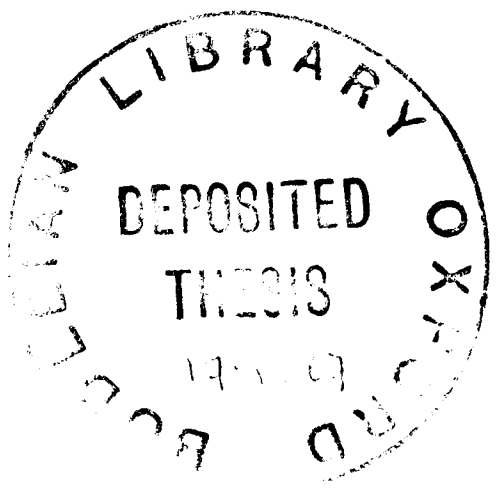
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
D.PHIL. THESIS

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EARLY ENGLISH REFORMATION: OXFORDSHIRE, 1520-1570

KATHERINE HALLIDAY

NEW COLLEGE

TRINITY TERM, 2006



SHORT ABSTRACT

D.PHIL. THESIS
TRINITY TERM 2006

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EARLY ENGLISH REFORMATION: OXFORDSHIRE, 1520-1570

KATHERINE HALLIDAY
NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

This thesis seeks, through the study of Oxfordshire, to explore how ordinary men and women negotiated religious change at a local level; to consider a wide and varied range of reactions to, and relationships with, religious alterations; and to investigate the dynamic between government and people in Tudor England.

The first section of the thesis uses Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts to explore the process of the Reformation within the county's parish communities. Virtually all the money with which Oxfordshire's churchwardens funded their churches' operations had been raised voluntarily by their parish communities – meaning that, although the parishioners' attitudes did not dictate the actions of their churchwardens, they did much to determine the level of financial support that the wardens received for them. Accordingly, the analysis of Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts – and particularly the wardens' funding regimes – is enlightening as to how Oxfordshire's parish communities collectively responded to the alterations that the Reformation wrought in their churches' worship.

The second section of the thesis explores the different ways in which individuals within communities such as those studied could, and did, engage critically with religious change. Oxfordshire was an outwardly 'conformist' county. Nonetheless, its commons engaged critically with religious change. Oxfordshire fostered both unlicensed evangelicalism and traditionalism throughout the Reformation period, with large numbers of the county's commonalty being in some way party to these. It was, however, unlicensed traditionalism which at times posed a very real threat to order within Oxfordshire. There was trouble at around the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace. The county was, moreover, the scene of two large-scale risings. In July 1549, several hundred of the Oxfordshire commons rebelled over matters of religion. Four years later, the county rose again in large number, this time under gentry leadership, in support of Mary Tudor's claim to the throne.

LONG ABSTRACT

D.PHIL. THESIS
TRINITY TERM 2006

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EARLY ENGLISH REFORMATION: OXFORDSHIRE, 1520-1570

KATHERINE HALLIDAY
NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks, through the study of Oxfordshire, to explore how ordinary men and women negotiated religious change at a local level; to consider a wide and varied range of reactions to, and relationships with, religious alterations; and to investigate the dynamic between government and people in Tudor England.

Any study of Oxfordshire is shaped by the relative paucity of ecclesiastical sources available. This thesis is, therefore, designed to capitalise on what material does survive, and is divided into two main sections. The first section (chapters 2 to 6) explores how religious change could be – and was – negotiated in the parishes, detailing how Oxfordshire's parish communities collectively responded to the alterations that were wrought in their churches' devotional practices. The second section of the thesis (chapters 7 to 10) concerns itself with religious conflict – exploring its occurrence, its nature, and its implications for the progress of the Reformation in the county.

I: OXFORDSHIRE'S PARISH COMMUNITIES

2: OXFORDSHIRE'S CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS

The first section of the thesis uses Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts to explore the progress of the Reformation within the county's parish communities. Chapter 2 appraises all of Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts which survive from the period 1520 to 1570. The chapter explores the nature of churchwardenship in the county: what the role of churchwarden entailed, what sort of men served the office, and the position of the churchwardens within the parish. It also investigates the means by which Oxfordshire's churchwardens raised their funds, and how they spent them. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the significance of the parishes' subsidiary institutions – concluding that, in Oxfordshire, subsidiary institutions were complementary to, but functioned independently from, the church proper.

3: Methodological Approach

This chapter outlines the thesis' methodological approach to churchwardens' accounts. Oxfordshire's churchwardens were enormously dependent on the voluntary giving of their parish communities. Virtually all the money with which Oxfordshire's churchwardens funded their churches' operations had been raised voluntarily by their parish communities – meaning that, although the parishioners' attitudes could not dictate the actions of their churchwardens, they did much to determine the level of financial support that the wardens received for them. Accordingly, the analysis of Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts – and particularly the wardens' funding regimes – is enlightening as to how Oxfordshire's parish communities collectively responded to the alterations that the Reformation wrought in the worship practised within their parish churches.

In the analysis of the accounts, it is desirable to adopt an approach with a quantitative aspect. Quantification enables the accounts to be better understood as composite sources. The process involves categorising the income and expenditure of suitable sets of churchwardens' accounts so as to create data which can then be analysed.

4: The Parish of Thame, 1528-1569

The parish of Thame is particularly well-suited to the application of this type of analysis. This is because suitable and detailed churchwardens' accounts survive in continuous series from 1528 to 1569.

The analysis of Thame's churchwardens' accounts 'problematises' the 'revisionist' view that the Reformation was not wanted; that it was only reluctantly accepted. Although Thame's churchwardens lost a great deal of financial support as a result of their implementation of the Henrician and Edwardian reforms, the accession of Mary – and the restoration of many traditional devotional practices, sometimes in anticipation of official edicts – did not immediately spark a resurgence of support. The parishioners' enthusiasm for church-funding only increased markedly towards the end of Mary's reign. This may be in part because the wardens' perceived rapacity during the reign of Edward VI made individual piety seem a more attractive means of expression at this time. However, although Thame's wardens' receipts fell immediately upon Elizabeth's accession, there was, during the 1560s, an apparent move towards the strength and stability that had been present in pre-Reformation church-funding. In other words, whilst Thame's parishioners had supported pre-Reformation religious practices, they could swiftly grow to support their successors.

5: The Parish of Pyrton, 1548-1570

The churchwardens' accounts which survive from 1548 to 1570 for the parish of Pyrton tell rather a different story. Following the reforms of the reign of Edward VI, the parish community of Marian Pyrton was eager for the trappings of traditional worship to be returned to its church. The parishioners, accordingly, fundraised unusually enthusiastically for their parish's churchwardens during Mary's reign, despite this being a period of socio-economic hardship. In contrast, the church experienced severe financial difficulties during the 1560s. Despite the wardens'

especial need for funds at this time (owing to the structural work being performed on the church building), the financial support which Pyrton's parishioners offered during these years was far less than had been customary, meaning that the work had to be financed through other means. It seems, therefore, that the church's financial problems were indicative of a disillusioned community. In sum, although the parish of Pyrton outwardly conformed to the religious changes wrought by the Reformation, its parishioners seem to have remained more steadfast in their support for religious traditionalism than did their counterparts in Thame.

6: THE PARISHES OF OXFORD, 1521-1570

The analysis of sets of churchwardens' accounts from the city of Oxford reveals that parish worship did not always 'reform' at exactly the same time, or in quite the same way, even within a common borough. Nonetheless, the attitudes of Oxford's parish communities to religious alterations seem to have been remarkably consistent. The parish-level religious changes that were wrought during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI provoked antipathy in the majority of parishioners. These changes induced each of the four parish communities for which suitable churchwardens' accounts survive to become less disposed to fund their churchwardens' activities than they had been previously. In contrast, the restoration of traditional religious practices which Mary's accession heralded brought a turnaround in the wardens' fortunes. However, although receipts fell immediately upon Elizabeth's accession, the city's churchwardens became financially secure once again as the 1560s progressed. Thus, whilst Pyrton's religious conservatism proved steadfast, there is every sign that parish communities within the city of Oxford could – and did – learn to adapt to religious change just as readily as did the parish of Thame.

II: CONFLICT WITHIN THE COUNTY

7: CO-OPERATION AND COMPLIANCE

The second section of the thesis explores the different ways in which individuals within communities such as those studied could, and did, engage critically with religious change. Chapter 7 considers the enforcement of religious change within Oxfordshire, and the extent to which the commons proved compliant.

The co-operation of the different branches of the law meant that the successive religious alterations were assiduously enforced in Oxfordshire throughout the Reformation period. There are, however, fewer records extant from the ecclesiastical authorities than there are from their secular counterparts. The types of religious disquiet which fell within the ecclesiastical authorities' jurisdiction were also much less likely to be proceeded against than were those falling obviously within the jurisdiction of the common law, and especially those which could be construed as treason. Consequently, the evidence available is skewed towards religious conservatives rather than evangelicals, since the former would have been accused of treason, the latter of heresy.

There seem, nonetheless, to have been few religious extremists of either persuasion in Reformation Oxfordshire. During most of the Reformation period,

Oxfordshire generated very few martyrs, traitors, heretics, or exiles. Instead, outward conformity was the norm.

8: Dissidence and Disobedience

Although Oxfordshire was an outwardly 'conformist' county, its commons nonetheless engaged critically with religious change. Oxfordshire fostered both unlicensed evangelicalism and traditionalism throughout the Reformation period, with large numbers of the county's commonalty being in some way party to these.

Evangelical opposition was, for the most part, covert in its nature. Yet it was at times both widespread and sophisticated. Moreover, religious change was drawn into many other aspects of society. This 'collaboration' assumed a number of forms, and took place for a variety of reasons which were not necessarily religious. It helped, nonetheless, to embed religious change into local society still further.

It was, however, unlicensed traditionalism which at times posed a very real threat to order within Oxfordshire. There was undoubtedly cause for concern around the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace. However, the events of July 1549 and July 1553 overshadowed even this.

9: The Oxfordshire Rising of 1549

In July 1549 the Oxfordshire commons rose in large number, and without gentry support. Somewhere in the region of several hundred armed participants marched from the south-east to the north-west of the county, pillaging parks as they went, until eventually retreating into the town of Chipping Norton.

The principal catalyst for the 1549 Rising seems, given the rebels' targets and timing, to have been the common perception that the goods of the county's churches were about to be seized by the commissioners for church goods. Consequently, the rebels did not head for London. They were not opposing religious reforms *per se*. Rather, Oxfordshire's rebels were contesting the Edwardian reforms as they had been imposed within their parishes.

The threat that Oxfordshire's rebellion posed to the government of 1549 should not be under-estimated. By early July, government resources were already stretched to their limits, and there was also the threat of foreign invasion. In addition to this, Oxfordshire's proximity to the capital made any rebellion in the county, let alone one of this nature, especially dangerous. Thus, despite the many other pressures on resources, Lord Grey and his mercenary force were ordered into the county to orchestrate immediate remedy. Grey's personal treatment of the rebellion lasted only a few days, but it was nonetheless savage. Oxfordshire's gentry seem, in contrast, to have acted with greater leniency – perhaps in an attempt to ensure the longer term peace.

10: 1553: 'Goynge Forth' for Queen Mary

In July 1553, just four years to the month after the 1549 Rising, the Oxfordshire commons rose again in large number. Faced with the decision whether to accept the

de facto government of Lady Jane Grey, or to rebel in support of Mary Tudor, Oxfordshire chose the latter.

Mary's Oxfordshire supporters were led by Leonard Chamberlayne esquire and Sir John Williams, the very same men who had been the especial targets of the 1549 rebels. For Williams, Chamberlayne, and the other gentry involved, legal, political, and pragmatic concerns loomed large. However, had Oxfordshire's gentry gauged their concerns differently – had they elected to support Jane's Grey accession – it is likely that their efforts would have been in vain. It seems improbable that Oxfordshire's commonalty, who were motivated much more clearly by religious considerations than were their gentry leaders, would have supported a pro-Jane gentry in any number. Oxfordshire's commons might, moreover, have risen for Mary's cause independently.

July 1553 was a month in which perceptions of power meant everything. In these circumstances, the risings in the Thames Valley – in which Oxfordshire was prominent – assume enormous significance. Indeed, the very day before her lords betrayed her, Jane Grey's last desperate pleas were for action to be taken in this area. Perhaps Jane still hoped that, if this area could be quieted, her throne might yet be saved. This was not to be the case.

III: SYNTHESIS

11: SURVEY

It seems probable that the assimilation of religious change which, by the 1560s, seems to have been experienced in all but one of the parishes studied, owed at least something to appeasement: to the transformation from the Marian to the Elizabethan Church seeming less aggressive at a parish-level than the changes which had been experienced during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. Such a situation presumably owed something to the passage of time. But the influence of a non-extremist parish clergy seems to have helped too. Indeed, quite *how* evangelical the 'average' Oxfordshire parish church seemed in the 1560s must, for now, remain a matter for conjecture.

In Oxfordshire, religious change was insufficient in and of itself to engender widespread insurrection. Even the most substantial alterations in parish worship did not necessarily generate conflict – given the right circumstances. If Oxfordshire's commons were to rise in large number they required something further to religious change.

Generally speaking, parish-level religious changes were implemented either by the incumbent clergyman, or by members of the parish community. Thus the practical implementation of the changes – and, critically, any costs or profits incurred by them – remained the responsibility of the parish community. However, this was not the case for those religious changes which sparked the risings of 1549 and 1553. In these years, religious changes were implemented which involved the active participation of outsiders, who were perceived to profit by their actions – monetarily, politically, or both. Accordingly, in order to register opposition to the changes of 1549 and 1553, Oxfordshire's commons had no choice but to couch their opposition in terms of force. In 1549, the rebels laid siege to the lands of John Williams and Leonard Chamberlayne. In 1553, they headed south to do battle with the London lords, this time under Williams and Chamberlayne's leadership.

Church goods were a critical issue in the reception of the Reformation in Oxfordshire – and not just in 1549. They mattered because around them the material and religious identity of the parish coalesced. The rumour that Henry VIII was going to seize church goods was one of the causes for the antagonism that Thame witnessed in the summer of 1537 – and quite possibly for the troubles which seem to have been experienced elsewhere in the county at about this time. Moreover, that the 1553 commissioners, who seized goods from the county's parish churches, did not provoke a comparable response to their predecessors in 1549 seems more to reflect the legacy of the suppression of the 1549 Rising than it does any meaningful alteration in the Oxfordshire commons' mind-set.

12: CONCLUSIONS

This study of Oxfordshire raises some more general issues about how the English Reformation ought best to be considered.

First, it appears that evidence for the Reformation being assimilated into wider society – through mediums such as actions, ideas, or language – does not constitute proof of the development of a new 'religious consciousness' in any meaningful sense. There is in Oxfordshire abundant evidence of such 'collaboration' taking place. And yet, in all those parishes for which suitable churchwardens' accounts survive, the support for religious traditionalism persisted long after this 'collaboration' had come into being, with any eventual change apparently owing much to the devotional practices of the Elizabethan churches being relatively moderate in their nature.

Secondly, the means by which Oxfordshire's parish churches were funded – which depended heavily upon the voluntary giving of the parish community – meant that the Oxfordshire commons had the opportunity to engage with the imposition of the Reformation in their parishes in a peaceable manner; and they seem to have capitalised on this, with widespread insurrection occurring only on those occasions in which they were denied this form of expression. Thus, this study of Oxfordshire suggests that, elsewhere in England, the manner in which parishes were governed – and, perhaps more critically, were funded – was a factor affecting whether, when, and how religious conflict occurred within them.

PREFACE

This thesis claims to be methodologically innovative, bridging the methodological lacunae between 'community' historians and Reformation historians. I must, therefore, acknowledge that many works of both 'community' and Reformation history have guided my research. Since this thesis is at times critical of his methods, I should in particular acknowledge my debt to the work of Beat Kümin, which really opened my eyes to the possibilities of working with churchwardens' accounts.

This thesis was supervised by Christopher Haigh who, in his role as both undergraduate tutor and postgraduate supervisor, has now endured more than seven years of my company. I thank not only him, but also Alison Wall for her sustained interest in my research. New College has proved a conducive environment in which to pursue postgraduate study. I was fortunate to be awarded the Reynolds Graduate Scholarship in order to pursue my M.St. I thank the trustees of the Reynolds Bequest, and here remember R. D. Reynolds (New College, 1967) in whose memory the Bequest was created.

I am grateful to have pursued my doctoral research amongst such lively and encouraging colleagues. Many individuals from Oxford's Early Modern Britain group have offered advice on my research, and have generously shared knowledge with me. It is invidious to name names, but my two exact contemporaries – Paul Cavill and Megan Wheeler – deserve special mention. Moreover, whilst I owe a debt of gratitude to virtually all of Oxford's hostelries, I must in particular single out The King's Arms.

It is ironic, however, that by far my greatest debt is owed to those who ultimately care least about my thesis: my family. The good-humoured teasing of my siblings – James, Caroline, and Edward – has helped to keep everything in perspective (and no, I never did buy tweed). My parents, Jane and Harold Halliday, have supported me more than they can possibly realise. This thesis has always been intended for them, as a small token of my love and gratitude.

CONTENTS

PREFACE i

CONTENTS ii

CONVENTIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS v

1: INTRODUCTION 1
- **1.1**: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT 1
  - **i**: The relevance of local-level research 1
  - **ii**: The focus of local-level research 5
  - **iii**: The problems of post-revisionism 8
- **1.2**: 'LOCAL ENGAGEMENT' WITH THE REFORMATION IN OXFORDSHIRE 9
  - **i**: The collective negotiation of religious change 10
  - **ii**: The study of conflict within Oxfordshire 12

I: OXFORDSHIRE'S PARISH COMMUNITIES

2: OXFORDSHIRE'S CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS 13
- **2.1**: THE WARDENS AND THEIR ACCOUNTS 13
  - **i**: The accounts 13
  - **ii**: Churchwardenship 21
  - **iii**: The churchwardens 24
  - **iv**: The position of the churchwardens within the parish 28
  - **v**: Conclusions 34
- **2.2**: RESOURCES AND EXPENDITURE 35
  - **i**: Resources 35
  - **ii**: Expenditure 40
- **2.3**: SUBSIDIARY INSTITUTIONS 42

3: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH 45
- **3.1**: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT 45
- **3.2**: THE POTENTIAL OF CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS 46
- **3.3**: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH 49
- **3.4**: METHODOLOGY 53
  - **i**: Data accumulation 53
  - **ii**: Data representation 57
  - **iii**: Conclusions 59

4: THE PARISH OF THAME, 1528-1569 62
- **4.1**: THE PARISH OF THAME 62
- **4.2**: THAME'S CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS 67
- **4.3**: REFORMATIONS OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY 71
  - **i**: Dramatis personae 73
  - **ii**: Data interpretation 78
  - **iii**: Determinants 83

iv: Stimuli 87
v: Conclusions 91

5: THE PARISH OF PYRTON, 1548-1570 95
5.1: THE PARISH OF PYRTON 95
5.2: PYRTON'S CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS 100
5.3: REFORMATIONS OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY 101
i: Dramatis personae 101
ii: Data interpretation 103
iii: Determinants 104
iv: Stimuli 106
v: Conclusions 107

6: THE PARISHES OF OXFORD, 1521-1570 111
6.1: INTER-PAROCHIAL ANALYSIS 111
6.2: THE OXFORD PARISHES 111
i: The city 111
ii: The citizens 113
iii: The parishes 114
6.3: THE OXFORD PARISHES' CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS 116
6.4: REFORMATIONS OF THE PARISH COMMUNITIES 120
i: Dramatis personae 120
ii: Data 123
iii: Data interpretation and determinants 125
iv: Stimuli 126
v: Complexity 129

II: CONFLICT WITHIN THE COUNTY

7: CO-OPERATION AND COMPLIANCE 133
7.1: THE CO-OPERATION OF THE COUNTY'S LAW-ENFORCERS 134
i: The question of jurisdiction 134
ii: Prosecution 136
iii: The role of the gentry 138
iv: The process of investigation 140
v: Complications 143
vi: Conclusions 144
7.2: THE COUNTY'S CONFORMITY 145
i: The extent to which conformity may be assessed 145
ii: The level of conformity 149

8: DISSIDENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE 154
8.1: EVANGELICALISM 154
i: Overt dissent 154
ii: Covert dissent 157
iii: The assimilation of religious change 161
8.2: TRADITIONALISM 168
i: Overt dissent 168
ii: The threat posed by traditionalist dissidence 170

8.3: CONCLUSIONS 173

9: THE OXFORDSHIRE RISING OF 1549 175
9.1: THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMOTION 180
9.2: RELIGIOUS GRIEVANCE 182
9.3: THE NATURE OF THE RELIGIOUS GRIEVANCES 191
9.4: A REBELLION 199
9.5: THE REBELLION'S RECEPTION 203
9.6: THE COMMOTION IN PERSPECTIVE 213

10: 1553: 'GOYNGE FORTH' FOR QUEEN MARY 217
10.1: THE GENTRY OF OXFORDSHIRE 218
10.2: THE GENTRY'S RESOLVE 220
10.3: THE GENTRY'S MOTIVATION 222
10.4: THE GENTRY'S FORCES 227
10.5: THE COMMONALTY'S MOTIVATION 230
10.6: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RISING 232

III: SYNTHESIS

11: SURVEY 236
11.1: THE PARISH COMMUNITIES 236
i: Observations 236
ii: Explanatory framework 239
11.2: DISSENT AND DISOBEDIENCE 246
11.3: SYNTHESIS 248

12: CONCLUSIONS 254

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER NINE 257

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES 270
MANUSCRIPT SOURCES 270
PRINTED SOURCES 274

SECONDARY SOURCES 278
PUBLISHED WORKS 278
UNPUBLISHED WORKS 282

ONLINE RESOURCES 283

CONVENTIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The year is taken to begin on 1 January.

In quotations from manuscript sources, punctuation has not been modernised, although numbers are presented in Arabic numerals.

The following abbreviations have been used in the footnotes (in their first instance of appearing in a chapter):

Acts of the Privy Council	*Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1542-1631*, ed. J. R. Dasent (46 vols., London, 1890-1964).
Calendar of Patent Rolls	*Calendar of the Patent Rolls* ... [of] *Edward III* (16 vols., London, 1891-1916). *Calendar of the Patent Rolls* ... [of] *Henry VI* (6 vols., Norwich, 1901-10). *Calendar of the Patent Rolls* ... [of] *Edward VI* (6 vols., London, 1924-9).
Calendar of State Papers, Domestic	*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth I and James I* (12 vols., London, 1856-72).
Calendar of State Papers, Spanish	*Calendar of ... State Papers ... Spain, 1485-1558* (13 vols. and 2 supplements, London 1862-1954).
The *Clergy of the Church of England Database*	http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk
Letter and Papers, Henry VIII	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J.S. Brewer *et al.* (21 vols. with *addenda*, London, 1862-1932).
State Papers	National Archives, State Papers [viewed on microfilm].
New *Dictionary of National Biography*	http://www.oxforddnb.com
VCH	R. B. Pugh (ed.), *The Victoria History of the Counties of England* (London).

The following abbreviations have been used in the citation of churchwardens' accounts (which are all from Oxfordshire Record Office):

Ambrosden CWAs	PAR/7/4/F1/1
Marston CWAs	MS. D.D. Par. Marston c.2
St. Aldate's, Oxford CWAs	MS. D.D. Par. Oxford, St. Aldate a.1, b.17-19, c.15-16
St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs	PAR/207/4/F1/1
St. Mary Magdalen's, Oxford CWAs	PAR/208/4/F1/1-
St. Mary the Virgin's, Oxford CWAs	PAR/209/4/F1/1-
St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs	PAR/211/4/F1/2
St. Peter-in-the-East's, Oxford CWAs	PAR/213/4/F1/1
St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs	PAR/214/4/F1/1-
Pyrton CWAs	MS. D.D. Par. Pyrton c.1
South Newington CWAs	MS. D.D. Par. South Newington a.1
Spelsbury CWAs	PAR/246/4/F1/1
Thame CWAs	PAR/273/4/F1/2
Warborough CWAs	MS. D.D. Par. Warborough c.3

[For example, 'St. Mary the Virgin's, Oxford CWAs, -4' refers to Oxfordshire Record Office, PAR/209/4/F1/4.]

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Local-level research facilitates the study of the impact of the English Reformation. However, Reformation studies have thus far fallen short of considering what I shall hereafter dub 'local engagement'. This thesis seeks to explore how ordinary men and women negotiated religious change at a local level; to consider a wide and varied range of reactions to, and relationships with, religious alterations; and to investigate the dynamic between government and people in Tudor England.

I. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

In considering how 'local engagement' might best be assessed, it is helpful to deconstruct the process that brought local-level research to the forefront of Reformation studies. (It has, however, to be acknowledged that no historiographical consensus exists here.) An appreciation of how close existing historiography has come to considering the question of 'local engagement' – and how it has done so – forms the most viable platform from which to proceed.

i. The relevance of local-level research

Until the mid-twentieth century, Reformation history focused on the actions of Tudor central government, and the works of the English divines. Local-level research was the province of the amateur antiquarian. It was not until the 1930s and 1940s that the work of F. D. Price very consciously made a distinction between what 'ought' to have

happened, and what actually occurred in practice – making local-level research relevant to Reformation studies for the very first time.[1] Price's researches were certainly on a regional level, focusing on the diocese of Gloucester. They were, however, more institutional than they were social. Price did not add many of his region's people to the Reformation. Throughout the 1940s, and indeed most of the 1950s, no large-scale Reformation study was produced that really considered the Reformation's impact: how it affected ordinary men and women. Although A. L. Rowse and Wallace T. MacCaffrey produced social studies of Cornwall and Exeter at this time – in 1941 and 1958 respectively – neither historian principally concerned himself with religious reform.[2]

The impact of the English Reformation first came into the foreground in 1959, when A. G. Dickens' *Lollards and Protestants* 'discovered popular heresy – ordinary Yorkshire people who were late Lollards and early Protestants'.[3] In part, this was the result of the sheer standard of Dickens' scholarship. *Lollards and Protestants* was of too high a quality, quite apart from being of too broad a relevance, for it to be dismissed merely as 'local history'. However, the publication of Dickens' *English Reformation* in 1964 proved to be still more significant.[4] Dickens' *English Reformation* presented the Reformation not as 'an act of state', but as a religious process: something in which people took part. Accordingly, Dickens employed what

---

[1] Price makes this assertion most explicitly in F. D. Price, 'The Administration of the Diocese of Gloucester, 1547-1579' (Oxford Univ. B.Litt. thesis, 1939).

[2] A. L. Rowse, *Tudor Cornwall: portrait of a society* (London, 1941); Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Exeter, 1540-1640: the growth of an English county town* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958).

[3] A. G. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558* (London, 1959). For this quotation: Christopher Haigh, 'A. G. Dickens and his Reformation', *History Today*, 51 (11) (November 2001), 7-8. Dickens had been writing about the Reformation in Yorkshire since the late 1930s, although his early work merely plays down 'northern conservatism', and seeks to make Yorkshire more like the south. A. G. Dickens' early publications include 'Some Popular Reactions to the Edwardian Reformation in Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 34 (1938-9), 151-69, and 'The First Stages of Romanist Recusancy in Yorkshire, 1560-1590', *Yorks. Arch. Journal*, 35 (1940-3), 157-82.

[4] A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, 1964).

regional studies were available to him, not least his own work on Yorkshire. In so doing, Dickens added a social aspect to the study of the English Reformation; and Reformation historiography could never look quite the same again. Reformation historians now had to look to the localities for much of their substance, if they were to be 'in competition' at all.[5]

The new generation of historians that set out to engage with Dickens' thesis inevitably followed him into the regional archives. However, few of this new generation agreed with what Dickens had to say. Indeed, they even disagreed with one another. The differences revolved around two matrices. The first was the motive force behind the progress of Protestantism (whether it was from 'above' or from 'below'). The second was the pace of religious change ('fast' or 'slow').[6] Dickens found an early adherent for his 'fast' Reformation 'from below' in James E. Oxley, who published a monograph on Essex in 1965.[7] In contrast, the other 'main players' (whose contributions all followed that of Oxley) presented a Reformation that came 'from above', although there was some disagreement as to the pace of change. Peter Clark's Kentish Reformation was a 'fast' one, whilst Manning's in Sussex, Haigh's in Lancashire, and (probably) Spufford's in Cambridgeshire were 'slow'.[8]

Inevitably, as a result of this, localities – and local-level studies – became identified with certain interpretations of the Reformation. The accusation arose that

---

[5] Dickens' influence is a matter of debate. Christopher Haigh, for example, attributes less influence to Dickens in 'A. G. Dickens and the English Reformation', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 77 (2004), 24-38.

[6] These matrices were identified by Christopher Haigh: 'Some Aspects of the Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Peter Alter, and Robert W. Scribner (eds.), *The Urban Classes, the Nobility and the Reformation: studies on the social history of the Reformation in England and Germany* (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 88-106, esp. pp. 89-99.

[7] James Edwin Oxley, *The Reformation in Essex: to the death of Mary* (Manchester, 1965).

[8] Roger B. Manning, *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex: a study of the enforcement of the religious settlement, 1558-1603* (Leicester, 1969); Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (London, 1975); Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: religion, politics and society in Kent, 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977); Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English villagers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (London, 1974).

this group of historians was being overly affected by the conclusions of their own regional studies. Such a situation was, however, insupportable much beyond the 1970s. It soon became unfeasible for any regional survey to be deemed conclusive about the impact of the English Reformation as a whole. As regional studies grew in number, it became increasingly difficult to dismiss or ignore those that disagreed with one's own view; and it became ever more necessary to acknowledge the conclusions of other regional Reformation historians.

What then was the place of local-level research in Reformation studies? How was 'conservative' Lancashire to be squared with 'evangelical' Kent? In 1981, Margaret Bowker's *Henrician Reformation* attempted to square the circle. In her concluding pages, Bowker did not seek to imply any generalisations about the impact of the Reformation at all. Instead, Bowker expressly stated that regional Reformations were different from one another.[9] Bowker's influence is a matter for conjecture. Nonetheless, it was around this time that the credible historian became reluctant to use a local study to extrapolate generalisations about the Reformation as a whole – and thus the process of quantifying how many people experienced what sort of Reformation began.

