

THE BURY STIRS REVISITED: AN ANALYSIS OF THE TOWNSMEN

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ON 6 AUGUST 1582, a petition signed by 174 of the inhabitants of Bury St Edmunds was sent to the Privy Council, 'beseching your Lordshippes to take pitie upon our miserable and wretched estate, whereunto presentlie we are plunged, and in the same likelic forever to sticke faste, yf by your moste gracious and honorable meanes we be not delivered'. The 'miserable and wretched estate' referred to was the loss of their two preachers, John Handson and James Gayton, both of whom had left the town because of the 'violent and continuall practices' of a group hostile to their preaching. This group was accused of 'falsifenge the matters or maners of our preachers Sermons or . . . pervertinge the sence and true meaninge of the same, usinge the notes taken by children at their sermons, not conveyinge the purpose of the Speaker to bringe them and their true meaninge with their godly labours into question and contempte . . .'.¹ According to the petitioners, this group had previously 'plotted a moste subtile and dangerous devise utterly and forever to have beaten the Word and the preachers of yt out of our towne, which was by withdrawinge their contribution', a device defeated only by an order from the Privy Council. The petitioners urged the Council to 'assigne the hearinge and reportinge of our severall greifes to suche personnes as yt shall please your Honors to appointe'.²

This petition, the second of three that were sent either to Burghley or the Privy Council between 1578 and 1582, was drawn up at the height of the 'Bury stirs'. These were a series of religious controversies and disorders that were centered on the town of Bury St Edmunds and that involved a variety of persons from Edmund Freke, Bishop of Norwich and the Eastern Assize judges to the neighbouring gentry, clergy, townsmen and villagers. The stirs have been interpreted in a number of ways. A servant of Sir Thomas Kitson argued that the hostility between the conservative gentleman Robert Drury of Rougham and the puritan minister Oliver Pigg, lay at the very heart of the troubles. Archbishop Whitgift gave prominence of place to the group of Brownists when he described the controversies as the time 'when the pretended Reformation was begun there, without staying for the magistrate, as the term was then'. Most historians since Strype have focused upon the wrangling between the Bishop of Norwich and the group of Suffolk magistrates led by Sir Robert Jermyn and Sir John Higham.³ Yet there was considerably more to the Bury stirs than the series of charges and counter-charges between the magistrates and the Bishop.⁴ Largely overlooked in this tale is the part played by the Bury townsmen.

The three petitions (which represented a total of 211 townsmen) on behalf of the town preachers have already been introduced.⁵ Other inhabitants gathered 'to the number of an hundred at a tyme in privat howses and conventicles' to hear the separatist Robert Browne declaim his radical views, 'not without danger of some ill event', or so Bishop Freke feared.⁶ His fears were realized when, in the following year, it was discovered that certain townsmen had organized the effort to paint the first part of the warning of the angel to the church at Thyatira around the Queen's arms, with its covert implication that for all Elizabeth's works and love and service and faith, she was a Jezebel who caused her servants to commit fornication and eat meat sacrificed to idols.⁷ The Assize judges took a severe view of the scriptural allusion and at the Summer Assize of 1583 executed two men for their separatist views, fined a third for paying to have the scripture text painted and publicly burnt books written by the separatists Browne and Harrison. There were other inhabitants

who opposed not only separatists but the town preachers as well, refusing to contribute towards their maintenance and succeeding in driving them from the town.⁸ The petitioners called these townsmen 'enemies' and 'a few infamous persons which cannot abide the godlie preacher of the worde as Papistes, Advoultrers, Swearers, Dronkardes and such like'.⁹ Sir Robert Jermyn and Sir John Higham referred to the conservative faction of the town as 'divers irreligious persons' or 'backward men in religion'.¹⁰ Bishop Freke in his visitation of 1581 'found great divisions amongst the people, some wherof are very desirous in dutifull affection to have her Majesties proceedings observed, others on the contrarye being geven to fantastickall innovations'. Amongst those given to such innovations he numbered the 'vulgar sort of people'.¹¹ Factionous and divided, the Bury populace was clearly an important element in the Bury stirs, yet their various groupings and motivations have remained relatively unexplored.

The sources that make possible an analysis of the petitioners are both original and registered wills and the accounts of the Guildhall Feoffees. The rich probate material for the town of Bury has never been systematically explored for the Elizabethan period. In 1539, the court of the sacrist of St Edmund's Abbey became the Episcopal Commissary Court for Bury St Edmunds, which continued until 1844 when it was annexed to the Archdeaconry of Sudbury. Although the jurisdiction of the Archdeacon of Sudbury was quite separate from that of the Bishop's commissary in Bury, between 1567 and 1570 the probate business of the two courts was merged, a fact reflected in the cessation of separate registers.¹² From 1540 until 1601, Bury wills proved in the court of the Bury commissary, the Consistory Court of Norwich and the Prerogative Court of Canterbury number no fewer than 623. Few early modern towns possess such an impressive run of testaments.

The re-appearance of the Feoffees' accounts has been a fortunate occurrence. These are detailed accounts of annual income and expenditure of a body of men who, while lacking the legal standing, were in practice the corporation or the corporation in embryo.¹³ Known to Samuel Tymms when he compiled his history of the parish church of St Mary's (Tymms 1854), the accounts were unknown to that remarkable archivist and historian Miss Lilian Redstone who, in the early part of this century, examined all of the manuscripts kept in the town muniments room. The accounts re-appeared in 1981 from an attic in Hampshire where they had been stored for at least three generations.¹⁴ Covering the years 1570 to 1622, their value can hardly be over-estimated, for they give a detailed picture of politics, administration and charity in the town under Elizabeth.

The importance of these sources and of their use must be understood in the context of how close Bury comes in the 15th and 16th centuries to being a world we have lost. Medievalists studying the ancient Benedictine Abbey of St Edmund have lamented the almost complete lack of evidence for the last century of the monastery's existence. The early-modernist's lot is little improved. Compared with the relative fullness of the records of other East Anglian towns such as Norwich, Ipswich, King's Lynn or Sudbury, the sources for Bury are disappointingly slim. The disappearance of all but one of the non-testamentary act books of the Archdeacon of Sudbury and the total loss of the act books of the Bishop's commissary in Bury add further constraints to the study of Bury in the time of the Reformation.

