

NOTES

*Francis Mason of Orford.*¹ I think there is a fairly simple explanation of how Josias Alsop made his howler in the matter of his predecessor Mason's age.

When in 1597 it was ordered by Convocation that all parish registers (which had been first ordered in 1538) were to be copied into *parchment* books, it was specified that *each page* of the transcript should be signed at the foot by the minister and the two churchwardens. I don't know how far the Orford parish register goes back, but if it dates from 1538 or thereabouts, it will probably be one of these parchment transcripts made at the end of the 16th century. Francis Mason (*S.T.B. ac verbi dei concionator*) was instituted to the parish church of Sudbourn with the chapel of Orford on 22 December 1599 and I imagine that soon after his arrival he saw the making of the transcript and duly signed each page, as directed. Later, in 1720 when the ingenious Mr. Alsop moved Mason's tablet into the nave, looking into the register and seeing Mason signing as rector on the first page—1538 or thereabouts—jumped to the conclusion that he must have been rector *then* and immediately added some 60 years to the poor man's age and to the term of his incumbency!

All this wants checking, but I think it will be the explanation of the extraordinary tablet. The figures seem to fit in all right; Mason was rector from 1599 to 1621=21 years; add 60 and you get 81: and it is the same with his age, 55+60=115, 'above 110 years old'. The same thing has happened elsewhere. The most extreme case, that I know of occurs at Keame, Leicestershire, where on the same grounds a rector was assumed to have been incumbent for 92 years, and to have had the same churchwardens for 70 years!

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A Rare Ipswich Token. Mr. Ralph Nott of Hendon tells me that he has recently purchased the only specimen he has ever seen of John Sparrow's Ipswich token of 1659. This token is recorded as No. 191 by Williamson (*Trade tokens of the 17th Century*, 1891) and as No. 173 by Golding (*Suffolk Coinage*, 1868) but is so rare that in my article on Suffolk Tokens (*Proceedings*, xxiv, 64) I suggested that it might not in fact exist. (Golding's records, all of which were copied by Williamson, are sometimes rather inaccurate). Mr. Nott's discovery is therefore of considerable interest.

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¹ *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxvi, 228; see also present issue, page 10, note 31.