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(By permission of the Librarian, Ipswich Borough Library)
Portrait of William Stevenson Fitch

WILLIAM STEVENSON FITCH, 1792-1859

By THE REV. A. H. DENNEY, A.K.C., B.A.

William Stevenson Fitch was born on 17 November 1792 and was baptised in St. Lawrence's Church, Ipswich on 14 April 1793. He was the eldest child of a family of five; his father was Samuel Fitch, druggist, and his mother Elizabeth Stevenson; they occupied a shop in the Buttermarket on the corner of the Thoroughfare in which William was to continue the trade of Chemist and add to it that of Post Master. Samuel sent his son to Ipswich Grammar School before giving him a training in his shop which he took over on his father's death in 1815. He was appointed Post Master in 1837 and a number of letters in the Ipswich Borough Library show him in his dual capacity; Colonel Brooke gives him a forwarding address for his mail, Sir Stanford Graham asks him to make up a prescription and others complain of the late delivery of letters. According to 'Rambler' in the *East Anglian Daily Times* (8.12.1934) he was not as obliging or efficient as might have been desired; he disliked giving change and performed all his duties in a small room at the back of his shop measuring only twelve feet square. In May 1855 vigorous protests about the condition of the post office were made in the meetings of Borough Council, and in the same month it was moved from the Buttermarket to the Town Hall and an advertisement was inserted in the *Ipswich Journal* asking for suitable premises.

The last few years of Fitch's life are somewhat of a mystery. He did not complete the catalogue of his manuscript collection as he had said he intended to do, and instead, he disposed of a large portion of it in London. The advertisement which appeared in the *Ipswich Journal* at the same time as complaints were being made about the Post Office, merely announces the forthcoming sale at the rooms of Messrs Puttick and Simpson of an outstanding collection of Books and Manuscripts of Suffolk interest; Fitch's name does not appear. Did he perhaps feel that the Council had not treated him well?—his Post Office had been described as a 'disgrace to the town'—or, more likely, had prolonged illness reduced his health and adversely affected his business? The sale of his collection must have been a severe blow to him and we know that the prices paid were below his expectation and caused him to withdraw several items. He died on 17 July 1859. He does not appear to have played any part in local politics although he was the friend and confidant of several Borough officers; he was however well

known as an antiquarian and collector of local books, manuscripts and antiquities. He had a number of friends in the literary and historical circles of his time, and by them was generally held in high regard. C. R. Smith, editor of the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* wrote kindly and respectfully of him in his *Retrospections* (Vol. 1, p. 245–8); obituary notices to his credit appeared in the *Annual Register* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and he has found his place in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

A contemporary account of him, which brings him nearer to the reader, is given by Dr. Purland, a friend of T. B. Ross, Mayor of Ipswich in 1850. The Doctor visited Ipswich this year and was royally received by the Borough. His visit was arranged by Fitch and the Mayor in close collaboration and Mrs. Fitch was responsible for entertaining him and making him feel at home. In this particular she was evidently a happy choice for the *Annual Register* granted her a special mention in her husband's obituary notice. 'He left a widow' it runs 'who will be remembered by all who sat at her hospitable and intellectual board, now living with her daughter and son-in-law in America'.

Dr. Purland has left us a most remarkable account of his visit in a curious manuscript volume called 'Ye Yppswyche Deazle, An Account of the Visit of Dr. Purland to Ipswich in 1850.' The volume is in the Ipswich Borough Library. It is profusely and quaintly illustrated with plentiful references to Mr. Fitch and his accomplishments as a guide and historian of the town. One particular extract is worth quoting as it records Dr. Purland's visit to Fitch's home and Library:

But his books! ah! that is quite another affair; his books, his unrivalled Suffolk collection, is, as it should be, all of a row, and many rows too, full of dainty bits in the shape of deeds, grants, and charters, got together, nobody—but himself—knows how or from where!

The Mayor told us in confidence, and we communicate it in the same manner! that he would not trust Fitch alone with the Corporation deeds on any account; the Mayor is much to be commended for his prudence; such men as master Fitch are not found every day, but when found they require a deal of looking after.

The answer to the 'where' we hope to show at least in part, as to the 'how', that remains as big a mystery as when Dr. Purland first asked the question.

There are four catalogues of Fitch's collection. One of these is the privately printed catalogue which he did not complete; the other three are sale catalogues. They are as follows:

1. Suffolk Manorial Registers, Royal Grants and Deeds, Courts Baron, Leet and Rent Rolls, Surveys, Letters, Papers and other authentic documents: collected for the purpose of a General History of Suffolk, in the possession of William Stevenson Fitch. Part First. MDCCCXLIH. Printed by Charles Sloman of Great Yarmouth. Dedicated to Dawson Turner 'in grateful acknowledgment of friendly co-operation and agreeable association.'
2. Catalogue of a very extensive, valuable and interesting Collection of Printed Books and Manuscripts illustrative of the History of the County of Suffolk formed by William Stevenson Fitch, Esq., of Ipswich. To be sold by Messrs. Puttick and Simpson on Monday July 2nd, 1855.
3. The Suffolk Collection. Books and Manuscripts, of the late W. Stevenson Fitch Esq. F.S.A. To be sold by Mr. Ross of Tower Street, Ipswich on Wednesday September 14th, 1859.
4. Catalogue of the Remaining Library of the late Wm. Stevenson Fitch Esq. of Ipswich. To be sold by Sotheby and Wilkinson on Tuesday November 29th, 1859.

Some Prefatory Remarks to the privately printed catalogue (No. 1 above) explain the purpose that Fitch had in mind when he brought his collection together, and, as he says, saved much from oblivion and destruction. 'The writer cannot but entertain the sanguine hope, that even in the mass of materials here described'—for he intended that another part of the catalogue should appear later—'will be considered of great utility to the historian and antiquary, and more particularly those interested with what relates to Suffolk'. That these laudable intentions were defeated within a short time can only be attributed to untoward circumstances in his own domestic affairs. In the same preface he refers to severe illness which had delayed the publication of the catalogue. He also expresses the intention of publishing a second part in the autumn. This never appeared although he presumably had it in preparation and so perhaps bad times had set in as early as this.

Many of the items in this catalogue are only very briefly described but they provide an impressive view of the collection. We can tell from the subsequent catalogues that this was by no means the whole collection. A careful comparison of this with the sale catalogue of 1855 (No. 2) in which the items are more fully and accurately described, enables us to identify several important Ipswich items which must clearly have come from the Corporation muniments. We must be careful in the apportionment of guilt in this matter since we have no direct evidence that Fitch was himself

responsible for their removal from the Corporation chest. A. N. L. Munby, writing of the sources of the Phillipps collection, mentions the purchases which Sir Thomas Phillipps made from the Fitch collection. 'Fitch's collection' he writes 'contained much material purloined from the archives of the Ipswich Corporation, which suffered fearful depredations at the hands of local antiquaries, though it appears that Fitch himself was not responsible, and the greatest blame must be laid at the door of William Batley, who retained on his retirement many of the records of which he had the custody as Town Clerk'.¹