Yet the relative paucity of Bury's records at this time does not accurately reflect the town's importance. In the 16th century, Bury St Edmunds was a prosperous market town, possessed of a gaol, a hospital, almshouses, two large parish churches, and, after 1539, a massive abandoned Abbey. In 1570, its population stood probably somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants.¹⁵ It was an Assize town, home to a grammar school founded

twenty years earlier, the seat of both an episcopal commissary's court and an archdeacon's court, an ancient borough by prescription, and yet, a town that had failed to receive a charter of incorporation.¹⁶

For all its prosperity and importance, Bury had grown for too long within the shadow of the powerful Abbey and its dissolution left the town with vexed constitutional problems. Throughout the 16th century, Bury lacked what lesser towns such as Thetford, Sudbury, Dunwich and Orford enjoyed: clear structures of authority. Depositions taken by Sir Robert Jermyn and Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1584 revealed no small confusion about the structures of municipal government. Thomas Andrews, a leading gentleman, said that 'they have no Alderman for the Town of Bury, but they have an Alderman of the said Company of the said Feoffees, but he thinks that they have Burgesses of the town of Bury in the said Company, and he thinks there be divers other Burgesses of the town besides other Burgesses of the Company'. Henry Horningold explained that there were burgesses of the town both in and out of the company of Feoffees, 'because they all serve the Queen at her Portmanmote by that name', but Thomas Goodrich confessed that while 'all the freeholders by the name of Burgesses, both of their Company and of the rest of the town be called to serve the Queen . . . by what right they be so called he knows not' (Eagle 1839, 15–16). Bury did not receive its charter of incorporation until 1606 and for more than sixty years the governance of the town lay in the hands of the Guildhall Feoffees, the Governors of the Grammar School, a body of townsmen that went under the name of the 'common conference' and the local magistrates who held petty sessions at the Angel Inn.

Ecclesiastically, Bury was an anomaly. Although it lay within the deanery of Thingoe, the town formed part of the Liberty of St Edmundsbury which, until 1539, was an ecclesiastical peculiar in the hands of the Abbey. With the dissolution, control had lapsed into the hands of the Bishop of Norwich who was represented in Bury by an episcopal commissary. In 1575, Freke had appointed Dr John Day to the post, whose complaints to the Bishop concerning the magistrates' actions served as a prelude to Freke's attack on the Justices of the Peace. Although the Archdeacon of Sudbury, Dr John Still, also held his court in Bury, he possessed no jurisdiction within the town itself. The two parishes of St James and St Mary were each served by a minister and a preacher, and the parishioners themselves, supported by the magistrates, insisted on their right to choose their own ministers, a point of no small contention with Bishop Freke who tried unsuccessfully on two occasions to install his own candidates.¹⁷ In this loose state of affairs the town preachers were an important but divisive element.

Since the 1560s, Bury had been served by a variety of strong protestant preachers many of whom ran ahead of the Crown in desiring a more thorough policy of reformation. Their zeal tended to find expression in nonconformity. George Withers,¹⁸ who served as a town preacher in 1565, had baulked at wearing the cornered clerical cap. John Handson who came to Bury in 1572 and James Gayton who came in 1577, possessed similar convictions. Handson was noted as early as 1574 for his refusal 'to weare the surplesse, not in the tyme of the service only, but also in thadmynistracion of the sacramentes, saing that by lawe he thinketh himselfe not bound to weare it' (Houlbrooke 1974, 221). Handson's nonconformity did not prevent him from being named by Bishop Parkhurst as one of the founding moderators of the exercise of prophesying established in the town (Houlbrooke 1974, 102). To their supporters, these men were 'godlie learned and faithfull ministers' whose lives and conversations were 'blameles and unspotted from all appearance of evil'. To their opponents, they were puritans who had reduced worship services to little more than 'Geneva psalms and sermons', troublers of the state and such as would not follow order. Economics exacerbated the situation. While the two parish ministers received stipends which were 'very competent and reasonable', the preachers were more tenuously

'mainteyned of a publicque contribucon' of the townsmen and 'some others of the gentlemen of the countrie adioyning'. What made this discrepancy more galling for the godly was the indifferent quality of the parish ministers in contrast with the 'very lerned and godly men' who served as the town preachers.¹⁹ In the end, those who opposed the preachers succeeded in driving them from the town. This harassment galvanized a group of townsmen to respond, and over four years, from 1578 to 1582, no fewer than three petitions were sent to Lord Burghley or the Privy Council seeking support for their embattled cause. The surviving petitions provide an entry into the 'godly' community in Bury at this time.

The first petition, dated 15 August 1578, was sent to Lord Burghley by the parishioners of St James, appealing for their preacher John Handson, 'lately called into question before your honor and others touching his doctrine and conversation amongst us'. Following so hard upon the royal progress which passed through Bury at the beginning of August,²⁰ it is likely that Handson had been examined whilst the royal party was staying in Bury and indicted to appear at the next Assize. The petitioners stressed that 'he wanteth not his speciall enemyes which maye untruelye suggest your Honor agcinst him' and that he 'hath ymparted unto us from tyme to tyme not only that which agrecth with all duties of a true and faithfull subiect but also which tendeth to our eternall comfottes in Christe Jesu'. In an impressive show of literacy, all sixty-three petitioners penned their own names to what was a quietly worded testimonial in Handson's behalf, stressing his patience in the face of false accusations and opposition. The petitioners' confidence appears to have been well placed, for there is no evidence that Handson was disciplined for his nonconformity on this occasion.

The calm tone of 1578 gave way to the lament of 1582. In the intervening four years, Handson had felt the severity of the Eastern Assize judges' campaign against puritan offenders (Collinson 1957, 904). Suspended by the Bishop from preaching in 1581 for his nonconformity and wearied with the 'violent and continuall practices' of 'some men's malice', Handson left Bury. His colleague James Gayton had left in the early months of 1582 and Handson followed in June of the same year. The townsmen's petition was drawn up in August of that year bewailing their barren estate in no uncertain terms: 'we that of late were moste blessed with the ymmortall secede of the worde of God, are made a gasing stocke to all others by the viewe of cursed barrennesse'.²¹ With 174 signatures, this was a significant show of support.

The final petition was sent on 6 November 1582 by at least 144 inhabitants of the town, partly in fulfilment of a commitment they had made with John Handson who had now returned to Bury. As the petitioners explained,

beinge sent for by a generall consent, a few persons excepted, [Handson] is returned back but will not exsecute his office till he maye make accompt of more peace which we hope maye casely be compassed if your Lordshippe will provide that the disturbers might be exsamyned as they have delte with our preacher, which promise we made to sew for unto your honours what tyme we called him to our towne againe and furthermore sufficient mayntenance which we are redie to performe accordingly.

This formed part of the strongest statement yet to come from the Bury petitioners, who peremptorily dismissed the 'false accusacyons of a few infamos persons which cannot abide the godlie preacher of the worde', and expressed their confidence not only in Burghley's 'principall spiritt of government' but in the comfort they derived from the 'fower hundred of us which have allwaies stood with the gospell'.²² If the figure is to be trusted, the Bury gospellers represented between ten and thirteen per cent of the town's inhabitants at this time.

Who were the Bury petitioners? Probate material has survived for sixty-six of the 211 separate names. Of this figure, twelve died intestate and are recorded in the books of copy administrations whose cursory entries are not very helpful, leaving fifty-four full wills.²³ From the internal evidence within the wills and administrations of the sixty-six examined, along with other probate material, it is possible to identify an additional forty-seven petitioners who served as witnesses or executors of their wills, or who possessed ties of kinship or tenancy. This brings the sample of identified petitioners up to 113, which comprises more than half of those who signed at least one petition. Eighty-six petitioners signed only once, although that figure is high as the petition of November 1582 is torn and possibly as many as twenty names have been lost. At least 125 petitioners signed two or more of the petitions. Thirty-three of the sixty-three parishioners who signed in 1578 signed a second petition and twenty-five of the sixty-three represent a hard core of puritan support signing all three petitions.

