

## SOME ANCIENT SUFFOLK PAROCHIAL LIBRARIES

By THE REV. J. A. FITCH, M.A.

The purpose of this article is to give an account of such ancient 'parochial' libraries as have survived in this county, together with those which have been lost, dispersed, sold or destroyed. An attempt will also be made to indicate the steps which have been, are being, and will be, or ought to be taken in order to ensure the preservation of the surviving libraries for posterity. The method in the first part will be chronological, taking the libraries in the order of their foundation, so far as this is known, and I shall endeavour to relate the Suffolk story to developments in the country as a whole, apart from which it is scarcely intelligible.

There has, in the last few years, both nationally and locally, been a revival of interest in these old libraries, of which Suffolk has, or had, a good representative share. This interest was stimulated a few years ago by the notoriety attending the sale and dispersal by their local trustees of certain valuable libraries (notably that of Shipdham, Norfolk) and the wholesale and wanton destruction and loss of others. This resulted in the appointment in 1949 of a Committee of the Central Council for the Care of Churches to enquire into the matter, make a survey of existing libraries and a record of those lost, sold or destroyed, and finally, to make recommendations for their better conservation in future. So much valuable information came to light in the course of this enquiry, that it was decided to publish a detailed Report under the direction of Mr. F. C. Francis of the British Museum, and Mr. Neil Ker, Fellow of Magdalen College and Reader in Palaeography in the University of Oxford, both members of the Committee. This Report was published in 1959 as *The Parochial Libraries of the Church of England* (Faith Press). The detailed and authoritative Historical Introduction and the Alphabetical List attached to the Report have proved indispensable to the investigation of the Suffolk libraries and the preparation of this article,<sup>1</sup> and I am deeply indebted both to the Report and to Mr. Ker personally for much valuable information. I must also place on record my indebtedness to the East and West Suffolk and Norfolk and Norwich County Archivists and their staffs for their help and to Mr. Leslie Dow for his constant encouragement and interest.

<sup>1</sup> The Report is cited below as *P.L.C.E.*

Here in Suffolk interest in these libraries was stimulated by the Exhibition of Church Treasures of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk held in Blythburgh Church 18–21 July 1961. The Printed Books section, which was arranged by the present writer, included forty five representative volumes drawn from the Beccles and Woodbridge Parochial Libraries. Shortly afterwards the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich appointed a small Committee under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Dunwich to make a survey of the remaining libraries and to advise him on means for their future preservation. The present article largely owes its origin to this work, and reference will be made below to the progress which the Committee has been able to record so far.

First, what exactly constitutes a 'parochial' library? It is intended by the use of this term to denote those libraries, varying considerably among themselves in size, scope, location, origin and character, which were nevertheless alike in this—that, whether by the explicit terms of their founder's will, or their foundation deed or trust, or by the established custom or tradition of their use, they were intended as intellectual and spiritual arsenals for the use of the clergy (and occasionally also of the educated laity) either of a single parish or, more rarely, of a neighbourhood or group of parishes. Thus they are to be distinguished not only from later public or subscription libraries, but also from earlier ecclesiastical and academic libraries such as those of cathedrals, monasteries, universities and colleges. Although the earliest date back to the end of the sixteenth century, the majority were established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most of them between 1690 and 1750, and in this respect Suffolk was no exception, eight of its thirteen or (if we include the Ipswich Old Town Library, the original nucleus of which was intended as a *parochial* library) fourteen parochial libraries having been founded during those sixty years.

Sometimes, as at St. James's, Bury St. Edmunds and Beccles, the libraries were gradually built up by gifts of books from clergy and gentry of the neighbourhood and local townfolk. Some libraries, such as that of All Saints', Sudbury (1712) were established ('settled' is the word) in a particular parish as part of a deliberate nation-wide policy, owing its formation and drive to the philanthropic genius of Dr. Thomas Bray. But in most cases these libraries were the private collections of individual benefactors, constituted in their wills as a trust for the (generally exclusive) use of successive incumbents of a particular benefice for ever.

Again, very often these libraries were (and a few still are) kept in churches—some, as originally at Beccles and still at Stoke by Nayland, in a little room over the porch, some as (still) at St.

Mary's Woodbridge and Nayland, in the vestry. In rare instances, as at Brent Eleigh, a special building was erected and furnished to house the library, in this case built on to the East end of the church. But many of these libraries were to be found in parsonage houses, constituting a definite part of the parson's freehold. Such in Suffolk were Assington, Milden, Lawshall, Coddendam and Yaxley — 'were' because in all these cases the large old parsonages have now been sold and the libraries displaced.

Yet with all this variety, these libraries all fall into the one category of 'parochial'. Taken all together they form a not completely negligible part of our historical inheritance. Quite apart from such individual treasures as they may possess in the way of MSS. or incunabula (and there is in fact little of outstanding rarity or importance) they have value as reflecting the spiritual and intellectual interests of bygone ages, as well as of particular persons and places. Further, they bear impressive witness to the classical Anglican appeal to the primary authority of Holy Scripture, interpreted in the light of history and tradition by right reason and sound learning. And finally, they are redolent of an age of massive erudition, of days when the clergy of the *Ecclesia Anglicana*, taken as a whole, enjoyed a European reputation for their learning, and the pastoral ideal of the Church of England was expressed in terms of a scholar and a gentleman in every parish.<sup>2</sup>

So much by way of introduction.

Suffolk claims the second oldest<sup>3</sup> parochial library in England, that of St. James's, now the Cathedral, Bury St. Edmunds. But if it is to be complete, our story must go back further still.

Before the Reformation many parish churches had small collections of MSS., mostly service books and lives of the saints, for the use of the clergy. Sometimes these were bequeathed to churches by well to do testators, as when Robert Scales, clerk, S.T.P., Vicar of Reydon 'cum capella de Southwold' by his will dated 3 June

<sup>2</sup> It was never *more* than an ideal. Some scholars were no gentlemen, some gentlemen no scholars, and, it must be confessed, some clergymen, then as now, made no pretensions to scholarship or gentility! And even as an ideal it had its limitations: a priest may be a humble Christian and a wise and loving pastor without much in the way of breeding or learning: but at its *best*, in the not few instances where all these qualities and virtues have been combined, the Anglican pastoral ministry has attained a rare and peculiar excellence.

<sup>3</sup> The earliest parochial library of which we have record is that which was established in 1586-7 in a room called the library in the Church of St. Martin at Leicester, and referred to in the churchwardens' accounts there for 1586-7, 1592-3 and 1593-4 when 'seven books were chained in the Church'. Henry, Earl of Huntingdon (d. 1595), gave several books to this library (*P.L.C.E.* pp. 16, 86) which remained in the Church until 1632 after which it became the nucleus of a Town Library.

1470 (proved at Norwich Consistory Court) left his copy of the *Golden Legend* to the newly built Chapel (later Church) of St. Edmund, Southwold. Of these mediaeval parochial libraries not one has survived, with the possible exception of some volumes at All Saints' Bristol.

The consequences of the Reformation included not only the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the dispersal of their famous libraries but the successive Acts of Uniformity which rendered obsolete the old Latin service books formerly possessed by every parish, and required all Churchwardens to provide copies of the Book of Common Prayer<sup>4</sup> and the latest translation of the Bible for use in their Churches. Furthermore, Royal Injunctions and Archbishops' and Bishops' directives prescribed and commended the provision, setting up and reading of certain books, some of which are still to be found in churches up and down the country—in some places providing the nucleus of a later parochial library.

One of these officially prescribed books was Erasmus' *Paraphrase of the Gospels*, of which copies have survived at Bramfield (1551 edition, original binding, leather and wood) and Chediston. The latter copy (1548 edition) is inscribed 'Hic Liber appertat ad ecclesiam Chestoni' and has the autograph of Thomas Claxton, (churchwarden?). It has its original brass and leather clasps and a Tudor rose design on the cover, but has been carefully repaired as appears from an inscription on the flyleaf: 'This book belonging to the Church of Chediston in Suffolk (see the colophon last page) was repaired in the year 1864 and is commended to the care of posterity in that parish'. *O si sic omnes!*

Another such book was Bishop Jewel's *Apology*, of which Archbishop Bancroft wrote in 1610 that 'every parish in England should have a copy'. In Cavendish Church there is a two-sided wooden lectern with a copy of Jewel's *Apology* chained on one side and the *Book of Homilies* (another sine qua non for churches) on the other. Many examples of this latter survive in Suffolk churches e.g. at Sotherton, where their copy cost Robert Freeman, churchwarden, 7s. 6d. in 1635. He has added the comment '✠ Lex Christi, Lex Christiani'.

The most interesting of these early Suffolk collections known to the writer is at Sotterley near Beccles. Besides Erasmus' *Paraphrase*, and Jewel's *Defence of his Apology* (fol. Lond. 1567), and a fragment of what appears to be the (rare) 1552 Prayer Book, that parish has a copy of H. Bullinger's *Fiftie Godly and Learned Sermons etc.* (Eng. trans. fol. Lond. Ralph Newberie, 1587). This volume is inscribed on the flyleaf 'Bought for the Towne of Sotterley the xvi

<sup>4</sup> At Beccles there is a black letter *First Prayer Book of Edward VI* (London, Edward Whitchurch 1549) with interesting annotations by a nameless liturgist probably of the early seventeenth century.

day of Maye 1588 in the thirty year of the Reigne of our Sovereigne Lady Queene Elizabeth. Price viii shilling. Robt. Edgar gent. and John Warne churchwardens'.

Thus, if three volumes could be said to constitute a parochial library, tiny, remote Sotterley could perhaps claim to have the earliest in Suffolk, antedating Bury St. Edmunds by seven years! To this prototype we now return.

### ST. JAMES'S BURY ST. EDMUNDS

There is no contemporary record of the actual foundation of this library, or by whom the initiative was taken, but the salient facts can be ascertained from inscriptions in the books themselves and from a parchment catalogue of 1599 entitled *A Copy of an Inventory indented of all the books which do remain in the Library of the Parish Church of St. James, in Bury St. Edmunds, in the County of Suffolk, the 13th day of October in the 41st year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth, to be delivered in charge to John Mann and William Briggs, now Churchwardens, and by them to be accounted for to the said Parish.* From this it appears that upwards of 200 of the most valuable volumes were given between 1595 and 1599.

The first recorded gift is that of Augustine Stywarde, who on 29 August 1595 gave a thirteenth or fourteenth century MS. of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, bound with his *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles and the Catholic Epistles*. (This MS. had originally been given to the Brigettine Convent of Syon at Isleworth by Master Robert Elyot in 1490). The names of the donors during those first four years are interesting. They included tradesmen and common councilmen of the Borough (John Man, grocer, Henry Hammonde and Thos. Bennett, clothiers, John Bye and Augustine Gooche 'maulsters'), a school master (John Wright A.M. Scholae regalis infra villam Buriæ Ludimagister), a lawyer (Thomas Hammond LL.B.), neighbouring squires (Sir Robert Jermyn of Rushbrooke and Thos. Crofts of Saxham) and of course clergymen, both of the town (Miles Mosse S.T.P. preacher of the word at St. James', and Henry Dawson, Clerk) and of neighbouring country parishes (Robert Pricke of Denham, Jac. Wallais of Stowlangtoft, H. White of Rougham, and Anthony Rous of Hessett). One who gave several of the most valuable classical texts (including the Florentine Homer, 1488 (*editio princeps*), the Aldine Pausanias, Venice 1516, and the Basle Plato, 1534) was Samuel Aylmer 'armiger in com. Essex de Aula Mowdon'. The son of John Aylmer, Bishop of London, he was of Mugdon (not Mowdon) Hall, Ulting, near Maldon, Essex, but had an estate at Claydon, Suffolk, and served as Sheriff of Suffolk in 1625.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For Samuel Aylmer v. T. Wright *History of Essex* (Lond. 1836) vol. 1, 249.

Apart from an occasional contribution, such as one from Robert Ryce (probably the author of the *Breviary of Suffolk*) in 1609, there were few accessions from 1600 to 1628.

There was a further spate of gifts between 1628 and 1630, when donors include Clement Higham, Sir Charles Gaudy Kt. and an Italian physician Gaspar Despotinus, M.D. Thereafter contributions continued sporadically throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until the present total of 475 printed books and five ancient MSS. was reached. The last accession until very recently was in 1761, a gift by Dr. Bernard Mills. Some distinguished later donors include John Gauden (d. 1662) reputed author of *Eikon Basiliké* and sometime Bishop of Exeter and, later, Worcester, who gave a copy of his *Hieraspistes* (1653); Charles Trimmell, Bishop of Norwich, who contributed three books in 1712; Cox Macro (d. 1757) the Suffolk Antiquary, of Little Haugh Hall, Norton; John Gibbon, Bluemantle Pursuivant (d. 1718) who contributed a copy of his *Introduction to Blason* (12 mo. Lond. 1682); and Sir James Burrough (d. 1764) Cambridge amateur architect of distinction and Master of Caius College. In 1680 Robert Plummer gave a copy of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* 'to the Library of St. James for ever' and added, very properly, 'Cursed be he that depriveth the church of itt'. James Reynolds, rector of Lackford, who gave two liturgical treatises circa 1660, inserted lengthy Latin commendations of these volumes on the flyleaves.

The library had one tiny endowment which enabled the churchwardens to make occasional purchases of books, recorded in the catalogue. Some time in the seventeenth century a Mr. Baxter had given or bequeathed one acre of land in Spinthill Mill Field, the rent from which (10 shillings per annum) was available for the purchase of books. *Pearson on the Creed* fol. Lond. 1669 was acquired in this way, 2 April 1673. This endowment has been lost.