In 1835 the Royal Commissioners were appointed to enquire into Municipal Corporations and in their report on Ipswich they remark: 'The Clavigers have the custody of the Charters and other records but no other member of the Corporation is entitled to such access without an order from the Bailiffs Two of the leading charters have been recently lost or mislaid and one of the two disappeared only a few days before the commencement of the Municipal Enquiry'. The work of the Commission led to a new administration in the Borough and Fitch was a close friend of the older officers. Perhaps the retention of the Borough documents in the hands of the old officials led to a few getting into the hands of Fitch who was reluctant to let them pass to the new custodians. In Catalogue No. 1 appear two charters which were certainly not among those examined by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts when they came to Ipswich in 1883 (Ninth Report, App. pp. 222-262). The first of these charters is described (Cat. No. 1, p. 9) as 'Charter of 1330, the fourth of Edward III, to the Borough of Ipswich'. No such charter is in fact recorded, but one dated 3 Edward IV is recorded and is missing. The second is described as 'Patent of Privileges granted in 1518, the 10th of Henry VIII to the Bailiffs and Burgesses of the Borough of Ipswich' (*ibid*, p. 11) which is shown in the Report as only a copy and translation. Fitch had also the Confirmation of this by Charles II, dated 17 February 1665 (*ibid*, p. 14) but this was back among the Corporation records in 1883, probably having been claimed by them in the sale of 1859; but Letters Patent of George II dated 2 March 1732 with great seal attached (*ibid*, p. 15) was sold to Sir Thomas Phillipps and is now at Elvedon Hall.

The following tabulation of the more important Ipswich items shows the scope of Fitch's collection and the extent of its dispersal. There can be little doubt that all these items originated from the Corporation archives.

¹ A. N. L. Munby, *Phillipps Studies No. 4*, 'The Formation of the Phillipps Library from 1841 to 1872', p. 75.

Entry from the privately printed catalogue (No. 1, pp. 9-15)	No. in Puttick and Simpson catalogue 1855 (No. 2)	No. in Sotheby and Wilkinson catalogue 1859 (No. 4)	Present whereabouts
Grant of lands and privilege of holding a Fair, to the Hospital for Lepers of St. Mary Magdalene, 1199 confirmed 1407.	293		
Proceedings at the Court Leet 1317 (Fader and Lanpet, Bailiffs) Another Roll 1318 (Cobb and Margaret, Bailiffs)	281 (Dates are here given as 2 Ric. 11 and 2 Ed. 11)	286	
Charter granted 1330, 4 Ed. III, to the Borough.			No charter of this date known, but there was one of 3 Ed. IV, now missing.
Inquisition into the liberties of the Borough 1340.	271	No. 93 in the catalogue of Mr. Ross and bought by Mr. Tymms of Lowestoft.	
Petty Court Books of the Borough 1513-1520.			British Museum. Add. MSS 24435.
Patent of privileges granted to the Borough 1518.	271 (described as 'official copy')		Original in Corporation records.
Gaal Deliveries 1670, 1674, 1675, 1685.	301 (ten others added)	301 and 307 (17 altogether)	Library of Elvedon Hall.
Entry Books of the Great and Petty Courts, 1589-1603.			Dates do not coincide with those of the Corporation Books.

Entry from the privately printed catalogue (No. 1, pp. 9-15)	No. in Puttick and Simpson catalogue 1855 (No. 2)	No. in Sotheby and Wilkinson catalogue 1859 (No. 4)	Present whereabouts
Register of Benefactions to the Borough.			Book No. 23 in Corporation records.
Bills, Orders and Receipts, 1634-85.	273	No. 79 in Mr. Ross Catalogue bought by Willis and Co.	Purchased by the Corporation from Sotheby in 1957.
Declaration of members of the Corporation Abhorring the Solemn League and Covenant, 1602.	295	306 (marked 'Withdrawn')	Corporation records, <i>via</i> Russell Collection.
Charter confirming Privileges to the Borough, 1665.	272 (Described as 'Copy of . . .')		In the Woolnough Collection in the Borough Library.
Fines set on Foreigners and non-Freemen, 1688.	271		
Letters Patent of George II with Great Seal, 1732.	299		Library of Elvedon Hall from Phillipps Collection.
279. Chamberlain's Account, 1555.		152. Appears in collection of W. P. Hunt and bought by W. Mason.	Appears to be missing if 1554-5. Copy by Fitch in Ipswich Borough Library.
289. Pardon granted to the Borough, 1432.		292	In Corporation Records, by gift of Lord Belstead.
294. Grant of Bourne Bridge Water Mill to Sir Edward Coke.		304	Library of Elvedon Hall from Phillipps Collection.
		285. Pleas of Court, 1272.	
		303. Court Roll, 1589 (marked 'Withdrawn')	

Apart from the Ipswich items, Catalogue No. 2 records some important items. Arrangement is under Hundreds. Under Bosmere and Claydon Hundreds appears 'Historical Memorials of the House of Tollemache' a folio of 170 pages compiled by Fitch. This fetched the reasonably high price of five guineas at the sale and is now in the Library of Helmingham Hall. Lots 63, 64, 65 contained the Court Rolls of Ash Manor for the years 1340-43, 1378, 1399, 1409 and 1411, Rent Rolls of Bury Hall in Helmingham and the Court Rolls of the Rectory of Helmingham for 1482-85; lots 74-112 contained four hundred and ninety one deeds relative to these Hundreds from the reign of Edward I to that of Elizabeth, the majority being of the fourteenth century.

Under the Carlford and Colneis Hundreds are two documents relating to the Cavendish family (lots 138-139); the first is an indenture dated 24 March, 33 Elizabeth (1591) from Thomas Cavendish to Charles Cornwallis of lands in Trimley, with the autograph of Thomas Cavendish the circumnavigator; since Cavendish disposed of property to finance his voyages this no doubt relates to such a transaction. The second is an indenture of earlier date, viz. 29 Henry VIII (1537), relating to an exchange of land between Charles, Duke of Suffolk, and Richard Cavendish, Thomas' father.

Under Cosford Hundred appears 'A Collection towards the History of Hadleigh' (lot 180) in which was inserted a number of original documents. Among these were the Churchwardens' and Overseers' Accounts; the volume also contained a copy of the charter of James I to the town. Among some letters in my possession addressed to John Glyde which will be described later in this paper, is one from the Hadleigh historian, Hugh Pigot, in which he regrets his inability to purchase this volume from Mr. Tymms who 'purchased it at Mr. Fitch's sale for £1.14s.6d.' Tymms bought the book at the sale of Mr. Ross in 1859; it had been withdrawn by Fitch in 1855 after a bid of £3.3s. had been made for it. Pigot had at some time been lent the volume by Fitch but had been reluctant to print material which Fitch himself had put together; he acknowledges Fitch's assistance in a footnote to the History of Hadleigh in the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* (Vol. III, p. 21).

The most important item of the whole collection is lot 190; this is the Cartulary of Dodnash Priory. Because of the interest and importance of the cartulary the whole of the catalogue entry is given here:

190. Dodenes. Chartulary of the Priory of Dodenes or Dudenasch.

A.D. 1200 to 1506, consisting of one hundred and fifty-six

documents, in the highest state of preservation, most carefully inlaid and beautifully bound by Mackenzie, in citron morocco, dentelle borders, gilt edges, enclosed in a deal case, large 4to.

To enable the binding in a compact volume, the seals have been removed, but they are carefully drawn upon the pages in exact facsimile; the Original seals, each in a separate box, and the whole enclosed in a mahogany case, will accompany the lot.