Almost all the petitioners who have been identified belonged to the 'middling sort of people', although this is to use a term that was not yet in common currency. No doubt they would have described themselves as the 'better sort of people' in contrast to the 'meaner' or 'ruder' sort.²⁴ They reflected the full scope of middling status and occupations that one might expect to find in a flourishing Elizabethan market town. In each instance, the list of petitioners was headed by a handful of gentlemen. Two gentlemen signed the petition of 1578 while the petitions of August and November 1582 were headed by a group of five and seven gentlemen respectively. The rest of the petitioners were drawn from the ranks of the yeomen and of what Sir Thomas Smith called 'the fourth sort of men which doe not rule' (Dewar 1982, 76). Of the sixty-five petitioners whose status is known, there were nine gentlemen, six clothiers, six grocers, five tailors, five yeomen, four bakers, three maltsters, three tanners, two butchers, glovers, drapers, haberdashers and cordwainers and individuals identified as shearmen, teachers, goldsmiths, book binders, cobblers, fanwrights, scribes, bowyers, lime burners, joiners, plumbers, curriers, shoemakers and singlemen. Few of these either possessed a great deal of wealth or were poverty stricken. William Jellowe, a wealthy tanner who died in 1602, was able to make bequests totalling more than £300, in contrast with Henry Bird, a cordwainer, who was £17 in debt when he died and made a single bequest of his tenement in Churchgate Street to his wife on the condition that she paid his creditors.²⁵ Neither was representative of the majority in the sample who made bequests totalling between £5 and £50.

Comparison of the petitioners with the subsidy roll of 1582 gives some indication of wealth and status. Of the 220 odd names assessed for the subsidy, seventy-two were petitioners. They ranged from Thomas Badby, a gentleman, who was assessed at £20 in land, to men like Ambrose Bryden or Henry Hammond who were assessed at the lowest rate of £3 in goods. Twenty-five men signed all three petitions, fourteen of whom have been identified on the subsidy roll. Only three men, John Bowmane, William Jellowe and William Johnson were assessed at 20s. in land, while the average assessment among the remaining eleven men was just over £4 in goods.²⁶ Several petitioners held a messuage and tenement in the town if not two, or a piece of land elsewhere. James Baxter, a baker who signed all three petitions, when he died held a messuage and tenement with a garden and orchard in Garland Street as well as an acre in Bury Field.²⁷ Thomas Cooke, a tailor, who signed both petitions of 1582, owned two messuages and tenements in the town, one in Smyth's Row where he lived and another in Risbygate Street which he rented to three men. Yet many of those who signed the petitions, such as Sylvester Hill, a baker, or the cordwainer Henry Bird, or men known only by their names like William Bumsted, Henrie Forman, Symon Langham and John Sargent, are not to be found on the subsidy roll. Perhaps the majority of petitioners were poorer husbandmen, labourers, craftsmen and apprentices.

With the exception of the petition of 1578 which was drawn up by the parishioners of St James, the petitioners acted as townsmen rather than parishioners. What little evidence survives indicates that the ward boundaries mattered far more than the parish divisions. Bury was divided into five wards: High Ward, North Ward, East Ward, West Ward and South Ward. There was a strong concentration of godly petitioners in three wards, High Ward, West Ward and North Ward. The subsidy roll of 1582 shows that of the seventy-two petitioners listed in the subsidy, twenty-four lived in High Ward, nineteen in West Ward and seventeen in North Ward, compared with only eight in East Ward and three in the South Ward. There are indications that the North and High Wards were home to the strongest support for the town preachers. Of the fourteen petitioners identified from the subsidy as having signed all three petitions, twelve lived in these two wards.

These men were not socially distinctive. They displayed no more carefulness in their will-making than other men or women, most of them waiting until they were 'sick in bodye' or 'crased in bodye' before they wrote or dictated their wills. Family size, their children's names, their occupations, goods and property were all that one would expect to find of middling folk in an urban setting. A significant number of petitioners appear to have been literate. All of those who signed the petition of 1578 wrote their own names, as did most petitioners at the foot of their wills. But this was an age of growing literacy and there were other inhabitants who were also literate who did not support the puritan preachers. It is also true that the links that existed between petitioners were close ones, forged as they served each other as witnesses, supervisors, executors, lessors, lessees, next of kin, servants and friends, but perhaps not out of the norm.

A wider examination of wills proved in the courts of the Bury commissary and the Archdeacon of Sudbury reveals the strong connections that existed between Bury's protestants in the 1560s and the godly petitioners of the 1580s. John Smythe, a scrivener, drew up his will in November 1560. Smythe was a protestant with Shropshire connections, leaving money to a schoolmaster in Shrewsbury and for the repair of the parish church of Uffington. Arranging for his funeral, he wrote

that if Mr Harte parishe prieste of St Mary's parishe will take paine to make a sermon in the daie of my buriall or shortly after, I will he have 3s 4d for his labour and yf he shall thinck it good to take his theme oute of the vii chapter of St John his Gospell. And further yf he will take paine to make two other sermons out of the firste epistle of St Paule to the Hebrues, to have 6s 8d for his labor.

Even more intriguing than the familiarity that Smythe possessed with the scriptures are the bequests made to three godsons and one god-daughter. Sylvester Hill, Robert Sparke, John Jent and Catherine Jellowe each received 3s. 4d. Hill, Sparke and Jent all signed the petitions supporting their nonconforming preachers as did William Jellowe, father to Catherine. Two others who received bequests, William Johnson and Edward Turnor, also appeared in the early 1580s as supporters of the town preachers.²⁸ William Bretten, who wrote his will in 1564, and left 'a testament in latten and Englishe' to his brother John, would probably not have been surprised to know of his brother's support for the godly cause in 1582. William Bretten himself in 1565 had the godly town preacher, George Withers, witness his last will; and the sons of his will's supervisor, Thomas Cage, were both found in the godly ranks eighteen years later.²⁹ A maltster, John Kent, when he drew up his will on 26 March 1574, spoke of his confidence in 'Jhesus Christe my only Saviour and Redeemer throwghe whose eternall election my salvation was appointed before the foundations of the world were laid', and wrote out scripture texts such as 'Precious in the sighte of the Lorde ys the death of his saints' and 'Blessed are they that dye in the Lord' at the foot of his will. Such full blooded Calvinism may well have been the motivating force

behind the decision taken by Thomas, his son, John Beacham, his supervisor, and William Mumplayne, one of his witnesses, to enlist in support of Handson and Gayton in 1582.³⁰ The connecting strands can be multiplied and attest to both the vigour and the continuity of the godly cause.

