingeramus de Banvilla, priest presented by William de Banvilla, proctor of the abbot and convent of Gresteign, on the death of the last rector master John de Grenestede.

Admitted 9th February, 1316/17 (Register II, f. 189).

8. John Bryan, clerk, presented by Edward III who had seized the patronage of Wilmington Priory because of the war against France, on the death of Ingeramus.  
Admitted 25th December, 1343 (Register VI, f. 97d).
9. John de Bryenne, priest, presented by Edward III on the resignation of Master John, the last rector.  
Admitted 15th December, 1353 (Register IX, f. 301).
10. Roger de Otery, clerk, presented by Edward III on Master John de Briene's accepting the living of Clyne.  
Admitted 2nd May, 1361 (Register IX, f. 317d).
11. John Cassels, priest, presented by William de Sleaford, dean of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, on the death of Roger Otery.  
Admitted 24th September, 1387 (Register XI, f. 387).
12. John Markham, alias Spanyell, chaplain, presented as vicar by Richard Slake, dean of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster.  
Admitted 10th December, 1414 (Register XIV, f. 457).
13. Roger Dyer, died *c.* 1464.
14. Thomas Smyth, priest, presented by Robert Kyrkeham, dean of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, on the death of Roger Dyer the last vicar.  
Admitted 23rd April, 1464 (Register XX, f. 182).
15. Thomas Payne, died *c.* 1488.
16. Henry Tybbard, priest, presented by the dean and chapter of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, on the death of Thomas Payne, the last vicar.  
Admitted 31st October, 1488 (Register XXII, f. 227d).
17. William Herevi, B.A., presented by the dean and canons of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, on the death of Henry Tyberd, the last vicar.  
Admitted 22nd March, 1506/7 (Register XXIII, f. 340).
18. John Underhill, clerk, presented by the dean and canons of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, on the death of the last vicar.  
Admitted 7th January, 1531/2 (Register XXVII, f. 216).
19. John Barbor, chaplain, presented by the dean and canons of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, on the resignation of John Underhill.  
Admitted 11th August, 1534 (Register XXVII, f. 218d).
20. William Forrest, clerk, presented by Anthony Lambesonne on the death of the last vicar.  
Admitted 1st July, 1556 (Register XXVIII, f. 163).
21. John Smithe, presented by William More, clerk, on the resignation of William Forrest, 12th March, 1577.  
(P.D. 1577/5).
22. William Dyere, presented by Queen Elizabeth, 10th April, 1592.  
(P.D. 1592/13).
23. Edward Stevens, clerk, presented by James I on the death of the last incumbent.  
Admitted 30th September, 1605 (Register XXX, f. 267).
24. Robert Evans, presented by James I by reason of lapse, 7th February, 1622.  
(P.D. 1622/69).
25. Adam Langley, died *c.* 1663.
26. Brian Emott, M.A., clerk, presented by James Blankes of Bledlow, gentleman, on the death of Adam Langley.  
Admitted 24th September, 1663 (Register 33, f. 16d).
27. Timothy Hall, presented by Elizabeth Blanckes, widow, 7th April, 1674.  
(P.D. 1674/14).

28. William Stevenson, M.A., presented by John Crosse, gentleman, on the resignation of Timothy Hall.  
Admitted 1st May, 1678 (Register 34, f. 27).
29. Hugh Whistler, B.D., presented by Henry Cross, Esq., of Bledlow on the death of William Stevenson.  
Admitted 7th September, 1728 (Register 38, p. 191).
30. John Taylor, M.A., presented by Henry Cross, Esq., on the resignation of Hugh Whistler.  
Admitted 8th February, 1732 (Register 38, p. 273).
31. John Davey, M.A., presented by Elizabeth Hayton of Ivinghoe, widow (daughter of Henry Cross), on the death of John Taylor.  
Admitted 24th February, 1775 (Register 39, p. 248).
32. Nathaniel Gilbert, clerk, presented by Samuel Whitbread, Esq., on the death of John Davey.  
Admitted, etc., 8th November, 1798 (Register 39, p. 662).
33. William Stephen, clerk, M.A., presented by the Rt. Hon. Lord Carrington, on the death of Nathaniel Gilbert.  
Admitted 19th January, 1808, remained as vicar until 1867. (See Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigienses*.)  
This list, all but the first five incumbents, has been compiled by the Lincolnshire Archives Committee, from the Bishops' Registers. The Buckinghamshire archdeaconry was removed from the diocese of Lincoln in 1837. Bledlow was a rectory until 1414, thereafter a vicarage.