Also a manuscript catalogue, consisting of copies, or abstracts of the originals, accompanied with illustrative memoranda (in the hand of Mr. J. H. Burn) forming a folio volume, half morocco.

The first charter in this volume is one of Ada de Toni, a Norman Baron, who died about the year 1200, who grants lands situate in Bercholte (Bergholt) and the last document is a Warrant of Attorney of Thomas Fincham, dated March 25th, 21 Henry VIII (A.D. 1506), the Priory being suppressed by Cardinal Wolsey in or about 1524. There is also a Papal Bull of Honorius III, confirming to the Prior and Canons of Dodenes, the church of Stereston, the lands of Fautcham (Falkenham, Colneis Hundred) and the church there with its appurtenances. dated 16th Feb. anno 16 Pontif (A.D. 1218) with the leaden Bulla attached. Of the whole number of one hundred and fifty six, comprising the volume, one hundred and thirteen are before the year 1300. Of the value and interest of such a volume it is needless to speak. It would seem that Dugdale knew but little of the History of the Priory, his account of it being exceedingly brief.

The preservation is, as before remarked, most complete, and the general arrangement of the volume may be offered as a pattern of taste and skill in its production, that has not been excelled in any collection that has come under our notice.

The volumes, not surprisingly, fetched the sum of £100, the highest price by far in the whole sale. The buyer is not noted in the British Museum copy nor the Ipswich Library copy of the catalogue; but he was Sir Thomas Phillipps and the volumes appear in his catalogue as Nos. 16732 and 16733. Upon the dispersal of the Phillipps' collection the volumes came back to Suffolk where they are now MSS. 203 and 204 in the library of Lord Iveagh at Elvedon Hall.²

² I am indebted to Mr. G. R. C. Davis of the British Museum for this information.

Another manuscript, this time a production for which Fitch was personally responsible, is number 376 in this same catalogue, viz. *Monasticon Suffolciensis*, 4 vols. folio. This is now in the Ipswich Borough Library and contains, under Dodnash, a brief calendar of the charters which composed the above volume (lot 190). Also loosely inserted into the *Monasticon* are a few original Dodnash Charters which, for some reason best known to himself, Fitch did not see fit to include among the other 156. Their presence here may exonerate Fitch from the actual manufacture of the Cartulary, or he may have acquired them after the Cartulary was made up. It is at least clear that they belong to the same group, and, most likely, originated from Helmingham Hall. On the back of each of these charters is a small Roman numeral which seems to relate to the manorial group to which the charter belongs; at Helmingham Hall there is a considerable collection of charters from Dodnash Priory, mostly, of course, subsequent to 1300 and many bearing the same numeral on the dorse. There can be no doubt that all once belonged to one collection and this collection was lodged in the library at Helmingham. The Priory was one of Augustinian Canons situated in the parish and manor of Bentley. It was dissolved in January 1524 and, as the catalogue pointed out, passed first to Cardinal Wolsey. After his fall it reverted to the crown and then was granted to Lionel Tollemache who died seized of it in 1553.

Since the library of Helmingham Hall or its predecessor at Ham House, in Richmond, may possibly have been the original home of several items in Fitch's collection, such connections as there may have been between Fitch and these libraries is worth considering. In the year 1669 Sir Lionel Tollemache died, leaving as his widow the Lady Elizabeth, who took as her second husband, the Duke of Lauderdale, whom she married on 17 February 1671. He was a person of considerable note in affairs of state. After the Restoration he was made Secretary of State, President of the Council, High Sheriff of Edinburgh and elected to several other high positions; it is his initial which stands last in the famous Cabal cabinet of 1667-73. In these various offices, as well as by personal inclination throughout his life, the Duke amassed a most magnificent library, to which were naturally added many documents and letters of contemporary importance. He died in 1682 and left to his widow all his moveable goods, which she transported, somewhat to the chagrin of the rest of the family, to Ham House. From Ham they were eventually removed to Helmingham, where they still constitute an important part of the library.

Our first clue to Fitch's connection with the Lauderdale library comes to us when we realise that the Lauderdale family

were Maitlands in the sixteenth century and before, for Fitch possessed and edited a little item by one of the Maitlands. This manuscript passed from Fitch to Dawson Turner, the Norfolk antiquarian, and appeared in the latter's sale catalogue (Puttick and Simpson, June 1859), as number 289. The entry and note read as follows:

289. Maitland (James) of Lethington; Narrative of the principal acts of the Regency of Mary of Guise, during the minority of Mary Queen of Scots.

Mr. W. S. Fitch of Ipswich, the former possessor of this curious and very important document, printed a very few copies of it while it was in his possession, with a dedication to Mr. Dawson Turner, in a flattering sonnet. One of such copies is here interleaved with the original MS, which Mr. Fitch, in his short preface, states that he communicated to Sir Walter Scott, before he consigned it to the press, and was by him strongly urged to the step he then took. The following quotation he gives from Sir Walter Scott's letter on the occasion: 'I had considerable trouble in satisfying myself as to the author of the Narrative, but find that he was the son of that Maitland who was Queen Mary's Secretary, and one of the first politicians of his time, but unhappily not so conscientious as able. The sketch was written to justify his father; and as the author was a Roman Catholic, the tract is of a partial character, both as to politics and relative to religion. In such an interesting age, it is curious to see what each party could say for itself, and, by comparing documents and admissions get, if possible, at the truth which generally lies betwixt both sides rather than exclusively with either.'

The book was printed for Fitch by R. Root, printer, Ipswich, and the British Museum copy was originally a presentation to John Gough Nichols at Ipswich, August 1842. The volume has no date of publication, but since this was a presentation from a small printing it was probably about this date. Since Scott died in 1832 it must have been in Fitch's possession before that date.

An anonymous writer of obituaries recording the death of Fitch in the *Annual Register* for 1859, makes these remarks: 'Mr. Fitch edited several ancient tracts, which he illustrated from his rich stores of half-forgotten learning. Among them is Maitland's "Narrative of the Principal Acts of the Regency during the Minority: and other papers relating to the History of Mary Queen of Scots". This is a very singular document by the son of that Maitland who was Mary's Secretary. The Narrative was written to justify his

father. In a letter written by Randolph, also included in the volume, the fate of Rizzio is mentioned ten days before it took place. It also insinuates that Henry Darnley imputed guilt to Mary at the time. Mr. Fitch also possessed a large collection of autograph papers and letters relating to Mary and Scottish affairs, illustrating the eventful period of her life and rule'.

These last remarks are of interest as we find that Fitch's sale catalogues do not contain any items of importance relating to Scotland. Where had they gone? The Dawson Turner Catalogue would seem to supply the answer to this question; and corroborative evidence is given in a manuscript note made by the Suffolk antiquarian, Richard Almack, whose copy of the catalogue has kindly been lent to me by Mr. S. F. Watson of Ipswich. Apart from the Maitland item there are six others, lots 270 to 275, under Lauderdale, comprising a mass of State Letters and miscellaneous personal papers, also ten items under Scotland, lots 416 to 425, several of which relate directly to John, Duke of Lauderdale, and all covering the relevant period of Scottish history. It is lot 416 to which Almack has appended his note. This was a collection of original letters 'of Sovereigns and other illustrious personages, illustrative of Scottish History; 2 vols. russia extra, gilt edges. 1538-1704'. They include nine letters of Mary Queen of Scots, six of Queen Elizabeth, twenty one of James the sixth, five of Charles the first, sixteen of Charles the second. There is no mention, in a long note, of Lauderdale, but Mr. Almack has written below:

All the above documents were, I believe, obtained by Mr. Dawson Turner of Mr. W. S. Fitch of Ipswich, and all except two or three last named, had been hoarded by the Duke of Lauderdale—altho' he is not named in the acct. of them.—R.A.

