EYE VICARAGE: THE DOCUMENTATION OF A PARSONAGE HOUSE

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THE LINKING OF written evidence with a standing building is often looked upon as providing a trouble-free elucidation of its development, especially when the documents relate specifically to the layout of the house, rather than simply to changes in its occupants and ownership. The most obvious documents which fit into this category are, of course, probate inventories, with their invaluable lists of rooms and contents. In practice, however, interpretation may not be as simple as it seems. One of the problems may be to relate the documents to the structure; to decide, that is, what really was done at any given time. A series of written references, spread over a period of time, may well contribute to eventual understanding while initially appearing to confuse the issue. Such may be the case with parsonage houses, where a sequence of glebe terriers may give details of room names and alterations, and the writer was made particularly conscious of these problems in considering the vicarage at Eye, a well documented house, where the written evidence provides a whole series of pitfalls.

Eye vicarage stands immediately to the north of, and facing towards, the parish church (Fig. 11). Apart from some minor late additions in brick, it is a timber-framed building, plastered externally, consisting of four separate ranges running parallel to each other, so that from the south side only the front range can be seen, while from the east an unusual elevation is visible, in which four gables of irregular size each represent a different stage in the development of the structure (Pls. IVa, b). The first two ranges from the south are externally of indeterminately Georgian date, without any very striking features, and mildly overlaid with Victorian work. They contain the present entrance hall and living rooms of the vicarage, as well as a storage area with a cellar below it. The third range is of plain but substantial framing, in three bays, with an internal chimney and queen-post roof, divided into two rooms on the ground and first floors, with a later attic above. Now used as a kitchen and general store, there is no doubt that this is the oldest part of the house, datable to the mid- to late 16th century. Adjoining this again to the north is a narrow range of Victorian timber-framing, with a wide jetty running along the north wall above a ground floor of brick. The design shows a certain amount of 'William Morris' influence. Without documentation there is not a lot to be said archaeologically about the house; it is visually attractive, but without outstanding characteristics.

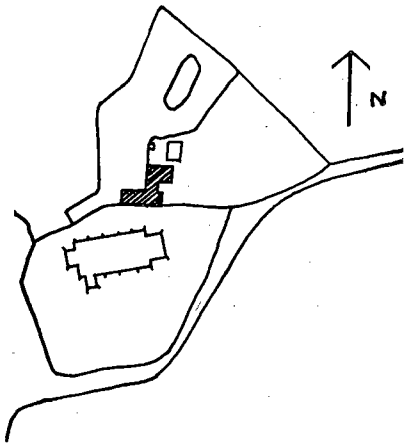

FIG. 11—Eye church and vicarage as shown on the tithe map of 1842.

There are twenty glebe terriers relating to Eye vicarage in the Suffolk Record Office at Ipswich (ref. FF(569):E34), covering the period from 1490 to 1908. The earliest is in a style of handwriting which suggests that it is a 16th-century copy of the original terrier of 1490, and this pinpoints the present site, abutting on the churchyard to the south, and on the highway to the east, as already having on it by that date 'one dwelling house called the Vicarage with a backhouse and a barne and stable. . .'. Then follows a gap of 137 years. The next terrier, for 1627, describes the vicarage as containing 'a hall, parlour and kitchen with other necessary

