

THE POUNDER MEMORIAL IN ST MARY AT THE QUAY CHURCH, IPSWICH

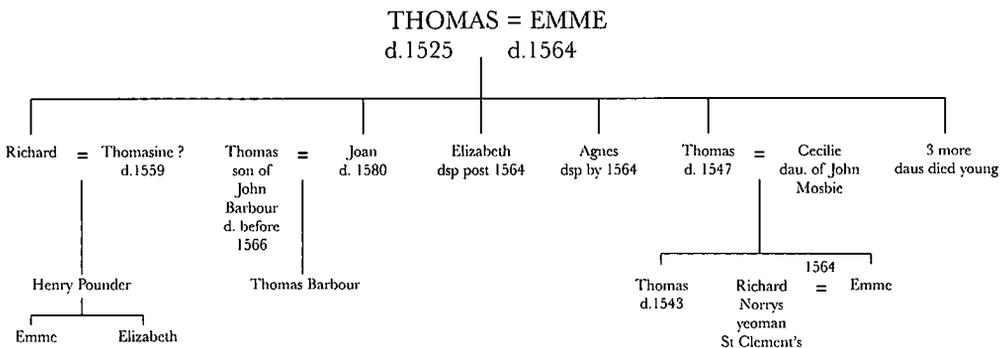
by JOHN BLATCHLY and PETER NORTHEAST

THE FINE FLEMISH brass which commemorates Thomas Pounder¹ and his family originally lay² on the south side of the sanctuary in the Quay church, which lies between the churches of St Peter and St Clement, three waterside churches all associated with the medieval maritime community of Ipswich. Comment on the likely workshop and the unusual lettering of this brass is largely beyond the scope of this article. Pounder probably commissioned it in advance on one of his visits to the Low Countries. Totally renaissance in style, the composition owes nothing whatever to the gothic.

The finely clothed family members stand or kneel in a classically modelled alcove. Thomas and Emme and their sons and daughters have the opulent air of similar groups in contemporary paintings. Rosaries are worn by Emme and her eldest daughter Joan, clear indication of the family's adherence to the existing religion. The younger son is still a schoolboy and carries his books in a pouch on his belt. To demonstrate Thomas's pre-eminence in Ipswich and further afield, three pendant shields bear his merchant's mark, the arms of the Merchant Adventurers Company, and, woefully mis-represented, the borough arms. Where there should be a single lion rampant to dexter and the sterns of three ships to sinister, there is one stern to dexter and a demi-lion to sinister. It has been suggested that continental arms were sometimes laterally inverted so that charges could face the centre to balance the composition. The inscription is incomplete:

Here lieth beried Thomas Pownder / marchauns and som'time
Balie of Ipswiche whiche departid in the yere / M^r V^e xxv yeris and
vii day of Nove'byr / And Emme Pownder his wiffe
whichedepartid in the yere M^r V^e [blank space for the actual date]

POUNDER of IPSWICH



Thomas was survived by two sons, Richard and Thomas, and three daughters, Joan, Elizabeth and Agnes. Three other girls depicted as living were already deceased, for how long is not known.

Thomas made his will⁹ only eighteen days before he died and it was proved eight weeks later in the bishop's consistory court at Norwich with administration granted to John Barbour the executor. Pounder and James Hyll, the supervisor of the will, were both portmen and were bailiffs – joint mayors – for the year 1523–24, Hyll for the fourth and last time for he only survived Pounder until 1527. John Barbour's son Thomas was already married to Pounder's eldest daughter Joan. After generous bequests to the church, the three friars' establishments in the town and Robert Basse the parish priest, Pounder left Richard, the eldest son, 'my little ship with all the apparel & "takelyng" [tackle] [be]longing to the same'. Emme was to hold in trust what was due to Thomas and Agnes 'which as yet be within age'. Emme was to have 'my place with the appurt[enance]s, in the parish of St Mary Caye' until her death, when it would pass to Richard (or Thomas, if Richard pre-deceased his mother). Emme was also to have another house in St Clement's parish immediately to the east and then in the occupation of Robert Wardall senior. Pounder's apprentice Thomas Humphrey, who witnessed the will, was to have forty shillings; he was a 'mariner' on his own account when buried at the Quay church in 1564.