Almack himself possessed some choice Lauderdale items when his collection was visited by A. J. Horwood for the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1870 (First Report, App. p. 55). These may have come from Fitch in the first place and so explain his knowledge of the source of Dawson Turner's collection. Lot 416 above was purchased by Messrs. Thorpe for £280; the bulk of the other items went to the British Museum.

Where did Fitch obtain the collection? It is unlikely that either Ham or Helmingham would have given them away; and as Fitch was only a druggist, it is equally unlikely that he would have been in a position to have purchased them even if they had ever come on the market. We are not altogether without some possibility of an answer to the problem, though the evidence is suggestive rather than conclusive, and it is as entertaining as it is original.

In 1874 Osmund Airy edited the Lauderdale Papers for the Camden Society. The edition ran to three volumes in the first of which is a short introduction which discusses the wanderings of these manuscripts. The following quotation is from this introduction (pp. v-vi):

To Mr. H. J. Ellis, who probably knows more about these MSS than any one else, and who has undertaken the labour of furnishing me with transcripts, I am in a special degree indebted for continual assistance in all matters of difficulty. It is to him that I owe the following interesting particulars regarding the sources from which the Lauderdale papers have been obtained. He says:

'I think there is no doubt that they were all formerly at Ham House, near Richmond. Elizabeth, Countess of Dysart, the Duke's second wife, inherited the house, and lived there, as also did her descendant, Louisa, second Countess of Dysart, who died 22nd September 1840. It was during the occupancy of Countess Louisa that most, if not all, of the papers were removed. A large number, which found their way into the hands of Dawson Turner, of Great Yarmouth, were bought at the sale of his Library in 1859, by the British Museum, and became Additional Manuscripts 22878; 22922; 23108-23125; Additional Charters 14503-8, Egerton Manuscript 1818. The history of this portion is curious. Hudson Gurney, in a letter to Sir H. Ellis, from Keswick in 1852, says that "the Scottish Papers in Dawson Turner's possession were abstracted from Ham House by a waiting woman of old Lady Dysart's, during her courtship by a very well informed antiquary" (who this may be I know not) "who married her; and many years ago I spoke to George Sinclair of several of them having been seen in these parts (supposing they had been taken from Helmingham)."'

C. R. Smith, writing of Fitch (*op.cit.* 245-8) remarks that in his literary pursuits W. S. Fitch was closely connected with Mr. Gurney. So Gurney was in a position to know some of the facts. As a Norfolk historian he would certainly have known Dawson Turner and been familiar with the growth of his collection. No evidence so far connects Mrs. Fitch with Ham House, nor may we rule out the possibility that the papers passed through other hands before reaching Fitch. The Dodnash Cartulary was never at Ham nor the Bentley material; these must surely have been at Helmingham since the sixteenth century, but a connection once begun at Ham might have been later taken up at Helmingham. However, there we must leave the matter.

Further examination of the 1855 catalogue shows an extensive collection of Butley and Tangham Court Rolls (lots 339-347). These cover, for Butley, 1386-1400, 1558-1622, 1631-66 with Court Books for 1635-82 and 1713-36; and for Tangham 1377-98, 1553-60 and Court Books 1654-1712 and Minute Book 1712-37. Likewise, belonging to the same manorial group are the minutes and proceedings of Courts Baron held for the manors of Bavents, Colvilles and Naunton Hall for 1765-1815 (lot 348). The old house at Rendlesham to which these manors were attached was burnt down in 1839 and so perhaps in this instance at least we may thank Fitch for an act of preservation, for the Court Books were bought by Boone for the British Museum, where they now remain. The Samford Hundred has a magnificent collection of deeds (lots 447-472), but from lack of detail it is impossible to suggest their origin. There are many from Bentley manor, but the manors in this group changed hands many times in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and some solicitor's office may have been Fitch's source; there are 365 deeds in all and they fetched a total of £25, quite a respectable sum; they date from Edward I to Elizabeth.

The Catalogue concludes with 57 lots of undated deeds numbering several hundreds, many being associated with manors of the Helmingham group.

The two catalogues of 1859 do not provide us with any startling items, much of the contents of both of them being the result of the withdrawals made by Fitch in 1855. There were however some Ipswich items which did not appear in 1855 of which two, lots 285 and 303, are given in the table above, both still being untraced. It was at the 1859 sale by Sotheby and Wilkinson that the Ipswich Corporation claimed some items as their possessions and returned them to the Corporation chest, but these do not appear to correspond with the 'withdrawn' lots in the catalogue (marked in the catalogue in the Ipswich Borough Library). As shown in the table, lots 303 and 306 were so marked, but the first is untraced and the second only came back to the Borough *via* the Russell collection.

A very considerable quantity of the Suffolk manorial material was purchased by, or on behalf of, Sir Thomas Phillipps. The numbers of these have been listed by Munby and reference to the Catalogue of the Phillipps Library³ enables some lots to be identified. Some were bought at the first sale in 1855 but the bulk buying

³ Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum Bibliotheca D. Thomae Phillipps, Bart, A.D. 1837, Pts. 1-4. (British Museum: Tab. 436.b.13). The numbers which are recorded as coming from the Fitch sales are as follows: 14042-14045, 14173-14174, 14979-15008, 15367-15435, 16115-16132, 16731-16734, 20183-20198, 23821-23828. (*vide* Munby, *op. cit.*).

took place in 1859 at Sotheby and Wilkinson's when Phillipps secured almost the whole of the Suffolk manuscript material by the purchase of lots 236 to 354 which included a vast quantity of deeds as well as other manorial documents. Further purchases were made at the Ross sale through Willis and Sotheran and Edward Acton. The total Fitch material in the Phillipps Library is split into eight groups which suggests that much was obtained by him from other buyers; his name does not in fact appear in any of the Catalogues as a buyer. When the Phillipps Library was dispersed much of the Suffolk material was purchased for Lord Iveagh and is now at Elvedon Hall. A list of the Phillipps purchases is contained in a catalogue made by Mr. Redstone and now at the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office. A careful examination of this list has made it clear that very much of this material was once in Fitch's hands, and scrutiny of the individual documents would probably enable us to identify them against the entries in the Fitch catalogues. The actual losses of original material through the dispersal of the Fitch collection may not in fact be so disastrous as might at first be supposed.

One of Fitch's publications has already been mentioned, but it was not the only one. In 1854 he printed an edition, including four large paper copies, of an early seventeenth century pamphlet called:

The Woefull and Lamentable Wast and Spoile done by a suddaine Fire in S. Edmonds-bury in *Suffolke* on Munday, the tenth of Aprill 1608. London. Printed for *Henrie Gosson* and are to be solde in Paternoster Rowe, *at the signe of the Sunne* 1608.