houses thereto belonging', and this description is used again in the terriers for 1675, 1709 and 1716. By 1723 there had been an enlargement: the house had a 'Hall, two parlours a kitchen and a brewhouse', and by 1725 there had been further changes: it then had 'a hall, great parlour, little parlour, kitchen, backhouse and chambers above, one cellar and three butteries'. In this form it continued through a succession of terriers, with only a modicum of change, which was concentrated within the service area. By 1760, when it was first called a 'Mansion House', there were only two butteries, and by 1806 these were being called 'pantreys'. By 1813, what was presumably the same area was described as a 'Storeroom and pantrey'. In the same year there is the first mention of a garret. These are all minor items, from which it becomes clear that the house was substantially the same in layout from 1725 until some time after the terrier for 1834. By the time of the 1845 terrier, the list of rooms includes a study, and with this single addition the parsonage continued again for something approaching forty years. No change is recorded in 1865, but it emerges from the 1886 terrier that a good deal had happened by then. The house, considerably enlarged, contained a 'Hall, dining and Drawing rooms (both enlarged by the present vicar) study, servants' hall, kitchen, scullery and larder and eight bedrooms over, (two added by the present vicar), Dressing room, garret, cellar and pantry'. The two final relevant terriers are for 1901 and 1908. Between these years the stable and coach house were rebuilt in brick and tile, but within the house 'two dressing rooms and a large cupboard' upstairs are the only changes.

How can all this information be linked with the structure itself? The only major change to the house since 1886 has been the removal of the ceiling over the entrance hall, which now rises the whole height of the house. This has meant the loss of one bedroom and dressing room, and the resiting of the main stair, but it is still possible, by looking at present-day plans of the house, to name all the rooms as they most probably were in 1886 (Fig. 12b), and, thanks to the additional information in the terrier of that year, to pick out without difficulty the additions made by the then incumbent, the Rev. Donald Campbell, vicar from 1879 to 1893. These are the brick extensions to both the main living rooms which flank the entrance hall, and the little range of mock timbering at the north end of the house, which contains the scullery and larder, with the two additional bedrooms above. The vicarage by this time, and doubtless up to at least the Great War, was a typical substantial residence of its period, housing two separate groups of people who lived virtually separate lives, the function of one group being to wait upon the other. Except in the course of their working day the servants would have been debarred from the front parts of the house, and the whole layout of the building, with its large service area at the rear, separately approached, and with its own stair, underlines this. The enlargement of the house must have meant taking on additional staff, and a 'servants' hall' appears for the first time at this stage.

We can, then, postulate without difficulty the layout of the house for the period after, and doubtless a little before, 1886, by looking at the contemporary plan of the house. How easily can we push it back further than this? It is simpler at this juncture to work backwards rather than forwards. Over the course of some 250 years the house developed from an unpretentious and relatively small structure to the present large and rambling building, and in so doing there were not only substantial additions, but inevitably, also, shifts in the functions of the older rooms, and accompanying changes in room names. Both of these must be taken into account if any sense is to be made of the earlier information the terriers contain.

We can, without being too problematical, interpret the hall, dining and drawing rooms of 1886 as the hall and two parlours of the preceding terriers. These were differentiated during the 18th century as 'great and little parlours', a distinction which can indicate a remarkably small difference in size (as here), and is much more probably related to a contrast in the uses of the two rooms, the little parlour being that in general use, while the great parlour was

reserved for more formal occasions.[1] The hall and two parlours at Eye can then be followed back to the terrier of 1723, when the progressive enlargement of the house first became apparent. It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that the front range of the building was erected during the years between 1716, when the house still had only 'a hall, parlour and kitchen with other necessary houses', and 1723.

It now becomes easier to work forward from the earliest terrier to that of 1723. It is clear, from an examination of the visible framework, that no surviving part of the vicarage is medieval. It is also clear, on structural grounds alone, that the oldest part of the present house, the third range from the south, must have been built by the time the 1627 terrier was made. This third range, it will be recalled, is a two-storey block, containing two rooms on each floor with an attic above. Inserting the attic involved cutting away part of the queen-post roof structure, and it is first mentioned as a 'garrett' in 1813. The two heated ground floor rooms in this section can be reasonably identified as the hall and parlour of the terriers from 1627 to 1716. Today, this part of the house contains the kitchen and a disused backhouse, a change of function which can be linked with the enlargement of the house just prior to 1723, when the older living rooms were downgraded into a service area for the new front range. The vicarage as described in the 1723 terrier consisted of two separate ranges, perhaps linked by a passageway, but by 1725 the gap between the two had been filled in by three butteries with a cellar below, forming a second range of about half the present length. That this was the layout of the house from 1725 to the early 1840s is usefully confirmed by the 1842 tithe map for Eye (Fig. 11), which shows the three ranges existing at that time, with both the south and middle ranges shorter than they became later. It was the addition of the study to the second range which brought it by 1845 to its present length (Fig. 12a).

