

AMERSHAM CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS.

BY FREDERICK GEORGE LEE, D.D., F.S.A.

A MANUSCRIPT volume of paper, small folio in size, recently bound in calf (*i.e.*, in 1866), is preserved in Amersham Church, consisting now of only twenty leaves and a half, in size twelve inches by eight. It has two vellum covers* of single leaves, and has been carefully repaired. On the first six leaves of the book are recorded the churchwardens' annual accounts from A.D. 1541, the thirty-second year of King Henry VIII.

At the end are memoranda for the year 1684 (during which time a series of Briefs, as they were technically termed, appear on the leaf's last half-page). Most of the original MS. is lost.

On the sixth leaf the accounts of Roger Harding and another are set forth, A.D. 1597—an *hiatus* of fifty-six years.

The eighth leaf is blank.

On the tenth leaf appear the accounts of Robert Watkins and William Garnett, made in April, 1598.

On the eleventh leaf appear the accounts of Robert Hill and Barnard Rychardson, made in April, 1599.

On the thirteenth leaf appear the accounts of William Grimesdale and Robert Hyson, 1599 and part of 1600.

On the fourteenth leaf the accounts appear of William Baldwin and Robert Bachelor, made the xijth day of June, A.D. 1601.

* On special examination by a magnifying glass, I find that the vellum cover of the present volume evidently belonged originally to another; for it has the following words, in pale ink, written upon it: "Thys is the comunyon bok of ow' lady's church of Amersham."

On the fifteenth leaf the accounts appear of William Child and William Nash, made the 11th day of April, 1602.

Those which follow are of a miscellaneous and not very interesting character.

The ecclesiastical changes effected under the Tudors will be apparent if examples of the earlier and later accounts are set forth *verbatim*. This, therefore, in two cases I have attempted; notwithstanding that the ink which was used is very much faded in parts, while in some cases portions of the leaves are much destroyed by old age, rendering the records exceedingly difficult to be read.

A few exact extracts will, perhaps, best serve to give an idea of the volume belonging to a class of which (owing to the Tudor destruction of such records) so very few now remain.

Here is the first extract :—

(Folio 1.) Thes be y^e wardyns chossyn by y^e py^rshe Rycharde chylde Nycho^r herne harre Ryngsted : they hathe Resevyd viij^{li} ye xxj yere of the Rayne of Kyng harre ye viij the xxvj daye of October.

It. Refevyd upon hallhow day for ye lampe	iiijs	vj ^d
Res ^d in getheryng apon crystmas day for y ^e bem lyght	ij ^s	vj ^d
Res ^d in getheryng at ester for pascall mony	xxjs	j ^d
Res ^d at Wekom for Thom' blake's bequest	iijs	iv ^d
Res ^d in getheryng at hoketyde	xjs	j ^d
Res ^d for bawlle pense		v ^d
Res ^d at Antony's berryng for wast of torches		xij ^d
Res ^d at pone for wast of torches		x ^d
Res ^d of y ^e lord for Robyn hode		
Res ^d of Rycharde Dormar for wast of torches		x ^d
Res ^d of y ^e goodman bered for lede iij q ^t		
Resevyd of wyffe for an owld andfold owld yron		
Res ^d of Wyll ^m Evanse for Rent of y ^e church howse		
Sum' xij <i>li</i> . vij ^s i ^d		

Paid to Mayster Sandes for a quartern of waxe	ix ^s	iv ^d
Paid for a quartern of waxe at london	xjs	iv ^d
payd to Rycharde Bamton for iij ^{li} & a horne of waxe	ii ^s	vlj ^d
payd to Whether's wyffe for vij li of waxe		xij ^d
payd for vij ^{li} of waxe that went to ye paschalle & font } tap' and cenap' lyght & p'y ^r she ca'dell for all ye yere }	ii ^s	iiij ^d
payd for y ^e makyng of thys to Rycharde cutteler		xij ^d
payd for makyng of y ^e beme lyght	ij ^s	