APPENDIX II  
VICAR JOHN TAYLOR'S TITHE BOOK, 1742/4,  
SUM-TOTAL OF STIPEND  
1742

Tythes at ye Town Bledlow		£33	17	17d
Ridge Tythes Bledlow Ridge		12	00	00
Both		45	17	07
Rent of ye Chyard		01	11	06
Recd. of John Stevens surplice fees		02	10	03
	Sum Tot	49	19	04d
Mr. Crosse* (Salary paid out of ye Parsonage)		05	00	00
Farmer's Piece & Hitchcock's Close		01	00	00
The Ham		00	02	00
Westfield		00	00	09
Rent of ye Ally (5s. being deducted for mending ye hedge every year)		02	00	00
		08	02	09
Queen Ann's Bounty		10	00	00
		18	02	09
		49	19	04
	Sum Tot.	68	02	01
Mem. The Eggs and Early Calves yt dropt before Ladyday Butler recd. ye profit this year.				
	1743			
Tythes at ye Town		37	02	01
Surplice Fees		03	06	02
		40	08	03

Whole Ridge Tythes		11	12	04
		52	00	07
Mr. Crosse		8	02	09
Queen Ann's Bounty		10	00	00
		18	02	09
		52	00	07
Rent of ye chyd		01	11	06
		71	14	10
Amb. Newell's grass seed		00	06	00
	Sum Total	72	00	10
	1744			
Tythes at ye Town and surplice Fees		37	15	01
Ridge Tythes		11	13	02
		49	08	03
Mr. Crosse Sum total		8	02	09
Queen Ann's Bounty		10	00	00
		67	11	00
The Wool sold		4	17	00
	Sum Total	72	08	00

\* Henry Crosse, greatgrandson of James Blancks, who married Elizabeth Jodrell and was patron of the church.

### APPENDIX III

#### THE CHURCH CHARITIES

- 1618 Henry East charged his tenement "Picked's Close" with an annuity of 20s. for 4 poor widows. The Bounty was known as "Widows' Crowns" and was paid in 5s. pieces.
- 1627 Henry Smith's "General Charity" from his Stoughton estates provided for 17 greatcoats or blankets.
- 1671 John Blancks bequeathed land called "Ford's Close", the rent was to provide bread, and 10s. to the vicar for a sermon.
- 1672 Margaret Babham gave £100 in land to provide 40s. a year for coats for 2 men and 2 women, to be marked with her initials M. B., and 10s. to the vicar for a sermon. The charge came on Sandpit Farm. The Charity Commission in 1905 converted this into a distribution among 12 women.
- 1784 Elizabeth Eustace's "Linen Charity" was for 4 poor persons, one to be a man. One of the gifts was to be made up as follows: "Two ells of dowlas at 1/3 an ell to make up the body of a shift; one yard of Irish linen at 1/6 a yard, and a quarter of a yard of lawn at 4/- a yard for a pair of shift sleeves and caps."
- 1812 The Coal Charity. Under the Bledlow Enclosure Act, the income from 25 acres of land on Bledlow Ridge known as Colony Cottages was devoted to buying coal for those in need, in substitution for the ancient right of cutting firewood in Bledlow woods.
- 1824 Edward Slaughter left £100 for distributing bread to the needy. This was amalgamated with John Blancks' charity.

#### ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES

*Addleshaw* G. W. O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (1948).

<i>B.L.T.</i>	Alison Young, <i>Bledlow: I. Land Tenures and the Three-Field System</i> , <i>Rec. of Bucks.</i> , 17.4 (1964), 266-85.
<i>C.Cl.R.</i>	Calendar of Close Rolls.
<i>C.P.L.</i>	Calendar of Papal Letters.
<i>C.P.R.</i>	Calendar of Patent Rolls.
<i>Dugdale</i>	<i>Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum</i> , VI.2-3 (1830).
<i>E.C.R.</i>	<i>Eton College Records</i> , vol. 7 (1943); vol. 46 (1960).
<i>Munro Cautely</i>	H. Munro Cautely, <i>Suffolk Churches and their Treasures</i> (1938).
<i>Wickham Legg</i>	J. Wickham Legg, <i>The Inventory of the Parish Church of Bledlow in 1783</i> , <i>Proc. St. Paul's Ecclesiological Soc.</i> , 5 (1901-5), 229.
<i>P.R.O.</i>	Public Record Office.