On the foregoing interpretation, the vicarage today represents some five separate constructional stages, pinpointed by the terriers of 1627, 1723, 1725, 1845 and 1886. We have still not accounted, however, for all the rooms given in the terriers prior to 1723; for these, it will be remembered, also make mention of a 'kitchen and other necessary houses', the implication being that the oldest part of the present house never formed in itself a complete structure, having been linked in its turn to a pre-existent building. The most reasonable explanation is that we have here another example of changing function, and that the 'kitchen and necessary houses' formed all, or part, of the house which was on the site in 1490, converted into service rooms when the 16th-century addition was made. This would mean taking a sixth building stage into account. While the term 'necessary house' can mean simply a privy, it seems much more likely in this context that it refers to a service room, the use of the plural indicating that there were at least two of them. There is also the probability that the backhouse mentioned in 1490, possibly a detached structure, was still standing until 1723.

In the case of the oldest part of the house the documents are providing us with evidence which the structure itself cannot give. Further evidence that the 17th-century parsonage was considerably larger than the 16th-century part of the present building might indicate is also provided by an entry in the 1674 hearth tax returns for Eye (Hervey, 1905, 104). This entry, as with so much of the written material relating to Eye vicarage, is not without its anomalies, for the then incumbent, the Rev. Henry Moorehouse, vicar from 1671 to 1681, whose distinctive and dignified signature appeared on a number of parish documents during his years at Eye, is curiously entered in the return as *Edward* Moorehouse, without even the courtesy prefix of 'Mr', which was generally accorded to parsons. No other of the same name occurs in the return, however, and so perhaps we must conclude that the officials who made it were not only vague but also anti-Establishment. If the entry does indeed relate, as seems very likely, to the vicarage, then the house contained six heatable rooms at that time. Today, the third range has two ground-floor and one upper fireplace: probably, prior to the altera-