As for the contents and character of this library, its main strength naturally is in Divinity. There is an impressive range of the Fathers, both Eastern and Western, and, perhaps a little surprisingly, the mediaeval doctors of the Church are noticeably well represented (including St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, Hugh of St. Victor, Nicholas of Lyra, and St. Antoninus of Florence), together with many of the lesser divines of the Reformation and Counter Reformation, and many works on Church History. The Library possesses the *Antwerp Polyglot Bible* (5 vols. fol. Ant. 1565) one of the four great Polyglots in the series beginning with Ximenes' *Complutensian* of 1522 and ending with the great *London Polyglot* edited by Bryan Walton (1657) of which there is a copy in Beccles Parochial Library. But there are also many of the principal classical authors, and some English and

European history. Miscellanea include the foundation book of modern science—Bacon's *Novum Organon* (4to Lond. 1620), Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* (fol. Lond. 1614), Dodonaeus' *Herbal* (fol. Lond. 1578), Featly's *Case for the Spectacles* (4to Lond. 1638) and Euclid's *Elements* (fol. Vincenza 1491). Besides the last named and the Florentine Homer (1488) referred to above, there is a handful of incunabula and a few MSS., including a fifteenth century MS. of part of the *Collationes* of John Cassian, one of the Desert Fathers (fl. 360–435), which had belonged to the *Domus Clericorum* of Doesborch in Holland, a fifteenth century gloss on the Pauline Epistles, a collection of medical texts (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) partly in Beneventan script, formerly in the Abbey of St. Edmundsbury, and the Bede referred to above.

For whose actual use was this library intended? And how much was it in fact used? We have only a few pointers to the answers to these questions. Anthony Rous, rector of Hesselst 1579–1600, gave a folio edition of the *Clementine Recognitions* (Basle 1526) bound with *Irenaeus adversus Haereses* (Basle 1528) and in his inscription stated specifically that it was 'in usum sacrae Theologiae studiosorum'.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand when Thomas Steevens, Headmaster of King Edward VI School, Bury, gave a fifteenth century gloss on the Pauline epistles in 1639 he wrote that it was '... in usum reipublicae literariae'. Whether this library was principally intended for mature students of divinity or more generally for the world of letters, we infer that it was at least found useful by some, if only from the negative evidence of a note in the Paris 1601 edition of the works of St. Isidore of Seville: 'This book cost 14s. and was brought into this library by exchange for 2 books of no use to us, N. Vesalius his *Anatomy* and Wecker's *Syntaxis*. This Exchange was made with the consent of the Churchwardens and other inhabitants of St. James his parish, and by the request and advice of the Ministers.

John Heely  
Roger Lowcatt

Richard Knewstubb  
John Brinckwell

The forenamed books was (sic) given to the library by Mr. Samuel Aylmer of Mowdon (sic) Hall, in Essex' (no date). (Similarly the *Statutes of the 31st year of Queen Eliz.* were exchanged for Henriquez' *Summa Theologiae Moralis* (fol. Venice 1600) and the *Works* of Ephraim Syrus (n.d.) which 'fair and new' cost 28s.).

<sup>6</sup> He adds this proviso: 'Non tamen ut sit inter bona (licet inter parietes sit), Ecc. Paroch. S. Jacobi in Buria St. Edmundi, de quibus Guardiani pro libito disponere jure possint; sed ut Bibliothecae isti remaneat, et in usum studiosorum cedat', i.e. 'Not however that it should be (*sc.* classed) among the goods (even though it be inside the building) of the Parish Church of St. James etc., of which the Churchwardens may lawfully dispose as they think fit; but that it may remain in this library, and for the use of scholars'.

A parchment catalogue of the library dated June 1716 and signed by Fran: Hutchinson, (minister) and John Blomfield and Matth: Burrough (Churchwardens) is in the Diocesan Registry, Norwich.

The Library remained in the Church from its foundation until 1846. At a Vestry meeting on 26 November of that year it was resolved on the motion of the Rev. J. W. Donaldson, seconded by Mr. Samuel Tymms 'That the Churchwardens be requested to deposit the Parish Library, now in St. James's Church, under the care of the Bury and Suffolk Library, in their Library Room, during the pleasure of the Parish, and that the use of the Parish Library be allowed to the Subscribers to the Public Library; provided always that no book be taken out of the room, without a written order signed by the Incumbent of Saint James's Parish or the Churchwardens, and that the Inhabitants of the Town shall be entitled to take out the Books if provided with a similar order; provided also that an Inventory of the Books be first made in duplicate and signed by the Incumbent and Churchwardens on the part of the Parish and some competent authority on the part of the Public Library. Also that the Council of the Public Library guarantee to keep the books insured at a sum satisfactory to the Churchwardens, also carefully to preserve them, and make good any injury they may sustain whilst in their custody'.

The Inventory was made in pursuance of this resolution by F. K. Eagle. He did his work most thoroughly and his printed catalogue (1847) is invaluable.<sup>7</sup> In his introduction he explains why it was decided to move the books: 'the books, from the nature of the situation in which they have been so long kept, have suffered from damp, yet the actual damage has fortunately been inconsiderable'. Also, with the establishment of a Public Subscription Library in Bury St. Edmunds there was alternative and better accommodation available. It is interesting to note that an exactly similar decision had been taken six years earlier, in 1840, in regard to the smaller and later but otherwise very similar Parochial Library at Beccles<sup>8</sup> and it is possible that this precedent was noted at Bury.

The Bury and Suffolk Library was kept at the Guildhall, and thither accordingly the St. James's Parochial Library was transferred. It did not stay there long. Some time after the new chancel and vestries had been built at St. James's in 1865, the books were returned to the Church and housed in the vestry in somewhat

<sup>7</sup> In his preface Eagle says that he 'could have wished to have added to the Catalogue a full Account, not only of the Authors and the Editions of their works, but also of the Donors'. He does however in many instances cite the donor's inscriptions and in some cases notes on the books themselves. I have drawn heavily on these notes in preparing this section.

<sup>8</sup> See below.

crude shelving mostly against the North wall, where, not surprisingly once again they suffered from damp.

Another (manuscript) catalogue was made in 1911 by C. M. Neale, who gave an account of the library in the *St. James's Parish Magazine* for 1911 nos. 344–6.<sup>9</sup>

St. James's became the Cathedral Church for the newly formed diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich in 1914, but it was not until 1960 that, as the first stage of the Cathedral Development, a handsome library room was specially constructed over the new North West porch and thither in 1963 the books were eventually transferred. They are now splendidly housed in a beautifully furnished room of great charm and character, and have been joined there by two other parochial libraries, equally in need of care and protection, those of Assington and Coddenham. Eventually it is hoped Beccles and Lawshall will also find homes there. A generous grant of £750 from the Pilgrim Trust has enabled much needed repairs and refurbishing to be carried out to this valuable old library. The present Hon. Librarian is the Rev. A. A. H. Radice M.A., rector of Hepworth.

### IPSWICH OLD TOWN LIBRARY

Where Bury St. Edmunds led, Ipswich was not slow to follow—but with a difference. When, in 1612, less than twenty years after the inception of St. James's Library at Bury, a new library was opened in Christ's Hospital, Ipswich, its amenities were not restricted to scholars and divines, but open to all freemen of the town, and from the first it was known as the *Town Library*. That being the case, why include it in an essay on *parochial libraries*?<sup>10</sup>

The answer is that in *origin* it was a *parochial* library. Its founder was William Smart, draper, Portman—i.e. alderman—of Ipswich, and in 1588 its Member of Parliament. Smart, like Henry Tooley (d. 1551) before him, with whom his name and charities are closely associated, was a great benefactor of Ipswich and its School as well as of Pembroke College, Cambridge. His character and benefactions are quaintly commemorated in an acrostic rhyme (the first letters of each verse of which form his name) on a painted wooden panel in St. Mary le Tower Church. 'The

<sup>9</sup> *P.L.C.E.* pages 72 ff.

<sup>10</sup> 'The wording of wills and other records of the use and ownership of these libraries and of other libraries founded in the (seventeenth) century in towns suggests that town libraries and church libraries are not easily distinguishable' *P.L.C.E.*, page 16.

verse is framed within a painting of . . . strap work with the kneeling figures of William and Alice, his wife, in the bottom corners. Between them runs a contemporary view of Ipswich . . .'<sup>11</sup>

Smart's intention of establishing a library at Ipswich was expressed in his will (dated 8 January 1598 proved 2 November 1599).

'All my Latin printed books and written books in vellum and parchment . . . I give towards one library, safely to be kept in the vestry of the Parish Church of St. Mary le Tower in Ipswich: The door to have two sufficient locks and keys, the one to remain in the custody of the Minister of the parish for the time being, and the other to be kept by the Churchwardens of the said parish to be used there by the Common preacher of the Town for the time being or any other preacher minded to preach in the said parish church'.

Was Smart, one wonders, influenced in making this charitable bequest by the example of St. James's Bury St. Edmunds? We do not know, but there were certainly other, more powerful incentives. St. Mary le Tower had always held pre-eminence in the town as the civic Church, on account of its seniority and central position, and the office of Town Preacher or Lecturer was already well established there—an office held usually but not invariably by the incumbent, and entailing the obligation to preach before the Corporation in the Church every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday as well as on Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whit Monday and Michaelmas. Under the Commonwealth the time allowed for the lecture was four and a half hours<sup>12</sup> and it is not surprising to find the Town Preacher, at a time when Ipswich was a stronghold of Puritanism, the most highly paid of the town officials. It was obviously desirable, if not essential, that this official propagandist should be well supplied with ammunition. This consideration must have been in Smart's mind when he made his will.

Why then were the provisions of the will not more strictly carried out? Dr. H. A. Hammelman, writing in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 18 August 1950,<sup>13</sup> says: 'Perhaps because the library was destined for the use of the "Common Preacher of the Town", it was the lay corporation which took immediate charge of the books. For some ten years, the collection was kept in an old chest. When, in 1612, it was decided to fit up a room with presses for the reception of the books, the town authorities chose, not the vestry of St. Mary's

<sup>11</sup> W. M. Morfey, *The Story of St. Mary le Tower Church, Ipswich*, page 15.

<sup>12</sup> V. B. Redstone's Introduction to his Ipswich Corporation Records, No. 15, 1648-85. I owe this reference to Mr. W. M. Morfey.

<sup>13</sup> This article, *An Ancient Public Library* gives the only adequate account of the Ipswich Old Town Library in print. I am indebted to it for much of the foregoing. [See also *Journal Brit. Arch. Ass.*, vol. xxi (1865), pp. 65-75.—Ed.]

Church, but the so-called Christ's Hospital<sup>14</sup> which also housed Wolsey's Grammar School'.

Between the probate of Smart's will (1599) and the opening of the Town Library in 1612, another East Anglian precedent had come to hand with the establishment of the Norwich City Library in 1608. This further example may well have influenced the Ipswich Corporation, in its decision to make Smart's books the nucleus of a Town Library available not merely to the Town Preacher and other local divines, but to townsfolk in general.

'Smart's legacy itself was not a large one; it probably comprised some 20 books, mostly theological works printed on the Continent in the early part of the 16th century, and 10 early MSS., seven of them from Bury St. Edmunds Abbey' (Hammelman). It would be interesting to know what happened to the intention of William Smart about his 'Latin printed books and written books in vellum and parchment', because it seems fairly obvious that the collection he was bequeathing, with the special instructions about its custody, was greater in number than the 20 books that still remain. It is possible that between the date of the drawing up of his will and his death the bulk of his collection was diverted perhaps by Smart himself to Pembroke College, Cambridge, which has a magnificent block of books from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds presented by Smart.

The town was, however, fortunate in being able to supplement this collection immediately out of a legacy of £50 left to the Corporation in 1588 by a Mrs. Elisabeth Walter, and 'laid out by them in the purchase of a further 66 volumes'.

With the later history of this library we are not here concerned. Suffice it to say by way of summary that it now comprises between 800 and 900 volumes, kept in the strong room of the Ipswich Central Library in Northgate Street and that there are two catalogues—the MS. catalogue and benefactors book begun in 1615, consisting of about 20 pages of vellum and recording all benefactions down to the middle of the eighteenth century, and a printed catalogue of 1799 compiled by the Rev. John King, Master of Ipswich Grammar School and Town Preacher. These show that 'although gentry and clergy of the neighbouring countryside played some part in the building up of the library, burgesses and townsmen, bailiffs and portmen were its most assiduous supporters'.

<sup>14</sup> Christ's Hospital, the site of the old Black Friars' Priory in what is now Upper Orwell Street near St. Mary Key Church, housed in addition to the Library and the Grammar School, a Bridewell, a Hospital, and Tooley's and Smart's Almshouses, known as the Foundation (whence Foundation Street nearby). Christ's Hospital (of which Kirby made an engraving in 1748) was demolished in the nineteenth century, and Tooley's Almshouses rebuilt on the site.

Although Divinity and Church History are inevitably prominent, the library clearly reflects the varied cosmopolitan concerns of a trading and manufacturing community and port.

Thus by the year 1612, the two principal Suffolk towns, Bury St. Edmunds and Ipswich, each possessed a library, the first ecclesiastical, the second municipal in character, but otherwise with a good deal in common.