<sup>1</sup> See *B.L.T.*

<sup>2</sup> See Domesday Book, *B.L.T.*, p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 1. A charter of Richard I repeats the confirmation of all gifts made by Mortain to Grestain by Edward II's charter. "Carta Regis Ricardi Primi, Donatorum Concessionem recitans et confirmans. [Cart. I Ed. II n. 21 per Inspex.] Ricardus Dei gratia rex Angliae dux Normanniae etc. Sciatis nos concessisse, et praesenti carta nostra confirmasse omnes subscriptas donationes, factas Deo et ecclesiae Sanctae Mariae de Grestain . . . Ex dono Rob. Comitum Moreton . . . et Wilmingtonam et quicquid ad eam pertineat . . . See *Dugdale*, VI.2, 1090.

<sup>4</sup> Hitherto documentary evidence for the gift has rested on an entry of 1284/5 in the de Banco Rolls, see below, note 7.

<sup>5</sup> J. R. H. Moorman, *Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century* (1945), p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Thame Cartulary, *Oxford Record Soc.*, 25 (1907), 84, fol. 34r.

<sup>7</sup> De Banco Rolls, *P.R.O.*, C.P. 40, 55, m. 50, dated 12/13 Ed. I. I am much indebted to Mr. T. D. Tremlett, both for the transcription and translation of this typically long-winded and involved legal document.

<sup>8</sup> *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 45 (Easter 1286).

<sup>9</sup> *E.C.R.*, vol. 46, no. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Taxatio Ecclesiastica P. Nicolai* (1802), 33, no. 49.

<sup>11</sup> *C.P.R.*, Ed. I, 1292-1301 (1895), 398.

<sup>12</sup> *C.P.R.*, Ed. I, 1301-7 (1898), 97.

<sup>13</sup> *C.Cl.R.*, Ed. II, 1323-27 (1898), 210.

<sup>14</sup> *C.P.R.*, Ed. III, 1340-43 (1900), 474.

<sup>15</sup> *C.P.R.*, Ed. III, 1338-40 (1898), 85.

<sup>16</sup> *C.P.R.*, Ed. III, 1340-43 (1900), 423.

<sup>17</sup> *Registrum Simonis Langham Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi*, (Ed.) H. Wood, *Canterbury & York Soc.*, 53 (1956), 80.

<sup>18</sup> W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the 14th Century* (1955), 36-7.

<sup>19</sup> *C.Cl.R.*, Ed. III, 1354-60 (1908), 57.

<sup>20</sup> *C.P.L.*, Ed. III (1897), 276, 338.

<sup>21</sup> *C.Cl.R.*, Ed. III, 1354-60 (1908), 659.

<sup>22</sup> *Dugdale*. Vi. 3, p. 1350, no. 6. "Carta dicti Regis Edwardi Tertii, de Advocatione Ecclesiae de Bledelowe" [Pat. I Ed. IV, p. 6, m. 3, per Inspex.] Given in 25 Ed. III. St. Stephen's Chapel, begun by Edward I in 1292, was continued under Edward II and finished in 1346/7. Two years later Edward III converted it into a collegiate chapel when a dean and chapter were appointed, but work inside the building was not finished till 1365, which may explain the delay in the appropriation of the Bledlow advowson. After 1547 the chapel served as meeting place for the House of Commons till its destruction in the fire of 1834. On this site St. Stephen's Hall now stands; the crypt survived as St. Mary's Undercroft. See J. M. Hastings, *Parliament House* (1950).

<sup>23</sup> *C.Cl.R.*, Ed. III, 1354-60 (1908), 541.

<sup>24</sup> *C.P.R.*, Ed. III, 1361-4 (1912), 85.

<sup>25</sup> *Registrum Simonis Langham*, *ibid.*, pp. vii, viii, 44. "Item magister Rogerus de Otery . . . Et subsequenter dominus noster rex Anglie michi de ecclesia de Bledelowe sui patronatus diocesis Lincolnensis providit parochiale que curata et taxata ad xxij li." See also A. Hamilton Thompson, *The English Clergy* (1947), 246.

<sup>26</sup> *C.Cl.R.*, Ed. III, 1364-8 (1910), 454.

<sup>27</sup> *C.P.R.*, Henry IV, 1408-13 (1909), 465.

<sup>28</sup> Earl of Selborne, *A Defence of the Church of England* (1886), 145.