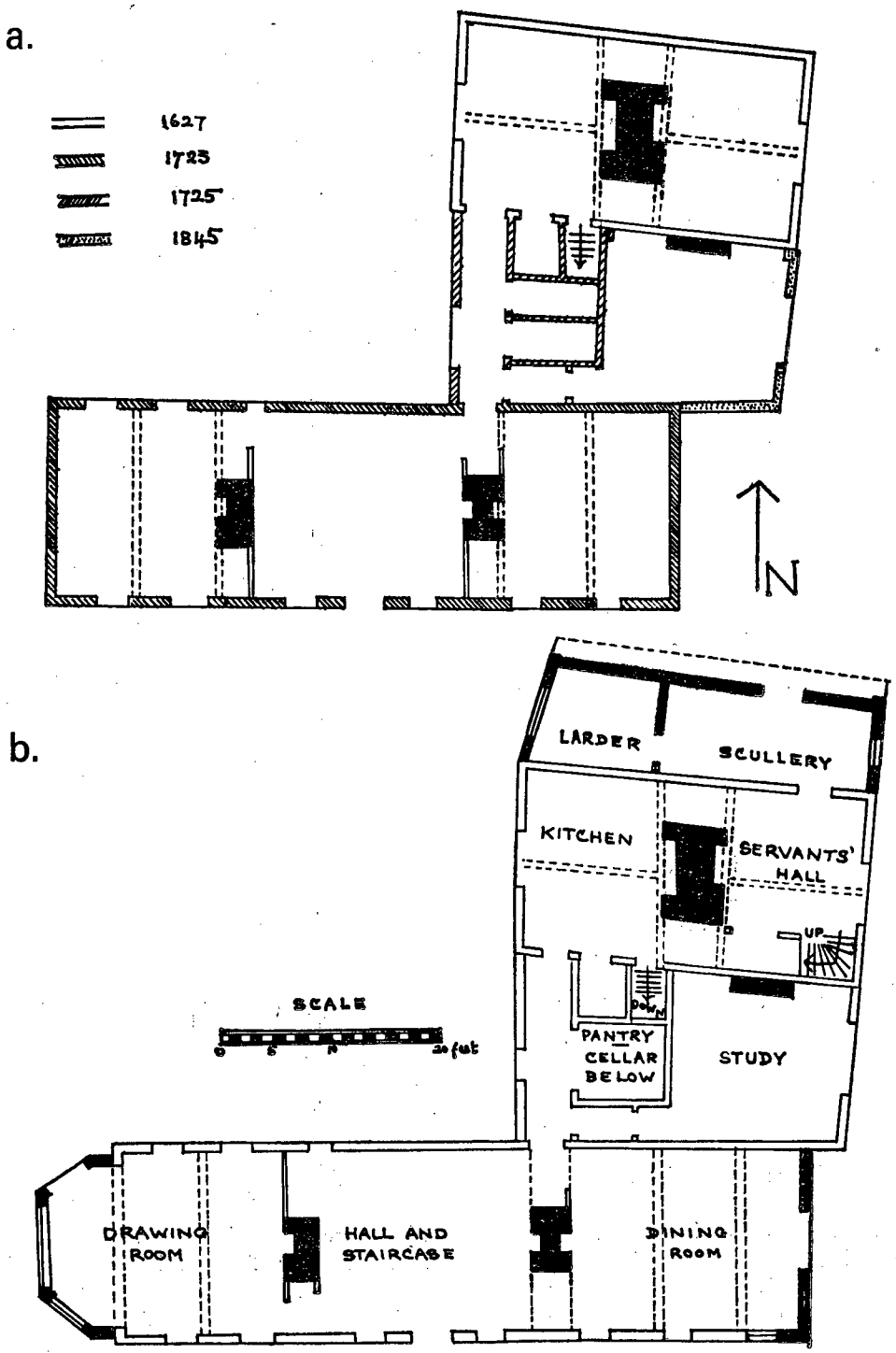

FIG. 12—*a*, development of Eye vicarage, 1627–1845; *b*, most probable layout as in the 1886 glebe terrier. Brick additions of that date and chimney stacks of all periods shown in black.

tions which resulted from adding the northernmost section before 1886, it had a total of four, leaving two more to be accounted for in the missing earliest part of the house. Since this was a medieval building, which would have had an open hall initially, the two fireplaces must have been in a stack inserted as a 16th-century improvement. Mention of the 'kitchen and other necessary houses' ceases with the 1723 terrier, and proof that the medieval parts of the house were demolished between 1716 and 1723 comes from the roof of the new south range. This has a simple clasped purlin construction, without principals or windbraces, which archaeologically would be difficult to date with any precision; it does, however, contain a number of re-used components, some of which are smoke-blackened.

The purpose of this paper is to point out that the relationship between documents and structure may well be more complex than either the one or the other alone would convey, and that all is not necessarily plain sailing as soon as there is written evidence about a building. In the present instance, the structure alone would show part, but not all, of the development sequence, whereas by taking the terriers alone, the evolving plan of the house would be virtually impossible to deduce, save that from modest beginnings it had grown by the later 19th century into a large and prosperous parsonage of a type associated with so many country livings at that time. As a social phenomenon, this growth of a 16th-century vicarage into a late Victorian 'Mansion house' of some sixteen rooms is in itself of considerable interest; but beyond such general conclusions it would not be possible to go.