Almost eighty years were to elapse before the next Suffolk parochial library came into being. Thereafter others followed in rapid succession.<sup>15</sup>

### ASSINGTON

Thomas Alston of Assington, clerk, in his will dated 1 May 1690, proved (P.C.C.) 31 January 1690/1, gave and bequeathed 'unto the Vicar Incumbent of Assington . . . and to his successors in the said Vicaridge for ever for and towards a standing library for their use hoping that some worthy and Charitable persons in this and succeeding generations will make some Additions thereunto all such books as I have in a large Quarto paper book under my own hand entered therein or shall under my hand enter or cause to be entered before my death to each of which books soe given I have set to my name att the begining and to such as would take Impression on both sides of each I have or will to be stamped TA also I doe give unto the said Vicar and his successors for ever all such cases of shelves as are in my study that will sute to the said books bequeathed by mee as also the Register book into which I have entered the aforesaid books upon the receipt of which Register and comparing it with the books bequeathed it is my will that the Vicar Incumbent att my decease that shall bee shall then subscribe his name to each Leaf of Folios Quartos and Lesser Volumes as they are therein distinguished and it is my desire and earnest request that my succeeding heires or their Assignes owners of the lands disposed of in my will to them will bee pleased totius quotius upon every Vacancy of the said Vicaridge to inspect and see that none of those books soe given bee exchanged or Imbezilled but that they goe as they are by mee intended and herein given'.

The testator came of a family of lesser landed gentry, clergy and lawyers, long established in the neighbourhood of Assington, and notably in the adjoining parish of Newton, where Alstons had

<sup>15</sup> 'Outside the towns only a very small number of libraries were founded, so far as we know, before the last two decades of the seventeenth century. . . . During the next half century (1680-1730) however, many libraries were founded and mainly in those churches where the incumbents were least likely to have books of their own'. *P.L.C.E.*, pp. 17 ff.

founded charities in the previous century. Thomas makes several bequests to his kinsman Edward Alston<sup>16</sup> who had become Rector of Newton in 1683 (and whose brother Charles had been Archdeacon of Middlesex). Thomas left him 'all such books and manuscripts' not otherwise disposed of.<sup>17</sup> To his namesake Thomas Alston of Newton Hall he bequeathed 'my silver spoon marked TA and my dozen of pewter plates'.

Alston himself was an alumnus of both universities. Described as son of Thomas Alston of 'Asin' Suffolk, he had entered St. John's College, Oxford in 1625 at the age of 16, migrating the following year to Queens' College, Cambridge.<sup>18</sup> He remembered Queens' in his will, endowing a 'Schollership' there worth £3 p.a. to be known as Alston's Scholarship. It may have been this same Thomas who was called to the Bar from the Inner Temple in 1639. Of his clerical career nothing seems to be known but his strong churchmanship is evident from his will: '... the Church as it is now established and commanded and which God continue to this now declining and distressed Church' (a reference presumably to the Non-Juring Schism and the Toleration Act of 1690).

So much for the testator. What of his bequests?

Alston's own 12 page catalogue, the Register referred to in his will, is in the Bury St. Edmunds and West Suffolk Record Office (EL 5/12/1). It is a most interesting document, listing some 280 volumes, the majority of which (191 volumes) have survived. (Those which have disappeared include: *Daemonologie* by King James, Edinburgh 1597, and three other works by James VI and I; *Henric. 8<sup>vs</sup> Angliae Rex contra Epistolam Martini Lutheri*, Lond. 1526; *A Conference in ye Tower w<sup>th</sup>. Ed. Campion* Lond. 1583; and a collection of Prynne's early pamphlets including his *Unlawfulness of Love-Locks*, 1628).

Alston's own books which have survived comprise about half the total number of volumes in the Assington Parochial Library. They are almost entirely theological, a few political. They include some twenty printed before 1600, some of them with interesting stamped bindings, details of which have been noted by Mr. Neil Ker in his typescript catalogue of the Library. The earliest books he lists are Lyndwood's *Provinciale* printed at Oxford in 1483(?) and *Theologia*

<sup>16</sup> Venn, *Alum. Cant.* who notes Alstons of Polstead, Newton, Assington, Edwardstone, Great Cornard and East Bergholt.

<sup>17</sup> He left 'all my physick books and books of Chyrurdgery as also of planting and Gardening and likewise my tobacco box of silver engraven with the Manuscript Book to explain it' to 'Luke Eales Dr. in physick sonne of Thomas Eales . . . my tutor and worthy friend deceased'. Several of Alston's books have a 'Thos. Eales' autograph.

<sup>18</sup> Foster, *Alum. Oxonienses* and Venn, *Alum. Cant.*

*Damaseni* (fol. Paris 1507, bound with Richard of St. Victor *De Trinitate*, Paris 1510). Nearly all of the books contain scholarly marginalia in Alston's neat handwriting, often comparing them with other editions in the Bodleian and the library of Queens' College, Cambridge. Many are stamped 'TA' on the cover and back as noted in the will. One note of gift is of particular Suffolk interest. The first edition of Anthony Sparrow's celebrated *Rationale upon the Book of Common Prayer*, Lond. 1657, has a note: 'Ex dono authoris 7bris (i.e. Septembris) xxiiiij—57'. Sparrow, a native of Depden, Suffolk, became Archdeacon of Sudbury at the Restoration, and Bishop successively of Exeter, 1667 and Norwich, 1676.

The remainder of the Assington Library consists of books contributed (in fulfilment of Alston's expressed hopes) by 'worthy and Charitable persons in . . . succeeding generations', among them several later Vicars, and several members of the Gurdon family of Assington Hall. These books include 53 listed in the S.T.C. There is an *Eikon Basiliké* 8vo 1649 (2nd issue 'binding stamped with CR between a crown above and a skull below, all gilt').<sup>19</sup> There are approximately 385 volumes (Alston and non-Alston) all told.

The Assington Library was kept at the old Vicarage until this was sold about 1945. They were then transferred by the purchaser, Mr. Wood, to Assington Church, some being stuffed into the Church Chest, the rest placed in a Victorian bookcase given by Mr. Wood. Following enquiries by the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches, they were eventually found in a deplorable condition, suffering from damp and worm. In 1959 they were removed for safe keeping to Oxford, where they were temporarily stored at the Bodleian. On condition that they were restored to Suffolk the Leche Trustees made a grant (of £150) for their repair.

The Assington books remained at the Bodleian until 1964, when through the kindness of the Provost, they were offered the hospitality of the newly furnished Bury St. Edmunds Cathedral Library. Some 208 of them have so far been repaired and refurbished and placed in the Cathedral library shelves. It is the intention that the remainder will find their way thither in due course and thus be restored, if not to their original home (which is impossible), at least to their own county and mother church.

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#### *Thomas Bray D.D. 1656-1730*

At this point it is necessary to interrupt the Suffolk story to introduce the remarkable genius whose influence, direct or indirect,

<sup>19</sup> Neil Ker's catalogue note.

can be discerned in all subsequent parochial library foundations, particularly in those of the first half of the eighteenth century—with whose name, indeed, the whole subject is inextricably linked. The Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray (1656–1730) was in the year 1696 charged by the Bishop of London, Compton, with the oversight of the English clergy in the American colony of Maryland. He soon reached the conclusion that one of their greatest needs was for books, which for the most part they, like many of their brethren in England, could not afford. He therefore established the Annapolitan Library at Annapolis, Maryland to serve as a model, and published proposals for the setting up of parochial libraries in every parish in America. Returning home in 1697 he circularized the clergy and gentry with a scheme for purchasing lending libraries for all the deaneries of England. Bray's proposals were marked by their practicality and attention to detail. 'It was his suggestion that five parishes should be grouped together as a deanery with a decanal library to serve as a lending library 'to allow (both clergy and gentry) to carry the books to their homes', while the parochial libraries would form "standing" libraries'.<sup>20</sup> He published his *Bibliotheca Parochialis* the same year, 1697, containing further suggestions, including lists of suitable books. In 1698 he founded the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge as a vehicle for his schemes and ideas, which by this time were gaining ever wider currency and support. His conception of what we should term post graduate further education for the country clergy appealed strongly to the spirit of the age.

We shall return to Bray later. We now turn to some early examples from Suffolk of the way in which his influence made itself felt.

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#### MILDEN

The Reverend William Burkitt M.A., Rector of Milden from 1678 and Vicar and Lecturer of Dedham, Essex from 1692, well known as the author of the popular *Expository Notes on the New Testament*, died on 24 October 1703 aged 53 (Plate XIII).<sup>21</sup> In his will dated 1 January 1700, having resigned his soul 'into the hand of the Father of Spirits whose I am and whom thro' Grace I serve in the Gospell of his dear Son', and his body 'to the Earth to

<sup>20</sup> *P.L.C.E.* p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Born in 1650, he was the second son of Miles Burkitt, rector of Hitcham. He was educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and after his ordination was for several years Chaplain at Bildeston Hall. He married a daughter of Dr. Henry Wilkinson, Principal of Magdalen Hall, Oxford (d. 1690) who is buried at Milden. Burkitt is the subject of an article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, *q.v.*

be decently buried amongst' his 'beloved and loveing Parishioners' at Dedham '(with many of whom I comfortably expect a very joyfull meeting in the morning of the Resurrection)' he went on, after numerous charitable and family bequests, including that of the Advowson of 'Milding' to his nephew Myles Burkitt, as follows:

'I also give unto my said Nephew my Library of Books to be set up in the Study at Milcing Parsonage And my will is that they never be sold but goe along with the Study for the benefit of succeeding Incumbents, every Incumbent haveing power to exchange what he pleases of the Books and leaveing under his hand a Catalogue of the Books he received from his predecessor and of what he leaves to his successor'.

Certain of his books were, however, excepted and these were specified in bequests to his widow and various friends. (These include 'To Mr. John Sherman the *Polyglot Bible* in Six Voll. and twenty books more where he pleases', and 'To Deborah Culpeck', his niece, among other books, *Dr. Bray on the Church Catechisme*). Burkitt's will was proved 18 December 1703 (P.C.C.).

It is said that the Milden Parochial Library thus constituted consisted of no less than about 2,000 volumes.<sup>22</sup> If so, it was far and away the largest of the Suffolk libraries. Not one single volume remains.

The books were housed in accordance with the terms of Burkitt's will in the Study of Milden Old Rectory, which stands near the little Church. (This charming old house was sold when the Benefice was united with Brent Eleigh in 1926). The books had been removed long before the Rectory was sold. In 1897 one A. F. Rivers was appointed Rector of Milden, and it was he who in 1904 decided to ignore the terms of Burkitt's will and get rid of the library. The following extract from the minutes of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury Bray Library (otherwise known as the Abbot Anselm Library) makes clear what happened: 'The Archdeacon reported that the Burkitt Bequest had been transferred by the Rector and Patron of Milden to the custody of the Archidiaconal Library and the thanks of the Committee were given to the Rev. A. F. Rivers for his generosity. The Rectors of Milden were to be made life members of the Library and to have full use of the books contained therein. The old books were sold and the money laid out in more modern ones. That part of the Library purchased by this money was in future to be called "The Burkitt Bequest"' (minute of 18 November 1904 cited by kind permission of the Rev. H. V. Koop, Secretary).

River's successor, the Rev. W. D. Churchill (Rector 1907-21)

<sup>22</sup> *P.L.C.E.*, p. 90 citing *Notes & Queries*, 6th series, vol. VII (1883), p. 117.

was scandalized by his predecessor's action and did his utmost to secure the return of the books. It is pleasant to be able to record that, on the occasion of a Suffolk Institute of Archaeology excursion to Milden on 29 July 1908, when the situation had been explained by the Rector, 'it was the unanimous opinion of all present that strong efforts should be made to recover the volumes, many of which were considered to be rare editions of good works'.<sup>23</sup>

Fortified by the support of the S.I.A., Churchill pursued his efforts to obtain the return of the Library, or what was left of it, but, pertinacious though these efforts were, they were unavailing in face of the high handed attitude of the Archdeacon, Hodges. The correspondence between them, ending in Churchill's defeat in 1912, is preserved in Brent Eleigh Rectory.

Needless to say, no trace of any of the Milden books is to be found in the Abbot Anselm Library today, and they must be regarded as a total loss. We do not even know *what* we have lost, since no catalogue or inventory has survived.

#### LAWSHALL

Not more than ten miles from Milden on the far side of Lavenham is Lawshall. The Rector of Lawshall from 1681 to his death in 1704 was Stephen Camborne, M.A. A Suffolk man born at Whitton circa 1640 the son of a former Rector of Campsea Ashe, and educated at Ipswich School and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, he had two brothers beneficed not far from Lawshall, Edward at Brettenham 1683-95 and Thomas at Drinkstone 1679-93.<sup>24</sup> Camborne must have known his neighbours and contemporaries, Burkitt of Milden and Colman of Brent Eleigh Hall (on whom, see below) and probably discussed with them, and possibly also with Alston of Assington, his plans for his bequest. In his will, dated 27 March 1704, he bequeathed 'all my library of Books to my Successor in this Living of Lawshall to continue here for ever' and directed 'that two Catalogues of all the Bookes of my Library be made by my Executors and one part to be delivered to the Churchwardens to be kept in the Church Box and the other to be delivered to the next Incumbent to the intent there may be no diminution of the said Library but that it may continue for ever'.

Camborne also left a very large benefaction to his old College.<sup>25</sup> The College Register says that he was formerly a Scholar of the

<sup>23</sup> *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, vol. XIII (1909), p. 238.

<sup>24</sup> Venn, *Alum. Cant.* & Venn's *Biographical Hist. Caius Coll.*, vol. I, p. 345.

