THE PARISH OF HEPWORTH, AND ITS RECTORS.

BY THOMAS TINDAL METHOLD.

The Parish of Hepworth, in the Hundred of Blackburne, in Suffolk, was, at the time of the Domesday Survey, situate partly in the Hundred of Blackburne, and partly in that of Brademere. These two Hundreds subsequently became absorbed in the double Hundred of Blackburne; and, indeed, from Domesday itself it would appear that the two Hundreds must, at all events for the purpose of taxation, have been treated together, as the geld stated to be payable for lands in Brademere Hundred only amounted to 11s. 10½d., yet the geld for the two hundreds amounts to £1 19s. 8d.; that is to say, as nearly as may be to £2, the double unit for calculation of the taxation of the double hundred.

Mr. Corbett in the able essay on the Domesday Survey in the Eastern Counties, for which he obtained the Thirlwall prize for 1892, at the University of Cambridge, calls attention to the fact that in Abbot Sampson’s Calendar, compiled about 100 years later than the Domesday Survey, it is stated that in the double Hundred of Blackburne there were 35 villis or towns divided into
14 leets, and shows that each of these 14 leets paid the sum of £2, or thereabouts, or an equal fourteenth share of the geld of £2 properly payable by the double Hundred.

The seventh leet of the Hundred comprised Hepworth, Honington, and half of Ixworth Thorp. In Domesday we find that Hepworth paid 17½d., Honington 12½d., Thorpe 9d. or half of Thorpe 4½d., making altogether 34½d. = 2s. 10½d.

In Abbot Sampson's time a somewhat elaborate calculation was used to adjust the incidence of taxation as between Honington and the half of Thorpe, as will be seen from the particulars of the seventh leet given in the following extract from Abbot Sampson's Calendar, copied from the ms. calendar kindly lent by Prince Frederick Duleep Singh for the purpose.

The material portions of Abbot Sampson's Calendar for our purpose are as follows:

In duobus Hundredis de Blakehunte sunt xxxv ville ex quibus constituunt ex xxi letea q ville integre appellant.

1. Stanton p se est una letea.
2. Berdewelle p se 1 letea.
3. Westowe & Suthnortu s 1 letea q Villas uterque e par aliis & medietas letea.
5. Major Fakenham et Sapeston st 1 letea & paria sunt.
6. Ingham & Pva Livermere & Trostune sunt 1 Leta Qru Villar' Trostam e medietas Ingham & Pva Livermere medietas et Ingham est due pres illi medietatis.
7. Hepeworth & Hunegeton & dimid' Torpe St una Leta Quarum Hepworth est medietas. Hunegeton et dimidium Thorp sicut medietas letea Qe Hunegeton est due ptes & eo Amplius. Thorp autem est iii pars eo minus. Qto Hunegeton debit returnare illi s de quott. geldum denarni.
8. Ixeworth & Elmeswell sicut una letea et Ixeworth est 11 ptes illi letea Elmeswelle est tertia ps.
9. Huneston & Langham & Stowe & dimidium Thorp sunt 1 letea Huneston & Langham sunt medietas & paria sunt Stowe & medio Thorp sunt alia medietas et Stowe ex illa medietatis ii partes Thorpe ui tertia ps & eo minus ad q lib geldum debit Stowa returnare illi decimi d.
10. Due Asseldæ & Walesham süt 1 leta qē villas Waleshmē est medietas ambe Asselde medietas & paria St.

11. Rikingehale & Wattesfeld et Hild'cle Sunt una qē villas Wattisfeld e medietas Rikinghall & Hildercole est medietas et Rikinghall est due pte, illius, medietatis.

12. Thelvetham & Weston & Hopeton sunt una leta Thelvethm & Weston sunt medietas Hopeton uo alia medietas & eo amplis. q debeq returnare alii medietati de quolibet geldo xxiii pte.


14. Ressewortha & Gnatashal & Euston sunt 1 leta; et Euston debeq returnare de oi geldo alius duaz villis xvi partem.

The Calendar also contains the following details as to the 7th leet of the Hundred:

Nunc de vii. Leta, dicend'est Hepeworth Hunigeton & dimid' Torp. In Hepeworth est dimid' caruc de qē Will's fil. Walti et Waltus fil Eadwardi teneit. 11 ptes libere—siarti illa q est de alto Socagio una pte tenet isti.

Turstō mitte vid & fi sunt de xx ac's de wara q St una ps dimid' caruc' tenet tm unde redd3 11 d' de Hidagio et Warp dimid Smā auene. vicec' ob' auxil' p'posta' iii ob'

Godwinas oppilio ten5 tm unde reddit 1d ppositis ob.

Gilbtus coping tenet tm uēn reddit 1 d' vic ob p'posit ob.

Herveius tenet tm unde redd3 iii d' dimid' Smā Auene vicec 1 d' p'posit' t d' Warp'

Ohin tenet tm unde reddit iii d di Smā Auene Warp vic' 1 d' pp 1 d'

Aluric fil habene tenet tm uēn redd4. 11 d d Smā. auen & Warp p'l' iii ob vicecom' 1 ob.

Rodb' tus fil. mattd' tenet tm uēn redd iii di dimid Sumē auēn & Warp vicec' 11 d ppo 111 ob.

Walt' p'sb tenet tm unde redd 11 d'

Ivo tenet tm unde redd3 11 d . . dimid' Smā. auene' & Warp pp iii ob vic' d' v'.

Ohin fil' godild' & pceanar' tenet tm uēn redd 11 d āụ. de vicec' ob.'

Ivo baf. tenet tm unde reddit 11 d 1 Smā. auen cū pceanar' p'po 11 d' Ulmera & Vluena Vidua tenet tm unde redd5 t d'

Gilebtus & Alfeld tenet tm uēn redd6 c vd.

In eadem Villa ten6 Gileb' tus fil Rad' de dio-ab'be que est di suo milita & ali dii sunt in illa villa et plures tenentes alii qui de socagio qui cū p'dictis-reddit vicec'i ano iii sol. Omnes p'dii Sokemanni pt' Will'm fil Walti & pt' Waltin fil Eadward' colligunt m t' se iii auerp Smā hidag 11 sol. iinmd.'