The post-Bowker era witnessed a continuing stream of publications: MacCulloch on Suffolk, Brigden on London, Whiting on the south-west, Litzenberger on Gloucestershire, and any number of journal articles.[10] The very standard and scale of these studies, together with their reception, suggests that there was a growing acceptance that major regional Reformation studies could be major Reformation

---

[9] Margaret Bowker, *The Henrician Reformation: the diocese of Lincoln under John Longland, 1521-1547* (Cambridge, 1981).

[10] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: politics and religion in an English county, 1500-1600* (Oxford, 1986); Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989); Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: popular religion and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 1989); C. J. Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (Cambridge, 1997).

studies also – or, at very least, the distinction between the two approaches became less apparent than once it was. Historians were even prepared to 'downsize' the scale of their studies. The production of a regional survey was no longer viewed as simply the work of an academic apprentice, with the chronology of the publications of Claire Cross and Eamon Duffy testifying to this.[11]

ii. The focus of local-level research

Why are we still producing local studies? If the intention were simply to gauge approximately 'how many people had what sort of Reformation', one would have thought that there was enough work on the localities to hazard some kind of approximation already. It is not as simple as this. Since Dickens, Reformation studies have been looking to the localities for their evidence. But they have kept on refining quite what it is that they have been looking for there. How the impact of the English Reformation ought best to be assessed has been constantly shifting.

From Dickens' *English Reformation* onwards, regional historians have employed a wide range of source-material. However, despite the near-uniformity in the range of sources that historians have used, the balance of the source-types' influence has depended on the differing foci of the studies. A. G. Dickens, for example, was looking to find evidence of non-conformity: of late Lollardy and early Protestantism. Consequently, Dickens examined those sources which were likely to identify people as being those things: the records of the Church courts, visitation returns, and, of course, John Foxe – whose martyrology had a vested interest in making Protestantism seem as popular as possible from the earliest possible date.

---

[11] In particular: Claire Cross, *Urban Magistrates and Ministers: religion in Hull and Leeds from the Reformation to the Civil War* (York, 1985); Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and rebellion in an English village* (New Haven & London, 2001).

Bibliographies cannot be compared crudely to one another, since the precise balance of source-material must be dependent upon the area. Susan Brigden's *London and the Reformation* recognises, in the selection of its sources, the peculiarity of London's position. In the study of the capital, it is appropriate to emphasise many more 'national' sources than would otherwise be the case in a regional survey. The reports of the foreign ambassadors are, for example, of particular relevance in any study of London because the ambassadors tended to base their reports on their experiences there. In spite of this idiosyncrasy, however, it is possible to perceive a general pattern in which sources regional historians have been using to assess the Reformation's impact.

The investigation of the impact of the Reformation began – with Dickens – by searching for nonconformists: people who fell foul of the law. To this day, conformity remains a concern. But the tendency to look beyond the nonconformity of individuals, in an attempt to discern what popular attitudes really were, has, despite its inherent difficulties, been growing stronger over time. The use of wills for this purpose is not a recent phenomenon: it began, in a very limited fashion, in 1959.[12] It is, rather, the development in the use of wills that is of relevance here.[13] For decades there has been an element of caution, as historians have struggled to overcome the problems inherent in the use of wills as evidence. It is only relatively recently that historians have been prepared to make wills central to their regional surveys. In 1989, Robert Whiting's three major sources were wills, churchwardens' accounts, and artistic and architectural evidence.[14] Caroline Litzenberger, writing eight years later, employed wills to an even greater extent in her study of lay faith in Gloucestershire –

---

[12] Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants*.
[13] Patrick Collinson charts the development in the use of wills: 'The English Reformation, 1945-1995', in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997), pp. 336-60, esp. p. 351.
[14] Whiting, *Blind Devotion*.

although this approach was conditioned by the scarcity of pre-1559 court and visitation material.[15] Litzenberger's increased confidence in the use of wills was due in large part to the sophistication of her adopted approach: she employed an elaborate scheme of categorisation, and attempted to redress certain of the source-type's limitations, such as gender-bias. In other words, lay attitudes – quite apart from the laity's willingness to conform – have come to be seen as an increasingly important issue to address in Reformation studies. Generally speaking, historians have become less and less interested in studying the impact of the Reformation from the perspective of the governing classes alone.

Concurrently, local studies have increasingly integrated 'non-religious' factors into their study of the Reformation. Christopher Haigh's *Tudor Lancashire* was innovative in that it attempted to deal with causative factors – concluding not only that most people in the county were 'backward', but seeking also to explain why this was so. Haigh's approach became the norm. For instance, Diarmaid MacCulloch's study of Suffolk emphasises the dynamic link between country and county throughout, and constantly compares Suffolk to the neighbouring Norfolk. Indeed, whether Reformation studies have chosen to dwell upon political and social influences or not, from the 1970s they have been unlikely to view them as irrelevant. Indeed, the only real variance that seems now to prevail is the extent to which this perceived relevance is overt in the text. In Robert Whiting's *Blind Devotion*, it is overt to the point that it verges on the mechanical. (Whiting's text is divided into two rigid sections: 'Assessment' and 'Explanation'.) Other historians are more subtle. It seems probable that the increased integration of local studies was induced by the concurrent developments within the discipline. The growing distinction between

---

[15] Litzenberger, *English Reformation and the Laity*.

what people felt and what they did seems to have encouraged historians to search for causative factors. Consequently, regional Reformation history can no longer be limited to 'religious matters' alone.

iii. The problems of post-revisionism

It is in this climate that a theory of 'post-revisionism' has been proposed, most vociferously by Ethan Shagan. Shagan's *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* contends that religion permeated every aspect of the sixteenth-century experience.[16] Religion did not constitute a self-contained sphere. Rather, it was mediated through society. Consequently, Shagan concludes that whilst revisionists are right to argue that the pace of religious change was slow and contested, they are wrong to treat religious change as an act of 'conversion': to assess its impact in terms of belief. The majority of Englishmen never experienced an epiphany. Instead they underwent a process of cultural dissociation whereby old and familiar religious rituals were destabilised and reinterpreted. Accommodation was gradual; religious consciousnesses evolved.

Central to Shagan's thesis is the explanation that, although the religious changes under Henry VIII and Edward VI began as acts of state, they were negotiated at local levels – meaning that we should consider a wider spectrum of responses to religious changes than enthusiastic acceptance or wholesale rejection. Whilst the vast majority of Englishmen 'collaborated' with religious changes, their actions may not have been theologically motivated. These actions did, however, help to embed the religious changes into English society nonetheless. In other words, the Reformation was popular not in the sense that it emanated from the will of the people, but in the

[16] Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003).

sense that the people played an important role in constructing the meanings of the Reformation in their communities. The English Reformation was not done to people: it was done with them.

This is an interesting thesis – and a convincing one. Yet the kind of research that Shagan employs is inadequate to address it: he has strayed too far from the localities. Shagan bases his argument on a series of case-studies, making wide generalisations from a series of disconnected incidents. In addition to this, whilst Shagan understands the Reformation to have been negotiated in the localities, he relies almost exclusively for his evidence on the central records of the state. It is no surprise then that Shagan has written a book on conflict and assimilation. As a result, Shagan fails to penetrate to the heart of the matter and examine the localities on their own terms. A more all-embracing survey requires a more wide-ranging approach.

II. 'Local Engagement' with the Reformation in Oxfordshire

My study of Oxfordshire aims to reconstruct, and to understand, the process of the Reformation as it affected – and indeed was implemented by – the ordinary men and women of the county. Accordingly, it focuses neither on the University nor on the county's religious houses (although these both necessarily feature). The focal point is, instead, the county's commonalty.

Any study of Oxfordshire is shaped by the relative paucity of the material most frequently used in Reformation studies. Perhaps most critically, the records for diocese of Oxford are patchy and incomplete, as are those for Lincoln in the period preceding 1542 (when the diocese of Oxford was created). Very few records of the Church's courts are extant. Returns survive from only four visitations – those of 1517-20, 1530, 1538 (which is incomplete), and 1540. Indeed, not even the diocesan

population returns of 1563 survive.[17] Any approach must, therefore, be designed so as to capitalise on what material survives. The thesis is, therefore, divided into two main sections. The first section (chapters 2 to 6) explores how religious change could be – and was – negotiated in the parishes, detailing how Oxfordshire's parish communities collectively responded to the alterations that were wrought in their devotional practices. However, whilst many forces pulled Englishmen together in this difficult period, others drove them apart. Correspondingly, the second section of the thesis (chapters 7 to 10) concerns itself with religious conflict – exploring its occurrence, its nature, and its implications for the progress of the Reformation in the county.

i. The collective negotiation of religious change

The first section of the thesis is procedurally innovative, bridging the methodological lacunae between 'community' historians (such as Kümin) and Reformation historians. In Oxfordshire, the English Reformation, as it manifested itself in parish worship, was orchestrated by lay members of the parish communities: the parishes' churchwardens. Certain churchwardens' accounts have already featured extensively in Reformation studies. The accounts have been used to chart the implementation of religious changes in England's parish churches – revealing, as they do, when altars were taken down, communion tables were erected, and the Prayer Books were bought. However, these churchwardens' accounts have not, as yet, been examined critically. Reformation historians have, typically, plucked only single entries from the accounts in order to 'prove' complicity – or the absence of it. This study uses Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts differently. Certainly, it is relevant to identify whether

[17] *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603*, ed. Alan Dyer and D. M. Palliser (Oxford, 2005).

Oxfordshire's parishes conformed with the edicts concerning the purchase of Prayer Books. But the study's focus is understanding these accounts as composite sources, in order to develop a much fuller appreciation of the process of Reformation within parish communities.

Critical to analysis is the fact that, in Oxfordshire, it was impossible for the churchwardens to enact religious change within their churches autonomously. The churchwardens relied upon the regular financial support of their parishioners in the broadest possible sense. Virtually all of the money with which Oxfordshire's churchwardens funded their churches' operations, including paying for religious alterations, derived from the parish community. This money came from a wide range of parishioners, who contributed through parish collections and church entertainments. At both parish collections and church entertainments, parishioners gave at their own discretion (in other words, they were not forced to pay a set 'rate'), and thus each and every member of the parish community played an active and a voluntary role in the orchestration of religious change within his or her parish church. Consequently, the accounts not only detail what the churchwardens accomplished, but they also reveal something about what the attitudes of the parish communities were to these changes.

Chapters 2 and 3 survey the extent to which the entries in select sets of the county's churchwardens' accounts can, when they are aggregated and categorised, reveal the collective attitudes of parish communities to changes in their worship. (The churchwardens' accounts, together with other surviving material, are analysed closely to determine what these changes were.) Chapters 4, 5, and 6 then proceed by applying select qualitative and thorough quantitative techniques to eight sets of Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts, based on the detailed analysis of their

income and expenditure. This choice of sample then allows me to present some more general deductions in chapters 11 and 12 as to how local, regional, and national pressures interacted in English communities at the time of their Reformations.

ii. The study of conflict within Oxfordshire

Methodologically, the second section of the thesis (chapters 7 to 10) is more conventional; and the source-material is much more broadly-based. However, since the relevant material for Oxfordshire is relatively sparse, it is necessary that it is construed particularly sympathetically. Since there are, for example, no surviving records for Oxfordshire's assize or Quarter Sessions, I have necessarily depended upon the records of the central law courts. As a consequence of this, I have had to determine what kind of cases would have generated documentation in the central law courts as a precursor to making any deductions about the condition of Oxfordshire.

Chapter 7 considers the extent to which religious conformity was enforced within the county, and the degree to which the commons proved compliant. Chapter 8 then proceeds to explore those instances in which religious dissent or disobedience manifested itself, considering its implications for the county. Two episodes, however, require special consideration – and so comprise chapters of their own. The first of these is the Oxfordshire Rising of July 1549. This was a rebellion induced principally by religious grievance, probably involving several hundred people. The second episode is the Oxfordshire commons' rising in support of Mary Tudor's claim to the throne in July 1553. This action, again, involved very large numbers of the county's commonalty; and religious considerations were influential. Oxfordshire's 1553 Rising also played a significant – indeed, possibly even a decisive – role in securing Mary's ultimate accession to the throne.

CHAPTER TWO

OXFORDSHIRE'S CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS

The first section of the thesis seeks to use Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts to explore the process of the Reformation within the county's parish communities. It is, therefore, necessary to consider exactly what these accounts represent. This chapter commences by appraising all of Oxfordshire's surviving churchwardens' accounts, and exploring the nature of churchwardenship in the county. It continues by investigating how Oxfordshire's churchwardens raised their funds, and how they spent them. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the significance of the parishes' subsidiary institutions.

I. THE WARDENS AND THEIR ACCOUNTS

i. The accounts

No comprehensive list of surviving churchwardens' accounts exists for England's parishes.[1] This deficiency owes much to the accounts' disparity. Attitudes as to precisely which parish records constitute churchwardens' accounts vary enormously.[2] It seems prudent, therefore, to adopt an inclusive approach, and to consider all extant records kept by Oxfordshire churchwardens between 1520 and 1570. Such records

---

[1] Various lists of churchwardens' accounts exist, most notably: Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: the ritual year, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 263-93; Beat A. Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: the rise and Reformation of the English parish, c.1400-1560* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 265-9.

[2] For instance, Ronald Hutton's definition of what comprises a churchwardens' account is much narrower than that of Beat Kümin. The differences between Hutton and Kümin's approaches are outlined in Katherine L. French, *The People of the Parish: community life in a late medieval English diocese* (Philadelphia, 2001), p. 47.

exist for seven parishes in the city and suburbs of Oxford: the parishes of St. Aldate, St. Martin, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Mary the Virgin, St. Michael-at-the-Northgate (hereafter referred to as St. Michael), St. Peter-in-the-East, and St. Peter-le-Bailey. Elsewhere in the county, accounts survive for the parishes of Thame, Pyrton, Ambrosden, South Newington, Spelsbury, and Marston. In addition to this, a small section of a single account survives for the parish of Warborough.[3]



Map of Oxfordshire

[3] I exclude Henley-upon-Thames from the study, albeit with some reservation. Whilst the borough assembly books record details of the maintenance of the church (together with the bridge) the process was not a result of 'parish government' as it is described below: *Henley Borough Records: assembly books i-iv, 1395-1543*, ed. P. M. Briers (Oxfordshire Record Soc., xli, 1960).

On a national scale, churchwardens' accounts are abundant. But their potential has not yet been realised; and Oxfordshire's accounts have received less attention than most. Oxfordshire's parish archives have not been as extensively studied as those of London or Bristol; nor have their churchwardens' accounts shared the renown of those of Ashburton, Prescot, and Yatton. Indeed, not all of them are even known about. Reasonably enough, neither Hutton nor Kümin's lists include the single scrap of parchment that survives for Warborough. But they do not acknowledge the accounts of the Oxford parish of St. Peter-le-Bailey either.[4] Moreover, where Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts have been used, they have not been engaged with extensively – being known largely through their published transcriptions, and through selections of extracts. At best these publications obscure the true nature of the accounts: the alterations, haphazard ordering, and damage that are evident in Marston's accounts are inadequately reflected in their published transcription.[5] At worst they are simply wrong.[6]

Regarding their format, there are two broad categories into which Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts fall. It is relatively straightforward to provide a *précis* of the first. A preamble includes the names of the parish and the churchwardens, and the dates which the account incorporates. Then follows a list of the churchwardens' receipts, with the total income recorded at its foot. Next come details of the wardens' expenditure, with the overall balance of the income and expenditure being recorded beneath. Finally, a concluding portion serves to discharge the wardens from their office, and to record the appointment of their successors. Supplementary memoranda – often added at the auditing stage, and recording matters

---

[4] In addition to this, whilst the accounts of the parish of Ambrosden are too late for Kümin's time-frame, they do not feature in Hutton's more wide-ranging survey.
[5] Compare Marston CWAs with *Churchwardens' Accounts of Marston, Spelsbury, Pyrton*, ed. F. W. Weaver and G. N. Clark (Oxfordshire Record Soc., vi, 1925).
[6] Consequently, I have without exception consulted the original documents for this survey.

such as outstanding debts and obligations – frequently feature also.[7] The second category displays more diversity. Generally speaking, this grouping encompasses those accounts which outline a quantity of information – by and large including dates, the names of the wardens, and total or balance figures – but make little (if any) consistent attempt to incorporate the wardens' individual financial transactions.[8]

The churchwardens' accounts that survive for the city of Oxford all belong to the first category of accounts. Indeed, they share a standard format. The Oxford city accounts are all written in English, with only small – or moderate, in the case of some of the earlier accounts – sections being written in (formulaic) Latin. Oxford's accounts were, moreover, produced professionally – with the wardens making annual payments to the scribe and for parchment, and with the Henrician wardens of St. Martin's and St. Peter-le-Bailey's churches both electing to employ a certain John Boterell.[9] The quality of work varied. However, whilst it is impossible to 'rank' the parishes in this regard, the most aesthetic account is doubtless that one which was produced for the wardens of St. Peter-le-Bailey's church in November 1538, which is spectacularly adorned with a picture of a dragon.[10] The principal variance between the parishes' accounts is in their length, with the parishes of St. Martin and St. Michael producing by far the longest accounts. It is worth noting, however, that all the parishes' accounts grew shorter as the years passed, in part owing to the alteration of their devotional practices.

---

[7] Beat Kümin provides a useful description of the composition of this type of churchwardens' account: *Shaping of a Community*, pp. 82-102, esp. pp. 84-5. Kümin defines what he perceives to be the format of churchwardens' account which is most useful for quantitative analysis: 'Late Medieval Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government: Looking beyond London and Bristol', *English Historical Review*, 119 (2004), 87-99, esp. 96-7.

[8] I would not, however, assert that there is so clear a distinction between accounts such as these and 'audited final accounts' as Kümin seems to imply in 'Late Medieval Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government', 97.

[9] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 3v; St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs, -21,-22, and -23.

[10] St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs, -21.

A great number of churchwardens' accounts survive from these seven Oxford parishes. But they are not extant in continuous series; nor are they evenly distributed, as the table below illustrates.

YEAR	ALDATE	MARTIN	MARY (MAGD.)	MARY (VIRGIN)	MICHAEL	PETER (EAST)	PETER (BAILEY)
1520							
1521							
1522						▪	
1523						▪	
1524						▪	
1525					▪		
1526					▪		
1527					▪	▪	
1528					▪		
1529							
1530							▪
1531					▪	▪	▪
1532					▪		▪
1533					▪		
1534					▪		
1535					▪		▪
1536	▪ [11]						▪
1537					▪		
1538					▪		▪
1539							▪
1540							▪
1541						▪	▪
1542							
1543							▪
1544		▪					
1545		▪			▪	▪	
1546		▪			▪	▪	▪
1547							
1548					▪		▪
1549							
1550					▪		
1551							
1552		▪			▪		
1553		▪			▪	▪	
1554		▪		▪			
1555		▪					
1556							▪
1557					▪		
1558		▪			▪		
1559		▪			▪		
1560		▪		▪			
1561			▪				▪
1562			▪	▪	▪		
1563			▪				▪
1564		▪	▪		▪		▪ [12]

[11] It is possible, albeit unlikely, that this account was made early in 1537.

[12] It is possible that the accounts of St. Peter-le-Bailey's churchwardens which are tabulated as '1563' and '1564' were actually made in 1564 and 1565 respectively. This is discussed in Chapter VI.

Year	Aldate	Martin	Mary (Magd.)	Mary (Virgin)	Michael	Peter (East)	Peter (Bailey)
1565							
1566							
1567							
1568							
1569							
1570							

Complete Churchwardens' Accounts[13]

The piecemeal nature of the accounts' survival is readily understandable. Oxford's churchwardens' accounts were written on individual pieces of parchment (or, very occasionally, paper). The accounts from successive years were not bound together. Thus it was always probable that their survival would be patchy. However, whilst the survival of the churchwardens' accounts is certainly piecemeal, it is not entirely random. The 'clusters' that are evident in the above diagram suggest that it was fairly common for accounts to be tied together in (fairly small) bundles. This assumption is, moreover, borne out by the account made by St. Martin's churchwardens on 26 November 1553. On this account's reverse is written: 'In this bundell are 3 a Counts for the Receats of the mony dew to the paresh for rent of the shambels 23s by the year'.[14]

The general format of Thame's churchwardens' accounts is identical to that of the Oxford parishes – with their appearance being, if anything, rather more aesthetic. Thame's churchwardens' accounts are, however, extant in continuous series, since they were bound together.[15] The small scrap of a single account that survives for

---

[13] The year referred to is the (New Style) year in which each churchwardens' account was made. The parishes differed as to when their accounting year commenced. It is also worth noting that, since the accounts of the Oxford parish of St. Michael-at-the-Northgate were made around the time of the feast of St. Gregory, Gregory comes to be styled as 'bishop' rather than 'pope' at the time of the Break with Rome.

[14] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 19v.

[15] For the purposes of this study I refer to Thame CWAs (Oxfordshire Record Office, PAR/273/4/F1/2), pp. 1-177. The quality of the text declines markedly after p. 177, and it is reasonable to assert that a different kind of account (a more 'day-to-day' one) begins to be kept from the 1570s

Warborough is extremely similar to Thame's accounts in its appearance, and the accounts of Marston, Pyrton, and South Newington's churchwardens all adopt this same general format. The accounts of these latter parishes are, however, somewhat less standardised than those of Thame – as well as being less professional in their appearance – with Marston and South Newington's accounts' inconsistency in how much detail they record creating a degree of confusion.

More idiosyncratic, and consequently falling into the second category of churchwardens' accounts, are the accounts that survive for the parishes of Ambrosden and Spelsbury. The wardens of these parishes demonstrate consistency in their record-keeping. It even seems that at some of their 'account days' they completed templates which had been produced in advance.[16] However, neither Ambrosden nor Spelsbury's accounts go further than providing a series of memoranda from which it is possible to glean only a limited understanding of the churchwardens' activities.

The different ways in which Oxfordshire's parishes kept their churchwardens' accounts does not intimate that different accounting practices were in operation. Moreover, these accounts were, without exception, the primary records of the parishes' churchwardens. This much could reasonably be assumed from their survival in the parish archives. Survival is seldom entirely arbitrary: it seems reasonable to suppose that a parish would have been more likely to preserve the churchwardens' principal written records than they would other documents.[17] The manner in which even the most unprepossessing of these accounts was regarded supports this case still further. In the Oxford parish of St. Michael, the authority for fining those who,

---

onwards. The text of 'Thame CWAs' commences with a concluding portion of the account which was made in 1528. Earlier churchwardens' accounts for the parish are also extant: ORO, PAR/273/4/F1/1.

[16] Ambrosden CWAs, fos. 8r-8v; Spelsbury CWAs, p. 8. (Since Spelsbury's churchwardens' accounts are neither paginated nor foliated, I have assumed pagination, starting at the first leaf.)

[17] Clive Burgess asserts that 'the survival of evidence is obviously arbitrary': 'The Broader Church? A Rejoinder to "Looking beyond"', *EHR*, 119 (2004), 100-16, esp. 107.

having been elected churchwarden, refused to serve derived, in the mid-1520s, from stipulations which had been written 'yn ye end off the messbook [Mass book]'.[18] The parishes' churchwardens' accounts were, however, also a common place to look for, or to record, legal precedent. For example, the account which was made for the Oxford parish of St. Martin in November 1566 has on it written: 'In this a Counts is to beproven the payment of rent'.[19] The fact that churchwardens' accounts were treated in this way often necessitated that they be altered after the wardens had cast them. Many of the debts recorded as being owing to Marston's churchwardens were deleted at subsequent dates, presumably in recognition that payment had been made or deemed irrecoverable.[20] However, matters were not always so resolved. Whilst it was solemnly recorded at the foot of the account made by Ambrosden's churchwardens on 27 May 1561 that 'mayster dentun [Denton] has yn hys handes off the cherches a pystola [pystolar] and 4 tastares [testers]', it had later to be recorded that 'mayster denton haht [had] not payd the pystola nor the testers'.[21]

The churchwardens' accounts proper must be differentiated from the other records which Oxfordshire's churchwardens generated in the discharge of their office. Evidence of sub-accounting survives for the Oxford parishes of St. Martin, St. Michael, and St. Peter-le-Bailey, and for the parish of Thame. For instance, one of Thame's churchwardens (William Mynchard) was paid £33 15s 9d in 1552 for work on the highway 'as yt Dothe Appere in His book of Rekenynge Brought in to this accompt' (which unfortunately no longer survives).[22] It is also clear that many individual entries in Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts are, in essence, the balance of multiple transactions – even in those parishes in which detailed accounts

---

[18] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 105v.
[19] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 39v.
[20] Good examples of this are to be found on fo. 3r of Marston CWAs.
[21] Ambrosden CWAs, fo. 4v.
[22] Thame CWAs, p. 112.

were kept. This is most notably the case for the income which the wardens generated from their church ales. The labelling of these receipts as 'declaro' or 'clear to the box' is in itself suggestive. Moreover, the wardens had, on occasion, to record expenses which they had incurred in hosting the ale in their accounts proper. In 1546, Thame's churchwardens made a payment of 15d 'to Olyver for Mete that was behynde unpayd fore at ye Churche ale'.[23] (Indeed, in Thame's accounts, entries concerning the church's lavish ales materialise on several occasions.)[24]

ii. Churchwardenship

To varying degrees, Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts reflect the activities of the churchwardens. But precisely what was churchwardenship?

By the sixteenth century, it was the duty of the parishioners, quite apart from paying their tithes, to maintain the nave of their church (the rector being responsible for the chancel), and to provide whatever equipment was necessary for worship. The churchwardens, typically two men serving as a pair for the duration of a year, were elected to fulfil these obligations on the parish's behalf.[25] However, within Oxfordshire, the precise responsibilities of churchwardenship varied from parish to parish; and they developed even within this relatively brief time-span. Some of this divergence is readily explicable. For instance if, at Christmas, a rural church wished to bedeck its nave with holly and ivy, it could often be gathered locally, at no cost to the parish. In contrast, the wardens of urban parishes had generally to pay for its

---

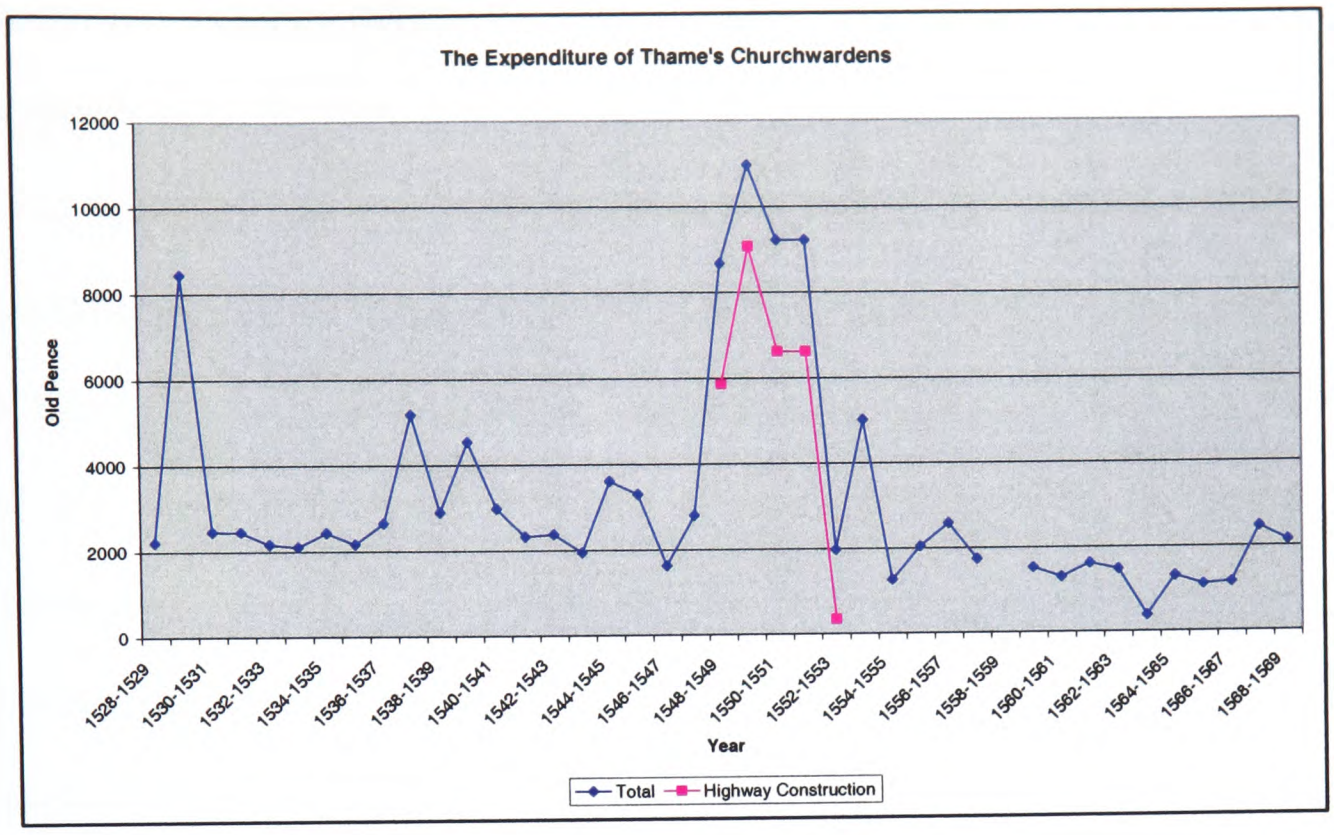
[23] Ibid., p. 78.
[24] Ibid., pp. 116, 124, 132.
[25] For discussions of the role of the churchwarden, see the introduction to *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts, 1504-1645 and Vestry Book, 1610*, ed. Charles Drew (Frome, 1941); Charles Drew, *Early Parochial Organisation in England: the origins of the office of churchwarden* (London, 1954); Eric Carlson, 'The origins, function, and status of the office of churchwarden, with particular reference to the diocese of Ely', in Margaret Spufford (ed.), *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1725* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 164-207; Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and rebellion in an English village* (New Haven & London, 2001), pp. 17-46.

supply. Likewise, those parishes which expected their churchwardens' accounts to be transcribed professionally effectively encumbered their wardens with the task of seeking a scribe – a job which would, presumably, have been easier in the city of Oxford than elsewhere in the county. Yet discrepancy had more idiosyncratic origins also. Uniquely in this sample, the Oxford parish of St. Mary the Virgin paid its churchwardens for their endeavours, rather than merely reimbursing them for their expenses. Each pair of wardens was given 10s *per annum* for their pains. Churchwardens' responsibilities could also extend far beyond their parish church. Marston's churchwardens rented out – and so were responsible for the upkeep of – several pieces of land: the Bull Acres, the Town Closes, the High Ditch, the Green Way, the Wash Way, the Stew Way, and the Oxford highway by the Cowleas hedge.[26] Parish custom or tradition operated in tandem with the universal duties of churchwardenship to such an degree that sixteenth-century parishes might best be understood as franchises of the Established Church. Certain standards were expected – and were enforced by visitations on the behalf of the archdeacon, ordinary, primate, and sovereign. Yet a considerable degree of self-regulation was permitted. Or, rather, it was expected.