payd for woke		vj ^d
payd to cutteller's wyfe		iiij ^d
payd to lody for hys labor		iiij ^d
payd to Gerry for hys labor		iiij ^d
payd for a lood of woode		x ^d
payd to gery for mendyng of bawdryk		iiij ^d
payd for a bybull	ix ^s	ix ^d
payd for fechyng of the bybull	ii ^s	
payd for a bottell of oylle		viiij ^d
payd for mendyng of ye shype foote		viiij ^d
payd for a nantyfyner to Rychard dormer	xxvj ^s	viiij ^d
payd for a grayll	v ^s	
payd for ij quers of Jhesu's masse	ii ^s	viiij ^d
payd for vi surples	iv ^s	
payd for mendyng of ye bell clap'		i ^d
payd Wyll'm tyller for mendyng of y ^e chymny		ij ^d
payd to Wykome to ye comyssarys corte		xij ^d
payd for mendyng of surples and abes		vj ^d
payd for iiiij ^h of tallowe Kandell at halowtyde & } crystmas }		vj ^d
payd for a bottell of oyle		viiij ^d
payd for iiiij p'reshyners	v ^s	
payd for kolys at ester to tredway		vj ^d
payd for watchyng of y ^e sepulkre in bred and alle		ix ^d
payd for skoryng of kan'styks at crystmas & ester		v ^d
payd to gery's wyfe for washyng at crystmas & ester		iiij ^d
payd for quyt Rent	iiij ^s	i ^d
payd for mendyng of surples a gaynst ester		vj ^d
payd for viij torches to water clarke	xvj ^s	
payd to Gery for mendyng of bawdryk		ij ^d
payd to foxe for mendyng of can'styk		iiij ^d
payd to Wyll'm buttler for mendyng of y ^e cloke		v ^d
payd for a new bell Roope		xiiij ^d
payd to butler for making a stapull for y ^e cloke		ij ^d
payd to Jone for sewyng of 'parlles on alb & abes		iiij ^d
payd for a sansebell Rope		vj ^d
payd for mendyng of ye orgynbellos		vij ^d
payd for ye gret bell Rope		xvij ^d
payd to glaycyers for mendyng of ye wyndowse	j ^s	
payd to Wyll'm butteler for mending of y ^e cloke		viiij ^d
delyured saynt Katern wardens		
payd for making of the pastry howse & y ^e making		
. corse and charges		
Whytsson alle aboue allcorse and charge	xxxij ^s	iiij ^d

Delyured by the honds of harre Ryngsted, Rychard
Chylle, Nicholas herne.

That which now immediately follows relates apparently to the property then belonging to the church. The names of the lands and their occupiers of course

have but a local interest; but such may serve to illustrate the history of the parish when unity in faith existed, and the customs of our ancestors:—

(Folio 4.) This bok made the second day of Noue'bre in the xxxij yere of Kyng henry th'eight by Mr. Thom's bland one of the Churchwardanes of the church of Agmondysh'm.

The bounds of the churche yarde of Agmondysh'm.

Imprimis, the stone wall w'th the gatte & the style towards the streate the hole Towne muste repayre and myteyne.

It'. Wedyn hill A D' perche now in the Tenure of Thom's Saund'rs (Henry Germon).*

It'. coperkyng's land a perche now in the Tenure of Chambers and John Gardyner of Banes. (Robt. Hemphry.)

It'. Galyens land a perche now in the Tenure of Thomas Saunders & Hugh Bachelor.

(Mr. Saunders of the Market Row.)

(Rich. Loueatt.)

It'. Cook's land A perch & a half now in the tenure of Whitefeld (& John deane).

It'. Barn's lands xij fote now in the tenure of Rychard Sicell. (James Jones.)

It'. John Chylds lands xij fote. (Robt. Child.)

It'. Will'm Carter's lands A Perch nowe in the tenure of Hugh Bachyler. (Robt. Bachelor.)

It'. Thom's Gardyners lands, a perch, now the Kyng's in the tenure of Thomas Saunders.

(Joh' Germon John Holt.)

It'. Rayne's land Mr. Brudenell's londs a perch now in the tenure John Crysp.

John Carter's lond a perch now in the tenure of John Noell. (John fford.)

It'. Thom's mylsents' lands A perch now in the tenure of Edmond Hardyng. (Henry Hardinge & Thomas Hardinge.)

It'. Darby's lond A Perch now in the tenure of Symon Hardyng. (Roger Hardinge.)

It'. pyper's lond A Perch now in the tenure of Thomas Lyvehed. (John Bischoe.)

It'. Thomas Russell's lands half a perch now in the tenure of Russell of Chansfont. (Ric' Ginsdall.)

It'. Rydyng's londs half a perch now in the tenure of John Murrey. (John Child of Deans.)

It'. Colyn's land A perch now in the tenure of Walter hawgat. (Will' Garrett.)

* In this particular account the names within brackets have been added by a later hand: evidently indicating new tenants of the land and tenements described.

- It'. powtrew's land a perch now in the tenure of John Monorday (now in the occupation of Giles Sextin).
 It'. Rare's land a perch now in the tenure of Rob^t Bartlet. (Roger harding. Robt. Hill.)
 It'. Cumsutlatt's lands A perch now in the tenure of Walt^r Tradway of Colsyll. (Mr. Robt. Waller.)
 It'. Stompe's lond vij foot now in the tenure of Mr. Saunders.
 It'. Barrows lands xij fote now in the tenure of Will^m Ty'berlake. (Mr. Robt. Waller.)
 It'. Stockton's lands A Perch & half now in the Tenure of Thomas Redyng. (Henry Tredway.)
 It'. Bachelor's land half a perch in the tenure of John hyll. (Robt. Hill.)
 It'. John Cooks lands half A perch in the tenure of Whitfeld.
 It'. Summ shrub's land A perch now in the tenure of Robt. Bartlett. (Agnes Benet.)