From Richard Percyvale's Great Domesday Book it appears, that in the 8th year of King Edward III., the tax payable by Hepworth to the King amounted to £4 3s. 4d. a year.
The advowson of Hepworth was for many centuries appendant on, or at all events passed with the Manors there.

From Blomefield's Norfolk and Davy's mss., in the British Museum, we learn that William, the son of Walter de Hepworth, who was lord of the manor of Hepworth, in the reign of Henry III., had four daughters: Ellen, the eldest, who married Sir Henry de Reveshall; Susannah, Marcella, and Agnes. Susannah married Thomas de Stanton. Marcella granted her share to Wm. de Neketon (the father of Giles de Neketon), and Agnes' share came, by purchase, to Sir Henry de Riveshall. Thomas de Stanton demised all his estate, by the Curtesy of England, to Magister Stephens de Hepworth, who subsequently joined in presenting to the living in this right. William de Neketon also purchased from Ralph de Saxham, a descendant of Fulcher, named in Domesday other property at Hepworth. The manor and estates at Hepworth thus, towards the end of the 13th century, became divided into three distinct manors, which acquired the names of "Reveshall, otherwise Rushalls," "Master Stephen's," and "North Hall," and the lords of these manors presented to the living by turns. Towards the end of the 16th century, the two manors of "Reveshall, otherwise Rushalls," and "Master Stephen's," came into the hands of Sir Robert Jermyn, and from thenceforth were known as "The Manor of Reveshall, otherwise Rushalls, with Master Stephen's," and the owner of the manor had thenceforth probably two turns. This state of affairs continued until about the end of the 17th century, when the advowson ceased to be appendant to the manors, and was held "in gross."

Magister Stephens de Hepworth, who, although only entitled to a portion of the original manor for an estate "pur autre vie," has left his name attached to one of the manors for nearly 600 years, must have been a man of some mark, and, doubtless, is the person of that name who was first appointed Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, in the year 1287, and a second time in 1299
(Fuller's History of the University of Cambridge). His tenure of that office was not altogether uneventful, as in 1299 an action was brought against him by one Thos. de Sutton, a student of the University, for false imprisonment (Annals of Cambridge, by C. H. Cooper). In 1301 Stephen de Hepworth was summoned in respect of his estates, in the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon, to perform military service in person against the Scots. The muster being at Berwick-on-Tweed, on the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, 24 June.

Hepworth is situate in the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, and was in the Diocese of Norwich until May, 1837, when the archdeaconry was transferred to the Diocese of Ely (6 and 7 William iv., c. 77, sec. 10). The transfer being carried out by a scheme approved by Her Majesty in Council, dated April 19, and gazetted May 30, 1837.

The earliest notice of the advowson or the church at Hepworth, appears to be the following entry in Domesday, under the lands of the Abbot of Bury in the Hundred of Blackburne, "In Hepworda . . . . Ecclesia de quindecem acris liberæ terræ in elemosina."

In the Norwich Domesday the living was stated to be worth 20 marks.

In the "Nonarum Inquisitiones in curia Scaccarii," made in the time of Edward iii., we find the following entry as to Hepworth:—

Heppeworth ext' xx mrc'
Itc eccia ejusd extend' ad xiiijl vij* viijd. Et jur'. dicuit qd nona ps. garb vett et agn' ville de Hepworth val' p ann' viijd et nò plus q. rector ibid hét xxx acr'.terre que val' p ann' x* vijd pt acr iiiijd. It. hi ibid de redd' p am ij*.

In 1535 John Brundish, or Browndysshe, then rector, made a return for the Valor Ecclesiasticus, showing that the living was worth net £13 17s. 3d.
FONT AND COVER.  HEPWORTH CHURCH.
In the year 1819, when the Rev. E. R. Payne was presented to the living, he found the rectory house surrounded by a moat, and it is stated that the only access to the house across the moat was by a foot bridge. The house, now a two-storied building, had then a third floor of attics, which were removed when it became necessary to put a new roof on the house.

In April, 1845, when the tithe apportionment was made, the emoluments of the rectory consisted of a rectory house, glebe land containing 41a. 3r. 34p. and an apportioned tithe rent charge (including the charge on the glebe) of £544 7s. 4d.

* The parish church, which is dedicated to S. Peter, stands on high ground on the east side of the village. It is constructed of flint and pebble rubble, with freestone dressings; the greater part of the building, with the exception of the porch and tower, being coated externally with lime plastering. The roof is of oak, thatched with reed.

The structure consists of a chancel, nave with tower at the west end, and a small porch on the south side, and, though the dimensions are not large, the height to the wall plate is considerable, and this gives to the interior a spacious and airy appearance.

A church existed here at the time of Domesday, but the present fabric belongs to the Decorated or second pointed period of Gothic architecture. The nave windows, north and south doorways, and porch, being later, and following the outline and details of the Perpendicular style.

The chancel measures internally about 34 feet long by 16 feet wide, and the floor, which is raised above the nave level, seems at one time to have been higher than at present, the sill of the priest's door being 1 ft. 5 in. above the floor. It is lighted at the east end by a lofty three light window, filled with elaborate Decorated tracery, and in each of the north and south walls are two windows

* We are indebted to Mr. John S. Corder for the description of Hepworth Church contained in the text.
of similar date, but not so ornate in design. Between the two windows on the south side is the priest's door, and the organ, which was placed in the church in 1892, occupies a similar position on the north side of chancel. The eastern most of the two south windows has the sill brought down inside, forming a sedilia; but whatever existed in the form of a piscina is now plastered over.

On the south side, near the chancel arch, is a square aperture with a small molding round, four feet above the floor, 1 ft. 9 in. wide, and 2 ft. 9 in. high, and recessed 1 ft. 2 in., probably an aumbry.

The floor has all been relaid, and several old glazed tiles, some plain and some ornamented, have been re-inserted.