To integrate the documents and the building a number of assumptions, not necessarily obvious, have to be made, for the terriers can be misleading in various ways. There is, first, the curious failure to mention upper rooms in any terrier prior to that of 1725. With the structure before us, it is perfectly obvious that there were upper rooms in existence during the whole period from 1627, and doubtless for some time before that; but had we not got the house itself, the most likely interpretation of the written material would be to assume that the parsonage was basically a single-storey medieval building until at least 1725. This particular problem cannot arise with probate inventories, but one wonders how many other detailed glebe terriers, which have provided a rich quarry of information on parsonage houses, have been made out in the same incomplete way. The matter is all the more confusing in that single-storey buildings, as probate inventories show, were a significant element in the overall 16th- and 17th-century vernacular pattern.

Secondly, we meet at all stages the problem of changing room names, and, frequently, associated changes of function. Again, with the structure before us, we can postulate two major shifts in the living area of the vicarage: from the medieval house to the 16th-century block, and from that to the present front range. Thus what was most probably the hall of the medieval house became the kitchen named in the terriers from 1627 to 1716, while the hall and parlour of the same period became the 'kitchen and backhouse' of 1723, and the 'kitchen and brewhouse' from 1725 until 1886, when the brewhouse became the servants' hall. We cannot say, of course, which of these two rooms was initially the hall and which the parlour; but I have assumed, perhaps incorrectly, that the room to the west of the stack had become the kitchen by 1723, and remained so thereafter. A minor point which may be mentioned here is the ready interchangeability of service room names at any given date, as here with backhouse and brewhouse, as well as their tendency to alter over a longer period of time in response to changing fashion.

In the front range of the house, the change of name from 'great and little parlours' to 'dining and drawing room' has already been noted; this would not be difficult to interpret from the terriers alone. Virtually impossible, however, would be the conclusion that the parlour of 1716 is not one of the two parlours of 1723, and that the hall from 1723 onwards is a different room from the hall of the earlier terriers.

We now come to the final question of who made the 18th-century enlargements at Eye vicarage. It is very generally believed that the man responsible was Dr William Broome (1689–1745), and it is appropriate to say something about him here, particularly since he was the only incumbent of Eye who attained a modicum of national fame. William Broome was born at Haslington in Cheshire in 1689. He was the son of a poor farmer, but through the good offices of friends he was well educated, first at Eton, and then at King's College, Cambridge. While at Cambridge he formed a lifelong friendship with the Hon. Charles Cornwallis, later the first Earl, who became his patron, presenting him later on to several livings, including those of Oakley Magna and Eye, and appointing him his private chaplain. His other attempts to further Broome's career in the church were, however, unsuccessful.

Broome already showed his ready ability to produce verse at the university, was nicknamed 'The Poet', and subsequently published some very poor poetry, modelled on Pope, whom he greatly admired. He first met the poet himself in 1714, and a friendship was formed which resulted in some years of regular correspondence between them. Broome's great strength was in his outstanding ability as a Greek scholar, and he assisted Pope with translations of Greek passages which were beyond the latter's much more limited powers. Finally, he collaborated with his friend Elijah Fenton in producing a verse translation of the *Odyssey* for Pope, and it is on this work that his claim to fame rests: 'Broome would be entirely forgotten, were it not for his connection with Pope's *Homer*'.[2] Broome, however, felt himself aggrieved in the amount he was paid for his very considerable labours, and there was a breach with Pope which lasted for some years. The two were finally reconciled after obsequious overtures from Broome, who had realised that, without Pope, his literary efforts were of little consequence.

Broome published several pieces of his own, mainly verses, but also one or two sermons for special occasions. He has been described as 'a smooth versifier without a spark of originality', Pope being his model at all times. 'Of his own poems, not one has remained in the memory of the most industrious reader'. From shy and somewhat boorish behaviour in youth he seems to have developed later a courtly and courteous manner, perhaps not entirely sincere. However, his capacity to make lifelong friends, and his second marriage in 1726 to a rich widow, suggest that he was likable and not without charm. Following this marriage he lived very prosperously, probably spending considerable periods of time away from his parishes. He died at Bath, and was buried in the Abbey there. A son by his first marriage, his only surviving child, outlived him by only two years, and his property then reverted, as he had wished, to his faithful patron Lord Cornwallis.