The duties of a churchwarden could be complex and onerous, with wardens sometimes assuming responsibility for quite extraordinary projects. Perhaps most notably, the churchwardens of Edwardian Thame were in charge of disbursing enormous sums of money to effect the building of a highway. The abnormality of these wardens' disbursements is demonstrated by the graph below, which compares the total annual expenditure of Thame's churchwardens with the costs of constructing the highway.

---

[26] The parish's renting of these lands is discussed in *Churchwardens' Accounts of Marston, Spelsbury, Pyrton*, ed. Weaver and Clark, pp. 6-7.



Indeed, Oxfordshire men were undertaking a considerable personal liability when they accepted the position of churchwarden. Discharge from office was never automatic. During the reign of Henry VIII, the parish of Spelsbury recorded that the account of churchwardens John Winter and John Symms was 3s 9d in arrears. Winter and Symms claimed that this money had been 'stollen from them'. However, the account records that they stood 'at ye curtse [courtesy] of the parsche for yt money to be payd'.[27] In other words, it appears that the parish held Winter and Symms to be personally liable for this sum of money, despite their claim that it had been stolen from them. Consequently, a subsequent entry in Spelsbury's churchwardens' accounts records that John Symms made a payment of 3s 9d to the parish 'for ye money lost'.[28] Churchwardens were sometimes required to make good shortfalls in the church's funds, even on those occasions in which they had acted with due care.[29]

---

[27] Spelsbury CWAs, p. 82.
[28] Ibid., p. 7.
[29] In the Oxford parish of St. Martin, for example, successive churchwardens in the 1550s were, at the end of their tenure, in the position of being owed money by 'the parishioners': St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 19r, 22v, 25v.

Churchwardenship was, consequently, not a position to be undertaken lightly – and any honour to be gleaned from the office came at a price which some men deemed unacceptably high. In 1564, a certain Humphrey Kyrre paid two stricks of malt to the parish of Spelsbury 'for refusyng to be chuch [*sic*] man'.[30] The incentive for Kyrre's refusal is not articulated in the account. Yet it does not seem to have been principled since four years later, on St. Luke's Day, Kyrre accepted election to the office.[31] Given the responsibilities and liabilities of parish office-holding, the benefits of churchwardens serving as a pair are palpable; and four churchwardens generally served the parish of Thame. Moreover, the relatively common practice of parishes electing only one new churchwarden at a time seems to have been a conscious attempt to combine new blood with experience.

iii. The churchwardens

It is worth considering the type of man – and in Oxfordshire it was only men who served – who was elected churchwarden.[32] There is sufficient material available for the churchwardens of Thame, Pyrton, and the Oxford parishes of St. Martin and St. Michael from which to draw meaningful conclusions.[33]

---

[30] Spelsbury CWAs, p. 52.
[31] Ibid., p. 54.
[32] There is one known instance of a woman serving as churchwarden in the churchwardens' accounts extant for Oxfordshire between 1520 and 1570. Edmund Fernesed and William Giles were elected churchwardens for the parish of St. Mary Magdalen in Oxford in May 1564: St. Mary Magdalen's, Oxford CWAs, -5. Edmund Fernesed, however, died later that same year. (His will is to be found amongst the Oxfordshire probate records.) The churchwardens' account was, therefore, made by William Giles and 'Edmonde fernesedes wyffe': St. Mary Magdalen's, Oxford CWAs, -6.
[33] From 1523, the lay subsidy returns which were made to the Exchequer included the names of the individual taxpayers: M. Jurkowski, C. L. Smith, and D. Crook, *Lay Taxes in England and Wales, 1188-1688* (Kew, 1998), esp. xlii. I have searched those wills which were proved in Oxfordshire, Lincolnshire, the Oxfordshire Peculiars, and the Prerogative court of Canterbury. Certain wills were also proved in the mayor of Oxford's court. These wills, or some of these wills, were recorded in what became known as the *Liber Albus*. The *Liber Albus* survives in Oxfordshire Record Office: ORO, A.5.1. (A transcribed and edited version of this document: *Liber Albus Civitatis Oxoniensis: abstract of the wills, deeds, and enrolments contained in the white book of the city of Oxford*, ed. William Patterson Ellis (Oxford, 1909).) I have analysed probate details for 54 out of the 147 identifiable

In Thame and the two Oxford parishes, churchwardens tended to first serve about ten or twenty years before their death.[34] So, given that the mid-sixteenth-century population was relatively youthful, with only between 6½ and 7 percent of its members being over the age of sixty, we are for the most part considering men who were in their forties and fifties.[35] Pyrton's churchwardens tended to first serve at a point when they were significantly closer to death. There is, however, no reason to suppose that they were appreciably older than their counterparts elsewhere in the county. Since all of Pyrton's churchwardens for whom suitable records survive died leaving children in their minority, it seems more probable that Pyrton's churchwardens enjoyed a lower life expectancy than did their opposite numbers elsewhere.

In relative terms, Oxfordshire's churchwardens were men of means.[36] In the parish of Pyrton, every man who was sufficiently affluent to contribute to the second collection of the lay subsidy of 1566 (collected in 1568) – barring the very wealthiest,

---

churchwardens: 15 out of 29 for the Oxford parish of St. Martin, 9 out of 36 for the Oxford parish of St. Michael, 8 out of 21 for Pyrton, and 22 out of 61 for Thame.

[34] The date that probate was proved has been taken as the most accurate estimate for the date of death. (However, it was seldom that the last will was made more than a few months before this date.)

[35] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: a reconstruction* (London, 1981), esp. pp. 215-7, 528.

[36] The material used for calculating the churchwardens' wealth are the returns for the first collection of the 1523 lay subsidy (National Archives, E 179/161/198), the first collection of the 1543 lay subsidy (NA, E 179/162/224, E 179/162/225), and the second collection of the 1566 lay subsidy (NA, E 179/162/331). This is because comparable figures are extant for the four parishes of St. Martin's in Oxford, St. Michael's in Oxford, Pyrton, and Thame. The sole exception is the 1543 subsidy for Pyrton, where the third collection has had to be used (NA, E 179/162/236) rather than the first. Ranking taxpayers (necessarily employing linear interpolation) rather than using absolute figures minimises the problem of under- or over-assessment. The fact that trends (recorded to the nearest 5%) are accorded more emphasis than the status of named individuals acknowledges that certain churchwardens cannot be identified in the subsidy returns used, and that the circumstances of some changed over time. The term 'churchwarden' refers, in this context, to all men identifiable in the sources who had served, were serving, or would serve as churchwarden. 12 of the churchwardens for the Oxford parish of St. Martin can be identified in the 1543 subsidy returns; and 13 in those for 1566. 8 of the churchwardens for the Oxford parish of St. Michael-at-the-Northgate can be identified in the 1523 subsidy returns; 11 in those for 1543; and 7 for those in 1566. Identification cannot be comprehensive in Pyrton before the 1566 subsidy returns – in which 6 churchwardens can be identified. 14 of Thame's churchwardens can be identified in the 1523 figures; 33 in the 1543 ones; and 16 in the 1566 ones. I interpret the 'active' parishioners of Thame as being the inhabitants of New Thame, Old Thame, Priestend, Moreton, and North Weston. The parish's churchwardens were always drawn from these settlements.

Francis Symeon – had served, or would serve, as churchwarden. There was, however, considerable variance in the county. In terms relative to their parish, Thame's churchwardens were, in the 1520s, wealthier than their opposite numbers in Oxford. In 1523, all of those who had been or would serve as Thame's churchwardens were in the top half of taxpayers, with over 85% being in the top quartile.[37] In contrast, whilst all of St. Michael's churchwardens were in the top half of taxpayers, only half of the wardens belonged to the top quarter of taxpayers.[38] These proportions were not, however, ones which would remain constant over the ensuing decades. In Thame, churchwardenship became more inclusive. By 1543, although over 65% were still included in the top quartile, only three-quarters of the parish's churchwardens ranked amongst the top half of taxpayers, despite the fact that the number of parishioners deemed liable to pay tax had increased from 130 to 168.[39] (The figures for the second collection of the 1566 subsidy are over 35% and over 55% respectively, but since only the 41 richest parishioners had to pay tax in 1568 these statistics are of relatively little value.)[40] In contrast, the office of churchwarden appears to have become more exclusive in the city of Oxford – although the figures for the 1543 and 1566 subsidies have to be relative to the city and suburbs as a whole, as opposed to the individual parishes. In spite of there only being 160 taxpayers in 1568 (as opposed to 441 in 1543) over 60% of St. Martin's wardens were included in the top quartile, and all but one of them was in the top half of taxpayers. None of St. Michael's churchwardens

---

[37] NA, E 179/161/198, rots. 11-11d.
[38] Ibid., rot. 5. The churchwardens' accounts of St. Martin's parish in Oxford are not extant at an early enough date for comparisons to be drawn.
[39] NA, E 179/162/225, mm. 5-7.
[40] NA, E 179/162/331, rot. 22.

were in the top quartile. However, over 55% of them were in the top half of taxpayers – which is impressive considering the parish's relative poverty.[41]

A parish's churchwardens were not equal to one another in terms of wealth. Whilst a significant number of wardens were of only moderate means, churchwardenship was an office which was sometimes filled by the most well-heeled of Oxfordshire parishioners. In 1543, over 30% of Thame's churchwardens numbered amongst the top 10% of the parish's taxpayers.[42] More remarkably, in 1568, only one Thame taxpayer (Thomas Hester) was richer than the wealthiest churchwarden.[43] The evidence from wills corroborates this picture. The value of the churchwardens' inventories ranges from just a few to several hundred pounds, with the variance in the wealth of the churchwardens seeming greater in the city of Oxford than in Thame.

In the rural parish of Pyrton, the churchwardens were rarely assigned occupational titles in their wills: there is record only of one 'husbandman' and one 'yeoman'. In contrast, it is patent that Oxford's wardens pursued a variety of vocations. The wardens of St. Martin's and St. Michael's churches included a brown baker, a white baker, a town clerk, three mercers, a saddler, a fuller, a smith, four tailors, two glovers, a carpenter, a fishmonger, a shoemaker, and a gaoler of the Boccardo prison (John Dobson of St. Michael's parish). Numbered amongst Thame's wardens were a 'gentleman', a yeoman, a fletcher, a chandler, and no fewer than four mercers. Rather more unusually, Thame's Richard Raye is described in his will –

---

[41] Ibid., rot. 23. In 1523, the amount that was paid in tax in the Oxford parish of St. Michael-at-the-Northgate was, in proportion with the number of taxpayers in the parish, much less than that which was paid by the parishioners of St. Martin's church.
[42] NA, E 179/162/225, mm. 5-7.
[43] NA, E 179/162/331, rot. 22.

which was made on 21 August 1554, and was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury – as being a Yeoman of the Guard of the Queen's Household.[44]

Oxfordshire's churchwardens constituted a distinguished order: in their later years, well-established in their occupations, and often wielding considerable financial clout. Within their respective communities, they can have been anything but insignificant. These were not simply the 'middling sort' of men which have so often been ascribed the role of parish official.[45] So when it comes to the issue of the churchwardens' autonomy, particularly careful consideration is apposite.

iv. The position of the churchwardens within the parish

It was intended that those serving as churchwarden should be both supported and assisted in their duties by other members of the parish. When the churchwardens of the Oxford parish of St. Martin, Richard Whittington and John Walkleyn, made their account in November 1552, they included the 2s which they had spent on a 'visitation' at Thame, on which occasion the party had consisted of 'owre selves & Rychard Iverye & oure horses'.[46] Members of the clergy were also heavily involved in the wardens' affairs, especially at the audit – frequently signing their names at the foot of the final account.

The involvement and assistance of other members of the parish community did not, however, undermine the importance of the office of an Oxfordshire churchwarden.[47] Oxfordshire's churchwardens were not subservient to a higher

---

[44] NA, PROB 11/37 [Image Ref. 370].
[45] In particular, Kümin's *Shaping of a Community* (pp. 31-41, esp. pp. 40-1) presents churchwardens as belonging to this 'middling sort'.
[46] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 14r. This 'visitation' seems, in fact, to have been part of the implementation of the 1552 commission for church goods.
[47] Clive Burgess asserts that churchwardens' accounts cannot 'mirror' a parish, since churchwardens were not the sole agents of communal projects. Burgess emphasises, in particular, the significance of tiered parish hierarchies: 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government: Lessons from London and Bristol', *EHR*, 117 (2002), 306-32. The substance of Burgess's claims could be

stratum of parish government. Richard Ivory – who accompanied Richard Whittington and John Walkleyn to the Thame 'visitation' – was no class apart, since he had served as a churchwarden himself. Equally, although it was beholden to Nicholas Perry, William Mitchell, John Ray, and Christopher Solby in March 1532 to witness the sum that St. Michael's churchwardens (Christopher Walker and John Collins) were charged with, all four men had been elected churchwarden in the past, although Mitchell had refused to serve in 1527.[48] These men had, moreover, not since been elevated to a higher stratum within parish government: at least John Ray would serve as churchwarden again. Oxfordshire's guild- and light-wardens comprised a very similar personnel to that of the churchwardens. The most detailed evidence is again to be drawn from the churchwardens' accounts of St. Michael's parish, as these accounts consistently record the names of the wardens for the 'boxes' of Our Lady Chapel, St. George, and SS. Clement and Thomas. No blueprint for the pattern of service seems to have been in place. However, the wardens of these institutions tended to serve as churchwardens also.[49]

The type of man who served as churchwarden was the sort to serve various offices in local government. Many of these men acted as sub-collectors for the lay subsidies. Moreover, whilst only one account of the work of Thame's 'Surveyours and Orderers' for the highway is extant (that for 1559-1560), all three of that year's surveyors – John Spenser, Philip Byrde, and Henry Grenod – had, or would be, churchwardens; and no fewer than three of the six surveyors who were appointed for the following year – Richard Pitman, William Mynchard, and Thomas Garnett –

---

anticipated from his introductions in *The Church Records of St. Andrew Hubbard Eastcheap, c.1450-c.1570*, ed. Clive Burgess (London Record Soc., xxxiv, 1999), vii-xxxiii; and *The Pre-Reformation Records of All Saints' Church, Bristol*, ed. Clive Burgess (3 vols., Bristol Record Soc., 1995-2004), ii, 1-34. For the three city churches that comprise Burgess's study, these assertions are probably quite correct; but, nonetheless, they provide no general conclusion.

[48] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, nos. 110, 105v.

[49] Given that the accounts are not extant in continuous series, it is impossible to be definitive.

would serve as churchwarden before the close of the 1560s.[50] It is unsurprising, therefore, that Oxfordshire's churchwardens felt strong ties of association between themselves and their fellow wardens. Most Oxfordshire men who had served as churchwarden chose at least one other churchwarden to act as an overseer to their will, frequently dubbing their fellow warden their 'trusty neighbour' or 'loving friend'.

Parish government was thus dominated by substantial men, who must have formed a fairly coherent group within the parish. These men were not, however, a league apart. Wardens had first to be chosen, with the process of creating churchwardens in Oxfordshire involving members of both the laity and the clergy. John Collins and Christopher Walker were made the churchwardens of Oxford's St. Michael's church in March 1531 'by the consent and assent off the parson and the holl parysch'.[51] However, generally speaking, the details regarding the appointment of wardens are disappointingly formulaic, with phrases such as 'electi sunt' and 'ys chosyn' being particularly prevalent. The basis on which Oxfordshire's churchwardens served is, however, rather more apparent: they were public servants. Once elected, wardens were expected to assume office. A refusal justified a penalty in itself, details of which survive for the parishes of Spelsbury and St. Michael's in Oxford.[52] Parishes might also institute heavy fines against wardens if they were late in tendering their accounts. In 1569, the parish of Thame agreed that the wardens' annual account should be tendered henceforth upon 'Lawe Sondaye', with the penalty for failing to do so being 10s per warden 'to the Use of the Churche'.[53] It was even

---

[50] Thame CWAs, pp. 357-9. Inexplicably, this account was bound with the churchwardens' accounts. The reverse of this account's second page was then used for parish record-keeping during the late seventeenth century.
[51] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 108.
[52] Spelsbury CWAs, p. 49; St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 105v.
[53] Thame CWAs, p. 177.

possible for a churchwarden to be stripped of his office altogether, which seems to have happened in the Oxford parish of St. Michael in the mid-1520s.[54]

The language which Oxfordshire's churchwardens employed in their accounts protests the wardens' public accountability. The accounts of no fewer than eight parishes – Ambrosden, Marston, Spelsbury, Thame, and St. Martin's, St. Michael's, St. Peter-le-Bailey's, and St. Mary the Virgin's in Oxford – state this to be the case. Yet, whilst phrases such as 'before the whole parish' seem convenient ones – perpetuated by convention – closer inspection reveals that the reality was relatively little removed from the stated ideal.

Parishioners were directly involved in their churchwardens' activities, not least because the wardens offered employment opportunities aplenty – even for women. Whilst it was common for women to launder vestments, in St. Martin's parish money was also paid 'to Brykysworth wyffe for makyng Clene under the Churche Wall'.[55] Close by, in St. Michael's parish, money was laid out 'fore ye wyne yat we gave to mistrs Archard wen sche delyverd us hower evydens & hower masbok' in the mid-1520s.[56] Evidence of conflict serves also as strident testimony of churchwarden-parishioner relations. The account made by Thame's churchwardens in 1535 had to record that 20d had been paid to a certain Master Chalffont to make a writ against a member of the gentry named Thomas Woodward since 'Thomas dyd sue the churchemen At the Commyng [Common] law For Cuttyng downe certyn trees yn his grownd as he hathe surmysyd yn his plee'.[57]

---

[54] This seems likely to have been the case, although the records are not altogether clear: St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 104v.
[55] This payment was made in the year preceding 25 November 1539: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 3r.
[56] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 104.
[57] Thame CWAs, p. 28.

Parishioners held their churchwardens to account. It is clear from the quantities of refreshments that certain Oxford parishes provided for their parishioners that a substantial number of them attended their churchwardens' account-making. There was drink at the churches of St. Peter-le-Bailey and St. Mary Magdalen. At St. Michael's, bread was also provided, whilst St. Mary the Virgin's laid on cheese as well. However, in terms of hospitality, St. Aldate's church surpassed its fellows by providing 'brede chese & custarde yn ye rogation wyke'.[58] Although written records are what survive, there was definitely an oral element to the account-making – although this did not necessarily mean that the accounts were read aloud in their entirety. One can almost hear the venom in the voice of John Campion, churchwarden of South Newington, when he asked allowance of the 20d that had been 'spend when Buckingham [his fellow churchwarden] and I was att Oxford when wee were slaunderid' in the early 1560s.[59] Indeed, if the accounts are not understood as a public presentation of the churchwardens' activities, certain elements of them are inexplicable. In accounting for the expenditure of 6s 11½d to William Kyrs in the mid-1520s, the wardens of St. Peter-in-the-East's church in Oxford allege that 'wyllyam smythe & thomas morys shuld have payd'.[60] Likewise, in Thame, the failure of both John Fletcher and John Blessed to provide the 'holy loaf' when they should have done (in the mid-1530s and mid-1540s respectively) was duly noted – with Fletcher and Blessed being identified as the cause of excessive expenditure on

[58] St. Aldate's, Oxford CWAs. (This is a box of loose rolls of churchwardens' accounts.) Given that terms such as 'for drinking' often covered a greater range of refreshments than the phrase would in itself suggest, I have cited only positive evidence from the churchwardens' accounts and make no claim to being definitive.
[59] South Newington CWAs, fo. 3v.
[60] St. Peter-in-the-East's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 23r.

the churchwardens' parts.[61] There would have been little point in directing the finger of blame had there not been an audience to appreciate it.

The churchwardens' audience was not a passive one. In Edwardian Thame, 'the moost parte of the inhabytauntes & parysshyoners' drew up a certificate for 'the kynges majestie & hys honerable counsell' of 'suche churche goodes, juelles, plate, & other ornamentes of the same churche as hathe bene sold within fyve yere last past' – presumably prompted by the enquiries made by the commissioners for church goods. This 'moost parte' alleged that several influential men in the parish, including those incumbent of the office of churchwarden, had profited to the tune of 'thre hundred poundes & more'.[62] There were no comparable *cause célèbres* elsewhere. Yet it is nonetheless clear that parishioners asserted their rights touching their churchwardens throughout the county. At Spelsbury, early in the reign of Edward VI, it was 'to be notyd that it ys agreyd amongest the parishners here [presumably at the meeting at which the wardens tendered their account] that the accownpt off the church goodes shall yerlye be made by the chyrchwardens upon saynct mathias day in Februarii upon payne off 6s 8d apese ϒt the sayd wardens shall paye to the church for lack of ϒe sayd accowmptes'.[63] Thus Marston's churchwardens noting in their accounts that 'the last churchale the churchmen had half a quarter of malt and certen whayte [wheat] over the stint that we had' may be interpreted as a defensive move – explaining to their parishioners why their ale could not be expected to be as financially successful.[64]

---

[61] Thame CWAs, pp. 37, 70.
[62] Ibid., p. 545. This is a copy (made by the Public Record Office in 1906) of Inventories of Church Goods (Exchequer, King's Remembrancer) Temp., Edward the Sixth, Oxfordshire, Bundle 7, No. 165, m. 5. See also *The Chantry Certificates and the Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods*, ed. Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Soc., i, 1919), pp. 115-6. It seems that this allegation was ill-founded. A fuller discussion of the case is included in Chapter IV.
[63] Spelsbury CWAs, p. 33.
[64] Marston CWAs, fo. 12r.

v. Conclusions

The manner in which Oxfordshire's parishes were governed seems – in practice – to have been remarkably uniform. But then, the same visitations were attended; and so many of the same pressures were applied. Sixteenth-century parishes were, moreover, anything but closed communities. There was, indeed, even a conscious relationship with the country as a whole, as the descriptive 'tags' which are ascribed to several years of Ambrosden's churchwardens' accounts indicate. The first year of Queen Mary's reign is said to have been of significance because in 'thys yere yn Februarij was ye rebellion off sir Thomas whiatt [Wyatt] off kent'. In another year 'was sene the blasyng stere [star]'. This year was followed by the one in which 'wheate [was] at 4 marke a quarter off wheate & all other greyne very dere'. In 1558: 'that yere was Calys [Calais] lost', and in 1559: 'thys yere was many prist [priest] dyyd'.[65]

Trade was a major factor in ensuring that the pressures faced by one parish would be very similar to those confronted by its neighbours. Not least, it ensured the impact of both debasement and inflation in all parishes; and, to an extent, this much was understood – with the wardens of the Oxford parish of St. Mary Magdalen explaining in May 1561 that they had lost 9s 6d 'by the fall of the mony'.[66] However, it is also clear that the gathering together of Oxfordshire's churchwardens at visitation times served as important opportunities for the cross-fertilisation of ideas. When the churchmen of Marston 'askyd alowans For the Fall of money 9s 8d' it 'was orderid that if other churche wardens in other townes were alowyd then thei lykewysse to be alowed els not'.[67]

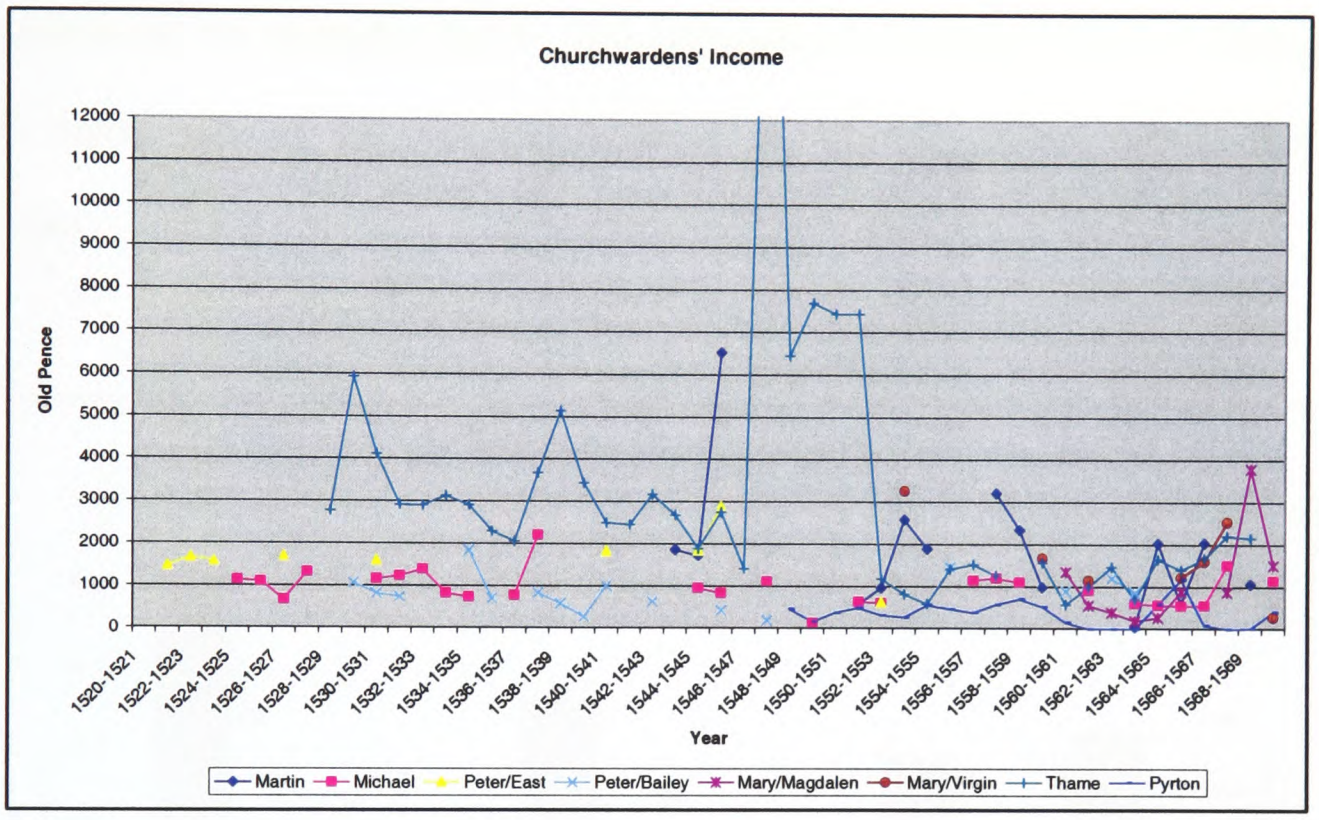
---

[65] Ambrosden CWAs, fos. 2v-3v.
[66] St. Mary Magdalen's, Oxford CWAs, -2.
[67] Marston CWAs, fo. 15v.

II. Resources and Expenditure

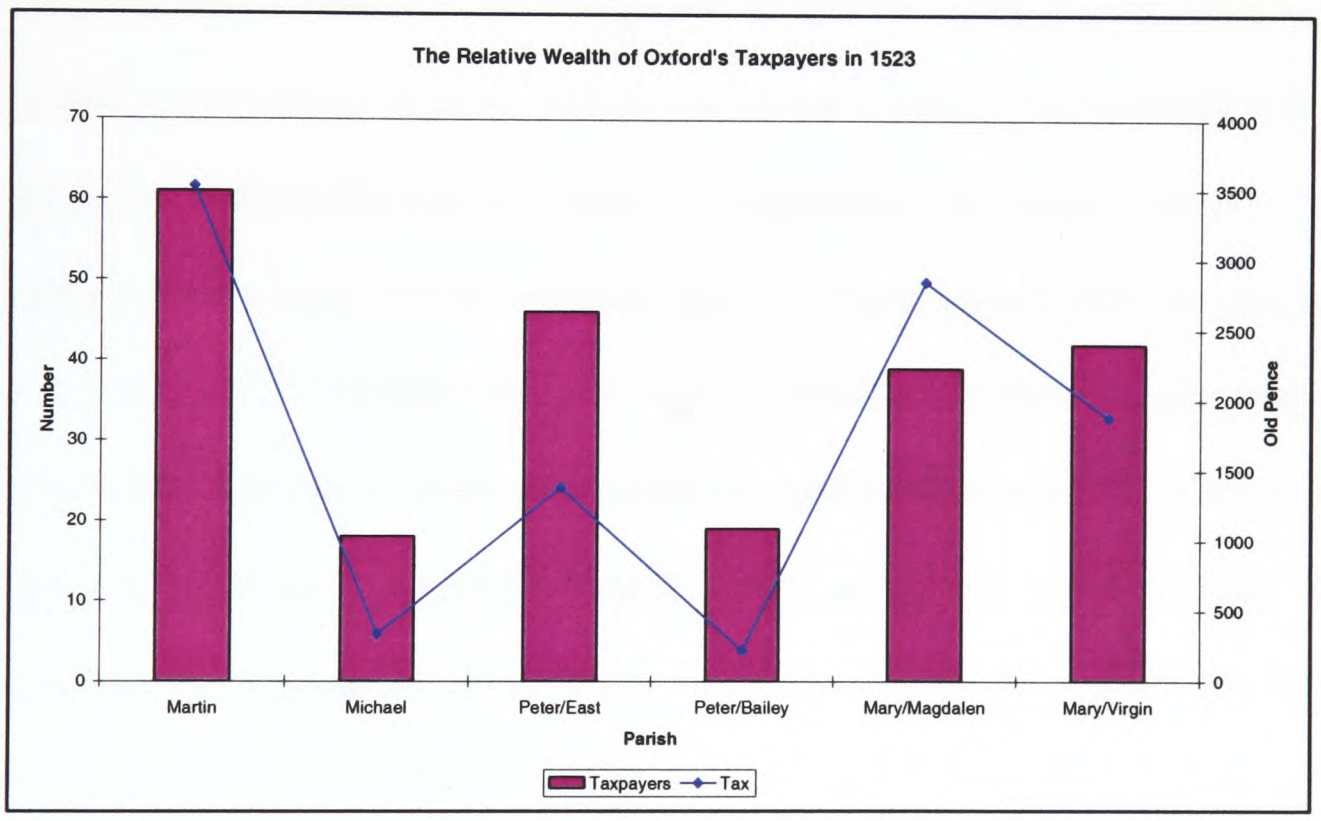
i. Resources

In those parishes in which annual income may be assessed accurately, the quantity of funds available to the churchwardens varied enormously, as the graph below demonstrates.