The church is entirely devoid of mural tablets, and only three monumental floor slabs exist. One under the communion table to the memory of the Rev. Robert Nunn, a former rector, who died on the 5th of January, 1797, and Penelope his wife, who died on the 16th of Nov., 1774. The two other slabs are in the nave, near the tower, one being in memory of Margery, daughter of John Cracknell of Hepworth, and second wife and relict of Thomas Satisfatt of Gatesthorp, who died Oct. 27th, 1741, aged 59, and the other to Catherine Hunt, who died in 1727, and Elizabeth Reve, her sister, who died the 21st of June, 1730.

The church was re-seated about 1854 with pitch pine seats. Several old oak benches with carved poppy heads have been worked in with the benches in the chancel.

The nave, 55 ft. long by 25 feet wide, is divided into four bays, in three of which well proportioned Perpendicular windows have been inserted on both north and south sides, the remaining bay is reserved for the north and south doorways of late Decorated work, which are placed opposite to one another in the third bay westward. The south doorway leads into the porch, and the north has been built up, as is often the case. The rood screen is entirely gone, but the doorways which gave access to it
HEPWORTH CHURCH. 387

can still be discerned on the north side of the chancel arch.

On the south wall of the nave, at the eastern end, is a small Decorated piscina with an ogee cusped arch over it, and a small circular dished draining hole, showing that in this corner existed a chantry chapel, but by whom founded no evidence remains.

Across the west end is a poor gallery of classic design with panelled front, and supported on wooden columns: it is approached from the church by a staircase on the south side. The following inscription is placed in the tower over the door leading into the nave:—"1743 Joseph Salter Sen'. came on Clerk. This gallery was built in January of the year 1756."

The most interesting feature in the church is the very beautiful carved oak font cover, which, though somewhat debased in detail, has many points of interest. The font stands exactly in front of the blocked up north door, and it would seem that this was its original position, and that its erection was posterior to the stoppage of the doorway, because the faces of the cover against the wall are not enriched.

The font itself is of hard Barnack, or other similar stone, and is very simple in design, octagon on plan with base, bowl, and pedestal plainly molded standing on a 9 in. step.

The dimensions are—total height of font 4 ft. 1 in., diameter of basin 1 ft. 8 in., external diameter of bowl 2 ft. 6 in., height of cover from top of font 12 ft. 6½ in., diameter of base of cover 3 ft. 1 in. The cover exactly fits the font, and is apparently co-eval with it, and in all probability was made especially for it. It is octagon on plan, rising in stages as a diminishing pinnacle, and terminating in a pierced and traceried spire-shaped finial, to which a modern cross has been added to conceal the iron rod which carries the fixed upper portion.

The three lower stages had evidently sculptured figures standing out on carved brackets, beneath cusped and crocketed canopies, but none of these figures remain,
though the manner of attaching them is clearly shown on
the upper tier. The whole of the lowest stage up to about
4 ft. 6 in. from the top of the bowl opens with folding
doors, hung on wrought-iron curved arm hinges, three sides
of the octagon opening on the right hand, and two on the
left. When open the doors and back form a kind of
Tryptych, and on the inside panels may still be seen remains
of colour decoration, but the remains are not sufficient to
give any clue to the character of the decoration.

On five of the faces of the doors on the lowest stage,
the pedestals on which the figures stood, take a very
peculiar form (see sketch). The idea in each case is similar,
the details, however, varying slightly in each instance. The
central feature of each pedestal represents a castle gate
tower, having a doorway surmounted by a battlemented
parapet; on either side of this tower is a smaller tower
similarly designed, and outside these two flanking towers,
is a traceried rectangular return to the face of the font
cover. The castle gate is shown with double doors, one half
being closed, the other partly open, with an armed figure
bearing in some cases a sword, and in others a spear;
standing in front of it.

The smaller towers have doorways similar to the
centre tower, and through these doors a smaller armed
figure is seen obtaining access to the castle. What this is
all intended to convey is somewhat mysterious. The
details are rudely conceived and executed, but they are
very quaint, and possess a marked Flemish feeling. It is
strange that such an elaborate piece of work should have
found its way into the church, and no records of the gift,
or giver should remain on record. The cover was carefully
restored, and many missing parts supplied by the late
rector, Mr. Henry Hand, the cross at the top being added
at the same time.

The nave is spanned by an open waggon-roof without
ties, and is plastered over inside unrelieved by moldings,
or ornament of any kind.

In the south doorway the old oak door, repaired and
patched, still hangs, and the ancient lock, escutcheon, and drop ring, though rusty and mutilated, still do duty.

Above the south door inside the porch is a small cusped niche for the dedication saint. The porch itself is a small appendage, 10 ft. by 12 ft., inside measure, of late Perpendicular. It has apparently been rebuilt, but is in rather a dilapidated condition.

The tower measures inside about 11 ft. square on ground floor, and communicates with the nave by a doorway, there being no tower arch. It is devoid of windows, there being only three small quatrefoil pierced apertures on the floor below the bells. The walls are thick, but owing to imperfect foundations on a clay soil, the structure has been for many years cracked, and partially disintegrated. Even as far back as the 17th century urgent repair was demanded, and the west wall and buttresses were banded and strengthened by stout ironwork, and the date 1677 was worked in the iron brace over the clock on the west side. About the same time, doubtless, the tower was considerably curtailed in height, by the removal of the entire upper storey. This was evidently done to reduce the superincumbent weight, and so avert the peril of a collapse.

The angle buttresses are of great size, those on the eastern corners stretching across the entire end of the nave beyond the tower. The usual stone circular staircase has been pulled down, and the belfry is now reached by ladders.

There are five bells in the tower, marked as follows:—
1st Bell, Thomas Gardner & Co., Founders, Sudbury, 1726,
2nd Bell, Thomas Gardner & Co., Founders, Sudbury, 1726,
3rd Bell, George Mears & Co., Founders, Sudbury, 1864,
R. Clears, G. Walton, Wardens.
4th Bell, William Dobson, Founder, 1825,
Robert Nunn, Warden.
5th Bell, three shields, each bearing three bells, with a crown between them, and the following line—
+ Petrus ad eterne Ducat nos Pascua vite.
The 4th bell appears to have replaced a bell which Davy mentions to have been in existence in 1810, and to have had the following inscription:—"Thomas Drake the younger made me 1593.

The 5th bell was probably made by Brasyer about 1475.