<sup>25</sup> He directed his estate in Lawshall called Stone Farm to be sold and the proceeds 'to be laid out for the perpetuall Advowson of a Living . . . to be given and secured unto Keys College in Cambridge for ever'.

College who always had in mind the welfare of the place of his education and was desirous to be commemorated as a benefactor of it, and 'though he had but a small preferment yet by living with great frugality to a good age, he raised a considerable estate; the chief of which, amounting to about £3,000 he . . . bequeathed to Keys College to be laid out in the purchase of a living' (*Registrum Magnum*, a MS. account of College property preserved in the Caius Treasury). As he had anticipated in his will ('. . . in case any lawsuit should happen to arise concerning my will . . .'), his eccentric spelling of the name of his College and the supposition that one living could fetch this sum, induced his heirs at law to dispute his bequest to the College on the ground of insanity. After a Chancery suit which was eventually decided in favour of the College (and which delayed probate of the will until 29 March 1706), the Court directed that as the sum was so large it could be used to purchase more than one Advowson, and thereafter no less than six East Anglian livings were bought for the College:—Lavenham, Suffolk; Great Melton, Long Stratton, Oxburgh and Blofield, Norfolk; and Ashdon, Essex.<sup>26</sup> A MS. list is preserved headed *A Catalogue of Books presented by the Rev. Stephen Camborne, Rector of Lawshall 1681–1704 to his Successors in the Rectory of Lawshall to Continue there for ever and now kept in the Rectory Study 1709*. This catalogue, which lists 127 volumes, includes quite a number added since Camborne's death, including some bound volumes of the *Illustrated London News* 1855–57 and 1869.

These books remained at the Rectory until it was sold after the resignation of the late Canon A. O. Wintle (Rector 1923–57). In March 1960 they were removed for safe keeping to the University of London Library, where they are in the care of the Goldsmiths' Librarian, Mr. J. H. P. Pafford, who reports that 'they are in a very bad state' (letter to the Bishop of Dunwich, 19 February 1963). He has issued a list of the books actually received at London which shews that of the 127 volumes in the MS. list, seven (including two bound volumes of the *Illustrated London News* referred to above) were not found in the collection, but that seventeen volumes *not* in the MS. list were received, making an actual total of 137. Of these about half are theological works, mostly seventeenth century—a few earlier, chiefly standard works mostly in Latin. The rest are classics (well represented) and miscellanea, including Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (2 vols. Lond. 1674–8) and Heylyn's *Cosmographie* (5th edn. 1674). The additional books include a volume of sermons

<sup>26</sup> The Lavenham Advowson was bought from Sir Symonds d'Ewes, Bart. for £710 15s. (M. Fountain Page, *The Church of SS Peter and Paul, Lavenham*, 3rd edn., n.d.).

by the quaintly named Offspring Blackall, Bishop of Exeter (8vo Lond. 1706). There is nothing else worthy of note.

All that prevents the return of the Lawshall Library to Suffolk, where there is a welcome awaiting it in the Cathedral Library alongside Assington and Coddenham, is the lack of sufficient funds to enable the necessary repairs to be undertaken. (It is estimated that eighteen volumes need rebinding, a similar number need major repairs and all will need refurbishing).

### BECCLES

The earliest mention of the Beccles Library is contained in a document in Lambeth Palace Library known as *Notitia Parochialis* (Lambeth Palace MSS. 960-965). This consists of replies to a questionnaire or 'Advertisement' by 'a Divine of the Church of England' (Dr. Bray himself?) inserted at the foot of a broadsheet Royal Brief dated 28 February 1704/5 to raise funds for the rebuilding of All Saints' Church, Oxford. The Advertisement comprised ten questions. Question 6 was 'What library is settled or settling in your Parish, and by whom?' 1579 replies were received but only thirty-one of these answered this question in the affirmative. One such was returned by the Rector of Beccles, the Reverend Thomas Armstrong, M.A. (Rector 1671-1715)<sup>27</sup> who reported 'There is a library settling by the Minister there'.<sup>28</sup>

It was Armstrong himself who took the initiative in establishing this library. A MS. memorandum of circa 1717 headed *A representation of the State of Beccles Library*<sup>29</sup> describes the circumstances:—

'The Reverend Mr. Armstrong late Rector of Beccles did about the year 1707 at great charge and trouble collect Books for a Parochial Library and having obtained many Benefactions in books and mony to buy books, the same was laid out accordingly, and the Parishioners at their own cost and charge fitted up a room over the South Porch of Beccles Church for the same designation. Mr. Armstrong or the Clerk of the Parish by his order always kept the key . . . .'. This key was later to prove the source of endless trouble, as we shall see.

Thus the Beccles Library like that of St. James, Bury St. Edmunds (with the history of which it has many points in common) was built up by gifts from local benefactors and from some further afield. The provenance of the books as indicated by the inscriptions is interesting and shows how far Armstrong cast his net. Not

<sup>27</sup> Venn, *Alum. Cant.*

<sup>28</sup> *P.L.C.E.*, p. 22 and note; and p. 66.

<sup>29</sup> Preserved in the Norwich Diocesan Registry at Norfolk and Norwich Record Office (Diocesan Registry Box. Misc. 1705-30).

all the early gifts are dated but those which are fall between the years 1706 and 1712. As at Bury, the Bishop of Norwich, Charles Trimmell, was a benefactor. He contributed six volumes in 1712. Among other original donors there are some distinguished names—they include Wm. Whiston, rector of Lowestoft, 1698 (mathematician, astronomer, editor of Josephus, and heterodox neo-Arian divine); Samuel Knight, then Vicar of Chippenham, Cambs., afterwards Archdeacon of Berkshire (biographer of Colet and Erasmus and founder member of the Society of Antiquaries), and Thomas Ridgley D.D., sometime tutor of the Dissenters' Fund Academy, Moorfields, who gave eleven volumes. Armstrong was pluralist Rector of Northwold, in West Norfolk 1679–1714 and one of his Northwold Parishioners, a Mr. Pateridge, contributed *The Whole Duty of Man* (Lond. 1687). Local magnates who gave books include Sir John Playters, Bart. of Sotterley, Sir Edmund Bacon, Bart. of Gillingham, Norfolk, and Mrs. Anna North of Benacre. Local clergy included Mr. Fauden of Sotterley, Mr. Prime of Wheatacre, Norfolk, and Mr. Rand of Hardwick, Norfolk. The most munificent single benefaction was the six folio volumes of Walton's *Polyglot Bible* (Lond. 1655–7, with Hollar's engravings) and the two companion volumes of Castell's *Lexicon Heptaglotton* (Lond. 1669), together constituting a superb example of seventeenth century learning and typography.<sup>30</sup> These eight volumes, handsomely bound in pale green calf bear on the front cover of each a red leather label inscribed in gold: THE GIFT OF SR. SAML. BARNARDISTON BARRT. 1709.

A number of volumes are stamped on the cover in gold lettering on black: E BIBLIOTHECA BECCLESIANA, and some of the smaller books, E B B.

Among examples of previous ownership recorded in inscriptions the most interesting is the edition of the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 3rd century Bishop of Alexandria (Basle 1549) which bears on its cover the device of James Betoun (1517–1603), Archbishop of Glasgow, inscribed 'Jacobus à Betoun, Archiepiscopus Glasguensis 1552'. (Betoun, a brother of the murdered Cardinal, was counsellor to Mary of Guise during her Regency and later Scots ambassador in Paris).

<sup>30</sup> 'The *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta*, which is among the first books in England to have been printed by subscription, was begun in 1653, and its six volumes of Old Testament, Apocrypha, New Testament and appendices were completed in 1657. Altogether nine languages are represented, though no individual book of the Bible is printed in more than eight versions. The work, which has not yet been superseded, is especially useful because of its lucid arrangements'. (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*). The *Lexicon Heptaglotton* correlates seven languages, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Samaritan, Æthiopic, Arabic and Persian.

Besides its only incunabula, Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla on the Old Testament* (4 vols. folio, Nuremberg 1497, with many fine woodcuts—one vol. has the autograph 'liber Rici Nykke epi Norwicen. 1506') this library contains several interesting early sixteenth century books, notably the handsome five folio volumes of Erasmus' edition of the *works of St. Jerome* (Froben, Basle, 1525-6—a notable example of Renaissance Scholarship, with its contemporary Cambridge stamped binding incorporating the devices of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon and, as end papers, nine leaves of MSS. pasted to the cover from a fourteenth century Digest) and the curious 'ΙΙΤΩΧΟ' ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟΝ or, *The Poore Man's Library* by William Alley, bishop of Exeter, printed by John Daye (of Dunwich), London 1571, with an unusual roll stamped binding. The Fathers are well represented, notably St. Augustine in a seven volume Paris edition of 1637 (folio), as are Continental and English theology and philosophy both of the Reformation and Counter Reformation. Miscellanea include North's Plutarch's *Lives* (Lond. 1612), Purchas' *Pilgrimage* (3rd edn. Lond. 1617) and the great German Jesuit astronomer Scheiner's treatise on optics *Oculus* (4to Lond. 1652). Its outstanding possession is probably its copy of the first English *Prayer Book*, 1549, printed by Edward Whitchurch, with copious learned marginalia by an anonymous (early seventeenth century?) liturgist.

The early years of this Library's history were troubled by bitter controversy and suspicion. The founder, Armstrong, had died in 1715. He was succeeded by Thomas Page (who was to reign as Rector until 1764). Page was possibly himself the author of the memorandum referred to above (*A Representation of the State of Beccles Library*) which describes the course of the dispute from his point of view.

It will be remembered that 'Mr. Armstrong or the Clerk of the Parish by his order always kept the key'. The *Representation* goes on:—

Tho. Page the present Rector perceiving some damage to ensue to the Library by the Clerk's keeping the key, some books being lent out which could not be retrieved, and others being likely to be diminished, took the key from the Clerk, and made a Catalogue of the books remaining in the Library.

In the year 1716 Richard Twisse was chosen Churchwarden, and being a very officious and overbusy person and probably designing to dispose of the books as he pleased, he forms a stratagem to obtain the key out of the present Rector's hands, pretending he wanted it only to repair the Library; which being not done, and the books further dimin-

ished, the foresaid Tho: Page made a complaint thereof to the Reverend Mr. Chancellour <sup>31</sup> soon after the Bishop's last visitation, and finding that there wanted some regulation in the Library and there being no rules formerly made but the Library likely to suffer much by the said Richard Twisse's keeping the key, the present Rector therefore desired Mr. Chancellour that he would be pleased to command the said Twisse to detain it no longer but to restore it to the Incumbent.

Accordingly Dr. Tanner at his Court at Beccles soon after the visitation admonished Mr. Twisse to take a Catalogue of the remaining books in the Library and return it to him, in order to have some rules enjoined for the preservation of them; and to restore the key to the Rector.

Nothing of this was ever observed, notwithstanding Mr. Chancellour's admonition, and it is highly probable that Mr. Twisse has very much diminished the books because he will not permit the Rector to goe into the Library, for tho' he is now off from being Churchwarden, yet he will not part with the key, the Rector having sent the Clerk to him three times for it, and Mr. Abraham Brown the present Churchwarden having asked him for it but he told him he would not part with it to him but upon the condition of his keeping it from the Rector. The reason is (very likely) least the Rector should call over the books now in the Library by a Catalogue he took as before mentioned, and so find what books he the said Mr. Twisse has diminished or disposed of.

And to make this the more probable, the present Rector has discovered one instance of Mr. Twisse's confederating with Mr. Will: Schulldham Clerk to rob the Library. for in February or the beginning of March last, Mr. Twisse pretended that (then his office of Churchwarden being near expired) he would first take a Catalogue of the books, and (in one of those months) called Mr. John Lodge the present Curate and Mr. Will Schulldham seemingly to his assistance for that purpose; but to Mr. Lodge's surprise no Catalogue was taken or offered at, for as soon as they met in the Library, Mr. Schulldham looked out all the books given by Dr. Beddingfield De Grey (viz. Cambden's *Brittania* in Latin fol; and Dr. Beveridge's *Works* 8vo 8 vols.) and sent them away by a boy he had there ready for that purpose. and pretended the reason was, he was then composing something and wanted those books to conferr with or used words to that

<sup>31</sup> The Chancellor of Norwich Diocese was Thomas Tanner, D.D. (1674-1735), later Bishop of St. Asaph—one of the leading antiquaries of his time.

effect. but as appears since, this was wholly concerted between the said Twisse and Mr. Schulldham, that Mr. Schulldham should take those books out of the Library and keep them to his own use. for Mr. Schulldham persists in it, that he had power to alienate and revoke those books by Dr. Beddingfield's order which he now produces in his own vindication, and will not return the books to the Library but keeps them for his own use and says the Dr. has given him them, and shows the order to many persons to justify himself; and says further that he had Mr. Twisse's compliance hereto, tho' Mr. Lodge well remembers that no such order was shown or mentioned when he took away those books, and that the only pretension was that he borrowed them to conferr with.

The eventual outcome of the dispute is not on record. Not surprisingly there is no trace of any books contributed by Dr. Beddingfield De Grey.