In another handwriting :—

Be it known to all the towne and parishe of Agmondysh'm that we Walter Tredway,* hugh bachelor, and Thomas Taylor hath receuyd of thom's Saunders and Robt Andrawe xijⁱⁱ of waxe iv dozen & v peaces of pewt^r vessell, that is to say xx brode brymyd platters xj narrowe brymyd platt' & xxj narrowe brymyd dysshes & a brode brymyd dyshe. And the samme Walt^r Tradway hugh bachelor & thom' taylor hath misesyd in their tyme vi dosyn and one peare of pewter vessell that is to say iij dosyn and ij pears of brode brymyd platters and xv pears of brode brymyd dishes after the sylu' fashyon & xx narrowe brymyd dysshes the w^{ch} vessells haith ben increasyd by the sellyng of waxe candle in the church & by lendyng forthe of the same vessell the w^h vessell is in the hole summe x dosyn & di. Also the same Walter Tredway, hugh bachelor, Thom's taylor hath kept the trendyll lyght befor the Rode of the same investe all ther tyme. And wher as they gathered for to make the trendyll whan the church yard was mett abouth the w^{ch} gatherynge was but v* and thereof we have made it once a yere we will leve wyk & wax to make it ij more. Aud besyde that we will bere vijⁱⁱ wax mad and un made and xij^d in redy money & for ij locks longyng to the cofer wher the wax lyeth viij^d and the cofer it self coste vj.

In another hand :—

* The family of Cheyne is believed to be now extinct. The Tredways subsequently migrated to Beaconsfield, where one, Thomas Tredway, a warm adherent of the Tudor revolution, was knighted, had a grant of arms, and intermarried with knightly and gentle families. The Gereys (sometimes spelling their name Geary) likewise moved to Beaconsfield and Thame. In both towns they assisted in erecting Dissenting meeting-houses for Brownists or Independents, and for Presbyterians.

here was A likely master fooll of supersticion.

thi will be don o lord.

On the back of folio 7 there stand the accounts for

“The Amending of the church walle by the town.”

The first entry, of which, altogethor, there are eighty-three, is—

“ffyrst Mr. Jerome’s Howse late Mr. Ddynams vj^d.”

Some parishioners contributed as much as two shillings and sixpence; others as little as twopence.

The leading contributors stand thus :—

Robert Hill	ij*	
Anthony Wig		xv ^d
Hary Ashburne		vj ^d
Dorsset of the White harte		vj ^d
John child		vj ^d
Mr. Bennet	ij*	vj ^d
Walter Bennet		vj
Mrs. Sanders	ij*	vj
Mr. Sanders of the Bywyre }	ij*	vj
Qy. Bury.		
Thomas Garrett		vj
Mr. Cheny *	ij*	vj

(Folio 9.) The Inv’ytory of ye cherche goods fyrst v challys
j pyxe of sylve’ & a pax ij payer of sensers w^t a shype the best
sewte of Red velvet & the hangyng of the hye awter wth ij
cortens of sylke x towells v tabull clothes, xiiij awt^r clothes
vi towells iiij napkyns vi surples.

Res’ of y^e gyfte of mastrys marks a dyap’ towell.

THOMAS SALT
HARY SUELL
BARNARD BAYSTELL
RIC’. BARTON
ROBT. BARNARDE

On the above it may be noted that the inventory is unusually short, while the *ornamenta ecclesiastica* are not properly or at all fully described. The “best sewte” certainly implies that other suits then existed; yet such are not enumerated or described. There are five chalices, but their metal, whether precious or otherwise, is not mentioned. Thirteen altar clothes was a fair number, even for a large parish church; but not one is specifically

* See the footnote relating also to Tredway and Gery.

described for due identification. None of the candlesticks—the standards, paschal taper-stand and font taper-stand—are mentioned; though reference is made to them in the “accounts.” When the Tudor kings and their ministers plundered the churches, it soon became a public policy on the part of local men of rapacity and influence to do the same. For this purpose inventories were loosely made, and sometimes intentionally made away with. Deeds and instruments were purposely destroyed. The families of Cheyne, Tredway, and Gery were foremost in obliterating the distinction between *meum* and *tuum*.