This was to be expected. The county's churchwardens served vastly differing numbers of parishioners. In 1523, there were 61 taxpayers dwelling in the Oxford parish of St. Martin, 46 in St. Peter-in-the-East's, 42 in St. Mary the Virgin's, and 39 in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen. In contrast, the parishes of St. Peter-le-Bailey and St. Michael housed only 19 and 18 taxpayers respectively. Likewise, whilst the parish of Thame housed 130 taxpayers – 163 if one includes North Weston and Tetsworth – the parish of Pyrton had only 26. Admittedly, the number of taxpayers in any given parish is not directly proportional to that parish's population. But, since even those of relatively humble means were taxed, subsidy figures do serve as a useful indication of population scale. In addition to this, although houseling figures

cannot be deemed entirely accurate regarding congregation size, the fact that in the first year of Edward VI's reign St. Martin's church in Oxford was recorded as having 700 communicants – in comparison with St. Michael's 200 – demonstrates that the former was the much larger parish.[68] Added to the disparity in population size was an inequality in the wealth of the parishioners. The amount of tax paid by a parish was not proportional to the number of taxpayers that it housed – with the graph below demonstrating, for example, that St. Mary Magdalen's taxpayers paid, on average, a much higher rate of tax than did those of St. Michael or St. Peter-le-Bailey's churches.



The churchwardens' sources of funding were, for the most part, sustainable ones – and varied little between the parishes. All the parishes made collections on certain regular occasions, such as at Christmas and Easter. In addition to these 'regular' collections, the wardens sometimes made supplementary collections for specific purposes. For instance, on 29 May 1530, Thame's churchwardens – Thomas

[68] *Chantry Certificates*, ed. Graham, pp. 12, 14-5.

Benett, John Smith, Thomas Chyche, and Robert Smith – recorded that in addition to the income gathered from the usual collections they had received £6 10s 'of the parishe towardes the Belles'.[69] The churchwardens were also the recipients of a variety of occasional receipts. These mostly comprised payments for burial. (The sum of 6s 8d seems to have been the standard tariff if burial were to take place within the church building.) Yet, in St. Michael's parish, 12d was given to the wardens 'for an ofering at a weding of hugh beterleye' in the early 1560s; and, at the church of St. Peter-le-Bailey, sums of money were received 'for candylse [candles] sold in ye cherche'.[70]

Occasionally, individual parishioners made gifts to their church. It was, however, practically unheard of for a large gift to take the form of cash. Substantial gifts tended to be offered in kind, and on the donor's terms. For example, Master Michael Dormer stipulated that the 'Suett of vestymentes off purpull velvet ... with thre Cowpes off the same velvett' which he gave to Thame church were 'for the prest dekon & subdecon'.[71] In those few instances in which a parishioner's gift took the form of a substantial sum of money, he tended to specify the purpose to which it was to be put – as opposed to simply handing the funds over to the parish officers. The will that Richard Mortimer of Thame made on 25 March 1545 bequeathed 20s 'to the Bushop of [presumably Oxford] that now ys yf he cume to my buriall'. But, if the bishop were unable to attend, Mortimer stipulated that only 6s 8d was to be given – to the vicar of Thame in return for his prayers.[72]

Collections and occasional receipts were important sources of revenue. However, Oxfordshire's churchwardens relied on more active fundraising methods for

---

[69] Thame CWAs, p. 6.
[70] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 131; and, for example, St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs, -16.
[71] This is recorded in the account made in May 1528; Thame CWAs, p. 3.
[72] ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 179.46r.

a high proportion of their overall income. The hosting of church ales was popular throughout the county.[73] Whitsuntide was the most commonly appointed season for these ales to take place. But it was by no means unusual for parishes to host more than one ale in a year. The 'young men' of Marston hosted their own ales; there were 'May ales' in the parish of Thame; and the Oxford parish of St. Peter-le-Bailey hosted ales on Our Lady Day in Lent. Thame's churchwardens' accounts yield by far the most detail regarding their church's ales.[74] Yet the provisions made in Thame should not be viewed as 'typical'. It is clear that the parishes' ales varied considerably in their format – with the Oxford parish of St. Martin being apparently alone in incorporating a 'supper night' into its festivities.[75] However, it does seem that all of Oxfordshire's parishes tended to supplement their general feasting with some form of organised entertainment, with many sets of churchwardens engaging the services of minstrels.

Allusion to profits from Hocktide – the climax of the Easter celebrations, taking place on the second Monday and Tuesday following Easter Day – is to be found in many of the churchwardens' accounts. Several parishes hosted ales to mark the festival. But the practice of 'hocking' was popular too. 'Hocking' entailed parishioners capturing (and tying up) members of the opposite sex, only releasing them when a fine had been paid to church funds.[76] The women of Oxfordshire seem to have been a feisty bunch, since their Hocktide activities were sometimes more lucrative than those of their menfolk. In the 1520s, the churchwardens of the Oxford

---

[73] The hosting of church ales appears to have been prohibited in Oxford during the reign of Edward VI: they are notable for their absence in the city's accounts for this period. However, any proscription seems not to have taken the form of a blanket ban. Ales continued to be profitable elsewhere in the county – not least in Pyrton and Thame.

[74] This is particularly the case for the ales which were held in Thame during the reign of Queen Mary. See Chapter IV for a more detailed discussion.

[75] References to this 'supper night' are, for the most part, incidental: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 8r, 8v, 9r.

[76] The practice of 'hocking' varied considerably, and is discussed in Hutton, *Rise and Fall of Merry England*, esp. p. 26.

parish of St. Peter-in-the-East received a payment of 20s 'at hoketyde of the wyvys'.[77] Likewise, at Thame, it was a certain Cecily White who tendered hocking money of 37s 5d to the churchwardens in 1546.[78] It perhaps follows, then, that organised drama should be a common feature of Oxfordshire parish life. Why else would Oxford's parish of St. Mary Magdalen have owned 'an olde saye coot [coat] of grene wyche was made for the lorde for wettsontyde'?[79] Performance art seems to have been something of a speciality in Thame. Here, whole plays were performed – to complement the Corpus Christi procession, or to portray the Resurrection of Christ. These plays were performed from specially-written scripts, with the players sporting wigs which were maintained by a certain Christopher Mixbury. Thame's plays were, moreover, considerable money-spinners – with the Easter Tuesday Resurrection Play of 1530 raking in a massive £3 4s.[80]

The sole area in which there was a substantial difference in the funding regimes of Oxfordshire's churchwardens was in rental income. Oxford's parishes, together with the parish of Spelsbury, accumulated substantial sums of money through the renting out of property. (Other parishes enjoyed some rental income, but it was usually derived from livestock or land.) Churches' properties had, for the most part, been bequeathed by parishioners.[81] Yet some churchwardens bought-to-let. In the mid-1520s, the churchwardens of the Oxford parish of St. Michael paid 40s 'for an hows [house] bought of master Bylman', laying out an extra 20d 'for makyng of the dedes of the same.'[82] The churchwardens' maintenance of their parish's property

---

[77] St. Peter-in-the-East's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 53r.
[78] Thame CWAs, p. 77.
[79] The reference to this coat is regarding its sale: St. Mary Magdalen's, Oxford CWAs, -3.
[80] References to these plays are littered throughout Thame's churchwardens' accounts. Thame CWAs, p. 6: the entry concerning the sum raised at the Resurrection Play performed on Easter Tuesday 1530.
[81] Oxford's *Liber Albus* is a particularly important source as regards the acquisition of property through legacy in the city: ORO, A.5.1.
[82] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 105.

involved much more than the collection of rent. Quit-rents – which were small but obligatory customary payments – had to be paid on certain properties, meaning that when William Flemming left three properties to the Oxford parish of St. Martin he had to explain that it was 'above all charges' that the properties were (collectively) worth more than 40s a year.[83] In addition to paying quit-rents, the wardens had also to ensure the properties' upkeep. The wardens of the Oxford parish of St. Michael undertook repairs on their 40s-house as soon as they had bought it.[84] Tenants had standards: improvements made in 1531 to a property owned by the Oxford parish of St. Peter-in-the-East did not increase its rental value.[85] Consequently, wardens made net losses on their properties in certain years. It may, therefore, have been in an effort to sustain a regular level of income that the parishioners of Spelsbury agreed in the mid-1550s 'that the tenauntes Wyche dwell in ye churche howsys shall kepe ye Reperacions thereof over and Above there Rentes'.[86]

ii. Expenditure

The spending-levels of Oxfordshire churchwardens' varied as much as their income did – although they were somewhat erratic, as the graph below demonstrates.

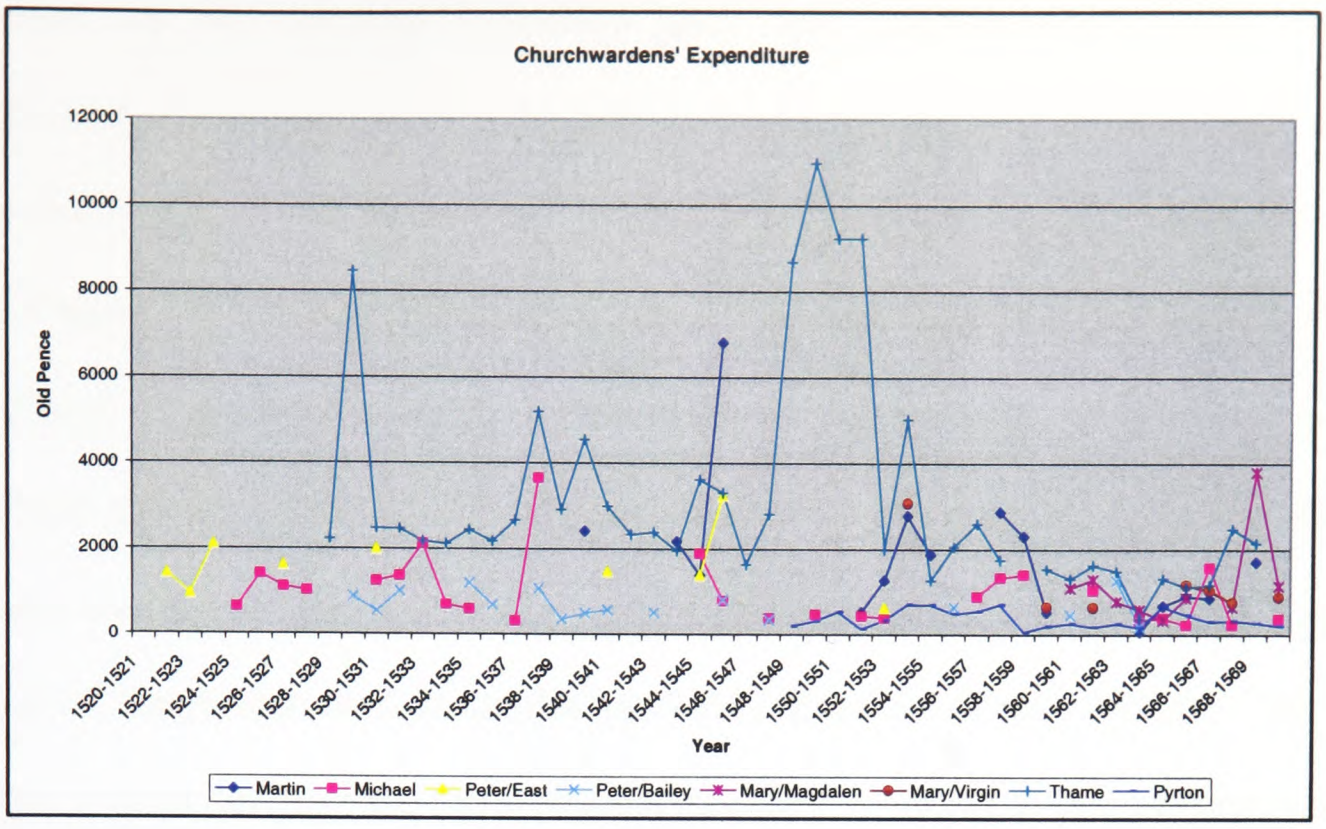
---

[83] The indenture and will of William Flemming survives amongst the parish records of the Oxford parish of St. Martin: ORO, PAR/207/13/1D/1. The original indenture was made on 6 June 1540, and the will was made on 26 June 1540. A copy of these documents was made at a later date, and is also preserved amongst the parish records: ORO, PAR/207/13/1D/2. A later will, which refers to the arrangements made on 26 June 1540, survives amongst Oxfordshire's probate records: ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 178, fos. 158v-160v. Flemming's will is also recorded in Oxford's *Liber Albus*: ORO, A.5.1, fos. 176v-177v.

[84] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 105.

[85] St. Peter-in-the-East's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 55r.

[86] Spelsbury CWAs, p. 44.



An enormous proportion of the churchwardens' funds was consumed by the church building and bells. There were also the costs associated with worship. Many religious ceremonies required the churchwardens' funding. It was Thame's churchwardens, for example, who provided the bread and ale for those who sang on Palm Sunday. Appropriate clerical vestments were also necessary. Many of these had been gifts from wealthy benefactors – although, at the commencement of Mary's reign, Nicholas Gibbard and Harman Evans withdrew 40s from the funds of the Oxford parish of St. Mary the Virgin to pay for 'a white cope of Damaske with an orfuse of redd velvat with Images of golde'.[87] The wardens provided books for the church. These included – besides Mass Books, Prayer Books, and Bibles – manuals, processionals, grails, homilies, hymnals, Psalters, books of thanksgiving, antiphoners, books for the organs, plainsong books, and the *Paraphrases of Erasmus*. The wardens were also responsible for buying wax and tallow to make candles.

With the church building, bells, and the equipment for worship taken care of, the remainder of the funds available to the churchwardens was not, however, merely

[87] St. Mary the Virgin's, Oxford CWAs, -1.

consumed by the wardens' expenses and their administrative costs. The churchwardens supported stipendiary priests, music-making, and clocks. They also performed works of public service. In the mid-1540s, the churchwardens of the Oxford parish of St. Martin constructed the 'Penniless Bench' – a 'lean-to' with a leaded roof, its timbers embedded into the east wall of the church – which became the traditional meeting place of the citizens on official occasions.[88] Churchwardens provided succour for the poor too. Thame's churchwardens gave money 'to a prest [priest] in almys that died at scolles [probably Edmund Scollis' house]'; 'to the Sadelars wyf for kepynge the Child of John Flecher'; 'to ye poore wenche that lyes at Holewayes at certayne tymes'; and 'to Elizabethe Waye by the Consent of the paryshe when her house was unfit with the plagge [plague]'.[89] In addition to all this, the wardens had to, if not expect, at least react to the unexpected. The account which Thame's churchwardens made on 29 May 1530 recorded that 4d had been spent 'for the hier of a horsse for oon day When the churche was rubbyd [robbed]', and a further 5d 'for a mans labor rydyng a bowtte the Cuntre [country] at that tyme' – doing much to explain why subsequent wardens cut two silver clasps out of one of the Mass Books 'for fere of Stelyng'.[90]

III. Subsidiary Institutions

It is impossible to estimate the number of subsidiary institutions that existed in pre-Reformation Oxfordshire. John Leland only reveals that there was a chantry within Thame's parish church, and a hospital by it, through his discussion of the Quartermain

---

[88] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 9r-9v. For a description of the Penniless Bench: *VCH*, Oxfordshire, iv, 333.
[89] Thame CWAs, pp. 92, 103, 117, 112.
[90] Ibid., pp. 10, 48.

family.[91] The issue is complicated further by the institutions' constant evolution. In the Oxford parish of St. Michael, the separate 'boxes' of St. Clement and St. Thomas merged at some point in the early-to-mid-1520s. It is, nevertheless, apparent that these subsidiary bodies were extremely numerous in the years immediately prior to their dissolution. Spelsbury's churchwardens' accounts mention stocks for SS. Michael, Anthony, Mary 'Pietas', Mary 'in Capella', Katherine, Nicholas, Clement, George, Christopher, Erasmus, and Andrew – with there being separate funds for the Trinity, the torches, the bells, and the herse.

An account dated 21 December 1531, quite possibly for the fraternity of St. Nicholas, survives for the Oxford parish of St. Mary the Virgin.[92] This reveals that the foundation employed a priest – paying him 53s 4d a year – to pray for the souls of the departed 'bretheryn & systers' in their allotted chapel.[93] Still clearer evidence of such institutions' functioning is to be found in St. Michael's parish archive. Numerous accounts of its chapel wardens – which are very similar to the churchwardens' accounts, both in their appearance and format – survive, with St. Michael's churchwardens incorporating summary accounts for the parish's various altars and 'lights' into their accounts.[94] All the evidence suggests, however, that in Oxfordshire subsidiary institutions were complementary to, but functioned independently from, the church proper – even if certain subsidiary foundations occasionally handed a portion of their profits over to the parish's churchwardens. Indeed, the only point at which the independence of these subsidiary institutions

---

[91] *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (5 vols., Carbondale, 1964), i, 115.
[92] There was a fraternity of St. Nicholas in this parish: *Chantry Certificates*, ed. Graham, pp. 7-9, 15. The Oxfordshire Record Office catalogues this account as being an account for the Guild of St. Thomas the Martyr. The reasons for this are unclear, although an altar of this name existed in the parish: *Chantry Certificates*, ed. Graham, pp. 7-9.
[93] ORO, PAR/209/17/F1/1. The fact that this account records that sums of money were spent on structural repairs is indicative that the foundation was also responsible for the upkeep of a chapel.
[94] The summary accounting to which I refer can be found at the foot of certain churchwardens' accounts.

seems to have been undermined was at their dissolution. (It is probable that certain of the goods sold by later churchwardens had initially been the property of these subsidiaries.) Thus, whilst any parish study necessitates their appreciation, these institutions' existence in no way undermines a close engagement with the county's churchwardens' accounts.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This chapter seeks to outline my methodological approach to churchwardens' accounts.

I. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

The development of Reformation studies means that churchwardens' accounts are now at its forefront. The distinction between what ought to have happened with what actually occurred makes local-level research vital; and the individual entries in churchwardens' accounts serve as useful tools with which to gauge a parish's conformity to the successive religious changes. Reformation studies have tended to focus on the purchase of Prayer Books, the erection and destruction of altars and communion tables, and changes made to Roods.

It is impossible to produce definitive conclusions about the level of conformity in Oxfordshire's parishes. The churchwardens' accounts which are extant do not, for the most part, survive in continuous series; nor are they all sufficiently detailed. The accounts for Spelsbury, Ambrosden, and South Newington do not record any relevant transactions. Other accounts are tantalising in their obscurity, with Marston's churchwardens recording during the reign of Philip and Mary that they had spent the sum of 43s 3d on making an altar, leading the church, and for 'other necessaryes as apperith by a bill examynid before all the prissh [parish].[1] Nonetheless, it does seem

[1] Marston CWAs, fo. 7v.

that Oxfordshire's parishes conformed – outwardly at least. In every account in which the purchase of a Prayer Book might reasonably be expected, it occurs.[2] Equally, it is evident that the churchwardens replaced their altars with communion tables during the later part of the reign of Edward VI; voluntarily rebuilt them during the early months of Mary; and pulled them down again early in the reign of Elizabeth – whilst simultaneously performing much work about their Roods.

II. The Potential of Churchwardens' Accounts

Churchwardens' accounts have yielded much. Yet, as a source, they remain under-used. When historians consider lay attitudes to the Reformation, the focus rests principally with wills. The use of wills has grown increasingly sophisticated. Yet the potential of will-analysis remains severely limited nonetheless. Even Caroline Litzenberger necessarily confines her conclusions to long-term and general trends, which offers little credibility to surveys which are more time- and place-specific.[3] In Oxfordshire, observations can be made from the extant wills. From the 1560s, the churchwardens of Pyrton, Thame, and the Oxford parishes of St. Martin and St. Michael became less likely to make bequests to their parish church and to their cathedral. But they also began to make greater provision for the poor at this time. It was, equally, not until the 1560s that non-'Traditional' – let alone 'Protestant' – preambles were common in these churchwardens' wills.[4] However, any such observations – whilst valid in and of themselves – cannot be deemed conclusive about the county's religious climate. Perhaps the most notable drawback is the fact that the manner in which a testator bequeathed his soul was not necessarily indicative of his

---

[2] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 14r, 30r; St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, nos. 122, 124; Thame CWAs, pp. 93, 116, 144; Marston CWAs, fos. 6v, 11r; Pyrton CWAs, pp. 29, 31, 39.
[3] C. J. Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (Cambridge, 1997).
[4] I have employed Litzenberger's scheme of categorisation: *English Reformation and the Laity*, p. 172.

religious attitudes – a drawback that Litzenberger acknowledges.[5] Whilst William Devon of Pyrton brusquely dedicated his soul 'to god' in August 1558, the later passage urging his executors 'to bring me honestly in earthe and to dyspose for the healthe of my soule as they shall thyncke best' suggests that Devon trusted in intercession nonetheless.[6]

Churchwardens' accounts – and, in particular, their published transcriptions – have both facilitated and encouraged the study of the 'religious life' of parish communities, with Ronald Hutton's *Rise and Fall of Merry England* and *Stations of the Sun* relying upon hundreds of churchwardens' accounts.[7] It would, therefore, seem logical to suppose that churchwardens' accounts have also been employed to assess the collective attitudes of parish communities – to deduce what motivated the parish community to lead the 'religious life' that their accounts record. Not so: even Christopher Haigh, in his *English Reformations*, says defensively that 'Churchwardens' accounts tell us only what churchwardens spent, not what they thought, and certainly not what the rest of the parishioners thought'.[8] Ethan Shagan, despite his 'post-revisionism', is equally dismissive of 'the two-dimensional stick-figures who so often appear in churchwardens' accounts'.[9]

This attitude requires revision. Churchwardens' accounts are, admittedly, an inexpressive genre. Thame's churchwardens only recorded that their sexton 'fell out of the Rood Lofte & dyed' because they had to spend 8d for sending for 'ye Crowner

---

[5] Litzenberger handles her sources sensitively, and accepts that wills provide no explicit testimony of faith: *English Reformation and the Laity*, esp. p. 178.
[6] Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 183.207r-207v.
[7] Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: the ritual year, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1994), and *The Stations of the Sun: a history of the ritual year in Britain* (Oxford, 1996).
[8] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: religion, politics, and society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), p. 17.
[9] Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 307.

[Coroner] to sitt uppon the case' in the early 1550s.[10] The accounts tend not to stray far from the strictly factual. They certainly do not include commentaries about what the parishioners believed. But, even if they did, we would be loath to believe such claims. Indeed, it is our inability to make windows into men's souls which makes churchwardens' accounts sources of vital importance. Ironically, the very attributes hitherto deemed impedimentary are those that enable the analysis which is the most far-reaching. It seems that the best way of detecting something of the attitudes of the laity is to see how these attitudes expressed themselves within their local community. What communities did (and paid for) is in many respects of far greater importance than what they might believe, or profess to believe – not least because individual and collective action can shape thought-worlds.[11]

Churchwardens' accounts are the only sources which possess the potential to reveal the collective attitudes of Oxfordshire's parish communities. To greater or lesser degrees, they reflect every member of the parish – something which cannot be said, for example, of guilds and fraternities. Whilst most parishioners were ineligible for office, parish government represented – and was answerable to – society at large. Each parishioner was, in turn, expected to lend his backing to the operation of the parish – not least his financial support. Critically, in Oxfordshire, this expectation did not equate to enforcement. The vast majority of the income of each set of Oxfordshire's churchwardens was drawn from three sources of revenue: collections, the hosting of parish entertainments, and the profits of rental properties, which made successive churchwardens extremely dependent on the goodwill of their communities. Any elements of rating that existed in parish collections remained that: purely elements. Likewise, whilst there may well have been social pressure to attend church

---

[10] Thame CWAs, p. 103.
[11] Here I am in close agreement with Shagan's *Popular Politics*.

ales, it would have been difficult to induce the payment of set sums. Indeed, the enormous fluctuation in the amounts raised by these means is in itself indicative that the activities of Oxfordshire's churchwardens were supported on a largely voluntary basis.[12]

Thus, by examining Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts closely – gauging the level of support demonstrated for parish religion as it was orchestrated by successive churchwardens – something of the attitudes of the parish communities may be discerned. The process may best be compared to modern-day forensic accountancy. Analysis must be sensitive to a plethora of concerns, including: the types and natures of the sources of funding available; the requirements of the individual church; and prevailing socio-economic circumstance. But this is all possible.

III. Methodological Approach

There are methodological obstacles to the study of churchwardens' accounts. If one is not simply to 'mine' the source in order 'to prove' an existing notion, every entry in the accounts needs to be incorporated. Yet, equally, the accounts' contents must be made more accessible, and indeed comprehensible. I have, accordingly, adopted an approach with a quantitative aspect.

Several historians have applied consciously quantitative analyses to sets of churchwardens' accounts.[13] The analyses of Ronald Hutton and Christopher Haigh are somewhat limited in their scope: Hutton and Haigh construct statistics concerning churchwardens' accounts in general. The approaches of Beat Kümin, Katherine

---

[12] Parish-specific analyses are performed in Chapters IV, V, and VI.

[13] 'Unconscious' quantitative methods – which include concepts so general as 'more' and 'less' – are employed by virtually every historian. They are necessary if the concept of scale is to be at all considered.

French, and Caroline Litzenberger are rather more sophisticated, performing quantitative analyses of the contents of individual accounts.[14] The statistics that Kümin, French, and Litzenberger have compiled are from the records of individual parishes. If it is to be at all possible to learn anything about the attitudes of communities through the application of quantitative analysis to their churchwardens' accounts, it is this latter approach that must be adopted. In addition to this, whilst previous quantitative analyses have tended to concentrate upon expenditure, for a survey of parishioner attitudes it is essential to apply analysis to the parishes' funding regimes also. The parishioners' attitudes could not dictate the actions of their churchwardens; but they could help to determine the level of financial support that the wardens received.

The quantitative analysis of the contents of churchwardens' accounts is an area riddled with controversy; and the schools of thought on the matter have polarised. Despite their previous collaborative work, Beat Kümin and Clive Burgess have come to occupy opposing standpoints.[15] Kümin advocates the quantitative analysis of churchwardens' accounts; and endorses comparative study. Burgess is uncompromising in his opposition, insisting that such an approach is untenable.[16] Burgess's reasoning is two-fold: he argues that Kümin fails to adequately appreciate the limitations of his source-type; and he finds fault with Kümin's quantitative procedures.

---

[14] Beat A. Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: the rise and Reformation of the English parish, c.1400-1560* (Aldershot, 1996); Katherine L. French, *The People of the Parish: community life in a late medieval English diocese* (Philadelphia, 2001); Litzenberger, *English Reformation and the Laity*.

[15] Collaborative work: Clive Burgess and Beat Kümin, 'Penitential Bequests and Parish Regimes in Late Medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 44 (1993), 610-30.

[16] Burgess and Kümin's opposition has culminated in Beat Kümin, 'Late Medieval Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government: Looking beyond London and Bristol', *English Historical Review*, 119 (2004), 87-99, and Clive Burgess, 'The Broader Church? A Rejoinder to "Looking beyond"', *EHR*, 119 (2004), 100-16.

I accept Burgess's criticisms. Yet I perceive promise in Kümin's approach nonetheless, not least because quantitative techniques are more far-reaching in their conclusions than are the methods adopted by their detractors. Thus I seek reconciliation, incorporating constructive elements from both schools of thought in order to take the matter forward.

Every source-type has its limitations; and so those inherent in churchwardens' accounts must be countered through their sensitive contextualisation. Kümin's efforts are misconceived. He illustrates the possibilities of reconstruction – as he perceives it – through the creation of the imaginary parishes of Market Albion and Cattleton, amalgamating the entries of multiple accounts in order to do this. This represents no solution, as Burgess tartly observes. It is merely a work of historical fiction. Yet Kümin's creativity is instructive nonetheless. In order to draw conclusions from a source-type, it is necessary to be responsive to its nature. Accordingly, I am not only integrating all other parish material into my analysis – such as inventories, and the records of subsidiary institutions – but I am also contextualising my source-material in terms of which sources do not survive. Equally, whilst many of the faults that Burgess identifies in Kümin's quantitative techniques are warranted, they are not inherent to quantification; and solutions to the problems may be wrought.