The correspondence between the Beccles and St. James's Bury St. Edmunds libraries does not end with the circumstances of their origins. Until 1840 the Beccles library remained in the room over the South Porch. In that year (as six years later at Bury) with the consent of the Rector and Churchwardens the books were placed under the care of the Committee of the recently established Public Library subject to four conditions: '1. That a Catalogue of them be made and printed. 2. That they be open to all the Inhabitants of Beccles for inspection and perusal at the hours during which the Public Library shall be open. 3. That the books be not allowed to leave the Library except under a written order from the Rector. 4. That they be restored to their original situation over the Church Porch, in as good condition as at present, upon the written request of the Bishop, Rector, and Churchwardens for the time being'. The time allowed for reading each volume was to be marked at the beginning (a label bearing the legend 'Beccles Church Library: ONE MONTH ALLOWED' was pasted in most of the books) and the same fines and penalties for infringing this regulation or losing, lending or injuring the books were prescribed as for the Public Library itself. These conditions were almost identical with those adopted at Bury in 1846 and may have served as a model. A Catalogue of the Beccles Church Library was printed listing 151 volumes.

In 1849 the Select Committee on Public Libraries singled out Beccles as a praiseworthy example to be followed. Having referred in its Report to the dangers of neglect and damage to which Parochial Libraries were too often exposed, it went on: 'In one, however,

that of Beccles, in Suffolk, the books have been rescued from danger. They have been deposited in a room in the town and "made the commencement of a Town Library". Your Committee cannot but recommend that the example of the people of Beccles should be imitated whenever there is an existing parish Library'. (Reports from Committees, 1849. pp. vi, vii, cited in *P.L.C.E.*, 1959 pp. 24f).

'After the closure of the Public Library, the books were returned to the church' (*Ibid.*, p. 67). And again as at Bury, they were placed in a vestry many of them in cupboards against a damp North wall, where in course of time they suffered grievously.

Meanwhile eleven books had been added to the Library since 1840, making a total of 162.

When Mr. Neil Ker examined this Library on 16 July 1960 he could only describe the condition of many of the books as 'terrible' and wrote of one shelf: 'All this shelf can only be destroyed'.

Since the Beccles Church authorities were anxious to clear the books out of the vestry in order to secure the use of the cupboards for other purposes, and as no other suitable accommodation could be found in the Church, and since in any case it was essential to remove the books to dry quarters if further deterioration was to be prevented, the contents of the library, with the exception of the 1549 Prayer Book and of eight volumes which, as Mr. Ker suggested, could only be destroyed, were, on 19 October 1962, as a temporary measure, and by the courtesy of the Archivist for Ipswich and East Suffolk, Mr. D. Charman, removed to a former air raid shelter in Ipswich, where they remain, safe and dry, but inaccessible. Considerable funds are urgently needed to enable us to carry out the necessary repairs, after which it is intended to transfer all that can be salvaged of this interesting library to the Cathedral.

A detailed MS. catalogue and historical introduction was compiled by the present writer in 1962. It includes as an appendix a transcript of the annotations to the 1549 Prayer Book.

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#### *The Parochial Libraries Act, 1709*

As we have seen, Milden, Lawshall and Beccles were all founded between 1703 and 1705. The early years of the eighteenth century were the heyday of the parochial libraries. In 1709 Bray put out a broadsheet 'Proposal for erecting Parochial Libraries in the Meanly endow'd Cures throughout England', in which he stated that a committee of clergy and laity was in being with the aim of collecting books for the establishment of such libraries, that they had already assembled over 3,000 folios, and 4,000 4tos and 8vos,

that fifty-two libraries were nearly complete and 500 more proposed, and finally that an Act of Parliament had been passed for the better preservation of Parochial Libraries. Would-be benefactors to this charity were invited to send their contributions to Mr. Henry Hoare, the banker, who, with Mr. Robert Nelson, a devout philanthropist, was closely associated with Bray in this project.

The Act (7 Anne c. 14) of 1709 to which Bray referred embodied the ideas for which he had been campaigning. Its preamble includes the following passage 'Whereas in many Places . . . the Provision for the Clergy is so mean, that the necessary Expence of Books for the better Prosecution of their Studies cannot be defrayed by them; and whereas of late Years, several charitable and well-disposed Persons have by charitable Contributions erected Libraries within several Parishes and Districts in England and Wales; but some Provision is wanting to preserve the same . . . from Embezzlement; Be it therefore enacted . . . that in every Parish or Place where such a Library is or shall be erected, the same shall be preserved for such Use and Uses, as the same is and shall be given, and the Orders and Rules of the Founder and Founders of such Libraries shall be observed and kept'. Among its provisions are the following:—that every incumbent before he be permitted to use and enjoy such library is to give security for its preservation and the due observance of its rules and orders; that the incumbent is to make a catalogue of the library to be delivered to the Ordinary by a fixed date; that upon the death of an incumbent, the library is to be locked up by the churchwardens; that the incumbent is to enter names of benefactors in a book; and that books are not to be alienated without the consent of the Ordinary and then only if they are duplicates.

This Act is still on the Statute Book. It has clearly been more honoured in the breach than the observance.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless its provisions were generally remembered and observed in the eighteenth century.

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#### SUDBURY ALL SAINTS'

The Committee of clergy and laity to which Bray referred was officially known as the Trustees for Erecting Parochial Libraries. These Trustees, while formally independent of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, were nevertheless closely associated with it, sharing the same energetic Secretary, Henry Newman. Bray himself was, of course, the presiding genius of both bodies.

<sup>32</sup> It is printed in full in *P.L.C.E.*, pp. 48 ff.

The Trustees as such functioned from 1705 until Bray's death in 1730, after which they were re-formed as the Associates of Dr. Bray, to carry on this aspect of his work. In the twenty five years of their existence during Bray's lifetime they established something like sixty libraries in meanly endowed cures. Of these Sudbury All Saints' (1712) was the only one in Suffolk.

All these Bray libraries were formed on the same pattern. The books were all uniformly bound in calf, a bookplate was placed in each volume sent out, and each library was despatched packed in a wainscot cupboard of 'best Season'd Oak' costing 25/-, with a catalogue and a copy of the Act of 1709 pasted inside the door of each cupboard. The libraries, as will have been gathered, were small, and were in two categories, some consisting of seventy-two books, and others, of which Sudbury was one, of sixty-seven, all solid standard works of theology, mostly seventeenth century. Each recipient, besides a formal receipt, had to sign and return a Bond or undertaking in accordance with the provisions of the Act.<sup>33</sup>

The 1813 Glebe Terrier of Sudbury All Saints' refers to '... A Parochial Library in the Vicarage house', and gives a list of sixty-two volumes. (West Suffolk Record Office 806/1/146). In the Terrier of 1834 the number is reduced by one. C. Badham, *History and Antiquities of All Saints' Church, Sudbury* (1852) gives an account of this little library (pp. 105-109) and mentions five octavo volumes of Bishop Patrick's works as having been left to the library by the Rev. Walter Hackett, vicar, at his death in 1750.

This Library has totally disappeared long since.

### BRENT ELEIGH

We now come to what is surely on several counts one of the most interesting of these old libraries—Brent Eleigh. The odd thing is that practically all the circumstances of its foundation are known, but almost nothing of the manner of its mysterious disappearance just within living memory.

Its founder was the Reverend Henry Colman, D.D. The Colman family had held the Brent Eleigh estate from at least the early

<sup>33</sup> *P.L.C.E.*, pp. 22-24 and 30-41 and for Sudbury All Saints, pp. 38 and 100. *P.L.C.E.* erroneously describes these foundations as S.P.C.K. Libraries and the Trustees as a Standing Committee of S.P.C.K. I am obliged to Mr. Thomas Kelly of Liverpool University for kindly drawing my attention to this very understandable confusion. In his forthcoming exhaustive and valuable two volume *History of Public Libraries*, Mr. Kelly is at pains to distinguish the various agencies promoting libraries at this time, citing as evidence correspondence of Henry Newman in the archives of S.P.C.K.

seventeenth century.<sup>34</sup> They were mostly lawyers and parsons. Henry, the younger son of Richard Colman esquire of Brent Eleigh Hall went up from Eton to Queens' College Cambridge in 1688, but migrated two years later to Trinity, of which in 1694 he became a Fellow (later serving under the great Dr. Richard Bentley, at a time when the College was in a state of civil war between the Master and the Fellows). He was ordained on the title of his Fellowship and eventually graduated D.D. (Sacrae Theologiae Professor) in 1712. Dr. Colman was Rector of Harpley, Norfolk from 1706, and of Foulsham from 1713, until his death at the early age of forty-six on 9 October 1715. He had married Susanna daughter of Edward Hyde, D.D. of Hatch, Wilts., but she bore him no children. On his black marble ledger stone in the sanctuary of Brent Eleigh Church he is described as 'Vir admodum Reverendus. Benevolentia, Literis & pietate Egregie Notus'.

Dr. Colman appears to have maintained two residences, Harpley Rectory and Brent Eleigh Hall. (After the death of his elder brother Richard he presumably succeeded to the estate and it may be chiefly to his good taste that we owe the present appearance of that very distinguished house).

In his will (dated 9 May 1715, P.C.C. Fagg, Fol. 214), he makes the following provision for his library: 'As for and concerning my Library of Books wherever the same shall happen to be at the time of my decease whether altogether at Harpley or at Brentely or (as at present they be) part at Harpley and part at Brentely I do hereby give and bequeath the whole Library all and every particular Book and Books with all things else appertaining and belonging to the same to the aforesaid my dearly beloved wife Susanna and to her Assigns In Trust that she or they will dispose of the same to such intent and purposes and in such manner as by a Schedule or Codicil by me made written by my own hand and sealed with my own seal shall be directed'. This Schedule or Codicil, addressed to his 'dearly beloved wife Susanna' his sole Executrix, and dated October 4th 1715 reads as follows:—'. . . as to my Library of Books I leave them altogether and dedicate and consecrate them to the use of the Church of Brentily that is the incumbent Minister there for ever Subject to the Order of the Act of Parliament in that case provided and any other Order or Orders which I shall at any time during my life or in writing left after my decease as Founder and donor of the same think fitt to subject them so Excepting out of this said donation all such Books as I shall in my lifetime or by writing

<sup>34</sup> On his handsome monument in Brent Eleigh Church, Edward Colman who died in 1737 is described as 'that good man . . . last of an ancient family'. There are numerous seventeenth-century Colmans from Brent Eleigh in Venn, *Alum. Cant.*

at my decease dispose of to my cosin Francis Tregagle of any sort whatsoever English Greek Latin or such other Books as you yourself shall think fitt to take to yourself and your own use from among my English Books only'.<sup>35</sup>

The provisions of Dr. Colman's Will and Codicil and of the Act of 1709 were faithfully carried out. A document recently discovered in the Norwich Diocesan Registry archives<sup>36</sup> consists of three skins of parchment fastened together. The first is a Bond in the sum of £1,000 binding Nicholas Thurloe, clerk, vicar of Brent Eleigh, to Charles (Trimnell), Bishop of Norwich and his successors. The Bond is dated 24 May 1720. It recites the relevant terms of Colman's will and codicil, states that his widow-executrix (having taken some English books for her own use) has delivered her husband's library to Thurloe for safe keeping, that a Catalogue of the Books is contained in two skins of Parchment subscribed by Thurloe and annexed to the Bond, and that they (the books) 'now remain in a Repository or Room at Brentely aforesaid built and erected by the said Executrix and Robert Colman of Furnivall's Inn Gent: and are intrusted to y<sup>e</sup> care and custody of the said Nicholas Thurloe for the better preservation of them'. The condition of the obligation is to bind Thurloe faithfully to 'keep and preserve' the books listed in the Catalogue and in no wise to 'Waste, Imbezil, deface or damnify' them otherwise than by necessary and reasonable usage, or permit them to be 'imbezilled' etc., and at the time of his death or removal from the Incumbency to leave them in good condition in the Library or Repository, and he is also to observe, perform and keep the provisions of the Act of 1709.

The Catalogue (which is dated 15 April 1719) is neatly written in several different hands on two enormous skins of parchment, one 2 ft. 4 ins. × 2 ft. 9 ins., the other 2 ft. 7 ins. × 2 ft. 8 ins. (approx.)

<sup>35</sup> Dr. Colman's will concluded by laying down very precise details for his funeral and interment 'in Brentily Church under the Altar or Communion Table there that the place be so ordered that my Wife and I may both be laid together in our due time and the two black stones which I desire may be laid over us may make a decent pavement and fill the whole space within the rails . . . that the time be the canonical hour of four of the Clock in the Afternoon if in summer; that the whole Service of Common Prayer be used with a short discourse proper to the occasion and that by the Minister of the Parish of Brentily but without any particulars whatsoever but such as are entirely the business of preaching only. That the whole parish be desired to attend the service and the chief Tenants and their wives have white gloves, the bearers black Gloves with hatband girdle and ring of 20 sh. value with the make and the Minister of the Place for his Service the same black Gloves hatband girdle ring and five pounds besides in mony'.  
All this, one feels, is characteristic. Everything at Brent Eleigh in those days was done decently and in order.

<sup>36</sup> In the Norfolk & Norwich Record Office (Diocesan Registry Box. Misc. 1705-1730).

In the first skin the books are listed in seven columns, in the second in eight. Descriptions of the books are often detailed, giving date and place of publication. The total number of volumes in the catalogue is a little over 1,700; the number of titles is about 1,500. It is the library of a scholar, a gentleman, a well informed man of affairs, but in range and comprehensiveness a miniature university library. It is strongest in divinity, classics, and English and European history, and contemporary politics and controversies are well to the fore. There is a small collection of law books, such as one would expect to find in the library of a Justice of the Peace, together with some atlases and geographical works. There are numerous books and pamphlets relating to controversies in which Bentley had taken part, including *The Case of Trinity College* and Swift's *Tale of a Tub* (1704).