(Folio 11.)—In another list of expenses—the 33rd of Henry VIII.—it appears that special candles were made for Our Lady’s Day, Easter, Whitsuntide, and for All Hallows’ Day, with its solemnities, and for the day following that of “All Soulen”; also, every year, for Easter. The commissioners at Beaconsfield—a royal commission of several laymen—were attended by Richard Herne. In the accounts, wax was largely purchased both from London and in the neighbourhood of Amersham. A man named Cuttler was specially paid for making and attending to the light before the rood-beam, styled the “beme lyght.” The bells, the clock, the windows, and the paving of the church, were sources of continual outlay. “Gery’s wife” was paid for “washyng of xxvi peaces”—*i.e.*, albs, surplices, towels, and altar-cloths, before the great feasts, and for scouring the brass standards and other candlesticks in the choir and church. This, too, is on record—

It’ for makyng a li of parrys candles agenst Christmas.

The Paschall candle, the font-taper, the corpse-candles, the tabernacle light, were all made as required, from time to time. The stand for tapers before some shrine or image was “flowered”—that is, hung with flowers and ever-greens upon great festivals. Another entry stands—

Mr. Gery to them that brought the Sacra’m’et case—iiij^d.

Visitations of the bishop’s officials appear to have been held at Aylesbury, Wycombe, and Beaconsfield: on which occasion the blessed oil and balm was procured for

the parson for unction of the sick. At funerals 3s. 4d. was paid for the use of the wax torches at the mass of *requiem*; and there appears to have been a parish collection to provide tapers for all the worshippers to hold on Candlemas Day. But there is nothing on record of unusual antiquarian interest.

Then follows the *hiatus* referred to.

Now I proceed to transcribe the accounts for the last year of Elizabeth :—

A.D. 1603.

EXPENCES.

Imprimis for one rundlett of wyne*	xx ^s	ij ^d
Item for the rundlett and carriage	ij ^s	ij ^d
for iij loves of bread for the communió'		iiij ^d
Item for another rundlett of wine 8 g.	xxix ^s	iv ^d
Item for the carrage		xiiiij ^d
Item to the glashir	xxvi ^s	viiij ^d
Item for washing of the church	xxi ^s	iv ^d
Item to Whitsnydt for washing the church	ij ^s	
Item for wood	i ^p	
It'm for the wether cock		xvjd
Spent at the veshtacio'	iv ^s	vij ^d
for breade to the communió'		iiiij ^d
Ite' bestowed upon the ringers upon the quene's day.	iiiij ^s	
Ite' to Richard Sanders for troushing the great bell	ii ^s	
Ite' to Whitingto' for his work		xii ^d
Ite' for nayles		vi ^d
Ite' paid to Will'm crosse for the carrage of two } rundletts of wyne	ij ^s	iiij ^d
Ite' for breade for the communion		xij ^d
for washyng the table cloths		vj ^d
for writinge the Inventory		xij ^d
Spent at the visitacion	ij ^s	ix ^d
to the appereter		iiiij ^d
Delyverin of the Inventory		iiiij ^d
Ite' for ij rundletts of wyne x gallons	xxxv ^s	
Ite' paid for the cariage of the third rundlett		xvi ^d
Ite' for paper		ij ^d
Ite' for one rundlett more x gallons d	xxii ^s	ij ^d
Ite' for my charges at London when I went to by } the wyne		xiiiij ^d

* As will be seen from the above, the amount of wine consumed at Amersham in the new "Supper of the Lord," was extraordinarily great. As I have elsewhere remarked, "The mystery had given place to a meal."—*Edward the Sixth*, by Rev. F. G. Lee, D.D., p. 110 and footnotes. Second edition. London: 1889.

RECEYTS.

Imprimis for breade and wyne	lxiii ^s	x ^d
Ite' upon the assesment for reperations	liij ^s	x ^d
P from the last church wardens	v ^s	ix ^d
Ite' for tow buryalls	xiiij ^s	iv ^d
Ite' for the rent of the church house	xx ^s	
	£7 10 ^s 6 ^d	

There remaneth to be paid back into the box xliij^s i^d

The account of Will'm Cock and Crystofer Clark taken the xxth of May 1603 in the p'sents of Thomas Pynshe Will'm chyld John Sutto' Will'm Grimsdale Joyn Pattingburn Richard Saunders Robert batcheler.

The inventory immediately following is even more poverty-stricken than that already described. Church robbers had evidently been about and at work:—

May, 1603.

Delyvered to the next churchwardens the church dore key, the comunyon cupp, a great peuter pott, a quart pott, a peuter dysh, a herisha cloth, a cloth for the pulpitt, tow carpitts for the comunio' table, tow cloths for the comunio' table, a chest, a gable or rowl, a table on a frame, with other descent ornaments belonging to the churche. A byble a bouck of com'an prayers with tow other boukes.

There remaining at the psn'age xth of lead.

In bringing this paper to its termination—letting the extracts tell their own story—I return my best thanks to the Rector and Churchwardens of Amersham for their courtesy and confidence in allowing me to examine the volume at leisure.

ALL SAINTS' VICARAGE, LAMBETH, Oct., 1891.