Crude comparisons may not be made between parishes – even within the same county. The idiosyncrasy of parish communities – and of their churchwardens' accounts – dictates that close comparison is only justifiable between accounts for the same parish, with the precise terms of the wardens' mandate – and the extent to which this remained consistent over time – being borne in mind throughout. Yet it does not follow that it would be appropriate to sample a random selection of parishes; or one that simply represented different types of communities, in some befitting

ratio.[17] Churchwardens' accounts portray communities whose functioning was too idiosyncratic for 'averaging' to be of any use at all; and the matter is complicated further by the fact that churchwardens' accounts are not extant from all 'types' of parish in equal measure: their survival is patchy and irregular. Instead, an acceptable sample is one in which all the parishes existed in similar conditions. We cannot begin to identify all the external pressures that parishes endured which, presumably, affected the 'religious life' of the community. This is not least because we cannot be certain about what was ordered. In 1547, when the team of royal visitors was seeking to enforce conformity to the religious injunctions in the West Country, it took action against summer games, alleging that 'many inconveniences' arising from them had been reported.[18] Yet we do not know whether this happened in Oxfordshire also. Thus the analysis of a 'cluster' of parishes is desirable. Parishes that were geographically close to one another, and that were (always) contained within the same county and diocese, are likely to have been subject to similar external pressures. Differences between the activities of the parishioners are generally due to the circumstances of the parish, although by no means are they all repercussions of the parishioners' attitudes. Thus through the individual analyses of their accounts, changes in religious practices and attitudes may be identified precisely. Subsequently, through the comparison of these analyses, it may be possible to identify causative factors more accurately than has hitherto been possible.

Not all parishes are suitable for this kind of analysis. The churchwardens' accounts need to yield enough detail to reflect the parish's 'religious life' as it was orchestrated by its churchwardens. They need to be recorded in an arithmetically

---

[17] Beat Kümin adopts this latter approach in his *Shaping of a Community*; and, although Kümin maintains throughout that he is not seeking to construct an 'average' parish by so doing, some of the methods that he employs might suggest to the contrary.
[18] Hutton, *Stations of the Sun*, pp. 249-50.

accurate form. In addition to this, the accounts must survive in sufficient number to provide context, and to make it possible to discern trends. The only parishes meeting the criteria in Oxfordshire are those of Thame, six of those in Oxford (St. Martin, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Mary the Virgin. St. Michael-at-the-Northgate, St. Peter-in-the-East, and St. Peter-le-Bailey), and Pyrton.

IV. Methodology

The complexity of my chosen methodology necessitates detailed explanation. In particular, the principles of the quantitative aspect require specification. However, it is pertinent only to delineate the guiding principles of my quantitative approach, concerning data accumulation and representation. So much needs to be determined on a case-to-case basis that more detailed elucidation is impracticable.

i. Data accumulation

It is necessary to generate data from the churchwardens' accounts if analysis is to be possible. First, it must be determined which entries in the accounts should be included. Deletions in the accounts pose a greater problem than one might initially suppose. Since the motivation for deletion varied considerably, it is vital to consult the original manuscript. Entries, and parts of entries, which the evidence (and common sense) suggest were 'carried out' are included in the data. Those that appear to have been 'cancelled' before they were performed are not. Entries that do not have monetary values ascribed to them, or that do not concern income and expenditure, pose difficulties also. With an entry that concerns income or expenditure, but does not have a monetary value attached to it, there are potentially two appropriate responses. Where it appears that the value has been omitted by mistake – or, indeed,

that it is damage to the manuscript that causes the figure to be indiscernible – I have inserted a substitute value. (An estimate may be most accurately created in cases where there exists an entry which is similar, and which is recorded close in time. If, however, damage is extensive, quantitative analysis should not be applied.) Where an entry concerns goods in kind, it is not appropriate in most cases for any value to be awarded: it would be nigh on impossible to estimate the value of the item, and it is debatable whether the goods were of monetary significance to the parish. Entries that do not concern receipts and expenditure are not included either. Debts, memoranda, and the like are certainly of relevance in such a study. But, tempting as it may be, it is inappropriate to perform quantitative analysis on these entries, as their recording does not seem to be as regular and as clear as that which concerns receipts and expenditure.

The entries in the churchwardens' accounts which are to be used as data then need to be assigned categories. Categorisation is essential for quantitative analysis, since it transforms diverse individual entries into a manageable number of groupings. It is, moreover, especially appropriate in the case of churchwardens' accounts, given that entries often contain several items (which are usually connected). The cost of labour, for example, tends not to be separated from that of building materials.

Fairly broad categories have an advantage over a larger number of more specific ones. The detail yielded in the entries of churchwardens' accounts is, at times, fairly sparse. The use of less specific groupings serves, therefore, to increase accuracy. Having fewer categories also facilitates comprehension. (If relatively few categories are employed, there is greater chance of the wood being identified from the trees; whilst it remains possible to investigate the individual 'trees' at a later stage, should the appearance of the 'wood' attest that it might be profitable so to do.) There

are, however, certain types of expenditure for which such categorisation is imprudent – necessitating the existence of a few 'specific' categories. 'Inflation and Debasement' requires its own category as, unlike other forms of expenditure, these outlays of money did not purchase anything. They tell us more about the economic climate than they do about the 'religious life' of the parish. It seems befitting also for 'Music', 'Bells', and 'Clocks' to constitute separate categories, rather than being accommodated in the 'Ornamental & Ceremonial' one. By law, parish churches were obliged to keep bells: there were certain occasions on which they were required to ring them.[19] This was not the case with the keeping of clocks and organs. However, the costly and irregular nature of their maintenance means that these expenses could potentially 'skew' the data were they not placed in separate categories. I have, therefore, found it necessary to assign ten categories for income, and fifteen for expenditure.

[19] A detailed discussion of church bells can be found in John James Raven, *The Bells of England* (London, 1906).

Categories[20]			
Income		**Expenditure**	
I:B	Benefactions	E:A	Administrative Costs
I:C	Collections	E:B	Bells
I:E	Entertainment	E:C	Clocks
I:G	Guilds etc.	E:F	Church Fabric
I:L	Legacies	E:I	Inflation & Debasement
I:O	Occasional Receipts	E:L	Liturgical Works
I:R	Rental Income	E:M	Music
I:S	Sales of Church Goods	E:O	Ornamental & Ceremonial
I:/	Other	E:P	Public Works
I:?	Indiscernible	E:R	Relief
		E:S	Stipend of Clerk
		E:V	Vestments
		E:W	Wax etc.
		E:/	Other
		E:?	Indiscernible

It is impossible to create a comprehensive list of rules, detailing which entries should be assigned which categories. This is because a number of entries could arguably be placed in more than one category. Thus, many of the principles for this categorisation are dependent upon personal conviction, as well as upon my familiarity with the accounts. For example, although I have treated the 'guarding' of the sepulchre as an 'Ornamental & Ceremonial' activity, it could also be grouped under 'Other' if it were deemed merely a security measure. However, the fact that this 'guarding' was part of the overall ceremony – and that often many of the purely ceremonial expenses were combined with those of the 'guarding' in the accounts – argues, in my opinion, far more convincingly for the 'ceremonial' side. It is essential, therefore, that categorisation is consistent. Indeed, the only significant exception is for expenditure concerning glazing. There is a strong case that extremely large sums (in terms relative to the parish) spent during 'Catholic' years

[20] Kümin employs almost twice the number of categories in the analysis performed in his *Shaping of a Community*: 24 categories for income, and 25 for expenditure.

were for stained glass, which would classify as being 'ornamental' rather than being merely a building material.

In cases where there is more than one component identifiable in the entry, there is the chance that the components cannot be allocated a common category. Whenever possible, I have assigned accurate monetary values to the individual components (with reference to other entries), and then categorised these individual components. Where this is not possible, I have placed the entry as a whole into a common category, selecting the category to which the majority of the entry (in monetary terms) seems to belong.

ii. Data representation

Once the data has been compiled, it needs to be represented. (The computer program employed is *Microsoft Excel*.) This stage is critical. How the data is displayed greatly influences interpretation. It is, therefore, sometimes desirable to 'adjust' the data before it is used in this way.

Certain adjustments are straightforward. Most figures in churchwardens' accounts are already 'clear to the box' (in other words, they represent either net profit or expenditure). So it is necessary to adjust any figures that are not. For instance, given that churchwardens could make annual losses on their properties, I have used net (as opposed to gross) figures in my analysis. (In other words, for each accounting year, I have subtracted the sum of money that the wardens spent on their parish's properties from the income that they derived from them.) The matter is somewhat more complex where the nature of a set of accounts varies over time, requiring 'standardisation' if analysis is to be performed. The responsibilities of the churchwardens of the Oxford parishes of St. Michael and St. Peter-le-Bailey altered

during the period in question. These churchwardens came to assume the responsibility, together with the resources – mainly from tithes, and the income from offering houses and tithe pigs – to appoint and support a stipendiary. (In the case of both parishes, the first evidence of this new responsibility occurs in the 1550s. 'Offering houses' were houses which had to pay a set sum of money to the parish church on an annual basis, although payment might sometimes be made in stages. St. Michael's parish housed eight offering houses, each contributing 4s 4d *per annum* to the churchwardens' funds.) However, these resources never exactly matched the expenditure of supporting a stipendiary; and it is evident in the accounts that whilst the churchwardens were the recipients of any profits, they were also liable to make good any shortfall.

It is necessary to proceed carefully. Activities within the parish were not always directly related to the office of churchwardenship, even if they were fulfilled by the parish's churchwardens; and such activities should not, therefore, be included in the quantitative analysis of the accounts. On the churchwardens' account for the Oxford parish of St. Mary the Virgin, which was tendered by Richard Hanson and Thomas Almond in September 1568, is written 'the names of the pore that hayd the gyfte of master John symson', with the amounts that they received, ranging from 4d to 16d.[21] This gift, together with its distribution, is not integrated into the churchwardens' accounts. This is because it appears that John Simpson simply appointed the churchwardens as distributors, rather than entrusting them to use the sum at their discretion for the good of the church. Situations such as this seem to have been fairly common, and were not restricted to the relief of the poor. For

[21] St. Mary the Virgin's, Oxford CWAs, -6.

instance, a fund operating in the Oxford parish of St. Mary Magdalen in 1568 seems to have rated the parishioners in order to provide for a new bell.[22]

It would be inappropriate to adjust raw data in order to take inflation into account. Beat Kümin employs both moving averages and the Phelps Brown and Hopkins' ratios in his quest to compensate for inflation.[23] However, for this study it seems probable that any such adjustment would cause more problems than it would solve. The time-periods that I am using are not of sufficient length for moving averages to be of any real use. Neither would a specialist price index be of much assistance, even if it could be applied to churchwardens' accounts (which are not separated into calendar years). Such an index would not be able to take regional variations into account, and might fall foul of 'custom and practice' relating to what churchwardens chose to record.[24] So, in the case of inflation, a sensible stance appears to be to leave the data unadjusted, but to bear inflationary pressures in mind during any analysis.

When the appropriate adjustments have been performed, the data is ready for presentation. The overriding principle here is that the data must be presented in a format that is statistically sound.

iii. Conclusions

Quantitative methods form only one aspect of my methodology. Non-quantitative methods are of no less consequence than the quantitative simply because they appear less sophisticated and complex. Quantitative techniques release much of the hitherto

---

[22] St. Mary Magdalen's, Oxford CWAs, -8. Whilst Oxfordshire Record Office has catalogued the accounts of this fund with the churchwardens' account of that year, the two accounts operated independently to one another.

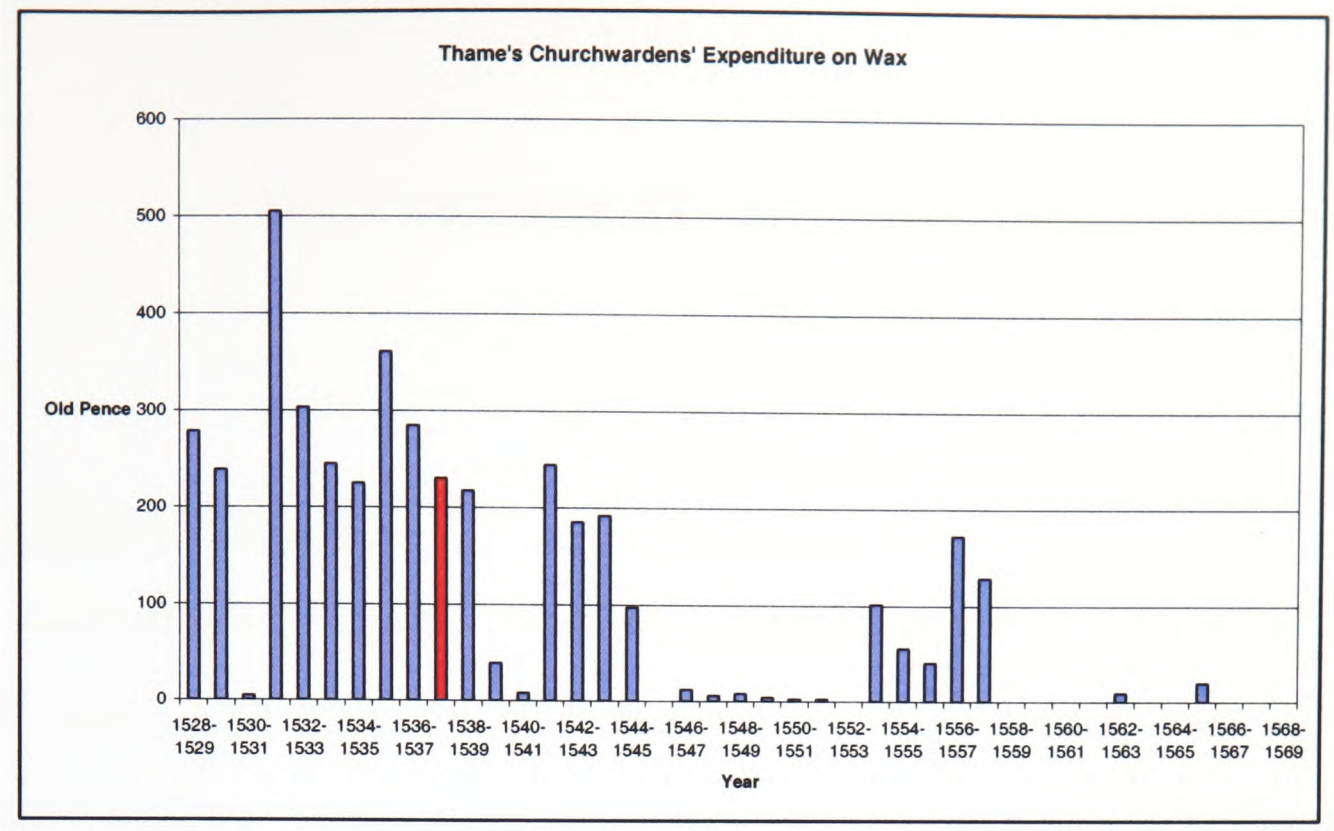
[23] For example, Kümin, *Shaping of a Community*, p. 126.

[24] This matter is discussed in Andrew Foster, 'Churchwardens' accounts of early modern England and Wales: some problems to note, but much to be gained', in Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat A. Kümin (eds.), *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 74-93, esp. p. 85.

unrealised potential of churchwardens' accounts. But the significance of the 'conclusions' that can be reached through their employment should not be inflated out of due proportion, or indeed out of all context.

Approaches must be integrated. The account made for Thame in May 1538 includes many entries which concern the wardens' expenditure on wax. First, Thame's wardens laboriously record that they bought a pound [1lb] of candles before the Annunciation of Our Lady, one on the Sunday before her Nativity, another on the feast of St. Michael, and yet another soon after. Then, they record that had bought two pounds of candles on the Sunday after the feast of All Saints, had spent 4s 1d on their Rood light, and had bought two more pounds of candles. After this, the wardens list that they had bought yet another pound of candles on the first Sunday in Lent, had paid for lots of tapers in the course of the year (first for the obit for Jane Seymour, and then for the obit for the benefactors of the church), had bought three more pounds of wax, and had then paid for the making of the Trindle, the Pascal Taper; and the Font Taper.[25] So, at first glance, the historian might think that Thame's churchwardens were – for whatever reason – spending a great deal more money on wax in the years 1537 to 1538 than they were wont to do. However, a different picture emerges when one quantifies the entries in the accounts. It soon becomes clear that this set of wardens had not spent an abnormally large sum of money on wax at all. Rather, they had spent an amount similar to that which their immediate predecessors had done. (The wardens' expenditure on wax in 1537 to 1538 is denoted in red on the graph below.)

[25] Thame CWAs, pp. 42-3.



Thus these wardens' assiduous recording of their expenses must be suggestive of something else. In this case, it indicates that, in the months immediately prior to the 1538 injunction on superstitious lights, although Thame's churchwardens were not yet loath to buy wax for their church's ceremonies (it was only later that their spending on wax contracted), Thame's wardens already felt under greater pressure to explain their actions – to explain exactly what they were using their wax for – than any of their predecessors had done.

It is inevitable that this kind of approach to churchwardens' accounts seems complicated and theorised at first. Yet through its application – to the parishes of Thame (where the surviving churchwardens' accounts are especially numerous and detailed), Pyrton, and Oxford – its functioning may be properly illustrated, and its implications for Reformation studies become evident.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PARISH OF THAME, 1528-1569

I. THE PARISH OF THAME

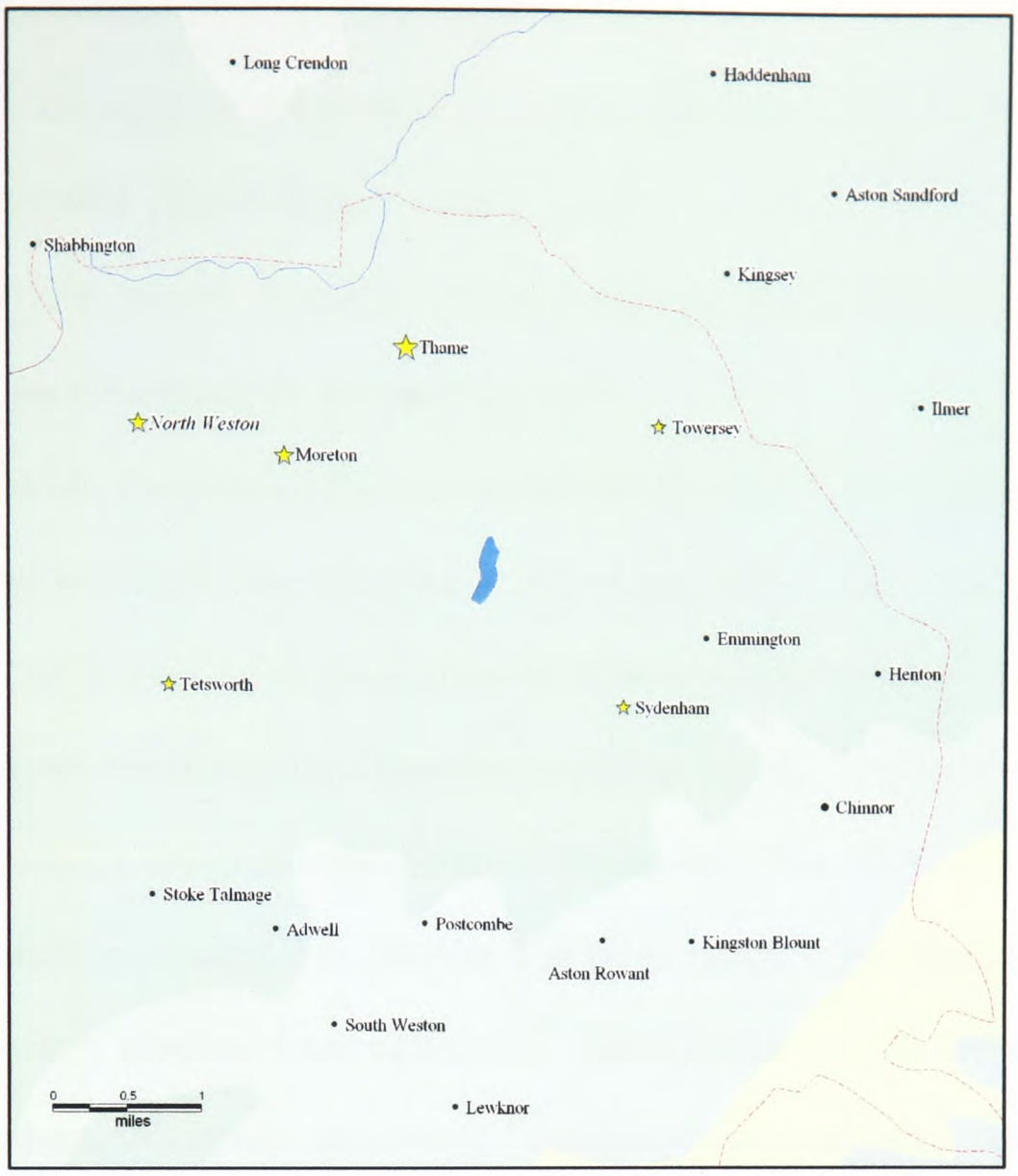
The sixteenth-century surveyor John Leland observed that there were '3 partes in Tame towne': 'Old Tame in the way from the churche, toward but not full to the Market Stede'; the 'Market Stede and the fayrest parte of the towne toward London way [which] is cawlyd new Tame'; and 'Prestes ende [which is] toward the churche and bridge toward [Great] Haseley'.[1]

Lying some fourteen miles south-east of Oxford, just south of the River Thames, the town of Thame was in the extreme north of a vast parish, the size of which was reduced from 5,229 acres to 3,140 acres in 1932. In the sixteenth century, the parish encompassed the settlements of North Weston and Moreton, with even the chapels at Tetsworth, Towersey, and Sydenham being only semi-independent.[2]

---

[1] *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (5 vols., Carbondale, 1964), iv, 34-5.

[2] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, vii, 162. Julia Carnwath deems the inhabitants of Tetsworth, Towersey, and Sydenham to have been – to all intents and purposes – 'inactive' members of the parish community: 'The Churchwardens' Accounts of Thame, Oxfordshire, 1434-1524' (2 vols., Manchester Univ. M.Phil. thesis, 1992), esp. i, xxix-xxxiii.



The Parts of the Parish

Thame was one of the richest prebends in Lincoln Cathedral, being valued at £82 12s 2½d in 1535.[3] The prebendaries were Thame's rectors, receiving the tithes of the parish, and appointing the vicars who in turn assigned chaplains to the outlying areas.[4] The parish church was a fittingly imposing seat, possessing the aspect of a cathedral; and, annually, the parish elected no fewer than four churchwardens to administer the building, together with its chattels.[5] Successive reforms confused the parish's jurisdiction. Whilst the see of Oxford (created in 1542) included the parish

---

[3] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, vii, 199.

[4] In 1526, the vicar of Thame was, moreover, assisted by no fewer than three clergymen (a curate, a chaplain, and a stipendiary priest): *A Subsidy Collected in the Diocese of Lincoln in 1526*, ed. H. Salter (Oxford Historical Soc., lxiii, 1909), pp. 252-3.

[5] Generally speaking, two churchwardens represented 'New Thame' and two 'Old Thame'. But the degree of liaison between the two pairs, and the integration of their activities, makes it desirable for them to be seen as a single unit – not least because their accounts were usually amalgamated.

of Thame, the bishop of Lincoln asserted his authority over the parish in 1545. However, the alienation of the prebend from the cathedral in 1547 strengthened the bishop of Oxford's counter-claim, causing conflict to ensue until the nineteenth century.[6] Thame seems, however, to have been governed alongside the other Oxfordshire parishes during the period in question.

The parish was united only in an ecclesiastical sense. The separate townships operated autonomously.[7] Ever since the Middle Ages, three-weekly courts baron had been held at Old Thame, at Priestend, at North Weston, and at Moreton. New Thame, on the other hand, was a seignorial borough, requiring – by the fifteenth century at the latest – two bailiffs and two under-bailiffs.[8] It was also New Thame that justified Thame's reputation as being – in William Camden's words – 'a mercate [merchant] towne situate very pleasantly among rivers'.[9] New Thame was never incorporated. But, by the sixteenth century, the town's 'merchant-farmer oligarchy' had acquired those urban liberties – burgage tenure, freedom from toll, and the right to hold fairs and markets – which facilitated commercial prosperity and growth.[10]

Thame lay at the centre of a network of rivers and local roads, illustrated by John Speede's 1605 map of Oxfordshire.[11] In February 1587, New Thame housed no fewer than twenty victuallers.[12] Thus, when Aylesbury was visited by the plague in 1577, the Privy Council sent a letter to the infested Buckinghamshire town's

---

[6] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, vii, 201-2.
[7] Some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century court rolls survive: Bodleian Library, MS. D.D. Bertie c.16/1-49.
[8] It seems likely that the break-up of New Thame's portanmoot court coincided with that of the bishop's manor in 1559, although this cannot be certain since no sixteenth-century portanmoot records survive.
[9] William Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Robert Mayhew (Bristol, 2003), esp. p. 383. William Camden's *Britannia* was translated into English by Philémon Holland in 1610.
[10] Carnwath, 'The Churchwardens' Accounts of Thame', i, xxvii-xxviii; *VCH*, Oxfordshire, vii, 193-5.
[11] John Speede, *Oxfordshire described with ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of yt famous Vniuersity. Ao. 1605* (Facsimile published by the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 1998).
[12] There were only three victuallers in Old Thame. For a list of Thame's victuallers, see State Papers 12/198, fos. 136r-136v.

'Baylefes, Connestables and other officers', ordering 'that no man being an inhabitant there shall attempt to resorte unto Thame' in order to attend the Michaelmas Fair; nor were Aylesbury's officials to 'permitte any wares or merchandize that maie take infection to be caried unto the said Fayre'.[13] Thame also enjoyed close relations with the capital, with The Gough Map – being probably compiled between 1350 and 1370 – indicating their long-established nature.[14] It was for this reason that the Privy Council delayed Thame's fair in September 1592, stating 'to the which [fair] doe usually resort many Londoners with wares, which in this tyme of the generall infection within the citty of London may be verie daungeroues'.[15]

It was a substantial resident population that received so many visitors. The chantry certificate returned under the Act of 1547 claims as many as 1,200 houseling people for the parish; but it seems probable that the number of 'active' parishioners was somewhat smaller than this.[16] Following the procedures of Julian Cornwall, Julia Carnwath has used lay subsidy returns to generate approximate population figures for the parish. (These principles proceed on the basis that there were equal numbers of men and women over the age of sixteen, and that under-sixteens composed approximately 40% of the overall population.) Carnwath concludes that the parish's population fluctuated quite considerably – there being 1,000-1,100 people in 1443-1444, 600-700 in 1524-1525, and about 900 in 1543-1544.[17]

It was not, however, simply the permanently resident population which was involved in parish life. Camden's *Britannia* lists Thame's most noteworthy families,

---

[13] *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1577-1578, p. 36.
[14] E. J. S. Parsons, *The Map of Great Britain circa A.D. 1360 known as The Gough Map: an introduction to the facsimile* (Oxford, 1958).
[15] *APC*, 1592, p. 195.
[16] The houseling figure for the parish can be found in *The Chantry Certificates and the Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods*, ed. Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Soc., i, 1919), pp. 16-7. Julia Carnwath concludes that the inhabitants of Tetsworth, Towersey, and Sydenham did not number amongst Thame's 'active' parishioners: 'The Churchwardens' Accounts of Thame', esp. i, xxix-xxxiii.
[17] Ibid., i, xxxviii-xlix.

presenting a lineage of (non-resident) patrons successively serving the parish. He records that

> the Quatremans, who in the age foregoing were men of great reputation in these parts, founded an Hospitall for the sustentation of poore people. But both of these are now decaied and quite gone: and in steede thereof Sir Iohn Williams Knight, whom Queene Marie aduanced to the dignitie of a Baron, by the title of Lord William of Tame erected a very faire Schoole, and a small Hospitall. But this title soone determined when he left but daughters married into the families of Norris and Wenman.[18]

Camden's emphasis of these families is appropriate. John Williams, for example, was not native to the parish of Thame; nor did he ever live there, residing at Rycote – a former seat of the Quatremains – in the neighbouring parish of Great Haseley. Nonetheless, by about 1550, Williams had become a figure of unprecedented influence, having acquired both the manor of Thame – sold by Henry Holbeach to Protector Somerset in 1547, presumably in part-exchange for the bishopric of Lincoln – and the site and lands of Thame Abbey (dissolved in November 1539).[19] Williams had also succeeded to the property of St. Christopher's Guild: a chantry founded by the Quatremains in 1447.[20] Williams' power was immense; and he was an innovator, founding the town's first grammar school by the terms of his will. And yet, given the prevailing circumstances, even Williams protected parish custom, ensuring that payments continued to be made to a priest and paupers after the dissolution of the Quatremain chantry.[21]

---

[18] Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Mayhew, pp. 383-4.
[19] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, vii, 171; *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1547-1548, p. 184; *CPR*, 1549-1551, p. 427.
[20] *CPR*, 1446-1452, pp. 180-1 (for record of the guild's foundation); *Chantry Certificates*, ed. Graham, pp. 16-7, 49 (for details about the guild's operation).
[21] An account covering the period from Michaelmas 1548 to Michaelmas 1550 is extant: Bodl., MS. D.D. Bertie c.16/35.

II. THAME'S CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS

The bound manuscript that is preserved in Oxfordshire Record Office is, without doubt, a 'presentation copy' of Thame's churchwardens' accounts.[22] A professional (although not an elaborate) text was expected; and it was paid for, with parishioner Thomas Stribblehill being paid 2s in 1528 'for wretyng of thys accompt'.[23] The extant accounts are also engrossed, further indication that these are not simply the 'day-to-day' records of the wardens' financial transactions. Whilst the process of engrossment is referred to explicitly only in later years, the practice persisted throughout the period, albeit to varying degrees.[24] It is clear from this that Thame's churchwardens' accounts were intended for show. Yet they need not be treated as 'show texts', as records conceived and contrived solely for the purposes of commemoration.[25] Rather, Thame's accounts are exceptionally well-suited to the application of detailed analysis, and may be subjected to quantitative techniques. This is made all the more feasible by the accounts being extant, in almost continuous series, from the mid-fifteenth century.[26]

Thame's churchwardens' accounts reflect the 'religious life' of the parish community, as it was orchestrated by its churchwardens, in quite extraordinary detail. During the mid-sixteenth century, the number of financial transactions listed in each account frequently approaches a hundred, with many of the wardens' individual

---

[22] I refer to Thame CWAs (Oxfordshire Record Office, PAR/273/4/F1/2), pp. 1-177. From p. 177, the quality of the text declines markedly, and it is reasonable to assert that a different kind of account (more 'day-to-day') begins to be kept. The text starts with the end of the account made in 1528. Accounts for the period 1442-1524 are extant also: ORO, PAR/273/4/F1/1.