In the most readily accessible sources of information, the 19th-century directories of Suffolk, the statement, which first appears in White's directory of 1855, is several times repeated: that Dr Broome became vicar in 1724, and that he rebuilt the vicarage in 1733. Now the date 1724, coming as it does exactly between the two terriers which record the major enlargements of the parsonage, makes one wonder whether Dr Broome initiated the alterations recorded in 1723 in preparation for taking up his residence at Eye, and completed them before the 1725 terrier. And, following from this, whether the date 1733 should not rather be 1723. Such a contrived explanation, however, can soon be proved false.

The two dates 1724 and 1733 have been taken from a superficially impeccable source, no less than the Eye parish register for the period 1670 to 1751, now deposited in the Suffolk Record Office's Ipswich branch (ref. FB135/D1/2). In view, however, of what follows, and in fairness to the register as a whole, it must be emphasised that both have been interpolated into it, and do not in fact form part of the information it was designed to record. The first is to be found in a list of incumbents of Eye, entered on a spare sheet in the book, and evidently intended to record the numerous changes of the Civil War and Commonwealth years. This list was subsequently continued, in a variety of different hands, up to the end of

the 19th century, and one entry states that Dr Broome became vicar following the death of the previous incumbent, John Burgate, in October 1724. Dr Broome, then, cannot have initiated the 1723 alterations if Burgate was still in office. Did he perhaps complete the work which Burgate had begun? Here the Bishop's register (Norfolk R.O., REG/21) provides some even more surprising information: that John Burgate was succeeded at Eye, not by Dr Broome, but by the Rev. Richard Swainston, who was instituted to the living on 31 December 1724, and continued to hold it until 1728. Dr Broome was instituted as rector of Oakley Magna and vicar of Eye on 17 March 1728/9. Returning to re-read the parish register entry, it becomes clear that it cannot have been made until some time after 1783, since it was written in the same handwriting as the next entry, recording the incumbency of Dr Broome's successor, the Rev. Isaac Cooper, who held the living at Eye until his death in November of that year.

With such a lapse of time, the omission of an incumbent as shadowy as the Rev. Richard Swainston is understandable, for Swainston is in effect a lost parson, and, beyond the record of his institution, it is impossible to detect his existence from the registers or any other parish documents. He was perhaps never resident, and he was certainly not at Eye when the 1725 terrier was made, for the space for the vicar's signature at the bottom of that document was left blank.

Dr Broome, then, did not come to Eye until the March of 1728/9, when the alterations to the vicarage, as far as can be deduced from the terriers, had been completed. It is unlikely that the elusive Swainston had any hand in them, and so it seems that the parson wholly responsible was the Rev. John Burgate, who did not live to enjoy for any length of time the improvements he had instigated. The form which the enlargements took strongly suggests that they had been planned as one somewhat lengthy single operation, which the 1723 terrier pinpoints for us whilst work was going on. The making of a second terrier so soon may well have been because John Burgate's death came immediately upon the completion of the work.

We know a good deal less about him than about Dr Broome: the details of his scholastic career are on record (Venn, 1922, 1, 256), and his will survives; and that, apart from the number of signed entries in the parish registers, which show him to have been one of the more consistently resident of Eye's 18th-century incumbents, is all. He was born in 1657 or 1658 at King's College, Cambridge, where his father was butler, and had his schooling at King's College (presumably as a chorister), and subsequently at the Perse School. He was admitted sizar at Caius College in February 1674, aged 16, and took his B.A. early in 1678, followed by his M.A. in 1681. In 1683 he was ordained priest at Lincoln. He became vicar of Eye in 1698, and held the living there until his death, 26 years later. In 1723 he also became rector of Little Thorpe in Norfolk. Was it in anticipation of an additional stipend that he instigated the enlargements at Eye vicarage?