<sup>29</sup> *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 76.

<sup>30</sup> *E.C.R.*, vol. 7, no. 88.

<sup>31</sup> *A New English Dictionary*, Clarendon Press (1888),

- <sup>32</sup> *Valor Ecclesiasticus Temp. Henry VIII, 1536*, vol. IV (1821), 249.
- <sup>33</sup> *Dugdale*, VI.3, p. 1349, 1 Ed. VI (1548).
- <sup>34</sup> *P.R.O. Q.R. Exchequer*, Church Goods, fo. 5. See *Wickham Legg*, p. 233.
- <sup>35</sup> That is: corporals and cloths with corporase-cases, used in the Communion Service, the latter made of linen to house the wafer.
- <sup>36</sup> The font veil or cloth, used ritually at Easter and Pentecost, appears to have been draped over the wooden font cover during the service of baptism. It was still used in this country after the Reformation when there is record of font cloths made out of albs and altar cloths. See F. C. Eccles, "The Font Veil", *Archaeological Journal*, 107 (1950), 78.
- <sup>37</sup> William Forest, *The History of Griselda the Second*, W. D. Macray (Ed.), Roxburgh Club (1875). Double entries in the Brown Willis MSS also record the presentation of William Forrest by Anthony Lampson in July, 1556 (Bodleian Library).
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182, Appendix of extracts from *The Governance of Princes* and comments by Macray.
- <sup>39</sup> See G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (1944), 136.
- <sup>40</sup> *C.P.R.*, Philip & Mary, 1557-8 (1939), 449-50.
- <sup>41</sup> Julian Cornwall, "An Elizabethan Census", *Rec. of Bucks.*, 16.4 (1959), 270.
- <sup>42</sup> *C.P.R.*, Elizabeth, 1560-3 (1948), 520.
- <sup>43</sup> S. A. Jeavons, "Midland Goldsmiths of the Elizabethan Period", *T. Lichfield & S. Staffs. Arch. & Hist. Soc.*, 3 (1961-2), 5.
- <sup>44</sup> *P.R.O.*, *Cal. of State Papers Domestic*, Charles I, vol. 366, no. 79, p. 18, for year 1637. See *Wickham Legg*, p. 234.
- <sup>45</sup> J. B. S. Carwithen, *The History of the Church of England*, II (1849), 155.
- <sup>46</sup> I am indebted to Mr. R. B. McDowall, who found time to visit the church and discuss certain aspects of the structure.
- <sup>47</sup> *Munro Cautley*, p. 194.
- <sup>48</sup> *Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, Appendix to Report IX (1883), 47. "The Will of James Freysel the Elder (1341)".
- <sup>49</sup> E. A. Greening Lambourn, *Some Armorial Glass of the Oxford Diocese, 1250-1850*, (1949), 53.
- <sup>50</sup> Mr. Clive Rouse has recently examined the wall-paintings and we look forward to his authoritative report.
- <sup>51</sup> *Addleshaw*, 104-7.
- <sup>52</sup> Published in full by *Wickham Legg*, pp. 234-6. The Churchwardens' Accounts Book of 1702-83 itemises "For parchm't for Making out two Inventories of the Books, Utensils and Ornaments belonging to the Church and exhibited at the Parochial Visitation of the Revd. and Worshipful Mr. Archdeacon Heslop, holden here the 19th of May, 1783. One of the Inventories signed by the Vicar and Churchwardens was delivered in at the Court and the other is to remain among the Parish writings . . . 17s." The Bledlow copy of the list is kept in the Parish Chest. On the back is a list of the Parish Charities and the document is signed by Jo Davey, Vicar, William Cowdery and William Bigg, Churchwardens, and endorsed "19th May, 1783, Exhibited before me, Luke Heslop, Archdn."
- <sup>53</sup> *Addleshaw*, p. 170-1; note 1 quotes Bledlow reredos.
- <sup>54</sup> *Munro Cautley*, p. 188.
- <sup>55</sup> *Addleshaw*, p. 72 and note 2, which mentions the Bledlow Litany desk.
- <sup>56</sup> A. H. Cocks, *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire* (1897), 317.
- <sup>57</sup> Kirby, *Annals of Winchester College* (1892), 341.
- <sup>58</sup> *Wickham Legg*, p. 244.
- <sup>59</sup> A. Morley Davies and A. H. J. Baines, *Proc. Geological Assoc.*, 64 (1953), 1.