Paul Seaver has asked whether Brownism was 'the Puritanism of the Bury inhabitants, and, if so, what did they make of it?' (Seaver 1977, 313–14). The question is important especially in light of the execution of the two separatists John Copping and Elias Thacker, along with the public burnings of Browne's and Harrison's books at the Summer Assize of 1583. Trouble with sectaries in and around Bury had been a continuing problem since at least 1576, and in the heated atmosphere of the stirs the boundary between nonconformist and sectary was easily blurred. A few petitioners were clearly separatists of a kind. There was Thomas Gibson, the Bury bookbinder who was convicted and fined for his part in the painting of Revelation 2:19 around the Queen's arms. He had signed the petitions of August and November 1582. Edmund Wyther, a haberdasher who also signed the petitions of August and November, was a steadfast separatist. The opening sections of his will consisted of a long exposition of his faith in which he stated his belief that

god hathe his churche which are A Company of faythefull Belevers scattered over the face of the earthe of the which numbere I doo beleve that I am one and unto these Company alone belongeth all the Benefites of Christe and mercyes of god, this Churche is the Body of Christe who ought to be guyd by ther heed Christe, who is also our Kinge priste and prophett; whom we ought to heare and obey in all things.³¹

This was remarkably similar to the purported confession of faith 'wherin the towne men dyed which were put to death at Bery' discovered in the Ellesmere manuscripts, in which Christ was referred to as 'our Kynge prophet and priest'. The final article of this confession stated the belief that 'he [God] hathe a Churche wiche is holy (wherof we are members) and he is the head therof, and that [it] is his body to whom he hath granted and given Repentance and to none but to her . . . ' (Peel 1946, 66). Even more remarkable was the evidence for what the confession referred to as the duty of every Brother and Sister 'severally to styrr up one another and provoke unto love and good woorkes, usynge the fellowship of Sayntes . . . '. After 1583, this was most clearly seen in the support given to the widows of the men who had died for the Brownist cause. When Wyther drew up his will in 1588 he left 6s. 8d. each to the widows of Copping and Thacker, as well as to the widow Tyler whose husband languished in Bury gaol for more than eight years on account of his separatist views, until his death in 1586.³² Thomas Stasye, who signed both petitions in 1582, was not as wealthy nor as prolix as Wyther, simply bequeathing his soul into the hands of Almighty God, but he may well have been one of the separatists. When his 'welbeloved wife Joan' came to draw up her will in 1589, she did not forget to leave 'a possnet,³³ a smocke, a nechar chew, a bolster, an apron and two Cushens to Good wife tiller and a hatt and black gowne to goody copen'.³⁴ William Johnson, who signed all three petitions, was one of those 'persons thought and comonlye reputed precise and such as observe not order' who met for times of extemporaneous prayer in an upper chamber in the Barrow Inn in Mildenhall and at Johnson's home in Bury, 'and all ther prayers were agaynst the Queen's majestic'.³⁵ One would wish to know more of the witnesses of these men's wills, fellow-petitioners like Christopher Cox (a grocer who was appointed executor of Joan Stasy's will), or of Thomas Kent who witnessed Edmund Wyther's will and whose father spoke in 1574 of his certain membership in Christ's 'trewe church being his mysticall body'.³⁶ The piecemeal evidence for separatism in and around Bury seems to point to a greater strength than has hitherto been admitted. Nor was it the preserve of the

poor; both Johnson and Wyther were men of wealth and standing in Bury, part of the '*parochiani meliores et antiquiores*'.

The strength and role of the separatists, however, remains problematic. In 1582, the year of the petitions, the disorder in the town was at its height. At the Summer Assizes of 1583, a minister was convicted for 'sainge yf Elias Fawker had bene executed at the former assizes ther would have bene fyve hundrethe good fellowes more than was at his execucon'. Lord Chief Justice Wray felt that there were 'manye of Coppinge and Elias opinyons' in the town and trusted that the example made of Copping and Thacker would act as a deterrent. It seems clear that the royal and ecclesiastical authorities viewed the controversies of 1582 as the beginning of a 'reformation without tarrying for the magistrate', as Whitgift was later to explain. That it was so perceived and the threat taken seriously explains why the Assize judges purposely avoided holding sessions in Bury in 1582, why they punished the Brownists so severely in the following year, and why the charge of countenancing these men brought the godly gentry like Jermyn and Higham into such trouble (MacCulloch 1986, 205–07). Nor were these troubles limited to Bury St Edmunds. There were separatists in the towns of Thetford and Mildenhall as well, so that the controversies can be seen to be affecting much of the region of West Suffolk. William Dennis of Thetford was hanged for his separatist views in the same year as Copping and Thacker, and from 1584 to 1586 a group in Mildenhall was being instructed by Thomas Settle, a fiery preacher who spent much of the 1590s in gaol for his separatist beliefs.

There is little evidence however that the 'puritanism' of the petitioners was 'Brownism'. When most petitioners came to write their wills, such radical sentiments, if they were ever there at all, were no longer in evidence. An examination of the bequests of the petitioners demonstrates the essential solidarity that existed in Bury between townsmen and magistrates. The bequests of a godly clothier or godly mercer mirrored those of the godly gentleman and gentlewoman and found their common ground in the advancement of learning and godliness.

In Bury, this found particular expression in support for the parish library of St James founded in 1595³⁷ and more commonly for the town preachers and the exercises. The parish library was probably the first parochial library of its kind in the country as distinct from collections of prescribed texts or school books. It was organized by the preacher of St James, Miles Mosse, and within four years of its inception possessed no fewer than 200 volumes complete with book plates commemorating donors. Of the forty-one known donors who gave books to the library in 1595 and 1596, at least eight were grocers, clothiers, mercers, drapers and maltsters, four of whom were either petitioners or the sons of petitioners; fourteen were gentlemen and another ten were clerics. The library itself, with its strength in reformed theology, appears to have been established primarily for the clergy in and around Bury, a logical offshoot from the regular combination lecture held on Mondays (Collinson 1983, 476–79). Like the combination lecture which was open to townsmen, so too the library does not seem to have been the exclusive preserve of the clergy. There were a few works in English, Calvin's *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, Peter Martyr's *Commonplaces* and Jewel's *Reply to Harding* among others, which provided opportunities for literate parishioners who had no Latin. And the townsmen, like the gentry families of Jermyns, Highams and Ashfields, supported the library not only in donations of books but also in particular bequests. Two petitioners, James Baxter and Edward White, made provision for the library of St James in their wills. In 1612, Baxter bequeathed an acre of land lying in the Bury field to the Guildhall Feoffees on the condition that 'the yssues and profites therof shall from tyme to tyme be imployed towards the repayringe of that parte of St James his church in Bury aforesaid which is nowe called the Librarie'.³⁸ Edward White's bequest was no less specific. In 1625, he gave

the sume of fyve markes of England to be bestowed upon a booke to be kepte as the rest of the Bookes are kept in the lybrarie of St James his Church in Bury St Edmunds aforesaid such a Booke as shallbe thought most meete and necessarie for the same place by the discretion and advyement of the preachers and ministers of bothe the churches of St James and St Marye. . . .³⁹

Godly preaching and godly learning appear to have taken the place of the more traditional bequest for the reparation of the parish church. Of the fifty-four wills examined, only one petitioner, William Jellowe, left money specifically for the reparation of the church.⁴⁰ Seven of the fifty-four testators made unusual bequests that reflected a greater concern for preaching and the combination lecture. William Brewster, James Baxter, Robert Hadlond and William Jellowe bequeathed substantial sums (usually 20s.) to the preachers and ministers in Bury, and Richard More gave 10s. to the preacher of St James, 'which shal bestowe anye paines in the worde at the day of my Buriall not for that I looke for anye good myselfe from that sermon when once I am dede but for his labour then in exhortinge those that are alive'.⁴¹ Francis Pynner emphasized the encouragement that might come from a good example when he gave 'unto the feoffees of [the] Guyld hall the sume of £20 which sume of £20 my will is that yt shalbe for the preacher which on Mondaie exerceyse doe preache which shallbe a finale helpe to paie for ther dynner but a begynninge to incoredge others therin'.⁴² Most of the soul bequests were predictably Christocentric and a handful wrote or dictated particularly expressive and singular spiritual preambles, although curiously, not one spoke of being among the 'elect and chosen people of God'.