[23] Whilst the accounts were cast professionally, it seems that they were not drawn up by professionals; or, at least, that the scribes were not greatly skilled. Although the scribes' hands are invariably neat, their efforts at ornamentation are distinctly rudimentary. For instance, a capital letter that is intended to resemble a human face possesses little artistic merit: Thame CWAs, p. 4. The reference to Thomas Stribblehill: ibid., p. 3.

[24] For example, ibid., p. 153 (2s was paid 'for the Writtynge Castinge & Ingrossinge of this Accompt').

[25] A fuller discussion of the nature of the various 'types' of churchwardens' accounts is to be found in Chapter II.

[26] Julia Carnwath's (unpublished) thesis includes a transcription of the accounts up to 1524: 'The Churchwardens' Accounts of Thame'. However, no complete transcriptions of Thame's accounts have ever been published.

entries being engagingly explicit. This facilitates a remarkably comprehensive reconstruction of parish religious life. It is evident, for example, that the ale held at New Thame at Whitsuntide 1556 was a lavishly-conceived affair, well-provisioned with drink. Churchwarden Thomas Symeon invested in '14 bushelles of Malt' (30s), '7 gallons & ½ of ale' (2s 4d), '½ a quarter of Meile' (13s 4d), '3 dossen & ½ of ale' (11s 8d), and '3 dossen & ½ of Beare' (11s 8d) in preparation for it. It was, therefore, perhaps to soak up some of the alcohol that Symeon ordered 'a Calf' (9s), 'a sheppe' (6s 8d), 'a loyne of Veile with ye hedd & feett' (18d), 'Chekyns' (21d), and an additional 15s 8d-worth of meat. Added to this were the costs of the 'salt Fyshe & Freche Fyshe' (3s), 'Butter & Veneger' (7d), and 'Spice butter & Candle' (2s 8d); with a wage of 2s 6d being paid to a cook and an assistant cook. The show of morris dancing necessitated the purchase of '13 yardes of grene for Morres Cottes' (13s), '2 yardes & ½ of yalow Cotton' (20d), '5 pecces of saye' (3s 4d), and 'Colorred threed' (4d); not to mention the costs incurred in the 'Makynge of the Cottes' (6s 10d), and the acquisition of nine dozen 'Daunssynge Belles' (3s 6d). Moreover, as morris men were evidently deemed insufficient entertainment in and of themselves, Symeon spent a further 5s on ensuring that there would be a 'lorde of the Maye ale' (whose men were fitted out with liveries at the further cost of 3s 6d), money on 'playinge Cardes' (5d), and an extravagant 28s 6d on minstrels who were paid severally 'for their wages' (20s), for 'ther Costes & Charges' (8s), and for 'ther Beddes' (6d). Rather more mundanely, Symeon had also to obtain 6s 8d-worth of wood.[27]

In addition to their being detailed, Thame's accounts are arithmetically accurate. The process of their calculation is often evident: in the form of dot formations and jumbles of Arabic numerals. The account that was presented on 22

[27] Thame CWAs, p. 132. Thame's churchwardens' accounts are extraordinarily detailed regarding the parish's Marian ales.

May 1552 (being, unusually, for the two preceding years) is testimony to this calculation's efficacy: nearly two hundred separate transactions are recorded; income exceeded £100, with expenditure not lagging far behind; and the arithmetic is spot-on. Granted, the arithmetical skill of John Spenser, Richard Bunse, and William Mynchard was subject to a more hawkish eye than was customary: complaint was voiced at around this time that it had been too long since these men had tendered adequate account. But, equally, this was a time when the complexity of the churchwardens' task was heightened. More than once, the churchwardens had to 'axe allowaunce aftre the rat of the last fall of Money'.[28] Whilst such precision is not completely uniform, with about half of Thame's accounts possessing arithmetical inconsistencies, errors are generally of only a very few pence; which can, in most cases, be accounted for by late alterations to the text. It seems likely that this accuracy was promoted by the external checking processes that were in place, with the account that was presented on 14 May 1542 being audited by a certain Robert Morton.[29] Indeed, fraudsters had but a faint chance of success. The scribe who sought to have 2s 'More payd for the writinge & engrossinge of this accompt' in May 1569 (and who altered the remaining balance accordingly) must have been disappointed by the resolution with which the churchwarden or auditor struck through his entries.[30]

Nonetheless, no amount of arithmetical accuracy prevents complexity; and understanding, let alone analysing, Thame's churchwardens' accounts is not altogether straightforward. Certain entries, such as those referring to 'the Churche

[28] For example, Thame CWAs, p. 113.
[29] Ibid., p. 60.
[30] Ibid., p. 174.

Boxe' and 'the lordes Boxe', initially baffle.[31] Added to this, it was not uncommon for wardens to insert memoranda amongst the accounts of their predecessors. Churchwardens William Ballowe and William Lee served for two successive years: they were continually in office between May 1552 and April 1554. During this time, Ballowe and Lee (successfully) sought allowance for the sum of £10 that was 'payd Unto the Handes of William Lee by the Comaundement of Sir John Williamz knyght for the goynge forthe of the Sowldyers in the behalf of our Soveraigne Lady Quene Marye', as well as for the 7d that had been 'payd in ale & brede'. Any such payment could not have been made before July 1553. Yet these disbursements are itemised at the foot of the account made on Sunday 22 May 1552.[32] Thus it seems that these payments were approved in advance of the churchwardens' account day, and that they were recorded immediately on a convenient page in the churchwardens' accounts, perhaps owing to their magnitude and political sensitivity. (Subsequently, Lee was paid a further 14s 4d 'above ye Money that he [had] Receavyd for ye Souldyers'.)[33]

Therefore the tendency in the 1540s and 1550s for a large proportion of the church's funds to be held in the hands of private individuals simply compounds a complexity that already exists. Indeed, it is only by achieving familiarity with the parishioners, and with their activities, that Thame's churchwardens' accounts may be properly construed; and, for much of the time, repeated critical reading is the sole means of inducing clarity.[34]

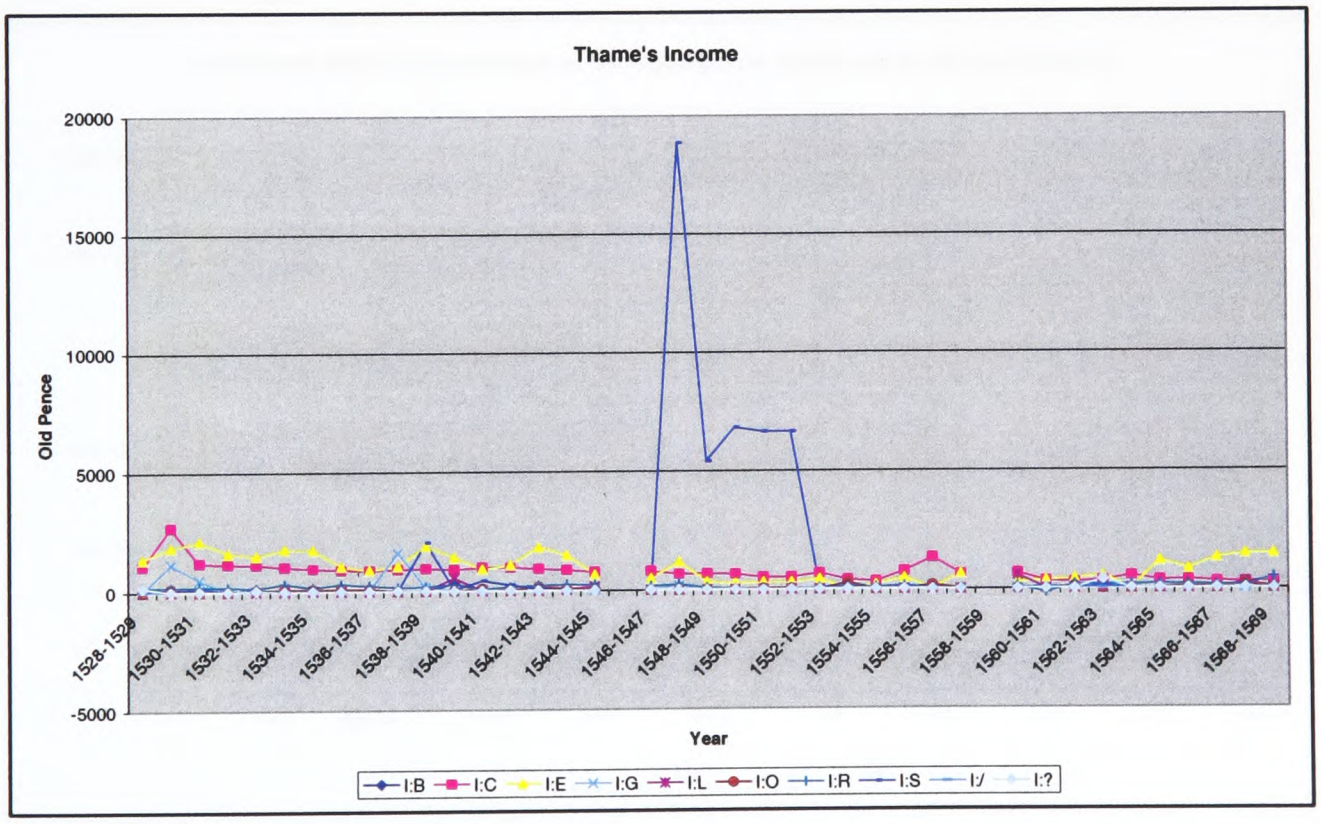
---

[31] Ibid., p. 123. In churchwardens' accounts, terms such as these often refer to the balance that is 'carried over' from year to year. This is not the case in Thame, where it is possible to conclude that the money in the 'Church's' and 'Lord's' boxes comprise the gross income accrued by church ales.
[32] Thame CWAs, p. 113.
[33] Ibid., p. 121.
[34] There are only two entries which concern substantial quantities of money, and for which I cannot ascertain their meaning. (The first entry concerns 16s that was 'Receavyd of Water Thame'. The second entry concerns 15s that was 'Receavyd of Thomas Andefelde'.) Both these entries are to be found in Thame CWAs, p. 155.

III. Reformations of the Parish Community

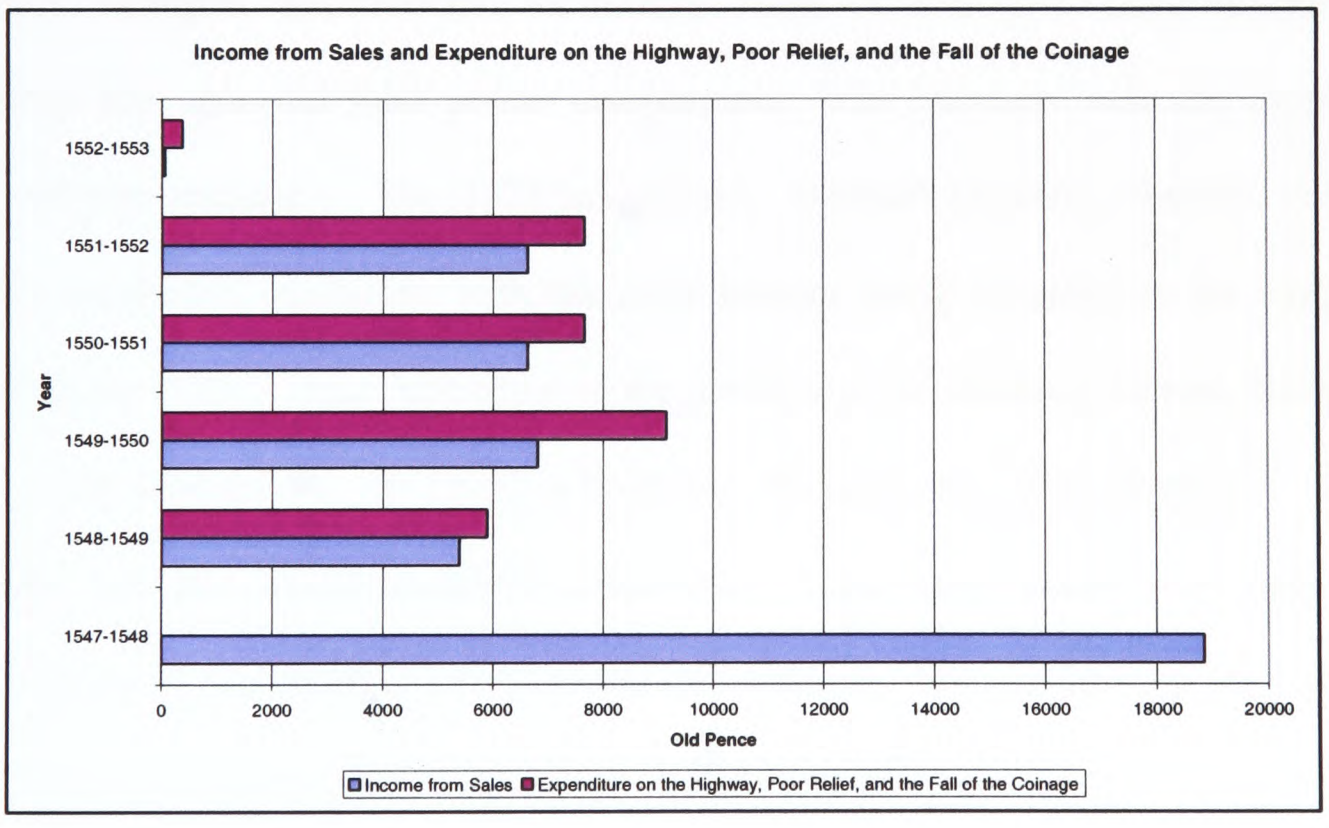
The parish of Thame was subject to England's Reformations. Yet it was not simply subjected to them, or subjugated by them. The comprehensive analysis of Thame's churchwardens' accounts discloses the extent to which this community played an active part in England's Reformations. Indeed, it could be said to have taken a leading role in the production of its own.

Thame's Edwardian churchwardens enjoyed incomes which were unparalleled, with their sale of many of the church's goods making a dramatic impact on the parish's coffers. The graph below displays the sums which successive churchwardens received from their various sources of income, thus demonstrating the abnormality of both the source and the scale of the Edwardian wardens' income.



Income Categories			
I:B	Benefactions	I:O	Occasional Receipts
I:C	Collections	I:R	Rental Income
I:E	Entertainment	I:S	Sales of Church Goods
I:G	Guilds etc.	I:/	Other
I:L	Legacies	I:?	Indiscernible

However, the impact of this exceptional income from the sale of the church's goods was remarkably limited. This is because the expenditure of these churchwardens was equally extraordinary. The churchwardens spent some 69% of this additional income (the money raised through sales) on highway-building, poor relief, and the expenses incurred due to the successive falls of the coinage – with, after the first year, 'extraordinary' expenditure always exceeding 'extraordinary' income, as the chart below demonstrates.



It is, moreover, probable that significantly more than 69% of this 'extraordinary' income was in fact consumed by 'extraordinary' expenditure, given that the churchwardens were unable to detail a significant portion of their effective outflow at

this time. It was – and indeed is – impossible to calculate the effective losses created by this period's inflationary pressures. (The only figures available are those for which wardens 'axe allowaunce' after the re-valuations of the coinage.) Nonetheless, the unusual liquidity of the church's assets during the Edwardian period means that the impact of inflation on the church's funds must have been considerable.

The sale of the church's goods can, therefore, have provided but little funding for the church and for its ceremonies. Indeed, the sales, and their profits, were pretty much independent to the typical functioning of churchwardenship in Thame. Thus it is possible to see beyond this episode; to discern the attitudes of an Oxfordshire parish community; and to do so over the period of some five decades.

i. Dramatis personae

Thame's wealthier parishioners contributed more of monetary value to parish 'religious life' than did their poorer counterparts. The Dormers were the parish's most affluent residents. The 1523 lay subsidy assessed Geoffrey Dormer as the parish's wealthiest inhabitant, with the same honour being accorded to his widow, Elizabeth, in 1543.[35] Also influential in the parish was Sir Michael Dormer, London mercer and lord mayor (in 1541), whose son William was later resident.[36] The Dormers did not found religious institutions. Yet they made very tangible contributions to the parish's religious life nonetheless. The account of May 1546 records that the churchwardens had paid 16d for the 'Fechinge of ye Torches frome kymble of ye Gyft of Master Michaell Dormer'.[37] In addition to making lavish gifts to the parish, the Dormers also participated in its government. Although never

[35] National Archives, E 179/161/198, rots. 11-11d (1523 subsidy), E 179/162/225, mm. 5-7 (1543 subsidy).
[36] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, vii, 172.
[37] Thame CWAs, p. 76.

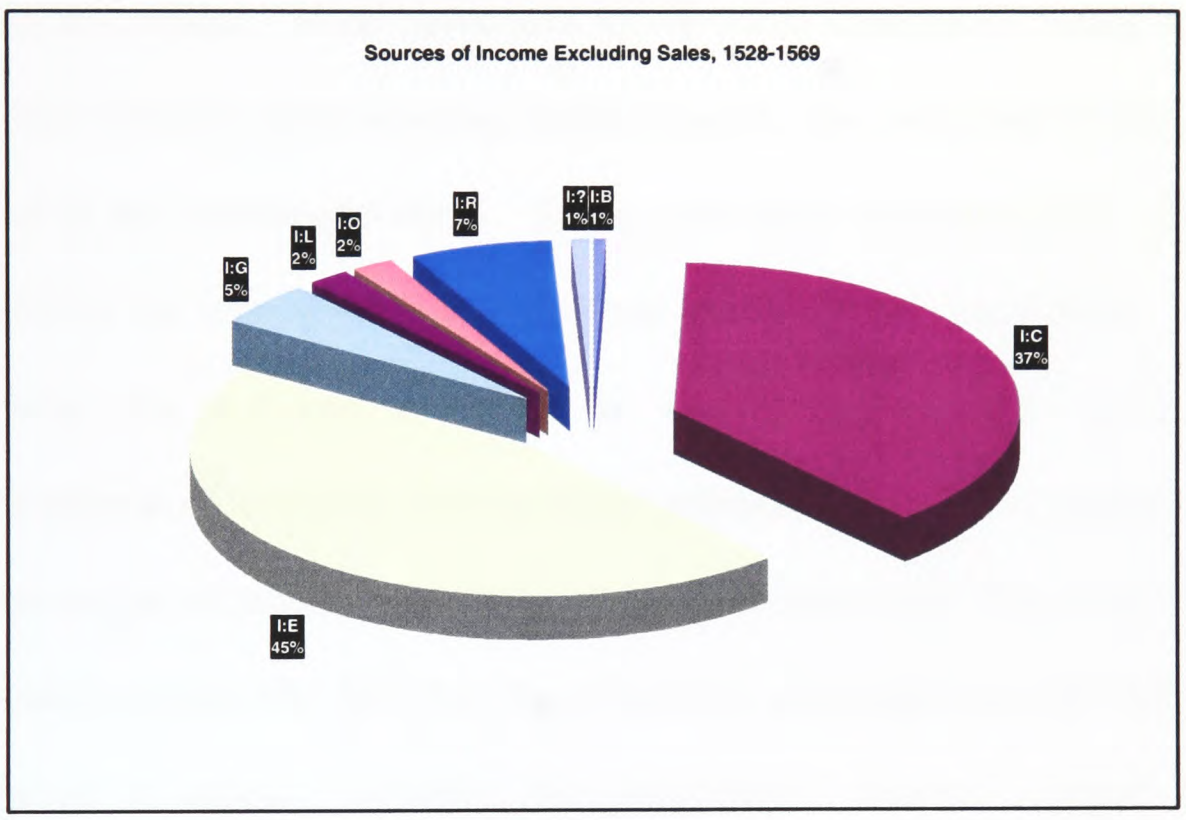
serving as churchwardens – at least during the period in question – the Dormers' involvement was active. The churchwardens' account of 1533 states that Masters Michael and Edward Dormer had been given a bottle of wine worth 6d, presumably for services rendered.[38] Some fifteen years later, it was again a 'Master Dormer' (this time most likely William) to whom the churchwardens entrusted the considerable sum of 26s 8d 'for to by Colours for ye paynter'.[39] The family's position within the parish was evidently one of immense trust. From the reign of Edward VI, it was they who broke with parish convention by 'holding' large quantities of the parish's funds on behalf of the churchwardens, with the arrangement only ceasing on 23 May 1557.[40] Indeed, the Dormers were undoubtedly Thame's resident 'first family', with part of the church becoming known as 'Master Dormers Ile [aisle]'.[41] Yet, even the Dormers were no league apart: there were only degrees of separation between them and the other parishioners. Most of the treasures sold in the late 1540s had been gifts made by generations of the parish's wealthy, either to the 'church proper' or to a light or guild.[42] These gifts had been bequeathed by a plethora of patrons – not just the Dormers. For instance, amongst the goods sold in the 1540s was a brass pot 'of the gyft of Elsabethe Goodwyn' who, together with her husband John, had also given 'a payre of Vestymentes of Grene Sattayne with Thappertenaunces for to be occupied at the aultre of our Lady of pite' in 1544.[43]

The contributions made by elite parishioners such as these affected the religious life of the entire parish. Yet they did not directly influence the operation of churchwardenship. The annual income of Thame's churchwardens was derived from

---

[38] Ibid., p. 20.
[39] Ibid., p. 88.
[40] In particular, ibid., p. 135.
[41] For example, ibid., p. 88.
[42] There is no evidence of independent funds providing the church with plate and other valuables, and the churchwardens did not generally possess funds sufficient to this purpose.
[43] Thame CWAs, pp. 85, 68.

the parish community on remarkably egalitarian terms, with the differential between the contributions of the rich and poor being minimal. Throughout the period, the holding of collections and the hosting of entertainments provided, respectively, 37% and 45% of Thame's churchwardens' regular income, as the chart below demonstrates. (Income from the sale of church goods is not classified as 'regular' as it was neither typical nor sustainable.)



Relevant Income Categories			
I:B	Benefactions	I:O	Occasional Receipts
I:C	Collections	I:R	Rental Income
I:E	Entertainment	I:/	Other
I:G	Guilds etc.	I:?	Indiscernible
I:L	Legacies		

These fundraising methods incorporated the parish elite. However, it seems highly improbable that the contributions of the elite were substantially greater than those of their fellow parishioners. The churchwardens' funds only benefited from Lord Williams' death in 1559 (to the tune of some 46s 8d) through the sale of 'the

Cottennes that dyd Hange in ye Churche at the Buriall'.[44] What the parish elite gave in cash to be used at the churchwardens' discretion tended (in terms relative to their personal wealth) to be simply token offerings. Very consciously, and very effectively, they differentiated their gifts and legacies from those of their more humble fellows. The communal nature of collections and parish entertainments was hardly likely to have encouraged any alteration in these behaviour patterns.

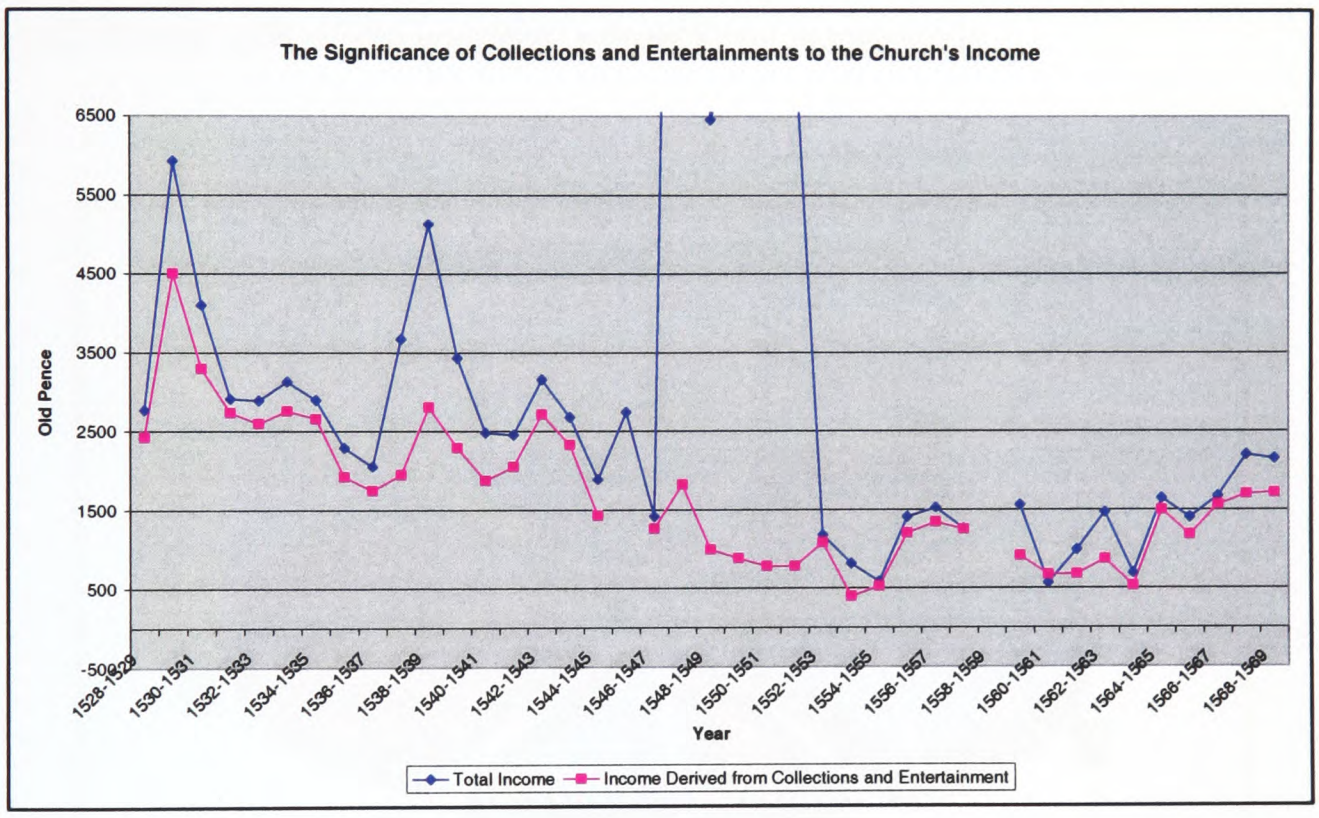
Collections and entertainments required the voluntary giving of the parish community as a whole. Some collections incorporated elements of rating, meaning that the sums raised by them remained fairly constant. But the parish of Thame was never rated in any meaningful sense. Rating was never comprehensive. The total sums raised by the churchwardens' collections varied on an annual basis, with no warden being able to dictate how much he would receive overall. Indeed, it is impossible even to differentiate between those collections which were rated and those which were not, as all monies raised belonged to a common fund. The clerk was paid £4 *per annum*, despite the fact that the collections ostensibly held for his upkeep seldom raised so much. Likewise, the parishioners' financial support for the churchwardens' ales and other social events could not be forced. There may well have been social pressure to attend these gatherings. But the enormous fluctuation in the amounts raised suggests that spending was voluntary.

In the mid-1540s, the amounts collected through these means roughly equated to each man, woman, and child of the parish 'proper' (Old Thame, New Thame, Priestend, North Weston, and Moreton) donating a little over 1d a year to collections, and a little more than 2d a year in excess of what the wardens had spent on their entertainment. This seems modest. But, as Richard Carew later observed in his

---

[44] Thame CWAs, p. 143.

Survey of Cornwall (published at the beginning of the seventeenth century), it was 'by many smalls' that the profit of a church ale 'groweth to a meetly greatnes'.[45] Collectively, the parishioners' contributions to collections and parish entertainments were crucial to the funding of the parish. As the graph below demonstrates, the churchwardens' overall income correlated very closely to the income derived through these means. (There is, of course, the notable exception of the reign of Edward VI, when the wardens' sale of the church's goods raised unprecedented sums of money.)



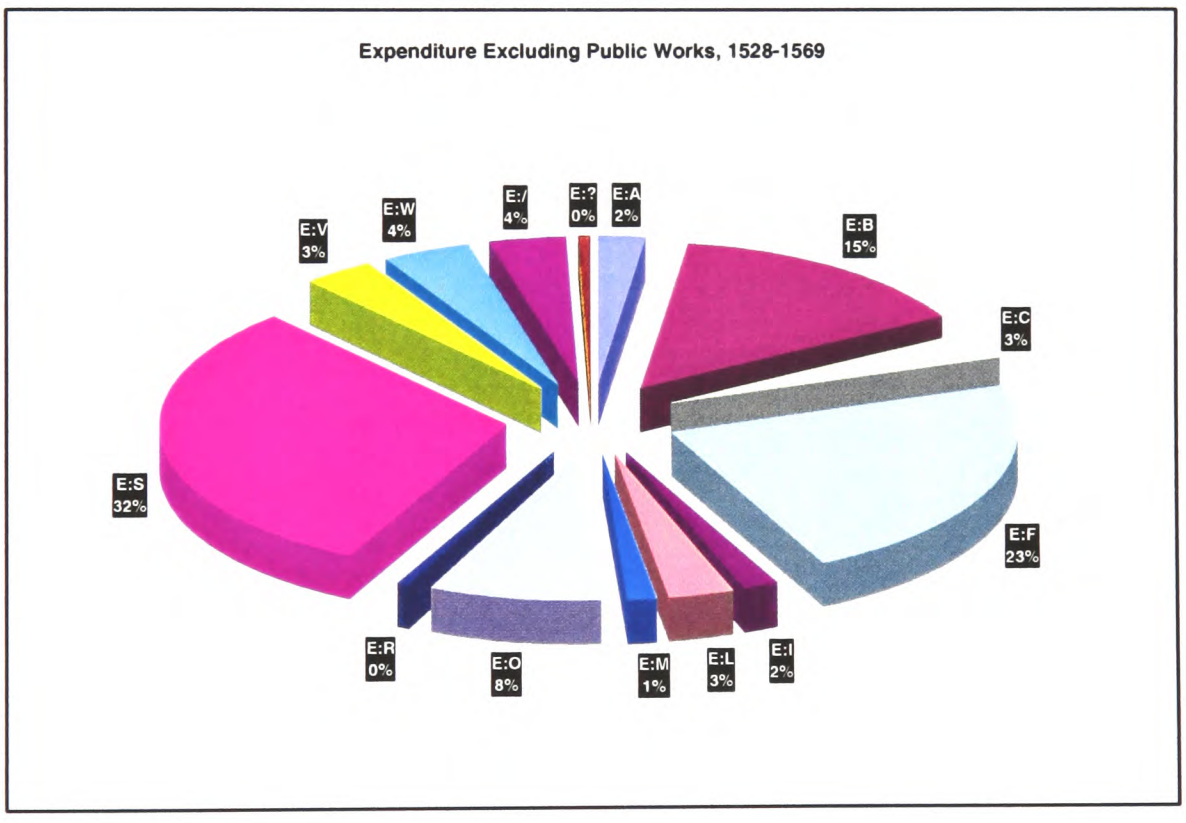
Thus, although the means of Thame's parishioners were by no means equal, and some contributed much more of monetary value to the parish's religious life than did others, it was in the very broadest of senses that Thame's churchwardens relied on the giving of their parish community to fund their operations.