The British Museum has a copy of the original publication of this little tract which came *via* W. P. Hunt and Read, the Ipswich bookseller. The latter was commissioned to purchase the volume on their behalf at the sale of the books of W. P. Hunt who had bought this, among several other things, from Fitch's sale in 1855 (lot 556). The Museum has also a copy of Fitch's reprint which is marked inside 'only twelve copies printed'. Following the reprint is an advertisement by the printer:

In presenting to the public this copy of an old Black Letter Tract, the publisher begs to intimate his intentions of reprinting and publishing (through the assistance of his Antiquarian friends) a series of scarce old tracts relating to the County of Suffolk, which will form a volume of interesting memoranda for those that are at all curious in the manners and habits of olden times. He respectfully invites the liberal patronage of the public to an attempt to bring

before it, through the publication of authentic documents, a faithful transcript of ancient local events, in which the page of general history often finds its best illustration and comment. In the present instance he is indebted to the kindness of Mr. W. S. Fitch of Ipswich, for the loan of this rare Black Letter Tract. Ipswich June 1845. Printer: F. Pawsey of the Old Butter Market.

So far as 'ancient local events' are concerned the tract provides no information worth the record, being mainly concerned to show what disasters ensue upon the wickedness of the times. The title page carries a most attractive little woodcut of men tackling burning houses with two pronged grappling poles.⁴

Another publication, this time from an original manuscript, was a minor work of the Elizabethan dramatist George Peele:

Anglorum Feriae. Englandes Hollydayes, celebrated the 17th November last 1595. Beginninge Happyly the 38th yeare of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Ladie Queene Elizabeth. By George Peele Mr. of Arte in Oxforde.

The British Museum copy belonged to the Revd. Joseph Hunter, to whom it was sent with W. S. Fitch's respects on 13 April, no date; it was printed by R. Root, printer, Ipswich. Fitch has added four pages of notes on the characters mentioned in the text, the whole comprising fifteen leaves unnumbered and without signature. The original manuscript, presumably once in Fitch's possession, is now in the British Museum (Add. MS. 21432), but it does not appear in any of Fitch's catalogues.

Quite a number of interesting volumes must have passed through Fitch's hands from time to time. Among these one found its way to America and its history was duly sought out and recorded by De Ricci in his Catalogue of Mediaeval and Renaissance Manuscripts in America. The manuscript is in the H. E. Huntington Library and De Ricci enters it as follows:

H.M.3. John Bale. King John, a play in English verse partly in the author's autograph. Paper (ca. 1560) 35ff. Formerly bound in English light brown calf (ca. 1830) in vol. 9. folio of the Devonshire Plays.

Discovered by William Fitch, ca. 1835, in some papers 'probably belonging to the Corporation of Ipswich'. Sold before 1838 by J. P. Collier to the Duke of Devonshire, from whom it was obtained in 1914. Two ff. were removed from Pulman by Collier for the Camden Society by J. P. Collier. 1838.

⁴ Bloom, J. H., *Early Suffolk Tracts*, vol. I, 1922, p. 152.

Apart from the suggestion of its origin by Collier there is no other evidence to associate this volume with the Ipswich Corporation. The following note about the two leaves mentioned above is taken from the edition of *King John* edited by J. H. P. Pafford:

With reference to the two leaves Collier writes:

'The manuscript copy of the play which I bought for the Duke of Devonshire many years ago was deficient of these ensuing leaves which I recently obtained from a Mr. Pulman who was a friend of Mr. Fitch. In fact they ought to have formed part of the Duke's manuscript from which they had been extracted before I bought it.'

Another note, presumably by Mr. Pulman runs:

'These two manuscript leaves were stitched in a printed copy of the play of "*King Johan*"—belonging to Mr. Wm. Stevenson Fitch of Ipswich and the following memorandum was in the back in the handwriting of Mr. Fitch—"2 leaves of the Manuscript play from which this was printed with Marginal Notes by Bale, and differing from the printed part"⁵.

Presumably Fitch sold the manuscript to Collier and Collier to the Duke of Devonshire to whom he was Librarian in the 1830s. It would not have been out of character for Collier to forge either the additional leaves or the evidence relating to them. But his suggestion that they came from the Corporation records must surely have come from Fitch or otherwise there seems little point in making it. Bale held the livings of Thorndon in Suffolk and Swaffham in Norfolk before he was Bishop of Ossory. If an origin was being sought for the manuscript there was no particular reason why Ipswich Corporation should be selected in preference to the many other possible and more legitimate places in East Anglia from which it might have come, unless Fitch had in fact disclosed its origin before parting with it.

Collier edited texts for both the Camden Society and the Percy Society and would have known Thomas Wright who was Honorary Secretary of the Camden Society in 1838, and of the Percy Society in 1841. Wright was also an acquaintance of Fitch, and on one occasion made things a little awkward for him. The relationship between them is revealed in a copy of a letter from Wright to W. P. Hunt, which is preserved for us by John Glyde. W. P. Hunt was an Ipswich publisher and collector of books and manuscripts, and probably had some idea that Corporation records were going astray;

⁵ *King Johan*, by John Bale, Ed. J. H. P. Pafford, for the Malone Society Reprints, 1931, p. iv.

in any case his interest was sufficient to prompt a question to Thomas Wright about the true history of the Ipswich Minstrel's Song Book. Wright had visited Ipswich on 10 August 1864 under the auspices of the British Archæological Association and had spoken about the Song Book at the meeting. The meeting was reported in the *Journal* of the B.A.A., (Vol. xxi, 1865, p. 175).

Mr. Thomas Wright, F.S.A. read his paper 'On the MS Song-Book of an Ipswich Minstrel of the Fifteenth Century'. He said the late Mr. Fitch of Ipswich had some years ago a manuscript of songs and carols, apparently of the age of Henry VI, and which probably constituted the minstrel's stock in trade. This manuscript book was found in the municipal records of the borough of Ipswich; and it being thought it had no business there, it was taken away. Mr. Fitch gave it to him (Mr. Wright); but being persuaded that Mr. Fitch did so in ignorance of its real worth, he insisted on returning it, and it is now in a private collection.

Hunt's enquiry brought back a letter as follows:

Private

14 Sydney St.,
Brompton,

London S.W.

August 22, 1864.

My dear Sir,

Our friend Fitch, knowing I was much interested in old English Poetry had given me some ballads, and one or two Chap Books, all of the latter part of the last century, when he showed me the manuscript of songs and carols, and told me it had come out of the Ipswich Corporation Records, where it was found accidentally and had been taken away as having nothing to do with the records. I asked him to lend it me, on which he gave it me and asked me to accept it. I should think as far as I can recollect that I must have had it in my possession not less than a year and a half, but am not sure of the exact length of time, during which I printed it. He asked me not to mention his name in the Preface, or where it came from, but to speak of it as mine, which is the reason I there said so little about its history. After it was printed I wrote to him, speaking of it as a loan, and told him that I was going to send it back again, to which he replied that he had given it to me and wished me to keep it, but I did send it telling him that as it was printed the manuscript was no longer any use to me, and that I knew it was more valuable than he imagined. Not very long

afterwards William Chappell, who has published several works on our National Music and Melodies, supposing it was still 'a manuscript in my possession' asked me if I would let him have facsimiles of some music in it which I had not published. You will see that I have given one specimen of it in the printed book, and I think there were two or perhaps three others in the manuscript. I wrote to Fitch, and he told me a mysterious story how he had given the manuscript to a bookbinder in Ipswich who had got into low circumstances and had decamped to America taking the manuscript with him so that he had lost it. A long time after this our mutual friend Halliwell told me that he had bought the manuscript of Fitch for I think £25 and that afterwards he had sold it to the Revd. T. Corser of Stand, near Manchester, who is a great collector of Old English Poetry, and has the most extraordinary private collection in print and manuscript existing in this country. There I believe the manuscript still exists.