The church plate consists of a silver Paten, Victoria, 19th century; a small silver Paten, Geo. III.; a silver Flagon, Victoria, 19th century; a silver Chalice, Elizabeth, 16th century. The latter is 5½ in. high, and 3¾ in. across the lips and base. The stem and base are relieved by moldings, and there is on the bowl a narrow engraved band of running scroll work. A small fleur de lis is stamped outside on the lip; which curves slightly outwards. (See sketch.)

The registers date from 1688, the previous books having been stolen or lost. Extracts from them occur in Martin's Church Notes, and have been copied from those notes into the Davy MSS. in the British Museum. These extracts, and also a copy of the entries in the parish registers for the year 1565 to 1569, which exist in the parish chest, have been printed in the East Anglian Notes and Queries (Vol. v., p. 23.)

The exterior of the church does not call for much comment, but the proportions are good, the view of the church from the north-west is picturesque, the massive buttresses dividing the windows giving great relief to the walls. Over the chancel arch is a parapet rising through the roof, surmounted by a cross, and the springers of the coping terminate in carved grotesque figures forming brackets. The original chancel coping has perished, and been replaced by a corbie stepped parapet in brick of Elizabethan, or Jacobean character.

Rectors of Hepworth.

In or shortly before the year 1200, Walter the priest, mentioned in the extract from Abbot Sampson's calendar, as holding a tenement at Hepworth, probably
held the rectory. We also find the following entry in the Curia Regis Rolls No. 27 4th John referring to him:—

Placita in xv dies post festum Sancti Michaelis Anno Regni Regis Johannis quarto.

Suffolk, Robertus filius Radulphi de Wikes obtulit de iii die versus Laurentium filium Walteri presbyteri de placito xv acarum terras cum pertinentiis in Hepeworth et Laurentius non venit etc. et sumenitis testata est. Judicium terra capiatur in manu domini Regis et idem Walterus (probably Laurentius) sumonetur quod sit apud Westmonasterium a die sancti Hillarii in octo dies etc.

From this entry it would appear possible that the land in dispute was the 15 acres of land referred to in Domesday, as being held on account of the Church in free elemosinary tenure.

The following Latin memoranda of early Rectors of Hepworth are taken from Davy's mss., and Martin's Church Notes, belonging to Mr. Milner Gibson Cullum:—

RADULPHUM DE HEPWORTH quondam Rector eccl' de Hepworth ibidem exist. Rector de eod. Henry III.

Note. It is stated that Ralph of Hepworth was presented to the living by William of Hepworth the owner of Hepworth Manor.

JOHANNES DE NEKETON quondâ Rector de ecclie exist. per xxxi annos videct tempore Regis Henrici tertii.

Note. This John Neketon (who is also called Robert Neketon) is stated to have been presented to the living by his father, Robert de Neketon, on the death of Ralph of Hepworth. Robert of Neketon having obtained a grant from Henry Abbot of Bury, during the infancy of William, son of Walter of Hepworth.

JACOBUS DE NEKETON quondâ Rector de ecclie exist. per xxxi annos videc, tempore Regis Henrici tertii per unü ann et tempore Regis Edwardi primi xxx annos.

From the commencement of the 14th century the names of the Rectors, with the dates on which they were presented to the living, have been obtained from the records at Norwich. The following is a list of the rectors with the dates on which they were instituted and the names of the patrons making the several presentations. The notes contain such information as I have obtained from other sources as to the incumbents and patrons of the parish:—
1303, 9 Kal Maij, WILL DE NECKETON. Ad præs. Abbis de S Edm quoad 3 partes rāone custodiæ Egidiij de Necketon et Joës de Ryveshall et ad præs. Mr Steph de Hepworth quoad 4th partem rāone firmæ terr Thomæ de Stanton cum advoc 4th parte.

In Blomefield’s Norfolk (v., 340), it is stated that in 1290, John de Riveshall, the son of Sir John de Riveshall, by Winesia, daughter of Ralph, son of William de Prevense, was an infant in the custody of the Abbot of Bury, and it will be observed that the names of the Patrons presenting Wm. de Necketon confirm this statement, and show that Giles de Necketon was in the same position as John de Riveshall, the Abbot being in each case the superior lord and entitled to the custody of the ward.

Martin’s Church Notes contain the following as to this Rector:

“Willmo Neketon capellus Institutus fuit in eccia de Hepeworth nono kalend. maii anno dni millmo cccmo tertio R Edwardi primi xxxmo et Rector ejusd eccæ exist. per xxvi septimanas vi dies videlt usq. vin diem mensis Octobr tunc cseq annro dni millmo cccmo tercio et anno dui Edwardi Regis xxxmo.


Nicholas de Stanton was the son and heir of Thomas de Stanton, by Susannah his wife. Nicholas de Stanton had a son named Thomas, and he in his turn was succeeded by his son, Edmund de Stanton.

Sir Oliver Wythe had married Winesia, the only daughter of John de Riveshall.

1333, 7 Id. Oct., PETRUS DE BUTTELE. Patrons: Wm. de Neketon, John Thorald, and Sir Oliver Wyth.

Petrus de Buttele is perhaps the same person as Petr de Buttele, presented on 6 Kal Maij, 1311, to the Rectory of Brockley. (Gage’s Thingoe Hundred, p. 362.)
John Thorald had at this time acquired the Manor of Master Stephens under a demise from Nicholas Stanton.


The Neketons held property at Great Barton, near Bury, and at Hepworth, which afterwards passed to the Conyers, and subsequently to the Cottons.

1356, 4 Oct., MR. JOHANNES DE THOMESTON. Patron: Oliver de Wythe, mil.

Thomeston exchanged Bradfield Monastorum for Hepworth, on Stebbings resignation. Thomeston was official to the Archdeacon of Sudbury. (Blomefield's Norfolk, III., 650.)

1375, 12 Jan., MR. RICHARD DE LAWSHALL. Patron: Bishop, by lapse.

This rector was, buried in the chancel of Hepworth Church. There was originally a flat stone there to his memory. (Davy's ms.)


1395, STEPHEN NICHOLLS CHAPLAIN.

The two last names appear in Davy's mss., but they do not appear in Bishop Tanner's ms. at Norwich.