The Fathers, both Eastern and Western, are massively represented (even the most obscure early Christian authors), likewise the English Caroline divines and the great Continental reformers and there is a fair sprinkling of mediæval divinity. Peripheral interests are reflected in such works as *The Monarchy of Bees*, Parker's *Sylva*, and a book on 'chymistry'—incidentally there are several books by Robert Boyle, 'father of chemistry and brother of the Earl of Cork'. A full description of one volume, in the *East Anglian Miscellany* for June 1902 is interesting '... among the books ... is *Cornelii Nepoti Vitae &c.* 8vo Lugd. Bat. 1675, pp. 339, index. vellum. No name inscribed in the book, but arms on both covers; a triple-turreted castle supported on either side by a lion rampant; motto, *Praemium diligentiae*'. The earliest printed book in the catalogue is a Latin Bible of 1524. And only one MS. appears, '*Martialis M.S.*' (This is the beautiful *Martialis Epigrammata* (fifteenth century MS. on vellum with initial letters illuminated in gold and colours) which was sold at Sothebys in 1887 to Quaritch for £16 and is now in the University Library, Cambridge (Add. 3327).

Evidently a collection of eight other MSS. most of which had belonged to one Fane Edge of Lavenham, was added to the Brent Eleigh Library some time after Fane Edge's death in 1727.

Dr. Colman's widow-executrix saw to it that this fine library was suitably housed. The Brent Eleigh Parish Terrier of 1801 (Bury St. Edmunds and West Suffolk Record Office EL 26/3) describes the building: 'Adjoining the east of the Chancel is a square handsome Library built of brick by Dr. Henry Colman and covered with lead containing about 1,500 books at present in good condition'. This library is shown in an early nineteenth century water colour (Plate XIV). Judging from what appears to be a chimney at the North east corner, provision was made for the incumbent to read in comfort all the year round. The Catalogue

PLATE XIII



William Burkitt, rector of Milden 1678-1703

PLATE XIV



Brent Eleigh church, showing the library adjoining the east end of the chancel.  
(from an early 19th century water colour; block kindly lent by The British Publishing Company Ltd., Gloucester).

PLATE XV



Baltazar Gardemau, vicar of Coddendam 1690-1739

refers to 'The Books which are behind the door'. The 1813 Terrier informs us that Edward Goate Esqre. provided in his will, proved 1803, an annual sum of 20/- 'from the rent of Millar's Field to be payable to the Rector of Brent Eleigh and his successors under the directions of the owners of Brent Eleigh Hall for the time being to uphold the said library (and certain monuments and gravestones), to be in trust for ever for the said uses allowing the Clerk of the said parish for the time being 10/- yearly out of the said annual payment for keeping them clean'.

D. E. Davy records that when he visited the Church in 1826 the Library was built up against the outside of the East wall, the inside being wholly filled with a splendid Altar piece, handsomely painted blue in the panels; the divisions and other parts gilt. In the panels were the Lord's Prayer, Belief and Commandments.<sup>37</sup>

Such was the Brent Eleigh Library in its heyday, a splendid example of eighteenth-century taste and liberality. It has seemed worth while to describe it at some length. In passing, it is worth noting, as a singular coincidence, that, from 1720 until 1890 or so, the two largest parochial libraries in the whole of Suffolk, with a combined total of something like 3,700 volumes, were to be found within two miles of each other in two of the smallest, remotest country parishes, Milden and Brent Eleigh. *Ichabod; The glory has departed.*

The sad sordid story of the Brent Eleigh Library's decline and fall begins with the year 1859, when the 'square handsome' library was demolished so that the present hideous east window could be inserted in memory of a Mr. Brown. A commonplace new library building was erected by Mrs. Brown near the churchyard gate, and the books transferred thither. So much for the building.

Almost all that is known concerning the disappearance of the actual books is contained in the following passage from *Eton and King's* (1926) by Montague Rhodes James, Provost of King's 1905, of Eton 1918, died 1936. '... In or about 1700 a Mr. Edward (*sic*) Colman bequeathed a library to the parish of Brent Eleigh in Suffolk. It contained some nine MSS. In 1887 the parish authorities, needing funds for some purpose, put two of them into a sale in London. One was a late Martial, the other a little book of the Gospels. The latter was bought for the Bodleian for about nine pounds. It turned out to be the very Gospel-book once owned by Queen St. Margaret of Scotland, mentioned in her *Life* as the subject of a miraculous rescue when it had fallen into the water. In 1890 an old friend, F. R. Chapman, Archdeacon of Sudbury, told me

<sup>37</sup> Davy, *Suffolk Collections* Brit. Mus. Add MS. 19077. I have not been able to check this reference which I owe to the guide to Brent Eleigh Church.

there were still some MSS. at Brent Eleigh, so I went over to see them, and found them housed in a small dank building in the Church yard. I was allowed to take some or all of them back to Cambridge for examination. After a rapid negotiation they all became the property of the University Library or the Fitzwilliam in 1891, soon after which the whole library was dispersed. Two of the manuscripts were unique—a volume containing the long lost life of St. William of Norwich (a boy supposed to have been kidnapped and crucified by Jews in 1124) and a bulky but mutilated Register of British Saints, written in the early part of the seventeenth century by Nicolas Roscarrock. The St. William was a considerable find, for it is the oldest of a long series of tales of boys slain by the Jews' (*Eton and King's*, pp. 205 ff).

The 1887 Sale was at Sotheby's. The St. Margaret's Gospels is now Bodleian Lat.liturg.f.5. It was acquired for £6. The Martial went for £16. The six MSS. acquired by Cambridge University Library in 1891 are Add.MSS.3037—42; that acquired by the Fitzwilliam is MS. 17. Nothing else remains.

Thus the noble library 'dedicated and consecrated' by Dr. Henry Colman for the use of the incumbents of Brent Eleigh 'for ever', disappeared without trace some time after 1891, perhaps as late as 1900, and what became of it is a mystery wrapped in an enigma. Exhaustive enquiries in Brent Eleigh itself, its parish records, the Ely Diocesan Registry, the British Museum, Sotheby's, and Cambridge University Library have failed to yield any trace. Brent Eleigh was in the Diocese of Ely from 1837 to 1914, but there is no evidence of any faculty having been granted to authorize the rector or churchwardens to break the Trust and sell the books. Thus their action in disposing of their precious heritage for ready cash was not only morally reprehensible but in flagrant contravention of the Law, civil as well as ecclesiastical.

#### POSLINGFORD

The 1716 Terrier (West Suffolk Record Office 806/1/122) of this small parish near Clare includes particulars of 'a Library' consisting of eleven books (14 volumes all told), mostly standard Caroline divinity. Authors include Sanderson, Stillingfleet (2 vols. each), Hammond (Works, 4 vols. folio), Pearson, (*On the Creed*), Andrewes, Hooker and Laud (*Conference with Fisher the Jesuit*).

The 1834 Terrier gives 'a Catalogue of Books in the Vestry' and enumerates twelve volumes, mostly the same as in 1716, but with a little addition and subtraction.

Nothing is known of the origin or fate of this little library, which has long since vanished.

## STOKE BY NAYLAND

The actual date of the foundation of this library is uncertain. Apart from a mention in a terrier of 1753 (West Suffolk Record Office 806/1/145), which refers to 'a Library over the Church Porch', the earliest reference I have been able to trace is in *Some Account of Stoke by Nayland* by the Rev. Charles Martin Torlesse, vicar of that parish (London, Harrison and Sons, 1877). Referring to the South Porch of the Parish Church (page 9) Torlesse says 'A room over it contains a parish library, bequeathed by one of the former Vicars, Rev. Thomas Reeve, who was presented to the Vicarage in 1685'. An Appendix to this book (pp. 97-99) contains a 'Catalogue of the books called The Stoke Library, kept in the room over the South Porch of the Church. The greater part, if not the whole of these, was given by the Rev. Thomas Reeve, vicar from 1685 to 1719'. Torlesse's catalogue comprises a list of 116 books, most of which still remain. A few others have been added since 1877.

Torlesse does not give the evidence for his statement that Reeve was the founder. It is certain that Reeve did not bequeath his Library to Stoke. Reeve left Stoke by Nayland in 1719<sup>38</sup> to become Rector of St. Mary Stoke, Ipswich, where he remained until his death in 1745. (He was buried in St. Mary Stoke Church, and there is a memorial to him in the floor of the North aisle, with a somewhat bald Latin epitaph). By his wife Elizabeth (1669-1721) he had five sons and four daughters, all baptised at Stoke by Nayland. His son William (1700-55) was Rector of Freston near Ipswich and Kirton near Felixstowe.

In his will (proved at Norwich 9 September 1745) Reeve left to this son, William, 'all my canonical apparel and all my Library of books'. This does not, of course, rule out the possibility that he may have left some of his books at Stoke by Nayland when he moved to Ipswich in 1719.<sup>39</sup>

The books themselves do not appear to provide any positive evidence for the date or circumstances of the foundation. Reeve's

<sup>38</sup> Venn, *Alum. Cant.* tells us that Reeve, a Suffolk man, was born in 1658, admitted a pensioner at St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge 1680, graduated B.A. 1683-4; M.A. 1693. Ordained deacon by the Bishop of Norwich 1684. It is conjectured by Torlesse on rather slight evidence (*op. cit.*, p. 99) that Reeve was a High Churchman, and leader of a faction in Stoke by Nayland.

<sup>39</sup> Since writing this article, I have been informed by Mr. Thomas Kelly that in the Accounts of Dr. Thomas Bray for 1695-99 he has found a reference to a grant of £2 10s. for a *lending* library at Stoke by Nayland. From this new evidence it would appear that the Stoke Library was after all, as Torlesse says, founded during Reeve's incumbency, perhaps in the same manner as the Beccles Library, by gifts of books solicited by Reeve as Vicar, assisted by this grant from Bray.

name does not appear in any. Only one of the books in Torlesse's list however bears a date subsequent to 1714 and that (*A Defence of Three Letters to a Dissenter etc. together with a Sermon preached in 1745 at Stoke by Nayland and Nayland against the Jacobite rebellion*, by John White, B.D., vicar of Nayland 1713-55) was obviously added later. Reeve was of course a neighbour and contemporary of Alston, Burkitt, Colman and Camborne, and may well have been inspired by their foundations, as well as by the spirit of the age, to follow their examples.

The later history of the Stoke Library can be briefly told. Probably interest was stimulated by the publication of Torlesse's painstaking researches. I have noted 35 items not in his list of which two were contributed by Torlesse himself in 1880. The most recent acquisition (*A Descriptive Catalogue of a Collection of Charters etc. sometime preserved at Gifford's Hall in Stoke by Nayland*, by I. H. Jeayes (typescript, cloth, n.d.) ) is inscribed 'The gift of John Taylor and Christabel Tabor to the Church Library, Stoke by Nayland 14 January 1927'. Seven of the books in Torlesse's list are missing, and two may possibly never have been there. This leaves us with a present total of 142.

In 1949 Miss D. M. B. Ellis of Newmarket, then a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches, visited Stoke by Nayland and made copious notes with a view to a revision of the catalogue. She was unable to complete the task, but generously placed her valuable notes at the disposal of the present writer, who, after visiting the Library in June 1962, and comparing the books with her notes and Torlesse's list, completed a detailed new catalogue. Miss Ellis remarks that 'several people have had shots at this catalogue, and all have dropped it, except Torlesse, whose list is not absolutely accurate or complete. Everyone of us (before me) seems to have rearranged and renumbered the books, but they have been well cared for'. They could no longer be truthfully said to be well cared for when I saw them in 1962, but, though very dirty and stacked in extremely rickety shelves, they were mercifully free from damp. Probably things have improved since.

Many of the books are standard works of theology, Biblical exegesis and current controversy, and call for no comment. Unusual literary and historical interests are indicated by Jac. Phil. Thomasinus Patavinus:—*Petrarcha Redivivus*. 8vo (Patavii [Padua] 1635); Matthew Paris: *Vitae Duarum Offarum*. (Lond. 1639); Sir Henry Wotton: *State of Christendom* (1657); Bacon's *Henry VII* (Lond. 1622), and Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *Henry VIII* (Lond. 1649). Some other interesting books are Wm. Laud: *History of his Troubles and Tryal* (Lond. 1665); *Three Popish Plot Trials* (1678); Thomas Digges: *A Geometricall Practical Treatise named Pantometria*. (Lond.

1591); White Kennett's *Parochial Antiquities of Ambrosden, Burcester etc.* (Lond. 1695. A fascinating book with many handsome engravings); John Evelyn's *Silva* (Lond. 1706, also with some fine plates); and, finally, Malebranche's *Treatize on the Search after Truth* etc. (Lond. 1700).