I have marked private at the beginning of this, because I fear I must ask you to consider it as partly a confidential communication. At all events I think that Halliwell would not wish his name to be introduced in regard to it. You can write however in your copy that Mr. Fitch subsequently sold it and that you have good reason for believing that it is now in the valuable Library of the Revd. T. Corser of Stand near Manchester.

Thank you for your kindness in sending me the Ipswich papers, they were just what I wanted. I enjoyed my visit to Ipswich very much and was glad to see the meeting go off so well. Believe me I am very faithfully yours,

Thomas Wright.

W. P. Hunt, Esq.

The sale of the library of the Rev. Thomas Corser took place during his lifetime and was spread over the years 1868-73. There were eight sales in all by Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, and the catalogues are in the British Museum. The Song Book does not appear under Ipswich in any of the Catalogues, but there is a great number of 'Song Books' and perhaps a very careful scrutiny of the entries might enable an identification to be made; but the present writer failed to locate it.

Nothing has so far been said about the 30 volumes forming what is known as the 'Fitch Collection' in the Ipswich Borough Library. The way in which these volumes were acquired by the Borough can best be described by reference to a volume I recently

purchased from a Norwich bookseller. It comes from the sale of John Glyde's library in 1910 and was bought on that occasion by William Booth of Felixstowe. It consists of Fitch's privately printed catalogue (No. 1 above) together with much of the correspondence of Glyde connected with the purchase of 28 volumes for the Borough (two other volumes—the Babergh Hundred—were purchased later). What happened at the sale and the efforts made to recover the collection are described in a manuscript note at the beginning of the volume:

An effort to raise a subscription in Ipswich in order to purchase these volumes and place them there for public reference had been made and it had failed. At the sale of the Suffolk collection of books and manuscripts of the late W. Stevenson Fitch Esq., F.S.A. held at Ipswich on Wednesday Sept. 14th 1859 and sold by Mr. Ross, Mr Samuel Tymms of Lowestoft, Secretary to the Suffolk Archeological Society bid till the volumes, lot 102, reached £40, he then stopped. Mr Charles Austin of Brandeston, also a bidder, went to £41 and stopped, the lot being eventually knocked down to Willis and Sotheran for £42. After the sale Mr John Glyde junr. conferred with Mr James Read, bookseller of Ipswich, and a subscription was raised to get the volumes out of the bookseller's hands.

Before continuing with the story it may be well to describe briefly of what this collection consists. There are 30 folio volumes covering the Hundreds of the county of Suffolk as follows:

Babergh	2 vols.	Wangford	1 vols.
Blackbourn	1 „	Mutford and Lothingland	1 „
Blything	2 „	Plomesgate	1 „
Bosmere and Claydon	2 „	Risbridge	1 „
Carlford and Colneis	2 „	Samford	2 „
Cosford	1 „	Stowe	1 „
Hartismere	2 „	Thedwastre	1 „
Hoxne	2 „	Thingoe	3 „
Lackford	1 „	Thredling	1 „
Loes	2 „	Wilford	1 „

Each volume is arranged under the parishes in the Hundred, in alphabetical order; under each parish there is a collection of very miscellaneous material, some in Fitch's own hand, much original—deeds, wills, terriers, letters, etc.—and much genealogical matter in a variety of different hands. The items are for the most part pasted to the pages, a few are loose, and some information Fitch has written out on the pages at length. The value of the volumes to

the student of local history today is very difficult to assess. In the course of three or four years fairly varied work on county history I have failed to find anything of real value, though there is much of interest. Of the value of the genealogical material I am not able to judge, but the lack of any index (except to the Babergh volumes) makes it difficult to use to the full.

Glyde's collection of letters about the purchase of these volumes begins with a series from Samuel Tymms, wherein the latter tells of his bid at the sale and his failure to secure them. He then goes on to warn Glyde about the contents of the volumes. They may well prove to be of less value than had been generally assumed. 'I wish you had the means of referring to the volumes' he writes 'I have never gone through them, but I have had the benefit of information derived from them, and which I could not get elsewhere without much research. They are not so valuable as people were led to think. That was evident on a cursory glance on the morning of the sale; but it is an entire misapprehension to consider them the refuse of the Bury collection. What I bought for Bury were only drawings and prints.⁶ This consists of notes and original documents, and is consequently quite a different thing'. He goes on to suggest an enquiry about their possible value from Puttick and Simpson, through whose hands they passed when first put up for sale in 1855. He also tells Glyde, in another letter, that Willis and Sotheran are prepared to accept £55 for them.

Glyde duly wrote off to Puttick and Simpson, asking their opinion of the value of the books, and received the reply that, taken as a collection they were worth far more than the price named. This estimate they based upon the prices actually offered at the 1855 sale. At this sale the first two volumes, for the Babergh Hundred, fetched £4.6.0. But Fitch was by no means satisfied with this price; he apparently put reserves on all the subsequent volumes which, though receiving bids, some of which exceeded that of the first two, were withdrawn. The highest price offered was £8.12.0d. for the two volumes of the Bosmere and Claydon Hundred. For all the thirty volumes the total offers reached £83.10.6d. Willis and Sotheran were therefore not being unreasonable in asking Glyde £55 for them. In spite of this Tymms's offer of fifty guineas was eventually accepted.

During September 1859 Glyde wrote off to many of the leading personalities of the county asking for a subscription of two guineas each to secure the collection for the Ipswich Museum Library. The contributors included a few resident outside the county who might yet be interested, such as Sir John P. Boileau, of Ketteringham

⁶ For this collection, in thirty one volumes, see later.

Park, Wymondham, Norfolk, who was prepared to contribute on account of his connection with Suffolk 'by my little property of Burgh Castle, and by my office as Vice-President of the Archæological Society (of Norfolk).' Lord Bristol, who offered a generous donation, should it be required, suggested that the collection be divided between East and West Suffolk, but did not wish to press the idea. J. Chevalier Cobbold declined to contribute as he had been told 'on good authority' that the price asked 'is beyond its intrinsic value'. W. Brown of Ipswich declined on the same grounds. William Long of Saxmundham supported the aim of depositing the volumes at Ipswich. 'Perhaps you are not aware' he writes 'that at the formation of the museum I encouraged the idea not only of forming a Library of Reference, but also making the Museum a place of deposit for County records connected with the history and antiquities of Suffolk'.

The final list of the subscribers bears the following names: W. H. Alexander, Charles Austin, The Marquis of Bristol, Sir Henry Bunbury, Sir John Boileau, S. H. Cowell, John Glyde, Jeremiah Head, The Rev. Professor Henslow, Lord Henniker, M.P., Sir Edward Kerrison, M.P., William Long, Sir William Middleton, Major Parker, M.P., J. Allen Ransome, R. C. Ransome, James Read, W. D. Sims, J. G. Sheppard, the Earl of Stradbroke.