A consideration of the godly without an examination of their opponents who had been so successful in harrying the town preachers from Bury would be one-sided. As Dr MacCulloch has pointed out, the Bury puritans had raised no mean opposition to their practices (MacCulloch 1986, 199–202). The conservatives in Bury were a powerful group of lesser gentry and merchants who served as the Governors of the Grammar School and as the Feoffees of the Guildhall lands. An examination of the relationships that existed between the townsmen and the Feoffees discloses the divisions that existed between conservatives and radicals at this time.

It is clear that by the late 1570s, much of the administration of the town had come into the hands of the town Feoffees. The Feoffees were, in essence, a modified version of the Candlemas gild of earlier times and, even as late as 1597, were referred to as 'the brethren of Candlemas gild'.⁴³ In the late 15th century a number of inhabitants, most notably Jankyn Smyth and Margaret Odeham, had bequeathed a substantial amount of property into the hands of the gild, with specific instructions for the maintenance of almshouses and the relief of the poor, as well as the erection of chantries or the foundation of services for the health of their souls. With the dissolution of the chantries in 1547, some of this land had come into the hands of the Crown. The following year, 1548, the parishioners and churchwardens of both parish churches agreed to sell their plate and establish an estate that would be used to maintain the parish churches and finance charitable endeavours such as the almshouses. The plate was sold for the handsome sum of £480, and it was agreed to purchase from the Crown the chantries of Margaret Odeham and Mr Beckett and the gilds of St Nicholas and St Botolph, together with other lands, some of which had supported the Morrow Mass Priests of St James's church. The Crown sold the property to the town in 1549, the estates being conveyed into the hands of feoffees, a body, in theory, of twenty-four of the most 'discreet and substantial persons of the town', twelve drawn from each parish.⁴⁴

In practice, the Feoffees were a select group of the more substantial inhabitants who

appear to have accounted for their activities only to themselves. Active Feoffees, or those who attended at least four annual meetings, numbered no more than seventeen men in the years 1570–84. There were thirty-one men who attended at least one meeting in the same time span, which represents the majority of Feoffees. It was certainly possible to serve as a Feoffee but ignore the annual meeting. Unlike the common conference of the town which existed at least in the early 1570s, and which was more broad in its composition and centered within each parish, the Feoffees were the urban elite with a restricted ‘fellowship’ and centered within the Guildhall. The common conference concerned itself with questions of order and morality: regulating employment, enforcing church attendance, removing vagabonds and licensing alehouses. The Feoffees functioned as an administrative, social and charitable body, an Elizabethan gild of sorts whose continuities created an ideal environment for the survival of conservatism.

It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that almost to a man, the Guildhall Feoffees were opposed to the ‘puritan’ faction in Bury. Of the thirty-one Feoffees serving between 1570 and 1584, only one, Thomas Badby, petitioned the Privy Council for the town preachers. There were at least two other strong protestants on the Feoffment, Sir John Heigham and Thomas Peyton. Heigham, however, seems to have avoided any business with the trust between 1579 and 1585; Peyton died in 1577 and his son Christopher was not admitted to the fellowship. Comparison with the 1582 subsidy roll reveals that of those Feoffees that can be identified, not one came from either North Ward or High Ward, the wards with the strongest concentration of support for the town preachers. Six Feoffees came from West Ward and three each from East Ward and South Ward.

What made the Feoffees so powerful was the wealth they administered. Total revenue for the year ending at Michaelmas 1580 from all sources – rents, gifts and sales – amounted to no less than £285 15s. 6½d. Its expenditure, on maintaining and repairing the almshouses or the Guildhall, repairing the two parish churches, alms for the prisoners in the gaol, the poor in the hospital, the orphans in the town, along with other payments, was £248 14s. 2½d. The Guildhall maintained a clerk, chief and under porters, a cook and a dec;⁴⁵ care was taken to ensure that the Feoffees themselves, whether in their capacity as surveyors and collectors of lands they administered, or as the annually elected alderman of their fellowship or as keeper of the Guildhall, received a fee for their pains. This group of men clearly thought of themselves as the corporation right down to the fee ‘given of benevolence to the Sextyn of the same church [St James] for preparinge of Cushions in the Church for the fellowship’.⁴⁶

If the wealth that the Feoffment administered made it powerful, its character and composition made it a place of uneasiness for protestants. An entry fee of 5s. was charged on ‘admittance to the fellowship’ – a payment that may well have retained connotations of the fee taken to be entered on to a bede roll, for both Heigham and Peyton balked at this charge. Until 1579 the Feoffees continued to audit their accounts and hold their annual dinner at the feast of Candlemas, possibly reading aloud, among other recorded bequests, the will and bidding prayer of Jankyn Smyth, enjoining the hearers with such dated encouragements as ‘Late us all of charite pray for the soul of John’.

Even if the social occasions were inoffensive to protestant ears, the conservative views and connections of most Feoffees were considerable. None of those who served as Feoffees between 1570 and 1584 left any money for funeral sermons, preachers or preaching or the parish library. Thomas Andrews, a leading Feoffee, best expressed his conservative views in his will when he declared his desire to be ‘buried in the Church yearde nighe unto the southe syde of St James Church wheare myne Auncestors lye buried, not for that I thinke any place better then other but to declare my hope and beleve that they and I shall ryse together in the last day throughe Jesus Christ our onely Saviour and Redeemer to lyfe

everlasting'.⁴⁷ Not all were so convinced of the eternal well-being of those who had died in popery. Andrews was a friend to Sir Thomas Kitson, the notorious conservative; they served as joint deputies in representing the Duke of Norfolk in his office as High Steward of the liberty of St Edmunds throughout the 1560s.⁴⁸

Sir Thomas Kitson took an active part in the Feoffment, at least in the early 1570s, serving as one of the collectors and surveyors of lands owned by the Guildhall in 1570 and 1571. As late as 1584, Kitson was numbered among the Feoffees and rented land owned by the trust. Roger Potter, a long serving Feoffee and keeper of the Angel Inn in Bury, had been presented for not coming to church in the 1560s (Talbot 1961, 110). Another prominent Feoffee, Anthony Payne, was brother to the conservative J.P., Henry Payne.⁴⁹ The two men who stood surety for the Bishop's commissary, Dr Day, when he was indicted by the puritan magistrates, had strong connections with the Guildhall Feoffment: Robert Golding was a Feoffee, albeit an inactive one, described by Sir Robert Jermyn as 'a man long suspected not to favour the Gospell'; while the other man, Dr Wood, who enjoyed the patronage of Thomas Kitson and Bishop Freke, had rented a piece of ground from the Feoffees at favourable rates for a number of years.⁵⁰ The seven men who, in 1580, brought a Chancery case against Thomas Badby charging him with appropriating land 'to his owne private use and proficte', were all active Feoffees.⁵¹ The Feoffment was not above receiving gifts from outright recusants, as shown in the accounts of 1580 and 1581 when £15 and £29 18s. respectively were 'given by a frinde E.R. gent'. The cryptic nature of the entry is suspicious and the most likely candidate for 'E.R. gent' can be none other than Edward Rookwood of Euston, whose recusancy was well known.