### NAYLAND

There is no record or tradition as to the foundation of the small but interesting library in Nayland Church. As we have seen John White was Vicar of Nayland from 1713 to 1755. The Library has his *Three Letters to a Gentleman dissenting from the Church of England* (London 1748) inscribed 'Given to the Library by the Author late Minister of this Parish'. Nayland's most distinguished vicar was William Jones ('Jones of Nayland', theologian, philosopher, scientist, musician, and exemplary parish priest), Vicar from 1777 until his death in 1800. Very properly the Library possesses a complete set in twelve volumes of *The Theological, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. William Jones M.A., F.R.S.*, edited with a Life of the author by his friend William Stevens (London 1801).<sup>40</sup>

So far as is known this library has not been catalogued, but there appear to be about 100 volumes. There is a list in a terrier of 1834 (W. Suffolk Record Office ref: 806/1/112) which enumerates only 27 volumes. Most of the books are in the vestry, but a few of the more valuable ones are in a show case in the nave. The latter include two volumes of Nicholas of Lyra's *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Lugduni [=Lyons] 1528), fitted with iron links for fastening with chains; one volume of St. Augustine *De Civitate Dei* edited by J. L. Vives (Froben, Basle 1555) (inscribed 'The Library of the Church at Nayland W.J. 1777'—i.e. Wm. Jones); Cocceius *TO ΔΩΔΕΚΑ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΩΝ* (Elzevir, Ludg.Bat. [=Leyden] 1652) and Jewel's *Works* (Lond. 1611). Among the other books are D. Brevint: *Saul & Samuel at Endor* (Oxford 1674); Calmet's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Eng. trans. (3 vols. fol. Lond. circa 1750); and works by Waterland (9 or 10 vols.) Blair, Horne, Arndt and Leighton.

The books are in good condition and well cared for.

### CODDENHAM

This library, in itself one of the most interesting, is also the best documented and has fortunately survived intact.

Its founder, Baltazar Gardemau, was born of Huguenot stock at Poitiers in France, circa 1656, and educated, and apparently trained for the Reformed ministry at the Protestant academy at

<sup>40</sup> For a recent appreciation of Jones, see W. K. Lowther Clarke: *Eighteenth Century Piety* (Lond. S.P.C.K., 1944), pp. 106-112.

Saumur (from which in 1696 he was incorporated M.A. at Cambridge).<sup>41</sup> As his epitaph in Coddendam Church puts it, he 'chose to reside in England on Account of the great Persecution of the Protestants' in France, and we find him on 14 November 1682 (three years before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes), described as 'Mr. Gardemau french minister at Ipswich', receiving £13 remitted from Mr. Thomas Firmin<sup>42</sup> the Ipswich-born London mercer and philanthropist for the relief of his fellow refugees. (Account Book at Guidhall Library MS. 279 an 'Acct. of Monies received towards the Relief of Poore Protestants lately come over from the Kingdom of France'—fol. 73).<sup>43</sup> At this time he must have been assistant to César de Beaulieu ('Mr. Bewly') the refugees' chief pastor who kept a school for Huguenot children in Christ's Hospital, Ipswich. Gardemau succeeded Beaulieu and also acted as pastor to the French Adventurers Company, assisted by Pierre le Grand as reader. He was ordained priest by Compton, Bishop of London in 1682,<sup>44</sup> and appointed perpetual curate of St. Mary Elms, Ipswich. The decay of weaving about this time caused great distress among the French refugees in Suffolk and Gardemau was foremost in drawing attention to their plight and urging support for the efforts of Firmin and others to set up linen and woollen factories for them in Ipswich. His efforts seem to have had considerable success. Lloyd, Bishop of Norwich, wrote to Archbishop Sancroft (4 June 1686) that Gardemau had approached him when on a visit to Ipswich. 'He came to me and earnestly pressed me to doe somewhat towards his support in his ministry there. I had never seene him, but once att your table at Lambeth, but when I enquired of y<sup>e</sup> Clergy after his demeanor at Ipswich, they told me y<sup>t</sup> he was studious & a sober man, well affected to y<sup>e</sup> established Governm<sup>t</sup>, upon w<sup>ch</sup> I desired him to sett downe in writing his request, w<sup>ch</sup> accordingly he did . . . I have taken ye freedome to sende their papers to y<sup>r</sup> Grace, not doubting but y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>r</sup> Grace will be pleased (upon y<sup>e</sup> perusal of them) to extend your Charity towards y<sup>e</sup> poore French Protestants. at Ipswich . . . so as to prevayle with y<sup>e</sup> other Commissrs: to sette a fund there, whereby y<sup>e</sup> distressed French P. may be employed & thereby relieved . . .'. Lloyd encloses Gardemau's petition to him, in which he maintains that 'a sume of 2 or 3 Thousand pounds will settle the Manufacture forever, and employ not only the French that are now in Ipswich (sic) but many others also' and signs himself the Bishop's 'most

<sup>41</sup> Venn, *Alum. Cant.*, art., Gardemau.

<sup>42</sup> For Firmin (1632-97) see *D.N.B.*

<sup>43</sup> *The Dutch & Huguenot Settlements of Ipswich* by Vincent B. Redstone F.R. Hist. S.—reprinted from the *Proc. of the Huguenot Society of London*, vol. XII, No. 3, London 1921.

<sup>44</sup> Consignation Book 1723, Norwich Diocesan Registry.

humble & obliged servt. and most true son of the Church of England, and his Ma<sup>ties</sup> most Loyall Subject Bal<sup>r</sup> Gardemau'.<sup>45</sup>

No doubt through his zeal for his compatriots and the studious and sober demeanour as a loyal Anglican clergyman which so impressed his bishop and fellow clergy, Gardemau had won for himself a degree of local respect and even prestige. At all events, no less a person than the then Squire of Shrublands, Nicholas Bacon, evidently approved of him sufficiently to appoint him Vicar of Coddendam with Crowfield in 1690, to which preferment he added the living of Ashbocking two years later, holding both in plurality until his death nearly half a century later. Little can his patron have imagined that when he himself was to die, in 1697, this handsome and intelligent refugee whom he had befriended, would marry his widow and be stepfather to his two young sons. Such was, however, the case although we do not know the date of this remarkable marriage.<sup>46</sup> His bride, Lady Catherine, was a daughter of that Edward Montague, Earl of Sandwich, who had played a notable part in the Restoration of Charles II and in the political and diplomatic history of his reign, and who had gone down in his flagship the 'Royal James' in the Battle of Sole Bay, 1672. By her first husband, Lady Catherine had two sons, Nicholas, the young squire (1686-1767), and Montague (1688-1749),<sup>47</sup> whose 'constant civilities' to his stepfather, Gardemau acknowledged and amply rewarded in his will.

Gardemau's marriage, although childless, was a very happy one. He refers to Lady Catherine in his will as 'my most dear and excellent wife', and in the epitaph on the monument she erected to him in Coddendam Church she says of him: 'He was Learned Pious & Charitable, / Exemplary in His Life and Conversation, / Dear to the Clergy, to the Poor, & to his Friends / But to his Wife an inexpressible loss, / with whom he had lived many Years / In the utmost Love and Harmony / By whom this Monument is erected / To his Memory / He dyed in his 84<sup>th</sup> year December the 19<sup>th</sup> 1739'.<sup>48</sup>

His will is an interesting one. As his epitaph records:—'God bless'd him with an ample Fortune, / With which he did very con-

<sup>45</sup> Tanner MSS. 138 f. 45 cited by V. B. Redstone, *op. cit.*

<sup>46</sup> We have a *terminus ad quem*. In 1717 'I' honourable my lady Catherine Gardemau' was a witness at a christening at the Threadneedle Street (Huguenot) Church. There is no record of this marriage in the registers of Coddendam or Barham.

<sup>47</sup> Montague Bacon's work as a scholar and critic won him a place in *D.N.B.*, *q.v.* He was rector of Newbold Verdun 1743. 'For some years out of his mind'. *v. also* Venn.

<sup>48</sup> The large monument is, appropriately, adorned with piles of marble books at either end of the pediment.

siderable Acts / of Charity and Beneficence', (one of which was to buy back the impropriate Great Tithes and re-endow the Coddendam benefice, making it for many years one of the 'plum livings' of Suffolk).<sup>49</sup> He did not forget the poor French Protestants in England, or his numerous nephews and nieces in France, among them his namesake Baltazar Gardemau Cottiby. But we are here chiefly concerned with his books. 'Item to Temple Bacon Esquire' [a step-grandson] 'I Give my large Book of Maps and to the Reverend John Bacon' [another grandson] 'I Give my Pool's Synopsis Criticorum, as to the Bulck of my Studdy of Books The Right Honourable the Lady Catherine my wife knows my Intention for the disposal of them after her death'. (Will. P.C.C. Browne, Fol. 13).

That Lady Catherine strictly observed these intentions, we see from the following letter,<sup>50</sup> to her eldest surviving grandson (who had succeeded Gardemau in the Coddendam Living in 1740):

To The Reverend Mr. John Bacon

These

Dear Son,

j must acquaint you, that it was mr. Gardemau's will & intention, & it is absolutely mine also, that ye Books of divinity, (fit for a clergyman) that j shall leave att my death, in my house, you may have y<sup>e</sup> use of them, during your natural Life, & that by your will, or any other proper deed, they may be convied by you, to your successor, in y<sup>e</sup> vikaridge of this parish of Coddendam, j hope you will be so just, as to comply with my request, & that nothing will dissuade you from it. j am y<sup>r</sup> affectionate grandmother,

att Coddendam  
y<sup>e</sup> 22nd May 1744

Cath. Gardemau

When Lady Catherine herself died, aged 93, in 1757, she gave and bequeathed 'to my said Grandson John Bacon all my Books desiring that he will dispose of those relating to Divinity according to the Directions which I shall leave for that Purpose . . . Also my desire is that the picture of my said late Husband Baltazar Gardemau may always remain at the Vicarage House in Coddendam, aforesaid to which Living he hath been so great a Benefactor'.

<sup>49</sup> It is surely worthy of note that, possibly for this reason, the Coddendam Benefice only had six incumbents between 1690 & 1930, whereas the present rector, the Rev. W. K. Munday, is the sixth since 1930.

<sup>50</sup> Ipswich & East Suffolk Record Office 50/19/23.

This portrait of Gardemau in the prime of life bears the legend; REV<sup>s</sup> BALT<sup>r</sup> GARDEMAU Ecclesiae de CODDENHAM Benefactor munificus & Bibliothecae Vicariae Fundator (Plate XV). It hung in the Hall of the former Rectory until 1964, when the Rectory was sold for £27,000, and the portrait removed to the Church vestry.

To conclude this long story, when Lady Catherine's eldest son Nicholas died in 1767, the Revd. John Bacon succeeded him in the Shrubland estate, resigned the Coddenham living and appointed his younger brother Nicholas<sup>51</sup> as vicar in his place. (It was John who commissioned James Paine to build the new Shrubland Park in 1770-2, and it is probably to him, too, that we owe the large, handsome old Coddenham Rectory, built about the same time). He then made final provision for his step grandfather's library in accordance with his wishes. In a document dated 30 December 1767 he appointed another brother, Basil Bacon of the Inner Temple, Trustee, and charged him 'to permit & suffer the present & every other future Vicar of . . . Coddenham for the Time being to have the free Use Custody & Perusal of the same Books . . . (mentioned on the Schedule or Catalogue on these presents indorsed) . . . while the said Vicars for the time being shall respectively inhabit the said Vicarage House' with the usual safeguards & provisos against their being defaced or destroyed.<sup>52</sup>

The catalogue originally accompanying this deed is missing but an incomplete Catalogue made by Nicholas Bacon in 1780<sup>53</sup> has survived. It distinguishes the books which were Bacon's personal property from those left by Gardemau. A further list was made by the Rev. Walter Wyles (Rector 1890-1930) on the back of the prospectus of a debenture offer by Beyer, Peacock & Co. (1902) and this was used as the basis of the revised catalogue made by the present writer in 1962. The books, 361 volumes all told, were generally kept in two handsome fixed mahogany glass fronted bookcases on either side of the fireplace in the Rectory Study. On 2 July 1964, in view of the imminent sale of the Rectory, and with the approval of the Rector and Churchwardens, the Library was removed to the Cathedral, Bury St. Edmunds, where it will remain 'on permanent loan', comfortably housed in the Library shelves. The books are nearly all in good condition. There are a very few instances, not more than ten at the most, of books added after Gardemau's death in 1739—two volumes have the bookplate and

<sup>51</sup> Nicholas Bacon (1732-96) also rector of Barham, like John before him. The male line of this branch of the Bacon family died with him.

<sup>52</sup> This deed, formerly kept with the Library at the old Rectory, is now at the East Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich.

<sup>53</sup> Ipswich & East Suffolk Record Office 50/19/4.7 (10).

autograph of N. Bacon. Emm. Coll. 1751; another, Albertinus: *De Eucharistiae*, fol. Daventriae [=Deventer], 1654, was left by the Rev. Robert Longe, Rector 1834-90. Patrick's *Witnesses to Christianity* (1675) evidently belonged to Lady Catherine before her first marriage. It is inscribed 'Catherine Mountague her book'. All the rest may be assumed to have belonged to Gardemau himself, although only a handful carry his autograph. A number of the folios and quartos are stamped in gold on the cover and back with the arms of Bacon and Gardemau impaling Montague. Several are inscribed 'Claydon Society', leading one to suppose that they were made available to the Clergy of the Deanery.

The Library accurately reflects Gardemau's Huguenot origin as well as his successful acclimatization into the very different world of his adopted country. Like Dr. Colman, with whose library his has much in common, he evidently entered with zest into the controversies of his day, and took a lively interest in the affairs of the nation and of Europe. But first, the French books. They form no more than a tenth of the total number, if that. By no means all of them are Protestant, but of those which are, the huge folio *Sainte Bible, interprétée par Jean Diodati*, (Geneva. 1644) and the delightful little *Pseaumes de David mis en rime Française* by Clément Marot and Th. de Beze (Paris 1660), with chants and Huguenot liturgical rites all bound together, alone call for comment. Perhaps surprisingly, French Catholic theology and church history are strongly represented by such authors as the Jesuit dogmatic theologian Petavius and preacher Bourdaloue, as well as by the historians Maimbourg, Fleury and Ellies du Pin, while Fénelon and Pascal are present, strangely enough, in English translations. And finally in a class by itself, the Abbé de Bellegarde's *Modèles de Conversations pour les personnes polies* (Amsterdam 1702).