The twenty eight volumes were received from Willis and Sotheran by Samuel Tymms at Lowestoft on 19 October. On 27 October he writes to Glyde 'I am glad to hear the Box arrived, where can it have been to? It must have made a tour of the county. We are now familiar with the railway freaks. If we are anxious to have a parcel on Saturday the people at Beccles are considerate enough to send it to spend Sunday in Norwich. Another day they consider a night at Yarmouth necessary before going to Lowestoft'.

According to a note in the *East Anglian Miscellany*, No. 6013 of 30 April 1921, the two volumes of the Babergh Hundred were offered in that year by Messrs. Murrays Ltd. of Leicester in their catalogue, for £25; they were said to have come from the library of Earl Howe at Gopsall Hall. The Ipswich Public Library secured them and they were added to the other twenty eight to complete the collection. In a further note, No. 6022, it is stated that 'The 28 volumes, covering all the Hundreds except Babergh, were purchased for £200 by public subscription many years ago'. This figure is incorrect, for we have seen that the actual price for the twenty eight volumes was only fifty guineas. But it seems probable that the writer of the note ('H.O., Ipswich') was confusing this collection with yet another of Fitch's, which will now be described.

Fitch's passion for compilation extended to illustrations as well as documents. In 1856 Mr. Tymms reported to the April Quarterly Meeting of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology⁷ the purchase of 'the extensive series of Drawings and Prints relative to the County of Suffolk, which has been formed at great cost, and arranged in thirty-one volumes, by Mr. W. S. Fitch, and a copy of Professor Agassiz's splendid work on Fossil Fishes, in ten volumes. To obtain these two desirable acquisitions, the Committee have incurred an expenditure of 220*l.*; but they are gratified in being able to state that their appeal to the noblemen and gentlemen of the county generally has been responded to by a private subscription of about 180*l.* For the remaining 40*l.* they look with confidence to the liberality of the members of the Institute, as subscriptions small in amount need only be made'.

It seems likely that this is where the writer of note 6022 in the *East Anglian Miscellany* got his figure from, assuming that the Fitch books cost £200 and the Fishes £20.⁸

This collection appeared as lot 628 in Puttick's 1855 catalogue (our No. 2). The following extract is given in full because of the interesting list of artists whose work is represented in the collection:

Pictorial illustrations of the County of Suffolk. Consisting of a vast Assemblage of Engravings, Plans, General Topography, Views of Public Buildings and private mansions, Monastic and Mediaeval Remains, Churches, monuments, seals and antiquities, Heraldry; a most extensive collection of Portraits of persons in any way connected with the County, by birth, possessions or official position, comprising many fine impressions from private plates, and many interesting original drawings.

The Artists represented include:

Baldry; Betham; Bowler; Buckler; Burrowes; Carter; Childs; Churchyard; Clarke; Cotman; Davy; Fairholt; Fitch; Frost; Fuller; Grosse; Hagreen; Huntley; Johnson; Kirby; Read; Rowe; Russell; Smart; Smith, C. Roach; Suckling; Thomas; Turner, the Misses; Wodderspoon.

The thirty-one volumes of this collection are available for reference in the library of the Suffolk Institute of Archæology at Bury St. Edmunds and deserve the attention of all interested in nineteenth century Suffolk. Though some of the illustrations

⁷ *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, vol. II, p. 219.

⁸ This supposition finds support in the fact that Agassiz's 'splendid work' was sold by the Institute, with other books, at Hodgsons on 4 August 1950 (lot 666); it fetched £25.—Ed.

In a Manuscript volume in my possession written in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, entitled "The Booke concerning the Copies of Inquestes and Recoveries & Offices of the Landes late Mr. Holdyches" are the following extracts relating to the Priory of S^t. Peter and S^t. Paul in Ipswich

1st. Grant from King Henry VIII dated 23rd August (1531) in the 23rd year of his reign, in which he gives to Thomas Alwode one of the Gentlemen of his household. All the foundations, lands, sites, and possessions of the late Monastery or Priory of S^t. Peter in the town of Ipswich, in the County of Suffolke. with all the Houses, Buildings, sites, Mansions, Coase Stables, Dovecotes Gardens Orchards, (other Tomaries), ponds, Waters and Curtilages within the same site, containing by estimation six acres of Land. And also granted to the same Thomas Alwode, all the Mesuages adjoining the same site lately inhabited by William Capon, Clerk late Dean or Master of the College, called the Cardinal's College of the Blispe Saint Mary, in the same town of Ipswich with all the appurtenances, excepting those reserved for us and our Heirs of the Advowsons and patronages of the Churches or Parishes of S^t. Peter, S^t. Nicholas, S^t. Mary at the Key & S^t. Clement, with all other mesuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments belonging to us in our same Town of Ipswich, which contain Foundations sites Mesuages land, tenements, Colleges and other premises paper into our hands, formerly belonging to the Reverend Father in God, by Divine permission, Thomas Lord Cardinal, Archbishop of York and Primate of England by the Bill exhibited against him by Christopher Hales our Attorney General, in our Court, before us at Westminster for divers, grave Contempts, Transgressions and Offences against our

This example of Fitch's neat and fairly distinctive handwriting is here illustrated in order to help in the identification of any Fitch manuscripts which readers may come across. The author of this article would be grateful if any such documents could be reported to the County Record Office. The extract is taken from Fitch's *Monasticon Suffolciensis*, vol. 2, p. 255. The volume mentioned appears as lot 287 in the 1855 catalogue; it has since been lost but the contents have been transcribed by Fitch among his notes on the Priory of St. Peter and St. Paul, Ipswich.

have been removed, the collection, especially the Ipswich volumes, is a most valuable record of much that has very much changed or completely disappeared from the Suffolk scene.

It is a pity that Fitch only published reprints of old tracts and a few papers in archæological journals. The Suffolk Institute of Archæology has only two articles from him. The first, on the Corpus Christi Guild of Ipswich, was read by the Secretary on his behalf at an Ipswich meeting in September 1854; the second was an Inventory of Furniture at Mendham Hall in 1548 and was delivered by himself at a Bury meeting in January 1856.⁹ In 1857 Fitch is described as a local secretary and at the February meeting he exhibited a twelfth century deed from Berta de Wanci granting land to Hugh Talemasche in Bury St. Edmunds.¹⁰ In October 1857 a meeting was held at Hadleigh and Fitch sent 'a number of impressions of ancient seals attached to charters connected with the district, autographs and manuscripts, including an autograph of John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk; a license for mortmain for lands in Cringleford, Norfolk, A.D. 1333 for the Hospital of St. Giles in Norwich; and Great Seals of Kings Edward III and Henry VI'.¹¹ He also wrote a little pamphlet on the Thetford Mints addressed to Dawson Turner, and another on the Ipswich Mints. Through the instrumentality of C. R. Smith he made several contributions on archæological subjects to the *Journal of the British Archæological Association*, viz.: On a Merovingian Coin found at Aldeburgh (i.257); On the Discovery of a Crypt and Chapel at Ipswich (ii.190); On Monastic Seals relating to Suffolk (ii.268); On a Seal and Ring found at Dunwich (ii.279); On Stone Vessels discovered in Suffolk (ii.345); On a Fibula found in a barrow at Otley (ii.345); On a Coin of Harold I found at Ipswich (ii.347); On a Bronze Sword (iii.254).