John Burgate's will (Norfolk R.O., 144 Lawrence) was made on 30 September 1724, when he was already 'indisposed in body', and was completed by a codicil, as long as the will itself, on 1 October. He died a few days later, aged 65 or 66. This will is the only personal document we have, and our sole means of forming an opinion as to his circumstances and character. He may have been a childless widower, but he was much more probably a bachelor, comfortable, but not wealthy. He owned unspecified 'estate lands and messuages' in Cambridgeshire, which he left to be equally divided between his three married sisters, and the absence of any other additional information implies that the actual details of the division of the property were already well known to those involved. He left £200 to be shared equally between four nephews and nieces, and £100 to another nephew. His 'brother Johnson', husband of his sister Rebecca, was left his personal estate, and charged with making these various payments out of it. He was also appointed sole executor. His 'brother Trowell',

husband of his sister Sarah, and probably also a parson, was left, amongst other items, his library of books and a cassock. The poor of Eye received forty shillings, 'to be given in 3 penny loaves after Divine Service the Sunday after my Buriall'. One wonders how the widow Gudgeon, charged with baking 120 loaves for the Sunday morning's distribution, succeeded in her task.

The will ends with the provision that any estate left over after discharging all commitments should go equally to John Burgate's three sisters, and the declared reason for adding the codicil was to give 'particular direction' about his burial. But in actual fact this intention had been forgotten by the next day, when the codicil was drawn up. It is instead a detailed list of legacies of those specific items which the testator had evidently remembered in the intervening time, and wished to ensure went to particular people. It is this detailing of household items which gives the will its old-fashioned air, and gives us further insight into John Burgate's possessions. The legacies include such items as 'a Dozen Damask Napkins and a Table Cloth mark't B to my sister Apsey', 'my silver watch and Queen Ann's Mausoleum', 'my tobacco box that stand in my little parlor' and 'all my goods in my great parlor'. From these last two entries it is clear that the two new parlours were fully furnished and in use. Some gifts were more appropriate than others. Ursula, the wife of Edward Clark, may have been less than delighted to receive 'an old Holland shirt and my best double morning gown', and Edward Clark himself may have wished that the used garments he inherited had included the one pair of unworn stockings specifically left out. It is evident that John Burgate knew the extent of his household goods and wearing apparel with a precision unlikely in a married man. In general, the impression is of an orderly, kindly man, attached to his belongings, on good terms with his relations, and anxious in his last illness that nobody deserving of a particular gift should be left out.

To return to the vicarage itself, what do we now make of the statement that Dr Broome was responsible for the rebuilding, and in 1733? This information comes again from the Eye register for 1670–1751, where the flyleaves at the front of the book have been used to enter a series of memoranda relating to the parish responsibility for the maintenance of a fence between the vicarage orchard and the adjacent school yard. The last of these memoranda, stating that pales 'were sett up at the expense of the town in the year 1733/4' is signed 'W. Broome, L.L.D. Vicar', and by the parish clerk, John Smith, with a mark. The whole entry is in the same script and below is written 'The same year the vicarage house was rebuilt by the said Dr Broome'. Initially, this strikes one as a rather strange memorandum, not least because of its astonishing implication that the parish clerk of Eye in 1734 was illiterate, but any doubts as to its authenticity are soon dispelled by comparing the handwriting with contemporary entries in the parish register: it was indeed written by Dr Broome himself. Like most of the wealthier 18th-century clergy, he does not appear to have exerted himself much on behalf of his flock, leaving their numerous baptisms, marriages and funerals to be conducted by a series of curates, but on the rare occasions when he made an entry in the register he signed his name after it. His writing is not very attractive, but it is unmistakable.