1401, 27 Mart, JOHANNES BURY. Patron: Nic. Conyers, de Barton juxta Bury.

John Bury is described as “Accolitus” in Davy's ms.

1420, 3 Feb., WALTERUS GERARD. Patrons: Nic Conyers de Barton Magna et Robt. Ashfield de Stowlangtoft.

In 1438 Walter Gerard was one of the executors of the Will of Dame Alice Harpeley, the widow of Sir John Harpeley, Knight, and daughter of Nicholas Conyers, who was buried at Great Barton.
Robert Ashfield had at this time acquired the Master Stephen’s Manor, by purchase from Edmund, the grandson and heir of Nicholas de Stanton, and he also apparently claimed some interest in the Hepworth estates from the Wythes, although it would appear that the manor of Reveshall passed to the Calthorpes, and who probably ultimately succeeded in making good their title to this manor.


Sir Robert Conyers died in 1480.

Sir Wm. Calthorpe, son of Sir John Calthorpe, and Ann, daughter of Sir John Wythe, was born in 1409, sheriff of Norfolk in the years 1442, 1458, 1464, and 1476. He married first, Elizabeth, daughter of Reginald Lord Grey de Ruthin; and secondly, Elizabeth, daughter and co-heir of Sir Miles Stapleton, and died at Norwich in 1494.

Robert Ashfield by his last will, dated Feb. 22nd, 1459, willed that his feoffees should grant to his son John the elder, and his wife Florence, his manor called Master Stephens, in Hepworth, with the advowson of the church of the same, and the other lands there and in Wattisfield, which were bought by his grandfather of Wm. Sadeler, als. Brett of Norwich, to hold to him and his heirs, remainder to his son Roger and his heirs male, remainder to his son John the younger and his heirs male, remainder to his son Reginald and his heirs male, remainder to his daughter Bewfery and her heirs male, remainder to his own right heirs.

1499, 11 March, WILLIAM ATKINSON. Presented by the Archbishop, the See of Norwich being vacant. Patron: Fflor. Ashfield.

Florentia Ashfield, who was the daughter of John Boteler, Esqre., was at this time the widow of John
Ashfield of Stowlangtoft. By an inquisition post mortem held 21st Edward iv. (1482), it was found that John Ashford or Ashfield, died possessed of manor and lands at Stowlangtoft, and also of Hepworth manor (really Master Stephen’s manor), and the advowson of the church there. This presentation was in respect of Master Stephen’s manor.


This presentation was in respect of North Hall Manor. Etheldreda or Ellen, daughter and heiress of Thomas Conyers, only son of Sir Robert Conyers, married Edmund, 2nd son of William Cotton, of Great Barton. Edmund Cotton held his first Court for North Hall Manor, on the Thursday before the feast of Pentecost, in the 19th year of Henry 7th (1504). The pedigrees of the Conyers vary as to the descent of Etheldreda Cotton.


This presentation was in respect of Reveshall Manor. This Rector made a return in 1527 for the Valor Ecclesiasticus, signing as John Browndysshe.

The possessions of the Reveshall family at Hepworth had passed into the family of Calthorpe through the Wythes. (Suffolk Institute of Archaeology, i., p. 140.)

Edward Calthorpe was probably grandson of Sir John Calthorpe, who married Ann Wythe. (Norf. Arch., ix., p. 1.)

The Rev. John Brundish was probably of the same family as Wm. Brundish of Hepworth, Yeoman, who was appointed a trustee of the Hepworth Town lands, by deed dated March 8, 1627, now in the Parish Chest, and who died in 1669, having made his will dated Aug. 29, 1669, disposing of various properties at Hepworth.


This presentation was made by the owner of Master Stephen’s manor.
The Rev. William Raynbirde made his last will dated Nov. 18, 1557, and desired to be buried in the Chancel, Hepworth. He left legacies to his sisters Agnes and Johanna, and appointed Stephen Baker, of Hepworth, and Robert Fuller, of Barningham, his executors. The will was proved at Bury S. Edmund's, May 8, 1559.


Etheldreda or Audrie Cotton presented Peter Kilburne to the rectory, as lady of the manor of North Hall. She was the daughter of Edmund Cotton and Etheldreda, his wife, and was entitled to the manor for her life only. She held her first Court on October 16th, 1536. Her will was proved at Norwich, January 3rd, 1564, and on her death the manor passed to her nephew, Edmund Cotton, as tenant in tail under the will of his father, George Cotton, dated July 14th, 1551.

Sir Peter Kilburne was suspected of Popish Practices, and to be in communication with Mr. Cotton, the eldest son of Sir Thos. Cotton, of Kent, who married Ursula, daughter of Sir Roger Wodehouse, and with Mr. Francis Downes of East Tuddenham Recusants. The following letters, from Dr. Gardiner to Bishop Parkhurst, of Norwich, dated March 20, 1573, and from Bishop Parkhurst to Archbishop Parker, dated March 25, 1573, which are published in Gorham's Reformation Gleanings, pp. 466 and 468, have reference to this charge:—

March 20, 1573.

My Good L,—So it is that Sir Peter Kilburne Parson of Hepworth in the County of Suffolk is apprehended, & hath been examined before Mr. Drue Drewerye, Mr. Chancellor, and me, who upon articles answereth:—That he was acquainted with Mr. Cotton more than a year past, & was three sundry times in his company, at one Mr. Francis Downes, his house of Tudenham, where the said Mr. Cotton uttered at two sundry times words condemning this time & religion to be schismatical; one time at the table in the presence of Mrs. Downes, Mrs. Cotton, and this Sir Peter; another time going over the moor between Mr. Downes his house & one Tilneyes. Mr. Downes being then with this Sir Peter in company; but he saith that he thinketh that Mr.
Downes did not hear that talk. He confessed that he (Peter Kilburne) sent him (Mr. Cotton) a book made by one Bachelor Giles, sometime a Frier in Norwich against the Kings Supremacy & in defence of the Pope's Jurisdiction, & that he received commendations from the said Mr. Cotton about xiiij days past, by one that named himself Chapman of Debnam Market, but that fellow being examined before Mr. Mayor of Norwich called himself Keltshall, of Halsworth, a gester (sic) or a chirugion; this man Sir Peter rewarded with vjs viijd for his reward, & with good cheer; he (Peter) used a pair of beads in Christ Church, which he saith he hath now burnt. We found in his (Peter Kilburne's) chest, fair covered with clothes & pillows upon them, one image of Christ with the Cross upon his back; three other tables (tablets) two of wood & one of alabaster, with gilded Images of the Trinity, Christ crucified, & of our Ladye, a super altar, a mass book, with a portuus; the case of a chalice, without a chalice; a letter from Mr. John Downes of Hepworth, wherein was written that he should receive money by Mr. Cotton. There hath been articles drawn out, & he examined upon his oath in the premises: but in my judgment, though he seem simple, he is a subtle fox; for directly he answereth to nothing, but with oaths which are rife in his mouth (a note of a Papist), & with stammering, & doubling his tale, would pass over the matter. He will not confess that he either conveyed Mr. Cotton away, or that he knows where he is. Yet Keltshall, alias Chapman, affirmed upon his examination, that this Sir Peter conveyed him away.