The winter of 1584/5 was a turning point for the godly in Bury, involving yet another petition, unfortunately no longer extant. For the past two years, their cause had suffered most notably in the loss of their preachers. Added to this were the discrediting of Sir Robert Jermyn and Sir John Higham (MacCulloch 1986, 206–07), the harsh punishments meted out to the separatists, and the death on 7 December 1583 of Thomas Badby, the leading puritan J.P. resident in Bury, whose zeal had resulted in his removal from the commission of the peace.⁵² Within a year of Badby's death, however, the puritan townsmen were once more on the offensive, complaining to the Privy Council about serious mismanagement of the town lands. This was a direct attack upon the Feoffees and in particular on Thomas Andrews as the leading Feoffee and the one who had led the conservative faction of the town against the town preachers.⁵³ A letter from the Privy Council, dated 20 December 1584, directed Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Robert Jermyn, Robert Ashfield, John Jermyn, Thomas Poley and George Kempe to hold a commission of inquiry into the allegations and to call the Feoffees 'to render a true account of their receipts and disbursements and how they have employed the revenues of the land . . .'. The commissioners were charged to examine each Feoffee personally 'according to the special desire of the Inhabitants', and to return an account of their findings 'before the end of next term, that we may thereupon take such further order in the cause as shall be thought expedient'.⁵⁴

Four months later, on 28 April 1585, a report was sent up to the Privy Council that roundly condemned the practices of the Town Feoffees. According to that report,

neither elections, receipts, nor discharge of impositions, were faithfully ordered nor disposed according to the good and plain meaning of the donors; but that the Feoffees do elect and account one to another, not making any one of the town privy to the same, contrary to the express words of the will of the first donor.

Other faults included selling off town houses well below their value and retaining the

best leases for themselves at 12d. the acre 'which is well worth 5s'. The Feoffees had irritated many inhabitants with their exclusive policies, having 'utterly refused to choose any more gentlemen whose ancestors time out of mind have been of that company'. The justices negotiated an agreement between the townsmen and the Feoffees, subscribed by Sir John Higham and William Cook, a lawyer, described as 'two of the best of the same feoffees', 'to the good contentments of all honest and peacable minds' (Eagle 1839, 38–39).

A copy of the articles of agreement dated 27 January 1584/5 has survived.⁵⁵ It is a single sheet of paper with seven items inscribed, bearing the autographs of Higham and Cook at the bottom. These points regulated the election of Feoffees by both townsmen and existing Feoffees, as well as an annual accounting before the same, the safe keeping of the keys of the House, Chamber and Chests, the costs of the annual dinner and the tax collections for the poor, the training of soldiers, and other impositions borne by the town. The bitterness and factiousness of the past years was reflected in the fourth item, which stated: 'yt is agreed that all unkindnes concerninge this controversie shalbe forgotten, and that we shall all ioyne like neighbours, Frindes and townsmen'. But, as the commissioners wrote to the Council in April,

these good beginnings have been thwarted by some sinister practice and certain of the Feoffees have run a clean contrary course in procuring new letters from your honours, directed to the Lord Chief Justices, or one of them, pretending in their plaint, as we hear, that certain difficulties of law questions, to be decided by the most sufficiently learned in the laws did lead them thereunto.

This was felt by the commissioners to be nothing more than a ploy covering their true motivation, which was 'the sweet of their private gains and desire of their former usurped authorities, to the great disadvantage of the whole inhabitants' (Eagle 1839).

It is likely that the conservative gentleman Thomas Andrews led the effort to foil the commissioners' work with legal obstacles, and significant that supplication had been made to the Lord Chief Justice, who held no sympathy for puritans. The precise details of this round have been lost, but it is clear from the Feoffees' accounts for the year ending at Michaelmas 1585 that the godly townsmen had succeeded in gaining control of the Feoffment. The Feoffees made their accounts before an Alderman, Henry Colling, and the accounting was witnessed by at least thirteen Feoffees, more than twice as many as had signed their names to the accounts in the previous three years. Heading the list of subscribed names is Sir John Higham's signature. Four others, Edward Ubancke, John Gyppes, Walter Brooke and Richard Higham, had all signed petitions in favour of the preacher, John Handson.⁵⁶ Missing from the list of subscribed names was that of Thomas Andrews who had died several months earlier. His death marked the end of the conservative hold upon the Guildhall and Grammar School and paved the way for the decades of godly ascendancy, the embracing of magistrate and minister. This was given substance in 1586 with the coming of Miles Mosse as preacher of St James's parish;⁵⁷ his lengthy service, until 1598, did much to consolidate the position of the godly, and upon his foundations his successors and colleagues, Robert Lewis, John Ward, George Estye, and William Bedell laboured.⁵⁸ Nothing better demonstrates the puritan ascendancy than the annual payments by the Feoffees to their ministers and preachers. Between 1582 and 1585, the total expenditure on both churches and ministers was as little as £2 per annum, with a rise to £4 in 1584. In 1586, the total expenditure shot up to £50, in 1588 to £58, and in 1589 it was £82, at which figure it remained throughout the 1590s.⁵⁹

Apart from complaints about how little money was spent to support the town preachers, as long as the preachers were able to work without interference, their supporters seem to have been content to leave the Guildhall Feoffment alone. It was only with the attacks on

the preachers and the fruitless petitioning to Burghley and the Privy Council that the unreformed nature of the Feoffment was thrown sharply into focus, resulting in the appeal for a commission of inquiry into the management of the town lands and the eventual consolidation of the 'puritan' townsmen as the leading men of the borough.

Although this account of the part played by the Bury townsmen in the stir of the early 1580s appears to reinforce the view of Bury as a town, like many in the 1580s, divided between radicals and conservatives, this is partly due to a concentration on the divisions that existed between petitioners and Feoffees. A more comprehensive account must take stock of such views as those of John Howard, a petticoat maker of Bury, who, in conversation with a group of servants, asserted that 'it was never merry in England sithens the scriptures were so comonly preched and talked upon among suche personnes as they weare',⁶⁰ or of men like William Dyar or Edmund Fullar, 'enjoynd to leave dicing and carding',⁶¹ upon pain of stiff penalties. Perhaps these views and activities represented a more popular alternative to those of the godly petitioners or conservative Feoffees. At this point, one can but speculate. What is less speculative is the political challenge posed by the Bury godly.