The number of his manuscript compilations was considerable, but only part of these is now available for easy reference. It is hoped that students discovering any more than are noted here will record their location with the County Record Office (See Plate XIX). The following is taken from the sale catalogues and represents items that are marked as being written or compiled by Fitch himself; there may well be more:

Collections towards the History of the Parish of Long Melford.
Account of the Church and Monuments of the Church of Stoke
by Nayland.

⁹ *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, vol. ii, pp. 206 and 215.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 278.

¹¹ *ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 397.

- Historical Memorials of the House of Tollemache. (Helmingham Hall Library).
- Collections for a History of the Parish of Bramford.
- Transcripts and Extracts from the Flowton Churchwardens' Accounts.
- Collections towards a History of the Parish of Flixton.
- Historical Collections for the Parishes of Walton and Trimley.
- Church Inscriptions from Monuments in several Parishes. (A number of these appear in John Glyde's collections in the Ipswich Borough Library).
- An Index of the Products of the Suffolk Mints. (B.M. Add. MSS. 23961).
- Collections towards a History of Hadleigh.
- Notices of the Family of Edgar of Ipswich.
- Notices towards a History of the Borough of Ipswich, 3 vols. (Bodleian Library, Misc. MSS. 29482-84).
- Extracts from the Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of St. Mary le Tower 1609-1712 and from the Parish Registers from 1538-85.
- Extracts from the Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of St. Lawrence, 1637-73.
- Undated Rental of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Ipswich. (Elvedon Hall Library).
- Rental of Wykes-Ufford for 6 Ed. VI. (Ipswich Borough Library).
- Rental of the Manor of Christchurch 38 Hen. VIII. (Ipswich Borough Library).
- Monasticon Suffolciensis, 4 vols. (Ipswich Borough Library).
- Monumental Inscriptions from Churches in West Suffolk. Page, with additions by Fitch. (Phillipps MSS. 15000; now *pene* Leslie Dow).
- Extracts from the Court Books of the Manor of Wantisden 17 Ric. II to 19 Eliz.
- Extracts from Reyce's Breviary of Suffolk.
- Collections towards the History of Copdock.
- Collections towards a History of Belstead.
- Collections towards a History of East Bergholt.
- Alphabetical List of Engraved Suffolk Portraits.
- Catalogue of Engraved Maps, Plans, etc.
- Index to the Liber Feodorum, temp Henry VI.
- Extracts from Suffolk Wills, Suffolk Archdeaconry Office, 1441-1531, 6 vols.
- Transcript of Sir James Thornhill's Tour through parts of Essex and Suffolk.

- Collections towards a History of the Parish of Debenham. (In the custody of the Debenham Parochial Church Council).
 Debenham Sepulchral Memorials. (Ipswich Borough Library).
 Collections towards a History of Beccles.
 Memoir of Thomas Martin appended to a copy of his Library Catalogue.
 Additions to Gardner's Dunwich.
 Notes on Kersey Priory.
 Suffolk Wills, 1481-98, Extracts.
 On the Ipswich Mints. (Ipswich Borough Library).
 Collections towards a History of Nettlestead.
 Suffolk Wills, 1531-47.
 Suffolk Domesday Book with Index and additions.
 Transcript of Maitland: History of the Regency during the Minority of Mary Queen of Scots.
 Additions to the Suffolk Garland, Ford and Fitch. (B.M. Add. MSS. 23964-23966).
 Collections towards a History of Erwarton.
 Chamberlains Accounts, Ipswich, 1555. (Ipswich Borough Library).

Miss White, the Ipswich Borough Librarian, has drawn my attention to the following items by Fitch which are not recorded in his catalogues but which are in the possession of the Ipswich Borough Library:

1. Suffolk Arms. An alphabetical list of the arms of Suffolk Families.
2. Extracts from Dugdale's Baronage. Index to Dugdale's Suffolk references arranged by place names subdivided by family names.
3. Inquisitions Post Mortem from 29 Henry III to 46 Edward III.
4. Three letters of Fitch without address re Ford's collection and Fitch's purchase of items therefrom. These are bound into a grangerised volume of the Suffolk Garland.

The outcome of Boone's purchases at the sales of Fitch's books for the British Museum comprise Additional Manuscripts 23945-23967. Briefly these are as follows:

23945. Ipswich Mints. MS by Fitch.
23946. Letters and Papers relative to fisheries in Eston River 1805 with some letters of George Nassau.
23947. Correspondence of Samuel Kilderbee with Pembroke College, Cambridge, 1795-1800.
23948. Survey of Bawdsey, 1438, for the Prior of Butley.
23949. Rental of Hollesley, 1501, Courts Leet and General of Hollesley and Sutton, 1561-1574.

23950. Copies of Records relating to Hollesley and Sutton, 1338-1605.
- 23951-2. Court Books of Hollesley, 1710-35 and 1748-65.
- 23953-5. Court Books of Butley, 1625-30, 1635-82 and 1714-36.
- 23956-7. Court Books of Tangham, 1654-1712 and 1713-38.
23958. Letters and Papers about Trimley Enclosures, 1804-5.
23959. Papers relating to the Manor of Monks Soham, 1389-1647.
23960. Abstracts of Titles and Papers relating to Framlingham and Saxstead, 1682-1808.
23961. The Products of the Suffolk Mints, MS. by Fitch.
23962. The Customs of Wangford (Rectory Manor), 1532-1580.
23963. Description of Dunwich, Paper 16th-17th century.
23964. Ipswich Wills, 1437-1547. MS. by Fitch.
- 23965-6. Additions to the Suffolk Garland, Ford and Fitch.
23967. Miscellaneous Papers, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, 1538-1669.
- Letters to J. Hunter from Fitch are under Add. MSS. 24868, nos. 77, 78.

The Museum copy of Thomas Martin's *Anecdotes of British Topography* was in Fitch's Library and he has interleaved parts of it with bibliographical notes and cuttings from catalogues. He also added a complete catalogue published by the bookseller Loder of Woodbridge.

There are necessarily very many omissions from this brief paper; a complete tabular analysis of the 1855 catalogue would be valuable as would also a careful scrutiny of the Phillipps manuscripts at Elvedon Hall as mentioned above; several items have almost certainly passed to the British Museum in subsequent years. All these things would take more time than most amateurs have at their disposal; in the meantime it is hoped that these notes may be useful or suggestive.

Fitch himself emerges from all these details in rather doubtful guise, but in spite of this we must remember the small regard in which these things were held by the majority of his contemporaries and the almost complete absence of anything approaching the modern methods employed for the conservation of records and their preservation for public use. Fitch was devoted to the past history of his county and romantically attached to the evidence of this history and his collection was mainly formed before there

was even a county Archæological Society in existence. The pity is that this collection was only in the hands of a small tradesman, who, when afflicted by bad times, had to disperse it. If the documents had remained in the great houses from which the majority must at some time have come, they might at least have survived to a time when their value was better appreciated; but this was a matter which the collector could scarcely have been expected to appreciate. At least this is a timely warning that the best place for such things in these days of change and decay in the great houses of the land, is the county record office where care and attention are lavished upon them by learned and experienced archivists.