Leaving aside the frivolous and improbable conclusion that Dr Broome made this entry deliberately to confuse, we must take it that, in his own estimation, he had made some fundamental changes to the vicarage in 1733/4. They cannot have amounted to rebuilding as we would understand it; he himself signed, apparently without demur, the terriers for 1729 and 1740, in which the list of principal rooms is identical with that given in all the other terriers from 1725 to 1834. What I would suggest he did was to change radically the external appearance and internal fittings of the vicarage, to an extent which he himself interpreted as rebuilding. The early 18th century was a period of striking overlap in the design and planning of smaller houses, during which the balanced requirements of the Classical style

finally triumphed over the essentially asymmetrical and functional arrangement of older traditional buildings. Dr Broome was a prosperous, cosmopolitan and relatively young man, and the parsonage as enlarged by the ageing John Burgate may well have appeared old-fashioned to his more sophisticated tastes, as well as to those of his wife. For one thing, the three-unit plan of the new front range, in which the hall was still heated and apparently intended to be used as a living room, did not accord with the more modern notions of the hall simply as an entry, containing the stair, and giving access to the other rooms in the house. Similarly, the windows in country homes were still very frequently casements with square leaded panes, pleasing to our eyes, but lamentably out of date to a townsman used to elegant small-paned sashes.

My view is, then, that Dr Broome found a newly-enlarged but unfashionable house, and proceeded to modernise it, putting such features as sash windows and a centrally-placed panelled door and doorcase outside, and within, an ample stair, making the hall into an impressive entry. But I would hasten to add that all this is speculation, for anything that Dr Broome did has been swept away again, and neither the documents nor the building can give us any help. The present windows of the vicarage, almost certainly the responsibility of the Rev. Donald Campbell, are casements with wooden hood-moulds over, in a style beloved of the later Victorians; removing the upper floor over the hall has meant the loss of the stair, and the present straight flight, partitioned off from one end of the hall, is unworthy of the building. Dr Broome may also have added some Classical fireplace surrounds, another type of fitting a Victorian incumbent would have been happy to remove.

Sufficient has already been said to emphasise the manifest unwisdom of accepting the written word unquestioningly in the case of Eye vicarage; the house is indeed an object lesson in this respect, and no more so than with Dr Broome's misleading statement, which clearly does not mean what it has generally been taken to mean. Had he not written it on the flyleaf of the parish register, however, a seventh stage of alteration to the structure would have been completely unknown. This brings us to another important aspect in the integration of documents and buildings. However much detail the documents provide, they rarely tell us the whole story; we may know the site, the names and number of the rooms, even their accumulated contents, but still not know what a house looked like at any given point of time. The framework will, if sufficient of it is visible, enable us to deduce the general quality of the structure, and the form and position of original door and window openings, but when and how and by whom these were altered, and how often, can be much more problematical. A sketch, painting or early photograph may fill some of this gap, and at the same time prove the point by illustrating an otherwise unknown stage in the appearance of the house. A pictorial record can also make us aware that parts of a building have been demolished.

A final point arises from Dr Broome's memorandum. The occupants of a house about whom, through written sources, we know most, may well have left little or no tangible imprint of their residence on the house itself, either because they really did not change it, or because, like the unfortunate doctor, all that they did has been removed. It is still not at all uncommon to find that alterations to a house, especially where there is a good run of early deeds, are unquestioningly associated, even to a precise year, with the ownership or occupation of known people, with absolutely no reference to archaeological probability. This leads frequently to the ludicrous misdating of structural features, and can only create problems rather than solve them.

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NOTES

[1] Cf. Ford Hall, Bridge Street, Long Melford, where the two parlours are also identical in size. When Robert Sparke died there in 1663 they were described in his probate inventory (S.R.O., Bury, IC500/3/8) as 'parlour' and 'little parlour'; the former was furnished as a sitting room, the latter as a bedroom.

[2] *D.N.B.*, 1885, 441–2, from which the quotations and information on William Broome in this and the following paragraph are taken. The entry fails to mention, however, that Dr Broome was twice married, although this is obvious from internal evidence.

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