While the efforts of the Bury petitioners on behalf of their preachers served, in the short term at least, to consolidate the position of the godly magistrates in Bury, those same efforts carried an implicit challenge to the place and authority of the gentry magistrates that found its expression in the townsmen's drive for incorporation and confidence in their abilities to govern themselves. The delicate balance maintained in the years prior to the town's incorporation can be clearly seen in a letter written by Sir Robert Jermyn, Sir John Higham and four other justices to the town governors of the Grammar School. The justices urged the governors to choose one Mr Coote as schoolmaster, 'a man whom we think very mete for that office', but were careful to qualify their recommendation with the following revealing words: 'not doubting of your sufficiency to judge and discern a fitt man without us, neyther of your care in this behalfe but as thinkinge ourselves somewhat interested bothe in the towne of Bury and your friendshippes also'.⁶² Where in 1596 the magistrates styled themselves as 'lovinge freindes' and 'neighbours', in 1601 they were curtly dismissing the Bury townsmen as 'mechanicall and trades men'. Although godly townsmen and godly magistrates might close ranks to oppose the conservative forces within the town, important differences in rank, status and, above all, political interest could not be papered over by their shared theology. In this sense, the 'puritanism' of the Bury townsmen proved a radical force, more critical of the status quo and more willing to effect change.

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NOTES

- 1 P.R.O., SP 12/155/5. For an example of such notes, see B.L., Harl. 367, f. 17: 'The copy of certayne articles set downe by Lenard Ramsey. preched and tawght secretly by one Geyton, Hanson, Knewstube and others'.

- 2 The implied reference to Sir Robert Jermyn and Sir John Higham is unmistakable, especially in the context of the inquiry led by them into the disputes in Thetford only a few months earlier. For the Thetford investigations, see P.R.O., SP Dom. 12/155/11 and SP Dom. 12/155/63.
- 3 The stirs have been examined by the following authors: Strype 1824, III pt. 1, 21–31, 176–77, III pt. 2, Appendix, 172–80; Collinson 1957, 860–930; Cockburn 1972, 201–16; Rose 1975, 158–69; Smith 1974, 202–04, 223–24; MacCulloch 1986, 199–211 and MacCulloch 1981, 269–78; and Seaver 1977, 296–315.
- 4 B.L., Eg. 1693, ff. 87–100; Lans. 33, nos. 20–22; Lans. 38, no. 64; Lans. 36, no. 65 and Lans. 27, no. 70, among others. The work of Dr MacCulloch goes the furthest towards a reassessment of the conflicts.
- 5 Petition of the parishioners of St James, 15 August 1578, Hatfield, CP 141/121 (63 signatures); petitions of the inhabitants of the town, 6 August 1582, P.R.O., SP 12/155/5 (174 signatures); 6 November 1582, Hatfield 2074 (144 signatures visible; the manuscript is torn so that names are missing).
- 6 Letter from Bishop Edmund Freke to Lord Burghley, 19 April 1581, B.L. Lans. 33, no. 13, f. 26.
- 7 B.L., Lans. 36, no. 65. See MacCulloch 1981, 274–75 and 1986, 204. The verse from Revelation 2:19 was a substitute for the more direct criticism of the church of Laodicea found in Revelation 3:15 but this was ‘stayed by advyce.’ MacCulloch’s account of this in his book confuses the verses; his article gets the verses right but he mistakenly thinks that all three verses (Revelation 3:18–20) were painted around the Queen’s Arms. There is no basis for this from Lans. 36/65 and it does not make sense given the fact that the original verse to the church at Laodicea was rejected as too severe. It is a tribute to Bancroft’s detection and jaundiced eye that he caught the implied message of Rev. 2:19.
- 8 The petition of 6 August 1582, P.R.O., SP 12/155/5.
- 9 Hatfield, CP 141/121; Hatfield, Petitions 2074.
- 10 B.L., Eg. 1693, f. 90r.
- 11 B.L., Lans. 33, nos. 13, f. 26.
- 12 S.R.O.B., will register ‘Sunday’ 1540–67 (IC 500/2/8) is the last of the separate registers. ‘Peade’ 1568–69 (IC 500/2/33) has no Bury wills; ‘Aldrich’, 1570 (IC 500/2/34) has only one. Subsequent books include an average of 22 wills per volume.
- 13 Accounts of the Guildhall Feoffees, S.R.O.B., HD 1150/1–2.
- 14 I owe this information to Mrs Margaret Statham of Bury St Edmunds who is preparing an edition of the Feoffees’ accounts for publication by the Suffolk Records Society.
- 15 According to the chantry certificates of 1546, the ‘town of Bury has MMM houseling people and a great number of youth’. See Redstone 1906, 40.
- 16 An attempt to obtain a charter for the town was made in 1562 and the support of Sir Nicholas Bacon enlisted; he confessed himself ‘gladde and willing to travaill as I may conveniently’. The overture failed, perhaps because, as Bacon warned, ‘there is an opynyon receyved among men of wisdom and understanding that the number of incorporations all readye graunted and established within this Royalme are so many, as it were not meete nor convenient to have that nombre encreased with any mor’ (letter from Sir Nicholas Bacon to Sir Clement Higham, Sir Ambrose Jermyn, Henry Payne and John Holt, 29 Nov. 1562., S.R.O.B., C4/1).
- 17 Collinson 1957, 894–97, 905–07. The Bishop’s candidates were Giles Wood and Mr Rowlande.
- 18 Withers became Archdeacon of Colchester and was the author of *A View of the Marginal Notes of the Popish Testament* (1588).
- 19 Letter from Lord Burghley to Thomas Andrews criticising him for the ill quality of the school master and two parish priests, 2 April 1581 (S.R.O.B., E5/9/103). The Guildhall Feoffees received £8 11s.6d. each year from the Crown in respect of the stipends for the parish priests (Tymms 1854, 101).
- 20 This was a supreme show of royal propaganda that was clearly orchestrated to disgrace recusants and reward conformity (MacCulloch 1986, 195–97).
- 21 P.R.O., SP Dom. 12/155/5.
- 22 All of the above is contained within the text of the petition dated 6 November 1582 (Hatfield, Petitions 2074).
- 23 All of this material is housed in S.R.O.B.
- 24 This point was made by Dr Keith Wrightson in a paper delivered at the Cambridge Early Modernist group in Michaelmas term, 1989.
- 25 S.R.O.B.: ‘Jellowe’, ‘Coppinge’, f. 145; Bird: ‘Bacon’, ff. 272v–273r.
- 26 P.R.O., E179 182/377.
- 27 S.R.O.B., ‘Everston’, ff. 151v–152v.
- 28 S.R.O.B., ‘Sunday’, f. 355v.
- 29 S.R.O.B., ‘Sunday’ f. 387r. The sons of Thomas Cage, John and Robert, were both petitioners, John in November 1582, Robert in 1578 and August and November 1582.
- 30 Will of John Kent (S.R.O.B., ‘Wroo’, f. 244). Thomas Kent signed both petitions in 1582; Beacham signed the petition of August 1578 and Mumplayne signed all three.
- 31 S.R.O.B., IC 500/1/46 (140). It is striking that Wyther reverses the more normal order of Christ’s offices as ‘prophet, priest and king’, placing ‘king’ before the other two.
- 32 ‘Tyler a prisoner from the gale’ was buried on 1 October 1587 (parish register of St James, Bury St Edmunds).