Scribbled in haste, at Norwich, this 20 of March 1572 (1572-3)
Your L at commandment George Gardyner.

BISHOP PARKHURST TO ARCHBISHOP PARKER
my duty unto Your Grace humbly remembered

Upon knowledge given unto me that one Sir Peter Kilburne (abiding within the Precinct of the Cathedral Church here) was acquainted with Mr. Cotton who lately conveyed himself out of these parts & that the said Sir Peter was otherwise suspected to have used secret conference with the said Mr. Cotton. I have caused the said Sir Peter to be called before Mr. Drurie Dr. Gardner & my Chancellor to be examined upon certain articles the copy whereof I do send unto Your Grace together with his answers whereby may appear to Your Grace how far forth I have proceeded against him & thereupon to receive from you your aid over & direction for further proceedings I send unto you also a letter sent unto me from D. Gardner touching this matter. This Sir Peter is surely an evil disposed body & subtle in his answers but if he were more sharply dealt, withal it were like he would utter more

At Ludham this xxv. of March 1573.
Your Graces most bounden
J. Norwich.

To my Lord of Canterbury his Grace.
RECTORS OF HEPWORTH.

A copy of the summons to Sir Peter Kilburne to attend at Norwich, dated the 18th of March, 1573, and signed by Drue Drury, is in the University Library at Cambridge.


Richard Rushbrooke was not inducted to the living. Probably his presentation was found to be invalid, either on the ground of Edmund Cotton not being entitled to this turn of presentation, or perhaps of his being a papist, and Richard Sporle was presented in his place.

Edmund Cotton was eldest son of George Cotton, of Great Barton, by his wife Jane, daughter of John Goldingham, of Belstead, Suffolk, and was grandson of Edmund Cotton, of Redgrave. Edmund Cotton died c. 1594, as his widow, Ann, the daughter of John Fuller, held her first court as lady of the manor of North Hall, March 25th, 1594.


In 1603 Rev. Richd. Sporle answered the queries addressed by the Bishop of Norwich to the Incumbents of the various livings in the diocese, by stating that there were 139 communicants in the parish, and that there were no recusants of any kind, nor any that refused to receive the Holy Communion, and that Sir Robert Jermyn, Knight, was the patron of the living.

Richd. Sporle and Ann, his wife, had two children. Ann, baptised at Hepworth, March 7th, 1587; and Mary, baptised Feb. 28th, 1597. The daughter, Ann Sporle, died a spinster, and was buried Dec. 29th, 1617, at Hepworth. The Rev. Richard Sporle was buried at Hepworth, March 4th, 1621, and Ann, his wife, in 1637.

1618, 7 Sep., ROBERT SHEPHERD, M.A.

Patron: Sir Thos. Jermyn, Knight.

The Rev. Robert Shepherd was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge; B.A. in 1614–5; M.A. 1618. Ordained priest by John, Bishop of Norwich, Dec. 24th, 1615, and licensed to preach anywhere in the diocese. He married
Anna Rust, at Hepworth, May 27th, 1627. They had a son, Robert, baptised at Hepworth, Sep. 27th, 1629, and Anna Shepherd was buried there on the following day.

On March 8th, 1627, Rev. Robert Shepherd was appointed a trustee of the Hepworth town lands.

The living was sequestered about 1643, during the sequestration Mr. Shepherd resided in the adjoining parish of Stanton. He was re-instated in the living Dec. 7th, 1660, and remained rector until his death. He made his will, dated Feb. 27th, 1672, and directed his body to be buried by his wife in the chancel of Hepworth, and disposed of property in Stanton and Hepworth, and gives directions as to his claim to the next presentation to Hepworth rectory, which he alleged he had acquired from "old Mr. Edmund Cotton." He appointed Robert Maltyward his executor. He was buried at Hepworth, March 5th, 1672.

Conflicting accounts of this rector are given in White's "First Century of Scandalous and Malignant Priests," p. 47, and in Walker's "Sufferings of the Clergy," part 2, p. 371.

The Rev. Thomas Abbott, who was the son of Giles Abbott, barrister-at-law, of Kirtling, Cambridgeshire, was educated at Caius College, and graduated as B.A. in 1620. He attested the will of Wm. Mordeboice Blacksmith, of Hepworth, dated Jan. 28th, 1644 (Tymm's "Bury Wills"). He is described in the will as minister of God's Word. He probably held the living under the sequestration.

The Rev. Robert Devereux, M.A., who was baptised at Ratlesden, Feb. 4th, 1611, and was second son of Rev. Peter Devereux, rector of Rattlesden, by Julian, his wife, held the benefice of Hepworth, under a mandamus from the Protector, for some years, during the sequestration which had been issued against the Rev. Robert Shepherd. He signed the minutes of various parish meetings between 1644 and 1653, sometimes describing himself as rector, and sometimes as "clerk." After Shepherd was re-instated in the living, Rev. Robert Devereux became rector of Little Stonham. He died in 1686, his will being dated
Dec. 16th, 1686. He apparently left no wife or children, but left legacies to the children of his sister, Mrs. Judith Folkard.