THOMAS POUNDER IN HIS HEYDAY

Thomas Pounder was master of a ship (not named) which sailed from Ipswich to Iceland in April 1506 with a mixed cargo for barter with the islanders. He returned in August carrying stockfish and blubber for himself and six other merchants.⁴ In November 1516 he exported thirty cloths to the Low Countries returning with madder, yarn and ropes.⁵ He first held borough office in 1513 when he and Richard Humphrey were the chamberlains. For seven years from 1515 he was one of the two coroners, a higher office.

In 1514, he and William Courtnall were appointed co-executors by their fellow merchant William Gyles, another Quay parishioner, who left property in Chelmondiston and at Caldwell in St Helen's, Ipswich. Finding a sitting tenant in the estates, the executors appealed to Archbishop Warham in the Court of Chancery, so that the properties could be sold vacant.⁶ Gyles' will makes one provision which gives the flavour of services in the Quay church. 'My executors to have my close and land in St Clement's parish, they to give the parish priest of the Key two shillings on condition he pray for my soul every Sunday the whole year when "he biddis the bedes in the pulpit". If he will not, then the money to be bestowed on certain lights in the church'.⁷ Troubles with Gyles's will took them and their successors as executors to the Court for more than eighteen years. On different occasions Thomas Wolsey and Sir Thomas More presided. Before everything was settled, both Pounder and Courtnall were dead, as was John Barbour to whom their responsibility passed, and it was his son and Pounder's son-in-law Thomas Barbour who made a final appearance before the king.⁸

EMME POUNDER AFTER THOMAS'S DEATH

Thomas's proper concern to provide for his children after Emme's death was in the event unnecessary, for she lived another thirty-nine years through the whole or part of four reigns, outliving many of her descendents. She also continued to trade in Thomas's place as shown by a customs roll of 1530.⁹ She with Henry Tooley, Robert Daundy, Thomas Man, Thomas Cutler and others, sent three vessels, the *Tregent*, the *Clement* and the *Anne* to the Low Countries in May of that year, in which she exported twenty cloths and imported iron, nails, oil, soap, woad, alum and thread. In 1537, Emme had to admit to possessing two bales of cloth from John Collett of London, mercer, which John Humphrey had brought to Ipswich from London by water.

The religious and political turbulence of the country at this period did anything but pass Ipswich by, and some of the experiences which caused Emme to abandon the old religion in favour of the new Protestantism are recorded in graphic detail in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.¹⁰ Foxe was well supplied with anti-Catholic stories from Ipswich, many from the protestant poet Peter Moone,¹¹ and he chronicled the troubles of godly townfolk fully. Under the date 18 May 1556, when the Marian persecution of protestants in Suffolk was at its height, lists of 'complaints against such as favoured the Gospell in Ipswich' were 'exhibited to Queene Marie's Counsaile, sitting in Commission at Beccles,' by three associates of Richard Argentine.¹² There were three categories of offence, and the offenders are named by parishes. Only one St Mary Quay parishioner is named, probably indicating Catholic conformity, but many St Clement's parishioners appear, including Emme and Joan her daughter, who were by then worshipping at St Clement's. They were not in such peril as the Wardalls, tales of whose tribulations Foxe told at length, as they had resorted to 'fleeing the town and lurking in secret places',¹³ and were also listed with 'such as have not received the sacrament'. But under 'Such as observe not Ceremonies' we read:

Joane Barber Widow and Thomasine her daughter: refused to behold the elevation of the sacrament.

Mistress Ponder, mother to Joan Barber: in the same fault.

Probably influenced by the Wardalls, and in company with Alice, widow of the celebrated Henry Tooley, Emme Pounder and her daughter had turned their backs on the Quay parish and the church where lay the too-Popish brass under which it was intended that she should eventually rest.

TROUBLES OVER EMME'S WILLS OF 1562 AND 1564

Emme Pounder had three children of full age in 1525, so that the first of them must have been born about 1500. Presumably she herself was born about 1480, and was therefore over eighty when she died in June 1564. By then she had outlived her second son Thomas by seventeen years and his son Thomas by twenty-one. This last Thomas's sister Emme married Richard Norryys at St Clement's within a year of her grandmother's death. Daughter Agnes, who probably never married, was also dead. Richard and Joan had both lost their spouses, Richard in 1559 and Joan before 1566. Emme's closest kin now were Richard (who probably died before her) and his son Henry. Joan Barbour had a son Thomas. Elizabeth, Emme's unmarried second daughter, also outlived her.