---

[45] *The Survey of Cornwall by Richard Carew*, ed. John Chynoweth, Nicholas Orme, and Alexandra Walsham (Devon and Cornwall Record Soc., new ser., xlvii, 2004), fo. 68v.

ii. Data interpretation

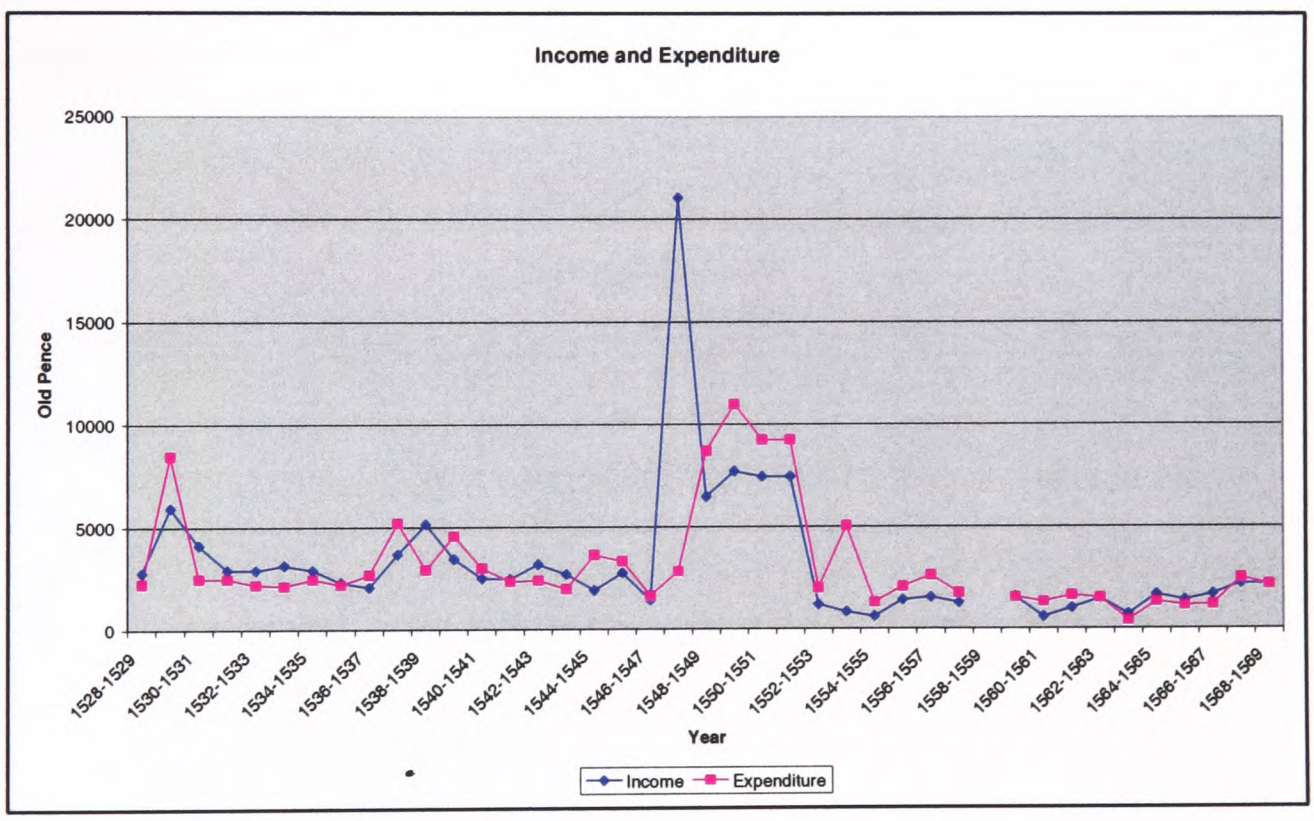
With the exception of the short period in which the town's highway was being built, Thame's churchwardens devoted virtually all their income to the church's day-to-day functioning. Liturgical costs loomed large: the clerk's stipend alone accounted for more than 30% of the wardens' total expenditure during the period from 1528 to 1569, even though payment ceased entirely at the outset of the 1560s. Even more financially-draining was the maintenance (and occasional improvement) of the church's building and bells, which – as the chart below illustrates – accounted for a further 23% and 15% of the wardens' expenditure respectively.



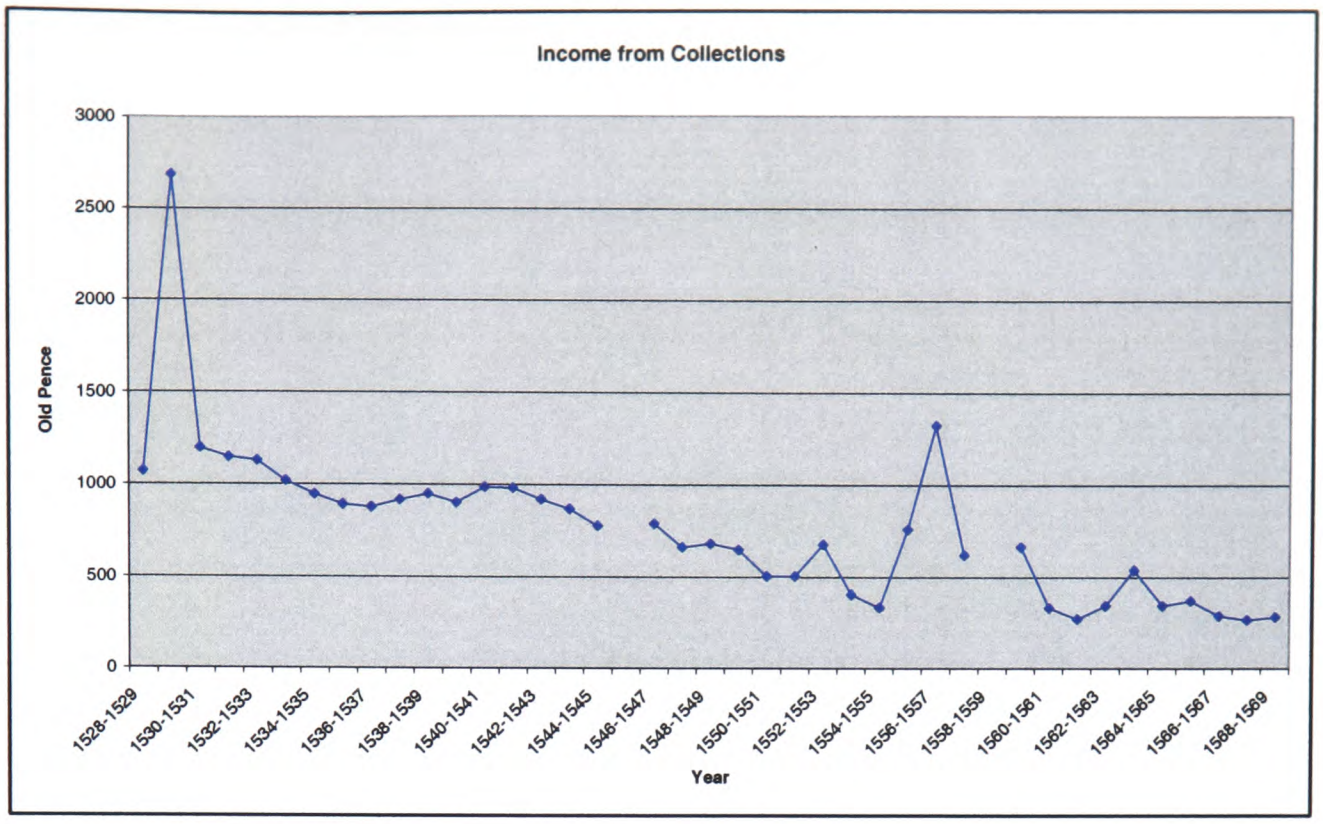
Relevant Expenditure Categories			
E:A	Administrative Costs	E:O	Ornamental & Ceremonial
E:B	Bells	E:R	Relief
E:C	Clocks	E:S	Stipend of Clerk
E:F	Church Fabric	E:V	Vestments
E:I	Inflation & Debasement	E:W	Wax etc.
E:L	Liturgical Works	E:/	Other
E:M	Music	E:?	Indiscernible

Other institutions and individuals made important contributions to the parish's religious life – and to its church. But it was the churchwardens who managed and ran the parish church on a day-to-day basis. It was they who effected the parish-level religious changes. Consequently, given that the wardens depended on the financial support of their parish community, each one of Thame's parishioners played an active role in the Reformation of his parish's worship.

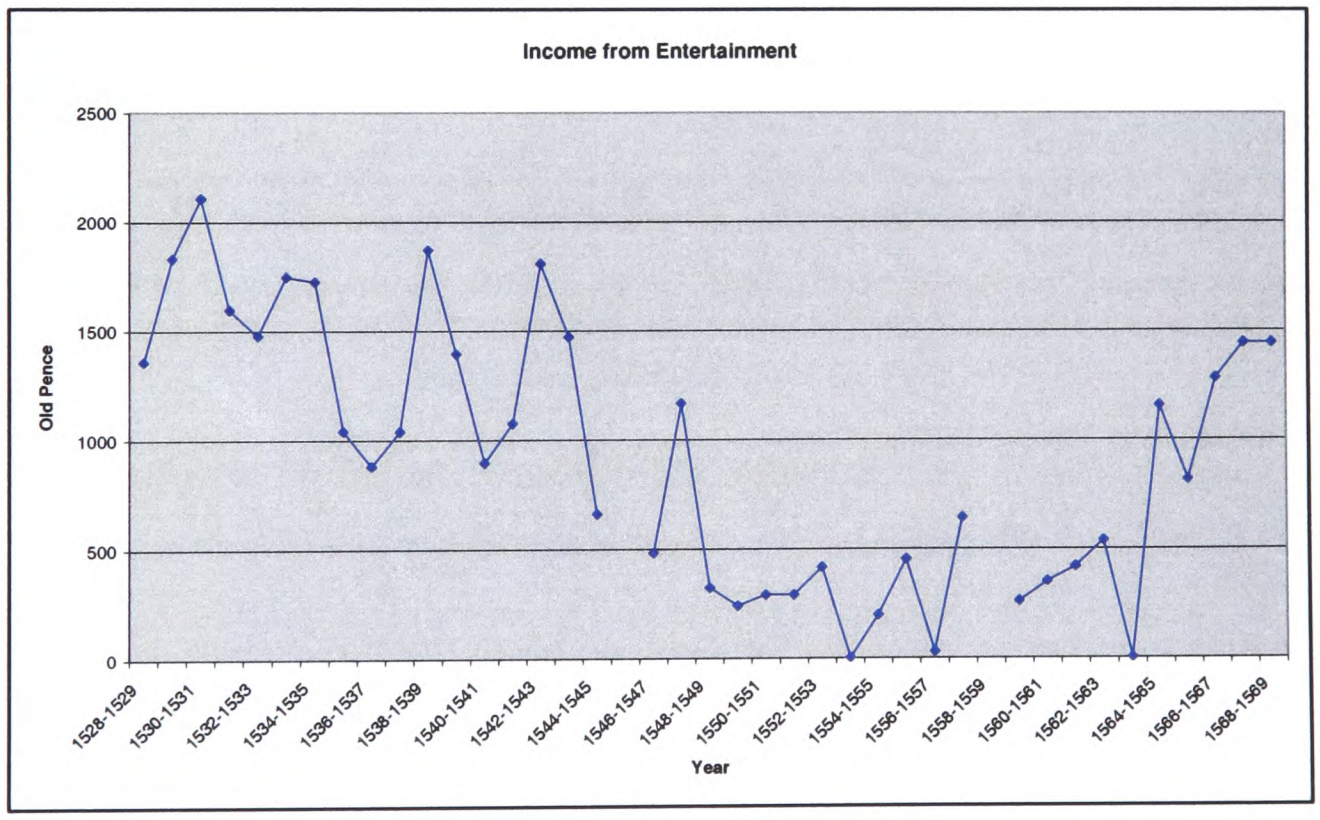
Thame's churchwardens' expenditure was closely related to their annual income, as the graph below demonstrates. Thus the wardens' activities depended on the parish community's giving (or *vice versa*).



Between the 1520s and the 1560s, the sums of money that successive churchwardens received varied, with the general trend being one of decline. The graph below illustrates how the sums that the parish community donated at collections dwindled as the years passed, although there was a temporary upturn in giving late in the reign of Mary.



The profits from entertainments were rather more erratic, as the chart below demonstrates.



It is more complex to assess the significance of the sums raised at parish entertainments than it is those monies which were gathered at collections. This is because the wardens' income from entertainments did not equate to the contributions which the parishioners made at them. Indeed, the figures were not even necessarily

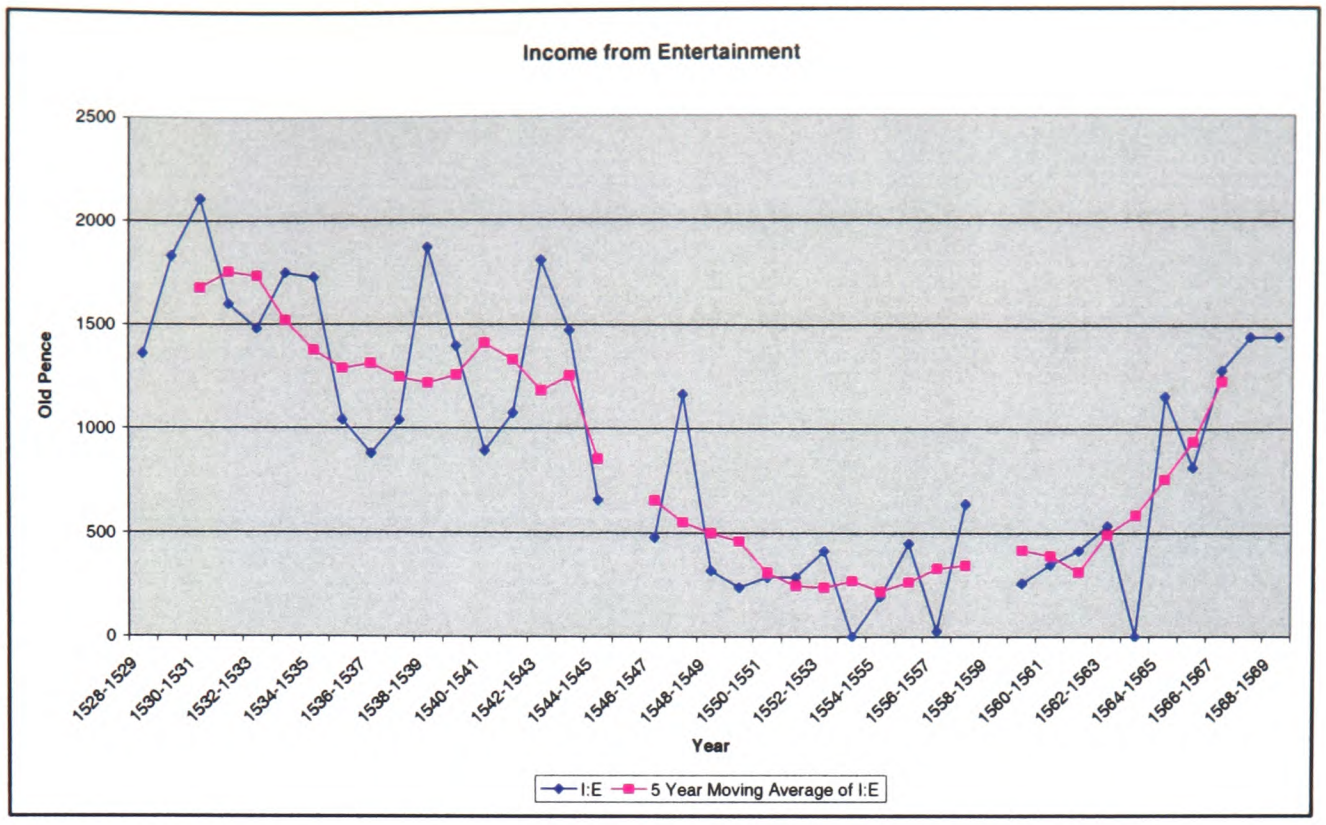
directly related. Carew notes in his *Survey* that when it came to making a profit from an ale the churchwardens' 'graciousnes in gathering, and good husbandry in expending' had a vital role to play.[46] Consequently, in order to ascertain the pattern of parishioner-giving at Thame's entertainments, it is apposite to use five-year moving averages.

It was always possible for sets of churchwardens to miscalculate what an ale's popularity would be: the May ales accounted for in 1557 produced a profit of only 27d. However, Thame's churchwardens were men of experience. They were drawn from the higher echelons of local society, and normally held office on more than one occasion. They could be expected to have done their homework; to have learnt from the experiences of their predecessors; and to (more or less) 'pitch' their ales on a scale that would prove the most profitable in the prevailing circumstances. Thus it may be concluded that the *general* pattern of the profitability of Thame's ales is correlative to the *general* pattern of the amounts of money that the parishioners spent at them.

The use of five-year moving averages suggests that the sums of money that Thame's parish community donated at entertainments declined even more decisively than did those gathered at collections, although receipts from entertainments began to rise again during the 1560s, as the graph below demonstrates.

---

[46] Carew, *Survey of Cornwall*, ed. Chynoweth, Orme, and Walsham, fo. 68v.



It is essential to appreciate that the declining incomes that Thame's wardens experienced in holding collections and hosting entertainments do not directly correlate to the extent to which their parishioners' financial support for them fluctuated. The parish's population was a rising one – meaning that, between the 1520s and the 1560s, more and more people came to be making contributions to the wardens' funds, albeit numbers probably fell during the 1550s.[47] The amount of circulating coinage in England also rose dramatically during this period. Standing at £847,576 in 1542, money supply rose to £1,754,867 in early 1549, and had reached £2,170,650 by July 1551. Moreover, despite its successive 'callings down', it had only fallen as low as £1,391,325 by 1562.[48] This meant that, penny for penny, the money received and spent at the end of the period was worth less than it had been at the beginning. Thus, had the 'average' Thame parishioner offered even a constant level of financial support to his wardens during this period, it is certain that the wardens' receipts would have risen considerably. Accordingly, since the very opposite was the case – with the

[47] It is almost certain that disease, in combination with high prices, caused above-average mortality in the parish at this time. Unfortunately, however, the parish's registers are not extant for this period.
[48] J. D. Gould, *The Great Debasement: currency and the economy in mid-Tudor England* (Oxford, 1970), esp. pp. 81-2.

exceptions of collections in the later part of Mary's reign, and entertainments in the 1560s – it is clear that the level of financial support offered by Thame's 'average parishioner' collapsed dramatically, falling even more decisively in real terms than the graphs of the wardens' receipts would immediately suggest.

iii. Determinants

There are two possible ways of explaining changes in parishioner-giving. First, a church might come to require more or less money for its day-to-day operations, affecting the need for parishioner-giving. Conversely, however, a parish community might simply become more or less willing to support its church.

Thame's churchwardens' accounts record what the churchwardens did on behalf of their church; but not what they thought about the level of funding available for it; and this problem is compounded by the threshold for sufficient income varying on an annual basis. It is, nonetheless, possible to deduce that Thame's parishioners did not simply give in accordance with their church's needs, as there is evidence of the wardens suffering cash-flow problems during this period. For instance, the account that Thame's wardens made on 15 May 1558 records that the (not-insignificant) sum of 12s 8d had been paid to two of the previous year's churchwardens for 'Money that the Churche was in their dettes at ther last accompt'.[49] Moreover, rather than being compensated for the loan, the wardens were not even repaid in full at this time.[50] The parish's finances were, at times, in grave difficulties. Two years after the repayment of the churchwardens' loan, 7s had to be 'payd more toward the Clarkes wages than we Could Receve of ye last yeres Gatherynge' –

[49] Thame CWAs, p. 138.
[50] Ibid., p. 135.

implying that the clerk had been underpaid in the previous year.[51] Supporting a clerk was costly; but its costs were predictable. In other words, Thame's churchwardens could not always rely on raising the necessary funds even for their regular expenses. Thus it is clear that the parishioners' donations did not simply dwindle in correlation with the church's needs. Despite their decreased expenditure, Thame's churchwardens were, by the 1550s, in direr need of funding than their predecessors had ever been – perhaps being a cause of parish office-holding becoming less exclusive at this time.[52]

That the parish community's willingness to fund its churchwardens altered – and, generally speaking, fell – was publicly perceived. Thame's parish church had received strong financial backing in the 1520s and 1530s. Thus confidence in the church's financial position had been buoyant. Although in the early 1530s more money had been spent on the bells than the churchwardens had had in hand, the serving wardens had endured no cash-flow problems at this time – in stark contrast with later years. The sum of £8 6s 8d had simply been borrowed from 'Master vicar' and from 'Richard Ray Balyffe', with the money being repaid in the following year.[53] Such confidence in the church's financial position was not, however, manifest twenty or thirty years down the line. Although the churchwardens sometimes subsidised parish expenses, other men seem to have been loath to lend money to the church – despite, or rather because of, its financial difficulties. The solitary exception was the long-serving (and perhaps long-suffering!) clerk, Simon Synckler. An account dated 27 May 1565 records that Synckler had finally been paid the 24s which he had been

---

[51] Ibid., p. 145.
[52] The parish's office-holding becoming less exclusive is discussed in Chapter II.
[53] This repayment: Thame CWAs, p. 14.

owed 'for settinge Uppe the Orgayns'.[54] Simon Synckler must have been more aware of the church's financial position than most; and so it is likely that, when this money had been lent, he had had little anticipation of it being repaid promptly. Thus it is pertinent to note Synckler's position of employee – not just of God, but of the churchwardens, and of the parish as a whole. Indeed, it is quite possible that Synckler was pressurised into lending money to the churchwardens; or, at very least, that if the parish suffered a shortfall, the task fell to him, as well as to the churchwardens, to make up the difference.

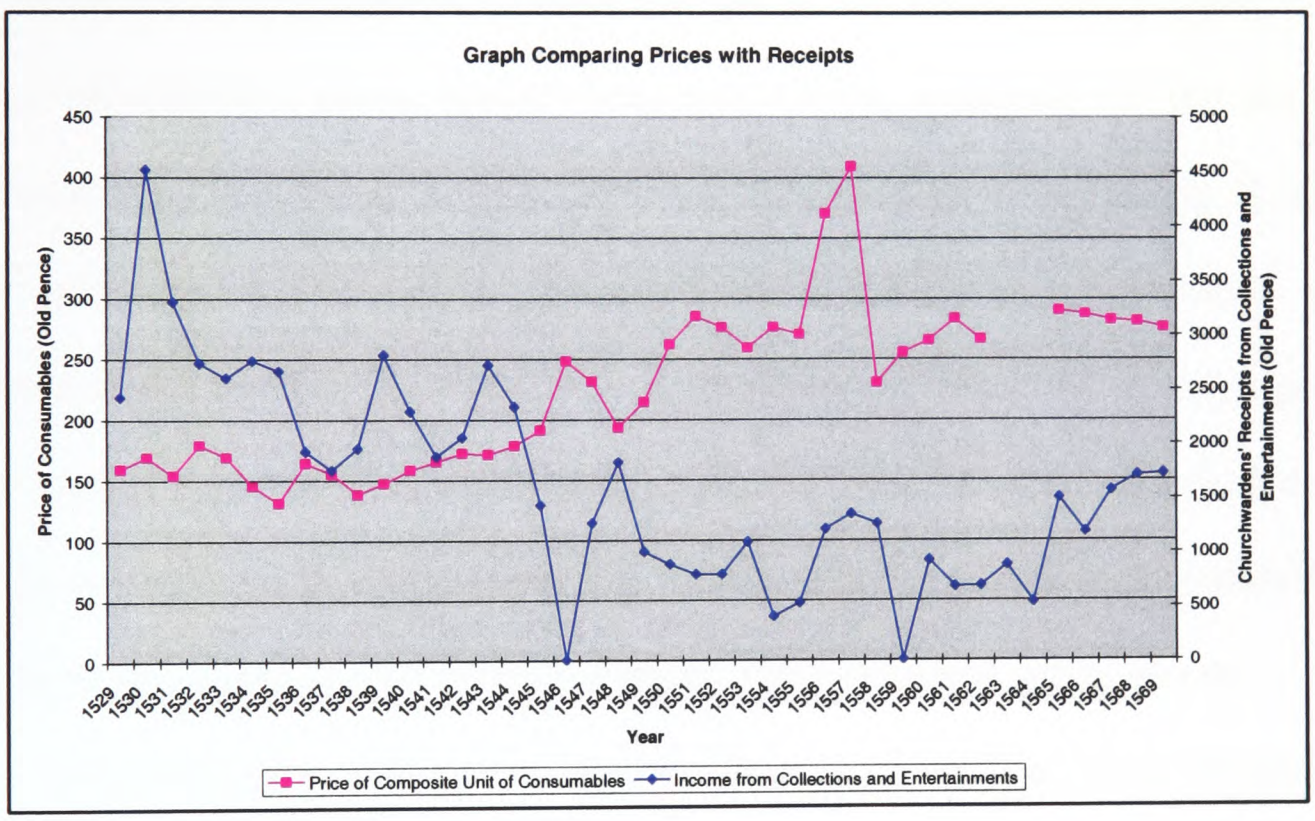
Why did this happen? Why did Thame's parish community become less willing to fund its churchwardens? This decline in giving coincided with the heavy taxation of Thame's parishioners, which was particularly onerous between 1544 and 1558 – although the peace of the 1560s alleviated matters somewhat. This was, moreover, an era in which Thame's parishioners faced harvest failures and famine. These socio-economic pressures must have had some impact. And yet, they are in no way explanatory of the fluctuation in Thame's wardens' receipts, and still less so of the changes in the parish community's giving. The waning of the parishioners' support pre-dated the period of heavy taxation: it was already discernible before the mid-1540s. Likewise, the parishioners' decline in support was not correlative to socio-economic hardship. The Phelps Brown and Hopkins' ratios for the prices of consumables are by no means flawless.[55] They are, nevertheless, enlightening. If the declining receipts of Thame's churchwardens' collections and entertainments had been due solely to prevailing socio-economic circumstance, they would have been

---

[54] Ibid., p. 162. The accounts do not make clear when Synckler made this loan, and there are no further references alluding to the matter.

[55] The Phelps Brown and Hopkins' ratios cannot be indicative of the precise prices of consumables in Thame: prices were extremely place-specific. The ratios are published in E. H. Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins, 'Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, compared with Builders' Wage-rates', *Economica*, new ser., 23 (1956), 296-314, esp. 312.

inversely proportional to price-levels. However, whilst the figures for the churchwardens' income from collections and entertainments cannot be said to be entirely dissociated from price-levels, the graph below (which compares Thame's churchwardens' income from collections and entertainments with the Phelps Brown and Hopkins' ratios for the prices of consumables) demonstrates that the connection is not nearly close enough, perhaps most notably in the late 1550s, for it to be concluded that it was price-levels which determined the wardens' receipts.