Sir Thomas Jermyn, the patron of the living, was eldest son of Sir John Jermyn, by Judith, daughter of Sir George Blage, Knight.


Rev. Richd. Burrell, son of Rev. Christopher Burrell, of Great Wratting, was admitted an undergraduate at Caius College, Cambridge, in 1658, at the age of 17. He was a scholar of the college from 1659 to 1661; B.A. in 1662. He was ordained priest at Norwich, Sept. 20th, 1671; appointed rector of Itteringham and Wolterton, in Norfolk, in 1674; and was chaplain to the Earl of Peterborough. In 1674 he obtained a dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury to hold the rectory of Itteringham with Hepworth.

He died June 11th, 1721, his death being recorded in the Hepworth registers by the Rev. Nathaniel Rye, who wrote the word "exit" after the entry. He having been waiting since 1692 for the living. In 1675 the Rev. John Warren became curate-in-charge of the parish, and he on March 27th, 1683, married Mary Ferneley. Their eldest son, John, was baptised at Hepworth, on June 27th, 1684:

From 1689 to 1691 James Reeve, and from 1692 to 1720 Samuel Rye, officiated as curates in the parish.

Rev. Nathaniel Burrell, elder brother of Richard Burrell, was educated at Caius College, B.A. 1654, M.A. 1658, and D.D. 1683; Fellow of Caius 1658 to 1661; and was rector of All Saints, Sudbury, although his name is omitted in the list of rectors given by Mr. Badham in his "History of All Saints' Church, Sudbury." His daughter, Elizabeth, married Rev. Samuel Rye. In Davy's ms. it is stated that Richard Burrell was presented to the living by Roger Kedington or Kerington. Roger Kedington, of Rougham, who was high sheriff of Suffolk in 1690, and
died May, 1703, was the owner of North Hall Manor, and he sold that property and his interest in the advowson about 1702, to Robert Hammond, of Wattisfield, who left it, by his will dated Sep. 23rd, 1723, to his niece, Mary Nunn, and her descendants.

In 1671 Mr. Roger Kedington sold the next presentation to the rectory of Hepworth, to Rev. Nathaniel Burrell, who purchased no doubt with the view of presenting Mr. Richard Burrell to the living, and on the occasion of this purchase Mr. Roger Kedington, then of Bury S. Edmund's, gave his bond to Nathaniel Burrell against any claim which might be made by Rev. Robert Shepherd, who alleged that he had some claim to the next presentation, under or by virtue of a grant made by Edmund Cotton, late of Clerkenwell, Middlesex, who, however, was only tenant in tail of the said advowson, probably under his father's will.

This Edmund Cotton died March 31st, 1639, and was buried at S. Giles in the Fields. His wife Katherine, the daughter of Roger Potter, of Bury St. Edmund's, was buried August 12th, 1635, at S. James, Clerkenwell.


Rev. Nathaniel Rye, eldest son of Rev. Samuel Rye, rector of Thelnetham, by Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Nathaniel Burrell, D.D., was born at Sudbury, Sept. 2nd, 1696, and educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, B.A. 1716; Deacon 1720, and Priest in the Bishop's Chapel, Norwich, 1721. He married Penelope, daughter of John Brooke, Esq., of Athelington, by Mary, daughter of George Green, of Brundish. Penelope Rye died and was buried April 19th, 1743, in Athelington churchyard.

Nathaniel Rye was presented to the rectory of Blo Norton in 1722, by R. Browne, Esq., on the death of Nathaniel Vincent. His will was dated April 20th, 1754. He died Oct. 19th, 1760, and was buried at Hepworth. He had two children: viz., Elizabeth, born March 30th,
baptised May 9th, at Hepworth, and buried there June 9th, 1728; and Penelope Rye, born and baptised Dec. 7th, and buried Jan. 1st, 1730.

About 1692 Mr. Samuel Rye purchased the Reveshall and Master Stephens right of presentation to the living, from Mr. John Mingay and Mr. Edmund Bedingfield, who had married the two daughters and co-heiresses of Mr. John Shawberry, the owner of the Reveshall and Master Stephens Manor, and afterwards the next presentation in respect of North Hall, from Mr. Roger Kerrington or Kedington, of Rougham, Suffolk.

In Kirby's Suffolk Traveller it is stated that Messrs. Rye and Nunn were, at the date of the publication of that work, the patrons of the advowson of Hepworth.


This rector was the second son of Martin Nunn, of Badwell Ash, by Mary, niece of Robert Hammond. He was educated at Caius College, Cambridge, B.A. in 1726. He was also rector of Holbrook. He married (1) Elizabeth, buried at Holbrook, Dec. 30th, 1744; (2) Eliz. Leeds, who died May 20th, 1804, also buried at Holbrook. By his second wife he had four children. Elizabeth, married Thomas Woodward, of Sproughton; Mary, died unmarried at Ipswich, May 20th, 1795, aged 46; Martin, baptised May 29th, 1752, died January 31st, 1775; buried at S. John Baptist, Peterborough; and John, baptised March 20th, 1753.

Rev. Martin Nunn died Feb. 24th, 1781, aged 77, and was buried at Holbrook.

From 1763 to 1766, J. France was curate of the parish; and Robert Nunn from 1767 to 1781.

J. France was educated at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and graduated as B.A. in 1759.


Rev. Robert Nunn, only son of Robert Nunn, of
Risby (the elder brother of the Rev. Martin Nunn), was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, B.A. in 1749. He was curate of Langham, and from January 11th, 1763, to January 2nd, 1765, held the vicarage of Pakenham. He was afterwards rector of both Hepworth and Hemingstone. He married Penelope, daughter of . . . . Hurrell, by Margaret, his wife. He died Jan. 5th, 1797, leaving three children:—Robert; Elizabeth; and Margaret, who married in November, 1797, Rev. Charles Browne, of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and afterwards of Leiston. Rev. Robert Nunn was buried at Hepworth. His will was proved Feb. 1st, 1797. Mrs. Penelope Nunn died Nov. 16th, 1774, aged 41; and was buried at Hepworth.

In 1797 the Rev. Charles Browne acted as curate of the parish; he graduated as B.A. in 1785, M.A. 1789.