Patristic representation is patchy but there is a fine eleven volume folio Chrysostom (Paris 1636) and some other good editions. The chief strength is in the Anglican theology, learning, polemics and homiletics of Gardemau's own day. In particular, Non-Jurors, Jacobites and Tory High Churchmen are surprisingly well represented, by authors such as Hickes, Kettlewell, Atterbury, Brett, Jeremy Collier (whose famous *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, 1698, is next to Congreve's reply *Collier's Short View set in a True Light*, 1699) and above all by the brilliant controversialist Charles Leslie, whose *Snake in the Grass or Satan transformed into an Angel of Light, discovering the Deep and Unsuspected Subtilty . . . of the Principal Leaders of the people called Quakers* (3rd edn. 1698) is there with all the subsequent literature. There are no classics to speak of, and little philosophy apart from Locke. There is a good collection of books on and from the Levant. There

are a few books by Suffolk authors, including *A Plain and Practical Exposition of the Catechism* by Thomas Bishop, D.D., Vicar of St. Mary le Tower, Ipswich (Lond. 1736) and *A Treatise on the Holy Spirit* by Nicholas Clagett, rector of Little Thurlow and Archdeacon of Sudbury, with additions by Henry Stebbing, Rector of Rickinghall (Lond. 1725). Finally there is George Psalmanazar's *Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* (Lond. 1705) a famous literary fraud, on the title page of which the author (an impostor who had never been anywhere near Formosa), describes himself as 'a Native of the Island'. It was a best seller.

There are no incunabula or early sixteenth century books.

### ST. MARY'S, WOODBRIDGE

The founder of this interesting library of some 190 volumes was an amiable eccentric and bibliophile, the Reverend Thomas Hewett, M.A., Rector of Bucklesham from 1744 until his death in 1773. Born in London, Hewett was the son of Thomas Hewett, M.D. (d. 1711) and grandson of Sir John Hewett, Bt. of Waresley, Hunts. Educated at Clare Hall (now College) Cambridge,<sup>54</sup> his life seems to have been uneventful. He remained a bachelor, but to judge from numerous references in his will, lived on affectionate terms with his many nephews, nieces and cousins, one of whom, the young baronet Sir Thomas, was evidently the object of especial favour. Hewett was connected by marriage with the Brokes of Nacton (the Rev. John Broke was Rector there) and as directed in his will, he was buried in Nacton Church along with his father,<sup>55</sup> both being commemorated on the same monument.

His whimsicality is evident in the codicil <sup>56</sup> ('A few directions for my executors Messieurs Knight & Gladwin') in which he set out his intentions concerning his Library: 'Instead of Legacies in

<sup>54</sup> Venn, *Alum. Cant.*, & epitaph in Nacton Church.

<sup>55</sup> '... my body to be buried in Nacton Church in a Bricked Grave at least seven feet deep and in a strong Elm Coffin uncovered with Cloth and funeral to be without any expense unnecessary But I would have a well polished Black Marble Monument with Gilt Letters opposite the Chancel Door after the pattern lying near this Writing and the Epitaph with additions or alterations to be put upon it'. After recording the Hewetts' vital statistics, this epitaph goes on. 'Their souls it is hoped were carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom. They have finished their course as thou also, reader, must in time. How soon thou knowest not; & therefore be frequently thinking of the Divine Laws of thy sinfull condition; of the aids of the Holy Spirit; of Death; Judgement; & Eternity. And of Christ our loving Saviour & most Glorious and Triumphant Redeemer. Use Gastrell's *Christian Institutes*; or Mapletoft's *Principles & Duties with the prayers*'.

(Neither of these works appears in the Woodbridge Library).

<sup>56</sup> He omitted to obtain witnesses to his signature on the will. An affidavit had to be sworn testifying to its authenticity.

Money permit my six Cousins and my charming new Cousin to take any Books or Baubles as they like the senior choosing first, only what I have excepted as the Gold Medal Map of Rome Fullers *Worthies Biographia Britannica* and the Coins if he pleases to Phillip Broke Esquire or otherwise to Ipswich Library. I would have all Manuscript about Religion burnt except those in a large hand and Dr. Berriman's *Sermons* And if Sir Thomas does not become a country Clergyman I desire him to Burn them. I would have the fathers and that sort of Learning sent to Woodbridge with the old cases if they like to accept them my Executors being at the Expense of Carriage tho' they cost me many Pounds, and the other Books go as in the Catalogue which are not thought proper to be taken out for Sir Thomas And I desire my dear Kinsman to divide the Books which become duplicate by his Aunt's Legacy between Ipswich and Woodbridge unless where the former had the Books already And I would have the Smaller Books never to go out of the two Libraries and the larger Works to be lent. All the Volumes together upon a deposit to their Value. Then should also a Catalogue of all the Books be given to each other Town to the Intent that one may aid the other. I hope each Town and the Trustees of both which should be the Corporation of one and the Minister and Churchwardens of the other will have an eye like Honest Men to the Act of Parliament and Rules of Brays Associates'.

The executors evidently did their best to carry out these somewhat imprecise instructions. 'The fathers and that sort of Learning' which constituted the Woodbridge share are in a large glass fronted bookcase, presumably the one referred to in the codicil, high up on the east wall of the vestry in Woodbridge Parish Church. 'A Catalogue dated 1785 is in the church chest'.<sup>57</sup> A detailed Catalogue and Index was compiled by V. B. Redstone in 1936. This, while still useful as a check list, contains numerous inaccuracies and signs of hasty compilation and is now in course of revision by the present writer.

The executors interpreted 'that sort of Learning' in no narrow or niggling fashion. Besides an assortment of the actual Fathers, including editions of Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Origen and Clement of Alexandria and a handsome Cyprian formerly in the library of John Fell, Bishop of Oxford, 1682, this library has considerable range and variety. There is, of course, a solid block of Caroline and later divinity, controversy and Church history, including works by Francis Mason (rector of Orford and Sudbourne died 1621), Chillingworth, Laud, Mede, Cudworth, Jeremy Taylor, Heylyn, Sanderson,

<sup>57</sup> *P.L.C.E.*, p. 106.

Pococke, Stillingfleet, Bull, Wm. Law and Waterland. There is a small collection of medical treatises, probably inherited from Hewett senior, and with them one slight volume the title of which deserves to be quoted in full: Robert Pitt's *The Crafts and Frauds of Physick exposed, The very low Prices of the best Medicines Discover'd, The Costly Preparations now in Greatest Esteem, Condemn'd, And the too frequent Use of Physick Prov'd Destructive to Health with Instructions to prevent being Cheated and Destroy'd by the prevailing Practice* (Lond. 1702). There are several late editions of works by the pioneer botanist John Ray including his *Travels* (2 vols., 1738), incorporating his *Catalogue of Plants*, and his great *Wisdom of God . . . in the Works of Creation* (6th edn. 1713). Miscellanea include an early (possibly first) edition of *Eikon Basiliké* (1648/9); Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (by 'Democritus Junior' 2nd edn. 1624); Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (2nd edn. 1650); *The Works of Mr. John Oldham* (poet and satirist) (Lond. 1686); Sir William Temple's *Miscellanea* (4th edn. Lond. 1705); *The Tryal of Dr. Henry Sacheverell* (Lond. 1710); and *An Exact Abridgement of all the Statutes in Force and Use from Magna Charta (to 1737)* (in 9 vols. 8vo. 1730-37). There is a fine copy of Roger North's *Examen* (Lond. 1740) presented to Hewett by the author's son, Montague North, rector of Sternfield. One handsome volume is *The Works* of Gervase Babington, Bishop of Worcester (Lond. 1622) bound in crimson velvet, with gilt edges, stamped on the cover 'RED', and with the inscription: 'Richd. Earl of Dorset & bequeathed by his dau. Margt Countess Dowager of Thanet with other books to me 1676'.

Many of the books carry Thos. Hewett's neat autograph, in many cases with the date when he acquired them, ranging from a *Latin Prayer Book* bought in 1724 when, as he notes, he was an undergraduate at Clare, to Whiston's *Astronomical Principles of Religion* (2nd edn. Lond. 1725) in which Hewett added a topical note on the comet seen in the year (1769) in which he purchased the book.

As a characteristic example of Hewett's style and outlook his note in *Remarks upon a Late Discourse of Freethinking in a Letter to N.N.* (Bishop Hare) by *Phileleutherus Lipsscensis* (Richard Bentley), (7th edn. Lond. 1737) is worth quoting. 'This Book will forever shew that Wit and the Laugh are not always on the side of Infidelity; that something else besides Religion may be demolish'd by Reticule, and that in General the Deists have no more Learning than their Neighbours, nay unluckily for them This Author as He had more Learning and a more Distinguishing Head than any of these Blasphemers, so He had more Assurance and even Impudence not only to look them in the Face but to scorn them as they Deserve . . .'.

The books, on the whole, are in good condition, but difficult of access in their present position. A few volumes were added in the nineteenth century.

## YAXLEY

The last of these libraries is chiefly interesting as (like St. Paul), 'one born out of due time',<sup>58</sup>

When Hewett founded the Woodbridge Library in 1773, the impetus given by Dr. Bray to the Parochial Libraries 'movement' (if such it can be called) was already virtually spent, and no more were founded in Suffolk for over a century. The tradition of scholarly incumbents bequeathing their libraries to their successors was not, however, quite universally forgotten. The vicar of Yaxley from 1861 until his death in 1896 was the Rev. W. H. Sewell. A strong Tractarian, he subjected his beautiful church to a 'barbarous'<sup>59</sup> restoration in 1868. Sewell left his library of just over a thousand books to his successors. Two MS. catalogues are in the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office. One, listing 1,014 volumes, almost all nineteenth century, and on a wide variety of subjects ranging from bee-keeping to ecclesiology, local history and novels, is entitled: 'Copy of Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts belonging to the late Revd. W. H. Sewell, vicar of Yaxley, Suffolk, and left by him in Trust to the Archdeacon of Suffolk for the use of his successors in the benefice of Yaxley subject to the conditions specified in his will'. It is stated that this catalogue was 'made at the Request of the Ven. R. H. Gibson, Archdeacon of Suffolk, by the Revd. Thomas Archbold, Rector of Burgate'.

These books remained at Yaxley Vicarage until the benefice was united with Thornham Magna and Thornham Parva in 1949, when the vicarage was sold. The Library was presumably sold with it. At all events, it disappeared.

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All that remains is to outline our plans to preserve what is left of these old Suffolk libraries and to secure them from further 'diminution'. The 1959 Report on Parochial Libraries was emphatic in its recommendation that wherever possible they should be preserved in situ. While heartily in agreement with this excellent general principle, the Bishop's Parochial Libraries Committee has been obliged to take account of hard facts. While there is no present reason why Nayland, Stoke by Nayland and Woodbridge should not remain where they are (although the last named is taking up valuable space in a small vestry, and the accommodation at Stoke by Nayland leaves much to be desired), when it comes to Assington, Coddendam and Lawshall, the hard facts are that they have already been displaced by the sale of their original habitations,

<sup>58</sup> 1 Corinthians 15, verse 8.

<sup>59</sup> The epithet is Norman Scarfe's; vide his *Shell Guide to Suffolk* (1960) p. 113; and cf. H. Munro Cautley, *Suffolk Churches* (2nd edn. 1938) pp. 142, and 354.

and there is no question of finding room for them in the small, cramped parsonages which have replaced the old spacious ones, nor is there satisfactory alternative accommodation available in the respective churches. Providentially an ideal solution of our problem is to hand in the new Cathedral Library which has room to spare, and has offered hospitality. Coddtenham and part of Assington are already there. If funds were available for the very necessary rebinding and repairs to be carried out to Lawshall it could follow at once. There remains Beccles. It is surely unthinkable that this interesting little library, or what remains of it, should go back to Beccles Church, where there is no satisfactory accommodation for it. Nor can it remain indefinitely where it is now. There is ample room for it at the Cathedral but before it can take its place there 'on permanent loan' (like the others), once again money must be found for the large scale repairs which are so badly needed. In any case some volumes are already beyond repair.

The parishes concerned are themselves quite unable, with their present day financial commitments, to raise or provide the necessary funds. The Committee and the Diocese have no resources available for this purpose. Charitable Trusts have been approached by the Bishop, so far without result. It is probable that something between £500 and £1,000 (perhaps less) would suffice to carry out this work quite adequately, and thus to enable the Committee to complete its salvage operation and secure these remaining libraries for posterity. Who, reading the foregoing, can doubt that this is a worthy object of charity?

Is it too much to hope that a book-loving benefactor will arise, in the succession of Alston, Burkitt, Camborne, Colman, Gardema, Hewett and Sewell to safeguard what is left of the inheritance they bequeathed?

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Since this article was completed the Lawshall Library has been brought back to Suffolk (Summer 1965). Some few volumes in good or reasonable condition from both Lawshall and Beccles have already been placed in the Cathedral Library, Bury St. Edmunds. The rest are temporarily in the care of the Archivist for Ipswich and East Suffolk.

Plans are being made to insert a distinguishing label (for each parochial library) in each volume in the Cathedral Library, and it is intended eventually to provide an overall catalogue and index.