When Emme made a will in January 1562, Richard was alive to witness, no doubt with satisfaction, that his son Henry was named 'sole and trew and lawfull executor' and was the only named beneficiary. Henry's sole obligation was a vague one, to make 'some distribution to the pore people accordinge as he shall thincke meete'.¹⁴ It could be that during the next two years Emme, already 'disquieten in bodie but in good and perfect memorie', needed more care, and received this at the hands of Joan Barbour her widowed daughter. Perhaps because Henry had neglected his duty to his grandam, or for some other reason, Emme was persuaded to make another will on 3 June 1564,¹⁵ appointing Joan and her son Thomas as joint executors, Henry to be supervisor. Unlike the earlier will there were now many individual bequests, and the general emphasis is towards an equitable division between Emme's 'kyndred'. Robert Wardall, deacon,¹⁶ was the chief witness to this will and there were no witnesses in common between the two wills. It was Wardall who instituted registers at St Clement's in 1563 and signed every page opening as 'minister' until his death in 1606.

We know that Emme died on 17 June 1564 from the extraordinary postscript to the first will. In a scene which recalls the Florentine plot of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*,¹⁷ Henry promptly summoned more than half a dozen leading townsmen to the house:

This beinge the laste will of Emme Punder widow wase Redde by me William Wheatecrofte bailief of Ipswiche at the howre of her deathe beinge the xviith daie of June Anno 1564 before Thomas Barker, William Paie, Henrie Hannam, Edmunde Quonwell, John Spicer and others.

Where Joan and Thomas Barbour were at the hour of Emme's death is not known, but they lost no time in sending the true last will in their possession to the Norwich Consistory Court. On 19 June, (the day of Emme's burial in the churchyard at St Clement's 'where I now dwell and inhabyte') probate was granted at Norwich through a proctor, Thomas Hopkins.

That probate, of course, should have been final. For some reason Henry Ponder delayed seven months before taking the earlier will to the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Probate was granted to him there on 17 January. Exactly six months later, however, Dr Thomas Hincke, surrogate to the commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, sat in judgement between the Barbours with their later will and Henry with his earlier one. On 17 July 1565, Hincke annulled the Canterbury probate 'because of the deceit of Henry Ponder', and awarded costs and damages against him. It would be fascinating to know whether Henry Ponder and the Barbours ever managed to patch up their differences. Under the later will Henry was left only a 'fetherbedd' and his young daughters shared some silver. Why he christened the son born to him the following year 'Shovolus' is very puzzling indeed. Apart from Joan Barbour's burial in 1580 we hear no more of the family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are most grateful to John Webb for mining his files for details of the maritime activities of the Pounders and to Diarmaid MacCulloch for supplying PRO references and helpful comments.

NOTES

- 1 The spelling Pownder only occurs on the brass and may have been an error. The family was usually Ponder or Punder and the former spelling will be adopted here. St Mary is sometimes 'at the Quay', and the key on the weathervane and Key Street support the alternative name St Mary Key.
- 2 The church was made redundant in 1973; its brasses had already been taken for safe keeping to Ipswich Museums in 1948. Two glass fibre replicas may be rubbed, one in the museum and the other in the church.
- 3 NCC 204 Bryggs (1525).
- 4 TNA K.R. Customs E 122 53/18.
- 5 TNA K.R. Customs E 122 53/22.
- 6 TNA C1/348/70.
- 7 PCC 34 Fetiplace (1514).
- 8 TNA C1/434/39 (Wolsey), C1/677/27 (More) and REQ 3/3 (the king).
- 9 TNA K.R. Customs E 122 53/25.
- 10 Cattley and Townsend 1837–41, viii, 598–600.
- 11 See PSIAH, 38 (1993), 35–55.
- 12 See also *Oxford DNB* 2004.
- 13 Henry Tooley's widow Mistress Alice, also a refugee from the Quay at St Clement's, was listed as 'departed to Dersham'.
- 14 PCC 1 Morrison.(1565), the later judgement was reported in 23 Morrison.
- 15 NCC 344 Knightes (1564).
- 16 Diarmaid MacCulloch writes 'it would be interesting to know whether Wardall had been made a deacon in a clandestine "church under the Cross" in Mary's reign'. Since he had been a sailor, he might have been ordained abroad in Mary's reign, perhaps by English exiles.
- 17 The plot of the opera was based on an idea from the 30th Canto of Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

REFERENCES

Cattley, S.R.C. and Townsend, G. (eds), 1837–41. John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*. London.