Shortly before 1790 Rev. Robert Nunn sold the advowson of Hepworth to William Colhoun, Esq., of East Wretham, Norfolk, and exchanged this advowson and certain lands at Hepworth which were added to the glebe, for the advowson of West Wretham, then belonging to King's College, Cambridge.

A private Act of Parliament was passed, authorizing the exchange, 30 George III., cap. xxxv, "An Act to effectuate and establish an exchange between Wm. Colhoun, Esq., and the Provost, and Scholars of King's College, of Blessed Mary and S. Nicholas of Cambridge, of the advowson, and right of presentation of, and to the rectory of Hepworth in the county of Suffolk, and certain pieces of land and hereditaments in Hepworth, aforesaid, for the advowson, and right of patronage of and to the rectory of West Wretham."


From the entries at Eton College and King's College, it appears that William Moore was born at South Tawton, in Devonshire, and entered Eton, October, 1772, at the age of 12 years. Wm. Moore became in due course a fellow of King's College, and B.A. 1783, and M.A. 1786.

In 1810 he exchanged the living for that of Chagford,
co. Devon, with Rev. John Hayter. The Provost and Scholars of King's College, as patrons, gave their consent to the exchange in October, 1810. The Rev. William Moore was buried at Chagford, on December 24th, 1818.

In 1798 Rev. Henry Patteson acted as curate of the parish. He then resided at Coney Weston Hall, being curate of Coney Weston. He was the son of Henry Sparke Patteson, by Martha, his wife (née Fromenteel), and was born Oct. 10th, 1757, and was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, graduating B.A. in 1780. He married Sophia, second daughter of Richard Lee, Esq., of Lombard Street, and had several children, of whom John (born Feb. 11th, 1790, at Coney Weston), became in 1830 Mr. Justice Patteson, one of the puisne judges of the Court of King's Bench, and was father of Rev. Coleridge Patteson, Bishop of the Melanesian Islands. Rev. Henry Patteson was rector of Wortham and of Drinkstone, and died Oct. 3rd, 1824, aged 67, and was buried at Drinkstone. He was a magistrate for both Norfolk and Suffolk.

In 1809 and 1810 George Holmes was curate of Hepworth. He was a son of Gervas Holmes, Esq., of Gawdy Hall, Norfolk, and was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, B.A. 1798; appointed domestic chaplain to H.R.H. Edward, Duke of Kent, May, 1807. Married Oct. 8th, 1807, at Dedham, Essex, Charlotte Isabella, only daughter of W. Stephens Williams, Esq. In 1810 he was presented to the rectory of Copford, Essex, where he died and was buried Sep., 1845.


John Hayter, who was the son of Rev. Joshua Hayter, rector of Chagford, and Frances, his wife, was born at Chagford, co. Devon., Feb. 16th, and baptised there March 19th, 1754. He entered Eton when 11 years old, and was elected for King's in 1772. He obtained the Brown medal for Greek Ode in 1776; and was elected a Fellow; B.A.
1778; M.A. 1788; M.A. Oxford (ad eundem) 1812, and chaplain in ordinary to the Prince of Wales (George IV.)

He went to Naples in 1802, being employed by the Prince of Wales to decipher papyri found at Herculaneum. In 1809 he was recalled to England.

Rev. John Hayter married Elizabeth, daughter of Capt. Peter Baskerville, R.N., and had eight children:—Sophia, William, Elizabeth, John, Francis, Thos. Baskerville, George, and Joshua, who were born and baptised at Chagford between 1787 and 1797.

He died of apoplexy in Paris, Nov. 29th, 1818.

Rev. John Hayter published the following works:—


During the Rev. John Hayter's incumbency the following persons acted as curates in the parish:—

In 1810 and 1811, Wm. Appleby.

In Nov., 1811, Rev. John Sikes Sawbridge was appointed curate. He was fourth son of Henry Sawbridge, Esq., High Sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1782, by Elizabeth, elder daughter of Thomas Sikes, of Hackney. Rev. John Sikes Sawbridge was born March 18th, 1765, at Hackney, and was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, B.A. 1787, M.A. 1790. Married Frances Jane, daughter of Framingham Thruston, of Market Weston, Suffolk, and had five children. He was subsequently rector of Walford, co. Northampton.

From 1812 to 1817, James Davidson.

From 1817 to 1819, George Boldero. He was son of George Boldero, of Ixworth, and was educated at Caius College, Cambridge, B.A. 1804, M.A. 1819, ordained deacon at Norwich in 1804, priest 1806. Was afterwards perpetual curate of Ixworth, and died s.p. Jan. 17th, 1836, at Brussels.

Edwd. René Payne, was the eldest son of Edward Payne, Esq., the third son of John Payne, of Shenley Hill, Herts. He was a Fellow of King's, B.A. 1802, M.A. 1805. He married January 10th, 1822, at Ixworth, France's, third daughter, and eventually heiress, of the above named George Boldero, Esq. Rev. E. R. Payne died Dec. 21st, 1850, aged 73; and was buried at Hepworth. He had three children:—Rev. Chas. R. Payne, who died Jan. 31st, 1859; George Edward Payne, J.P., now of Badwell Ash; and Hester Maria Payne.


Henry George Hand was born Sep. 27th, 1810, at Billericay, Essex, he was a son of Rev. R. S. Hand, rector of Dunton Waylett, Essex, by . . . . Vanderzee, his wife. He was Fellow of King's College, B.A. 1833, M.A. 1836. He married July 30th, 1851, Caroline C. More Molyneux, third daughter of Rev. George More Molyneux, of Compton, Surrey. He resigned the living of Hepworth in Oct., 1883, and died at Godalming, s.p. Aug. 12th, 1887.


Wm. Chas. Green is a son of Rev. George Rowney Green, one of the Fellows of Eton College. He was a Fellow of King's College, B.A. 1855, M.A. 1858. He obtained the Brown Medals for Epigrams in 1852 to 1854, and Craven Scholarship in 1854, and graduated as 2nd Classic in 1855. He married Elizabeth M. Fison, daughter of J. Fison, Esq., of Barningham, Suffolk, and has issue one daughter, Miss Jeannette Eleanor Green.