- Hervey 1916, 23). According to the justices' answer to the Bishop's articles (Jan. 1583), Tyler, along with Copping, had been 'committed to prison five or six years past', which puts his arrest about 1577-78 (B.L. Lans. 37, 28, f. 59).
- 33 A small metal pot or vessel for boiling having a handle and three feet.
- 34 S.R.O.B., IC 500/1/47/47.
- 35 L.P.L., Carta Misc., XI, 19.
- 36 S.R.O.B. IC 500/2/37, f. 244v.
- 37 Fitch 1967, 44. I intend to write more extensively on the politics surrounding the establishment of the parish library under the title of 'Books and Bury St Edmunds: Learning and Godliness in an Elizabethan Town'.
- 38 S.R.O.B., 'Everston', ff. 151v-152v.
- 39 S.R.O.B., 'Pearle', ff. 538r-539v.
- 40 Jellowe left 6s. 8d. (S.R.O.B., 'Coppinge', f. 145).
- 41 S.R.O.B., Brewster: IC 500/2/44/319; Baxter: IC 500/2/48/151; Hadlond: IC 500/2/47/2; Jellowe: IC 500/2/45/145; and More: IC 500/2/46/206.
- 42 S.R.O.B., 'Gibson', f. 58.
- 43 Will of Edward Reeve, 1597 (S.R.O.B., IC 500/1/56 (91)). Cf Statham 1970, 117-57.
- 44 Eagle has transcribed parts of the relevant grants and indentures (Eagle 1839, 7-9).
- 45 The dec was given a yearly stipend of £4 for providing the annual dinner in the guildhall as well as a smaller fee of 3s. 4d. He was possibly the guildhall's major-domo.
- 46 S.R.O.B., HD 1150/1, accounts for 1581.
- 47 P.R.O., P.C.C. will, 16 Brudenell.
- 48 See the Chancery cases disputing the office, P.R.O., C3/5/102, C3/4/18.
- 49 For Henry Payne's conservatism, see MacCulloch 1986, 167n. He was granted a licence to eat flesh during Lent 'because of sharpenes and burnyng of his uryne' (parish register of St Mary's, 1538-1579, S.R.O.B., FL 545/4/1).
- 50 Golding: P.R.O., SP 12/155/11; Dr Wood: MacCulloch 1986, 210-11; S.R.O.B., HD 1150/1, accounts for 1579-84.
- 51 These were Thomas Andrews, William Hill, Henry Collyng, Stephen Hayward, Anthony Payne, Thomas Bright and Roger Potter (P.R.O., C3/205/104). Hayward was buried on 21 December 1580, so the bill of complaint must be dated 1580 and not 1581 as it is endorsed (Hervey 1916, 17). Not all these men were governors of the Grammar School, but they were all Feoffees. Andrews, Payne, Collyng and Hayward were governors; Hill, Bright and Potter were not.
- 52 On 22 November 1582, Sir Robert Jermyn wrote to Lord Burghley and appealed for Badby's cause as one 'who hath served her Majestic faithfully . . . and who is now, upon a surmised disturbance of an unworthy and unlawful minister in that place, put to his fine of 100 marks according to the statute and thrust out of the Commission' (H.M.C. *Hatfield House*, II, 536). For the date of his death, see the testimony given at the commission of inquiry into his lands (P.R.O., E178/4552).
- 53 Andrews was a leading conservative in Bury. A servant to Sir Nicholas Bacon, he carried favour with the Duke of Norfolk and was given the deputy stewardship of the town of Bury St Edmunds with the notorious conservative Thomas Kitson. He represented Sudbury in the Parliament of 1563 where an absence was granted him on 19 February on account of his 'weighty affairs' (see Hasler 1981, 344-45). As a Feoffee of the Guildhall Trust, one of the chief Governors of the Grammar School and a Justice of the Peace, he wielded considerable power. Andrews lived in the East Ward in St James's parish and was assessed at £20 in land at the subsidy of 1582 (P.R.O., E 179/182/377). He had served on the common conference of the town in the early 1570s and appears to have been the leading Feoffee of the Guildhall from 1579 until 1584. For his activities as a lawyer and Clerk on the Western Assize Circuit as well as his gentry connections, see MacCulloch 1986, 88, 200-02. For his opposition to the godly townsmen, see Collinson 1957, 889 ff.
- 54 Eagle 1839, 36-37. The only evidence that appears to have survived for this commission of inquiry, with the exception of the agreement of the townsmen, is that transcribed by Eagle in his report. Whatever Eagle had in 1839 is no longer extant amongst the records in Bury St Edmunds. An extensive search in the P.R.O. has failed to find any relevant material.
- 55 S.R.O.B., C2/2.
- 56 S.R.O.B., HD 1150/1 (unfoliated), the account for the year ending 4 January 1585/6. Richard Higham, son of Sir John Higham, signed the petitions of 6 August and 6 November 1582; Edward Ubancke, a governor of the almshouses, signed the petitions of 15 August 1578 and 6 August and 6 November 1582; John Gyppes (son-in-law of Henry Horningold, a long serving feoffee) signed the petitions of 6 August and 6 November 1582; Walter Brooke signed the petition of 15 August 1578.
- 57 Miles Mosse described himself on 4 October 1595 as 'Sacrae Theologiae apud Cantabrigienses Baccalaureus et verbi divini in hac ecclesia (iam per annos novem completos) Praedicator' (inscription in *Damasceni Opera* (Cologne, 1546) in the parish library of St James, Bury St Edmunds, now stored in Bury Public Library).
- 58 Robert Lewis, a member of the Dedham conference, came to Bury in 1589 as preacher of St Mary's where he

served until becoming rector of Rushbrook in 1598; John Ward, father of both Nathaniel and Samuel Ward, long time preacher in Haverhill, served as one of the town preachers in 1597–98. George Estye, fellow of Gonville and Caius College, served as a preacher of St Mary's from 1598 until his early death in 1601, when he was succeeded by William Bedell who served with interruptions until 1615, later becoming Bishop of Kilmore. See the Feoffees' accounts for Lewis: S.R.O.B., HD 1150/1; John Ward's will: P.R.O., P.C.C. 85 Lewyn; Estye and Bedell in Tymms 1854, 114–23.

- 59 S.R.O.B., Guildhall summary accounts 1581–1602, H2/3/1.
 60 Campbell 1960, 290–91. Campbell mistakenly identifies Howard as an Essex man. For the correct identification, see Collinson 1957, 768.
 61 S.R.O.B., C2/1, f. 5v.
 62 Letter from Sir Robert Jermyn, Sir John Higham, William Spring, Thomas Crofte, Nicholas Bacon and Robert Ashfield to the governors of the Grammar School in Bury St Edmunds, 3 June 1596 (S.R.O.B., E5/9/205).

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Abbreviations for MSS

B.L.	British Library.
C.U.L.	Cambridge University Library.
Eg.	Egerton MSS.
Harl.	Harleian MSS.
Hatfield	Hatfield House.
Lans.	Lansdowne MSS.
L.P.L.	Lambeth Palace Library.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
S.R.O.B.	Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds Branch.