Multifarious factors influenced parishioner-giving. But the fluctuation in the churchwardens' receipts was not simply determined by the interaction of external pressures. The attitudes of the parish community were vital forces to be reckoned with. If Thame's churchwardens wanted their receipts to rise, the support of their parishioners had to be won.

iv. Stimuli

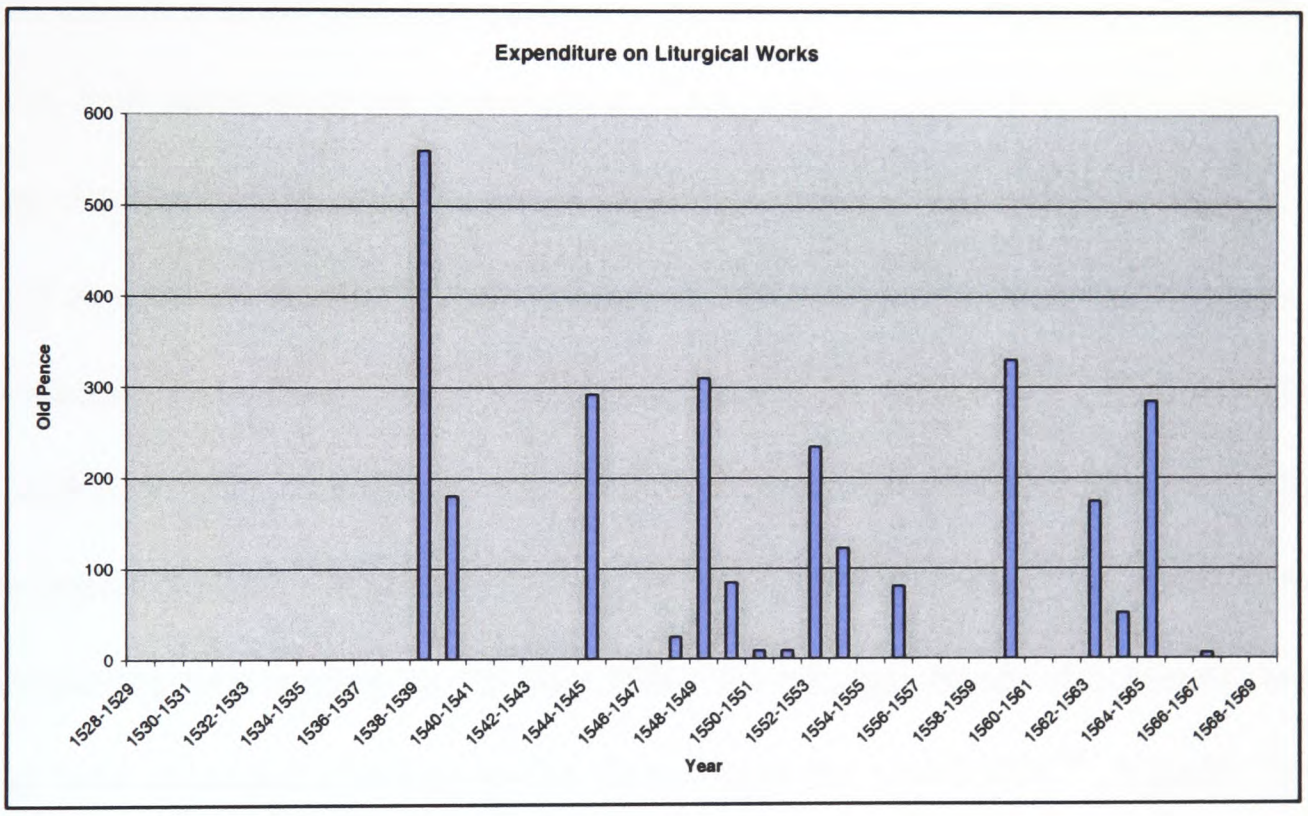
There can be little doubt that the sale of the parish's goods during the reign of Edward VI served as a disincentive to parishioner-giving. The churchwardens sold very little, besides the church bells, that had been provided by the parish community as a whole. (Most items which the wardens sold had been the gift of wealthy individuals.) Nonetheless, the wardens' sale of the church's goods seems to have caused widespread disquiet in the parish: it was the 'moost parte of the inhabytauntes & parysshyoners' who alleged (albeit incorrectly) that these sales had allowed the churchwardens, amongst others, to personally profit to the tune of over £300.[56] The sale of the church's goods proved disastrous for the reputation of the parish's churchwardens. Yet it was, at most, only a contributory factor in causing Thame's parish community to become less enthusiastic about funding its parish church, with the onset of this trend in parishioner-giving pre-dating the sale of the church's goods by at least a decade. The parish community did not reduce its churchwardens' funding in response to a single incident: it reflected the parishioners' (collective) reaction to the actions of their parish's wardens over a sustained period of time.

Successive sets of Thame's churchwardens facilitated significant changes in parish worship. Thame was party to England's break with Rome: the last payments of 'Peter's Pence' were recorded on 22 May 1533.[57] Yet the wardens did not only dissociate their parishioners from the pope: they also changed their relationship with the Almighty. The obits held for the church's benefactors failed to outlast the Henrician regime.[58] (It was perhaps in lieu of the bread and ale that had been

---

[56] Thame CWAs, p. 545. This is a copy (made by the Public Record Office in 1906) of Inventories of Church Goods (Exchequer, King's Remembrancer) Temp., Edward the Sixth, Oxfordshire, Bundle 7, No. 165, m. 5. See also *Chantry Certificates*, ed. Graham, pp. 115-6.
[57] Thame CWAs, p. 20.
[58] The last obit for this purpose was held in the accounting year which ended on 15 May 1547: Thame CWAs, p. 82.

distributed in memory of Hugh Hunt and 'all good benefactors' that the Edwardian churchwardens offered succour to some of their most needy parishioners.)[59] Thame's wardens also dutifully bought the successive Books of Common Prayer, making a studied point of detailing these purchases in their accounts, and generally buying in duplicate (one book perhaps being for 'Old Thame', and the other for 'New').[60] From the late 1530s, the purchase of liturgical texts became customary, as the churchwardens' spending pattern, illustrated by the graph below, makes clear.



At least some of these texts became available for public consultation. The wardens bought a 'byble of the largest Volume' for the church at some point between May 1539 and May 1540 at the cost of 15s. But it is the wardens' additional expenditure of 8d, enabling them to buy a 'chayne & a stapull', that is especially enlightening. [61]

---

[59] The churchwardens occasionally detail how the money spent on these obits was used: for example, Thame CWAs, p. 29. The obits for the benefactors were important events in the parish, and substantially more money was spent on charitable causes at each of these annual events than was spent at the obit of Queen Jane. (Compare the figures in Thame CWAs, p. 42.)

[60] Thame CWAs, pp. 93, 116, 144.

[61] Ibid., p. 50.

It is this that demonstrates that, whether literate or not, the inhabitants of Henrician Thame began to share a common right of access to the Word of God.

The interior of the church reflected the liturgical changes in the parish. Thame's altars were taken down (with the stones, allegedly, being 'caryed awey ... by nyght'), and a communion table and two forms were erected on 25 January 1551. (Whilst it was probably a little before this date that Thomas Geyt pulled timberwork around the high altar down, it was not until 20 December 1552 that George Ansley was paid 10s 4d in part payment for taking down the altars, suggesting that the table and the church's altars had coexisted for a period of time.)[62] However, by 1553, the wardens had supplanted the communion table with a high altar once again, with George Anesley being paid 4s for its making. Indeed, it seems that change was effected as early as August of that year, since bread and wine were only bought 'for ye Comunion table frome Ester to Bartylmewetyd [24 August]'.[63] (Edward VI had died on 6 July 1553, with Mary only being proclaimed Queen in London on 19 July.) The wardens evidently erected additional altars thereafter: a priest was paid 3s 4d in the accounting year ending on 19 May 1560 'for takynge downe the *aulters*', whilst another altar remained standing in the church until the mid-1560s.[64] Equally, whilst Thame retained its Rood loft until the reign of Elizabeth, the Rood itself had been removed from the church during the Edwardian period; and so the wardens restored a Rood, complete with figures of Mary and John, to the church during Mary's reign.

The changes wrought were, to an extent, permanent. Later vestments, for example, were never as ornate as their pre-Reformation counterparts. Pre-

---

[62] Ibid., pp. 545, 102-4. Christopher Haigh states that Thame's churchwardens did not replace their altar with a communion table until Christmas 1552: *English Reformations: religion, politics, and society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), p. 177. However, the relevant account spans a period of two years (rather than the usual one), with the account's chronological nature making it implausible to date the events thus.

[63] Thame CWAs, p. 120.

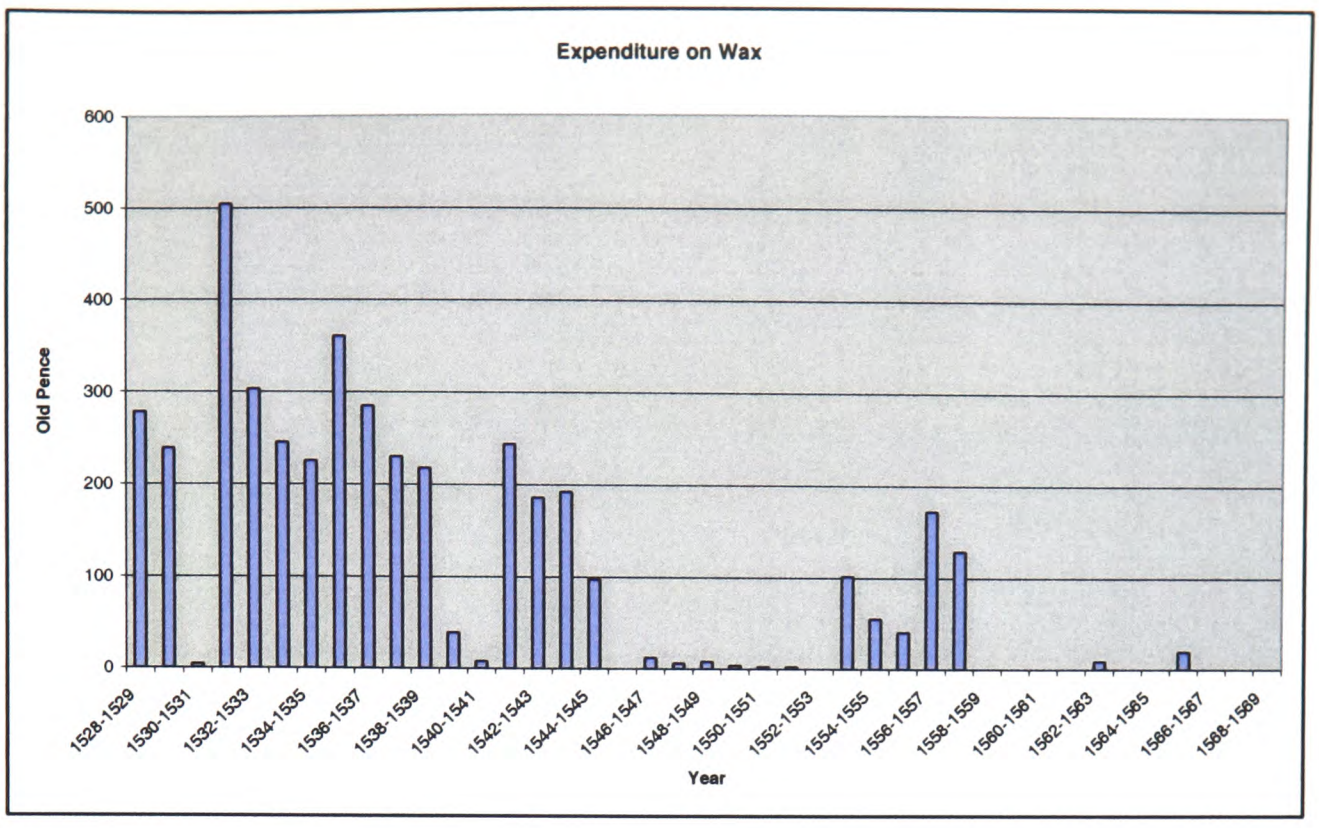
[64] Ibid., pp. 145 (emphasis is my own), 160 (8d was paid 'for Pullinge Downe the aulter').

Reformation pictures were, moreover, stripped from the walls of church. Early in Edward's reign 'ye pargitor' was paid 22s 9d 'for 39 days work in Whitt lymynge of the Churche'. Then, using the same set of scaffolding as had the pargitor, the painter then set to work, receiving 26s 8d-worth of colours, and being paid 19s as his wage.[65] Marian attempts at interior decoration seem, in contrast, to have been somewhat half-hearted. In addition to this, as the years passed, the parish church came to be seen in a different light – quite literally. Pre-Reformation Thame had harboured the chantry of St. Christopher, with separate lights (with their own stocks) being kept for the sepulchre, All Souls, St. Michael, Our Lady, the Trinity, and St. Thomas the Apostle. The 'Men of Morton' had also regularly raised funds for the Rood light through the hosting of ales.[66] These institutions were abolished in the 1540s, and their activities banned. In addition to this, Thame's churchwardens spent substantially less money on wax from this decade onwards – a significant change, since it indicated a meaningful alteration in the church's devotional practices. The graph below charts Thame's churchwardens' expenditure on wax, although it is necessary to analyse the general trend as opposed to the figures from specific years.

---

[65] The relevant payments appear in the account made in May 1548: Thame CWAs, p. 88.

[66] This list is intended to be illustrative rather than definitive, for the reasons outlined in Chapter II. The evidence has been gathered from *Chantry Certificates*, ed. Graham, pp. 16-7, 49; *Itinerary of John Leland*, ed. Toulmin Smith, i, 115; and Thame CWAs, pp. 6, 13, 39, 40, 45, 53, 61, 90. There is evidence that the sepulchre light fund was revived in the first year of Mary's reign: Thame CWAs, p. 119.



So, vacillating though it was, Thame's Reformation had an element of permanence. Whilst it was possible for successive governments to reverse individual policies, it was impossible to entirely turn back the clock.

v. Conclusions

As Thame's Henrician and Edwardian churchwardens wrought religious changes in their parish church, the parish community's support for their activities altered and, broadly speaking, fell – falling particularly rapidly from the mid-1540s. The accession of Mary, and the restoration of more traditional practices, brought some respite in the form of increased receipts from collections in the late Marian period, made all the more notable given the dire socio-economic conditions of that time. However, no sustained recovery in the parish's enthusiasm to give was forthcoming before the early-to-mid-1560s. Thame's parishioners donated, in real terms, much less money to their churchwardens' funds in the 1560s than they had done in the 1520s and 1530s. Yet the monies which they raised at this time implied an increased, and increasing, enthusiasm for parish-fundraising nonetheless. There was, if

anything, less need for the parishioners to contribute towards the expenses of their parish church in the 1560s than there had been hitherto, not least because the churchwardens were no longer paying a regular stipend to a clerk. Equally, this upturn came at a time when the parishioners' resources were, in some respects, more stretched than they had otherwise been in recent years. Whilst the building of the highway had been the responsibility of the churchwardens, its long-term maintenance was not; and so, in the 1560s, the highway's overseers were, as well as the churchwardens, seeking funding from Thame's parish community.[67]

From this general pattern of enthusiasm, it would be tempting to draw the conclusion that Thame was a community that was religiously conservative in its attitudes: a community that, whilst being compliant with government prescription, registered its disapproval of the parish-level religious changes wrought by the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations; a community that welcomed the counter-reforms of Mary. The analysis of the churchwardens' accounts may be manipulated to 'prove' such a deduction. The parish community reduced the level of financial support offered to its churchwardens throughout the late Henrician and the Edwardian periods whilst, in contrast, the Marian period witnessed extra collections being held for the church.

A conclusion such as this is the dream of the revisionist. It depicts a Reformation that was not wanted; one that was only reluctantly accepted. But, somewhat inconveniently, this dream constitutes no reality. Whilst the 'revisionist' conclusion is a compellingly neat one, it is flawed nonetheless – at least in the case of

---

[67] A stray account for the highway (covering the period 1559 to 1560) records the contributions of no fewer than 63 householders to the fund, suggesting that the financial support offered to the overseers was broadly-based. This account has been bound with the parish's churchwardens' accounts: Thame CWAs, pp. 357-9. Admittedly, previous generations of parishioners had (presumably) made donations to the parish's subsidiary institutions as well as to the churchwardens. But, by the 1560s, these institutions had been long-since dissolved; and it also remains unclear as to how broadly-based the giving to them had ever been.

Thame. There are two principal caveats to the interpretation that Thame's parishioners were 'conservative' in their religious attitudes. First, the decline in enthusiasm – as measured by the level of financial support that the parish community chose to grant its church – is in no way correlative to the degree to which a 'conservative' community would have been dissatisfied with the practices of its changing church. Perhaps most notably, support for the Marian church came relatively late in the day, and was only manifest in the parish's collections – despite the fact that the central features of conservative religious orthodoxy were restored to Thame soon after Mary's accession. Secondly, this interpretation does not adequately explain the revival of parish enthusiasm in the 1560s – evident in the increased profitability of the church's ales – despite the probable population growth of this decade.

The reality of Reformation Thame is rather more complex than any revisionist interpretation would give credit. 'Religion' was not the only issue at stake: enthusiasm was affected by multifarious interdependent factors. Perhaps the dynamic which can be identified most readily is the personal distrust of the churchwardens in the late 1540s and early 1550s. This situation was hardly one to encourage men to dig deep into their pockets, and does much to explain why, on the surface, Thame's parishioners did not display much enthusiasm for the religious changes of Mary's reign. Individual piety might well have seemed a more attractive means of expression at a time when the parish's churchwardens were believed to have behaved so rapaciously. Yet factors cannot hope to be separated, and it is debateable how profitable attempts to do so are. This being the case, one cannot claim that analysis of Thame's churchwardens' accounts can tell us 'what the faith of the parish community was' in absolute terms. What it does do, however, is illuminate a community's

changing attitudes towards its parish church; and it is from this that certain conclusions about faith may be construed.

In the space of forty years, attitudes seem to have come almost full circle. In the midst of the machinations of the mid-Tudor period, the parish church lost a great deal of support. Moreover, although a brief (and relatively small) flurry of enthusiasm was forthcoming towards the end of the Marian period, an apparent move in the direction of the strength and stability present in pre-Reformation church-funding was not forthcoming until the 1560s. But why was this so? How could the Elizabethan church be popular? Surely it was substantively different to the pre-Reformation church – the one which *had* been popular in Thame? The answer must lie in the fact that, for whatever reasons, the attitudes of the parish community had changed. By the 1560s, a new generation inhabited the parish: a generation that felt differently to its fathers; a generation that had grown up in a reforming Church and church. Thame's parishioners had supported pre-Reformation religious practices. But, evidently, they could grow to support their successors.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PARISH OF PYRTON, 1548-1570

England's Reformations could affect parish communities in very different ways. This was the case even within a common diocese and county – as the parish of Pyrton demonstrates.

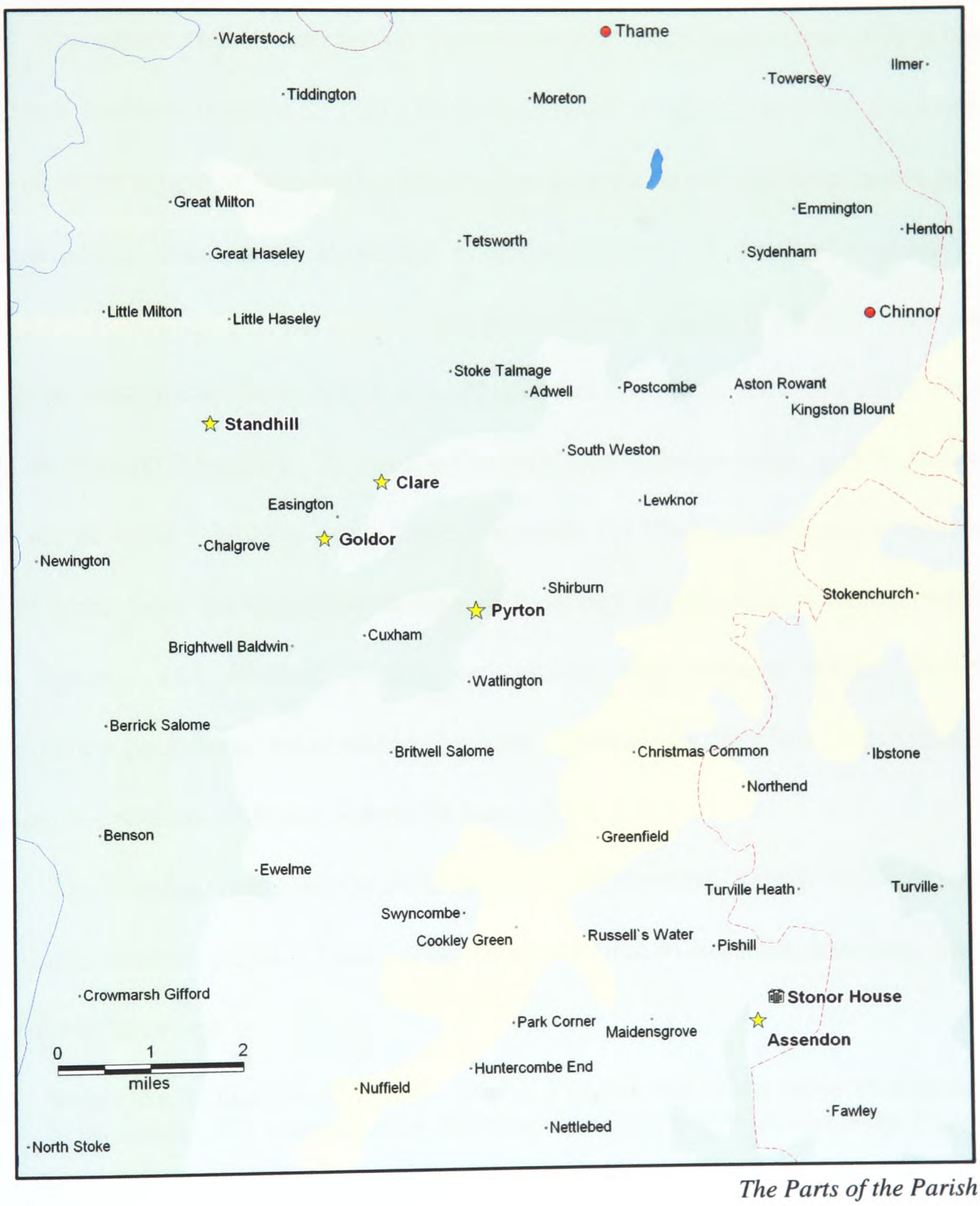
I. THE PARISH OF PYRTON

The village of Pyrton lies to the south-east of Oxford. An ancient settlement, the manor was given to the dean and chapter of St. George's Chapel, Windsor in 1480. The dean and chapter retained the lordship until the nineteenth century. Their manorial court was the most important in the hundred: it was attended by the dean and chapter's tenants in Pyrton, and by the lords of the dependent manors in Clare, Goldor, Standhill, Assendon, and Pishill Venables. The manor site was leased to various local families. In the sixteenth century, it was farmed by generations of the Symeon family, with Thomas Symeon's sixteenth-century brass in Pyrton church styling him as 'sometyme fermor of Purton'.[1]

The village had a church by 987; and by the twelfth century the parish covered an area of some 4,847 acres, in two detached portions. The northern part of the parish comprised the tithings of Pyrton, Clare, Goldor, and Standhill. Assendon, later

[1] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, viii, 166-7, 149. Court rolls survive for the period 1381-1768, but are not in continuous series. Thomas Symeon died in 1522. His brass remains in the church, and can be seen to this day.

known as Stonor, constituted the southern section.[2] Thus, whilst the parish was only one-and-a-half miles in width at its broadest point, it stretched for about twelve miles in length.



The Parts of the Parish

[2] Assendon/Stonor was also known as Upper Assendon.

Pyrton rectory was granted to Norton Priory in Cheshire at the priory's twelfth-century foundation. The priory was dissolved in 1536. In 1546, the rectory passed to the dean and chapter of Christ Church, Oxford; and Christ Church continued Norton Priory's policy of farming out the rectory, although Christ Church exempted the rectory's advowson and timber.[3]

The parish church was served by both a vicar and a curate: the 1526 subsidy collection assessed them at £12 and £6 respectively. A third clergyman attended to the dependent chapel at Standhill, although few services were held here, and it seems to have ceased functioning altogether at about the time of the Reformation.[4] In around 1520, Bishop Atwater's visitation found Pyrton church to be in a sorry state. The vicar was non-resident, and it was alleged that the curate had refused to bury a body on Passion Thursday. In addition to this, the vicarage, nave, and churchyard were all in ruins. Matters were little improved by Bishop Longland's visitation several years later: the parishioners refused to accept the account of churchwardens John Symeon and Richard Emery; the church was without books; and the churchyard's boundaries were still in disrepair. Longland's men had little option but to insist that remedy be found before the feast of All Saints.[5]

The Stonors were without doubt the most distinguished family to reside in this sometimes troubled parish. John Leland takes the time to describe their seat, Stonor Park, in his *Itinerary*:

> Stoner is a 3. miles out of Henley. Ther is a fayre parke, and a waren of connes, and fayre woods. The mansion place standithe clyminge on an hille, and hathe 2. courtes

---

[3] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, viii, 138, 155, 169.
[4] Information regarding the parish of Pyrton's clergy can be found in *A Subsidy Collected in the Diocese of Lincoln in 1526*, ed. H. Salter (Oxford Historical Soc., lxiii, 1909), p. 254; *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-1531*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (3 vols., Lincoln Record Soc., 1940-7), ii, 62; and *VCH*, Oxfordshire, viii, 171.
[5] *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln*, ed. Hamilton Thompson, i, 121 (Bishop Atwater's visitation), ii, 62 (Bishop Longland's visitation).

> buyldyd withe tymbar, brike and flynte. Syr Waltar Stonar now pocessor of it hathe augmentyd and strengthed the howse. The Stoners hathe longe had it in possessyon.[6]

The Stonors were one of Elizabethan Oxfordshire's leading Roman Catholic families. (In 1575 there were no resident Justices of the Peace for Pyrton Hundred because all the gentry were papists.)[7]

The Stonors played their part in parish life. A late fifteenth-century inventory notes that one of the family's two Mass books 'ys at Pyrton'.[8] Despite their recusant status, the Stonors' membership of the parish remained beyond question into the seventeenth century. Although William Stonor's children were not baptised in the parish church, the vicar of Pyrton, John Barnard, was prepared to include their names in his register 'uppon the entreatie of Master Sheapheard Master William Stoners Curat'. Mary, Francis, William, Thomas, and Martha Stonor were registered in 1627, with Katherine, Elizabeth, Arthur, and Henry following in 1634.[9] Nonetheless, the Stonor household was set apart from the parish community proper. On 14 June 1349, John de Stonore had been granted licence 'for the stay and habitation of six chaplains, regular or secular, to celebrate divine service for ever as he shall ordain in a chapel founded within the manor in honour of the Holy Trinity'.[10] Thereafter, the Stonors principally worshipped in this chapel, making Barnard's protestation in the parish register that he did not 'knowe the time place nor person when where or by whom

---

[6] *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (5 vols., Carbondale, 1964), v, 72.
[7] State Papers 12/96, fos. 19v-21r.
[8] *Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers, 1290-1483*, ed. Christine Carpenter (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 233-5.
[9] There are two registers extant for the parish. One is a paper register. The second is made of parchment, and seems to date from 1627-1634 as the first but not the second 'batch' of Stonor children are correctly listed under the years of their births/baptisms. The relevant entries in the paper register: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. D.D. Par. Pyrton e.7, fos. 11r, 11v, 15r. The relevant entries in the parchment register: ORO, MS. D.D. Par. Pyrton d.3, fos. 1v, 6r, 6v, 7v, 9v.
[10] This foundation is recorded in *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1348-1350, p. 290.

they [the Stonor children] were baptized' somewhat suspect.[11] The Stonor household did not provide officers for the parish church either.[12]

In the sixteenth century, Pyrton parish church served somewhere in the region of 120 men, women, and children.[13] Having never fully recovered from the Black Death, the village of Pyrton had only ten free tenants in 1548.[14] The parish's outlying areas were still less populous: the lay subsidy return of 1523 recorded only 26 taxpayers for the whole parish community, as opposed to the 137 contributors who were listed for Thame.[15] Most of Pyrton's parishioners worked the land; and occupational titles were rarely assigned in the parish's wills and subsidy returns. The parish was by no means self-sufficient though, with Stonor Park having to purchase many items from outside the parish.[16] But, despite the limitations in what could be produced locally, the parish community was a relatively affluent one. The 1523 lay subsidy returns provide tax assessments for an unusually broad spectrum of the population and, although Pyrton's parish community included no individual of very great wealth, its mean tax assessment was nearly double that of Thame, indicating that it enjoyed more widespread prosperity.[17]

---

[11] ORO, MS. D.D. Par. Pyrton d.3, fo. 1v. This entry was probably made between 1627 and 1634, when the parchment register was made.
[12] At least, this was the case in the period 1548-1570. I have not, therefore, included the Stonor household in the analysis of Pyrton's 'parish community'.
[13] This population figure has been calculated according to the principles of Julian Cornwall: 'English Population in the Early Sixteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, second ser., 23 (1970), 32-44, esp. 35-6. The lay subsidy figures used: National Archives, E 179/161/198, rots. 26d-27 (1523 lay subsidy).
[14] There had been over forty free tenants at the end of the thirteenth century, albeit the amalgamation of landholdings was a contributory factor in the fall in tenant-numbers: *VCH*, Oxfordshire, viii, 159-60. Land tenure in the parish is discussed in Barbara M. Tearle, 'Customary landholding in the principal manor of Pyrton, Oxfordshire, from the 15th to the 18th centuries' (Oxford Univ. M.St. thesis, 1995).
[15] NA, E 179/161/198, rots. 26d-27 (Pyrton), 11-11d (Thame). The very size of the parish church suggests that the congregation was never great. Whilst the church was rebuilt in the nineteenth century, it seems to have remained similar in its scale and, indeed, retains various twelfth-century features.
[16] *Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers*, ed. Carpenter.
[17] The figures have been calculated from NA, E 179/161/198, rots. 26d-27 (Pyrton), 11-11d (Thame).

II. PYRTON'S CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS

The parish of Pyrton was served by two churchwardens. Each warden generally served for two years at a time, with one new warden being elected annually. The wardens' accounts survive with only marginal damage for the years 1548 to 1570.[18] Because the accounts are working records, they are at times difficult to construe. This is not least because the wardens' funds were not always held in the church box, instead sometimes lying in the hands of (unspecified) individuals. These are, nonetheless, the definitive accounts of the parish. These are the accounts which were drawn up on an annual basis; which were modified and corrected; and which were presented for scrutiny, the auditors registering their approval with words such as 'satisfecit'. Moreover, wherever it can be assessed, the accounting appears competent.

Pyrton's accounts are by no means as detailed as those of Thame. In any given year, there are usually no more than twenty separately-recorded financial transactions. Yet Pyrton's accounts provide a remarkably comprehensive reflection of the parish's 'religious life' nonetheless, especially when they are used in conjunction with other sources. For instance, the relative modesty in the scale of the churchwardens' operations which the wardens' accounts suggest is supported by the inventory of church goods to which serving warden, Edmund Symeon, put his name on 29 July 1552. Symeon lists only: three bells in the steeple, two silver chalices, a copper cross, two old copes (one of which was of red velvet), three vestments and

[18] The accounts are transcribed in *Churchwardens' Accounts of Marston, Spelsbury, Pyrton*, ed. F. W. Weaver and G. N. Clark (Oxfordshire Record Soc., vi, 1925), pp. 67-95. However, this transcription is inadequate, and the original manuscript has been consulted throughout (Pyrton CWAs).

their albs, two old silk cloths, a veil cloth, a hand bell, two surplices, a rochet, six towels, and four tablecloths.[19]

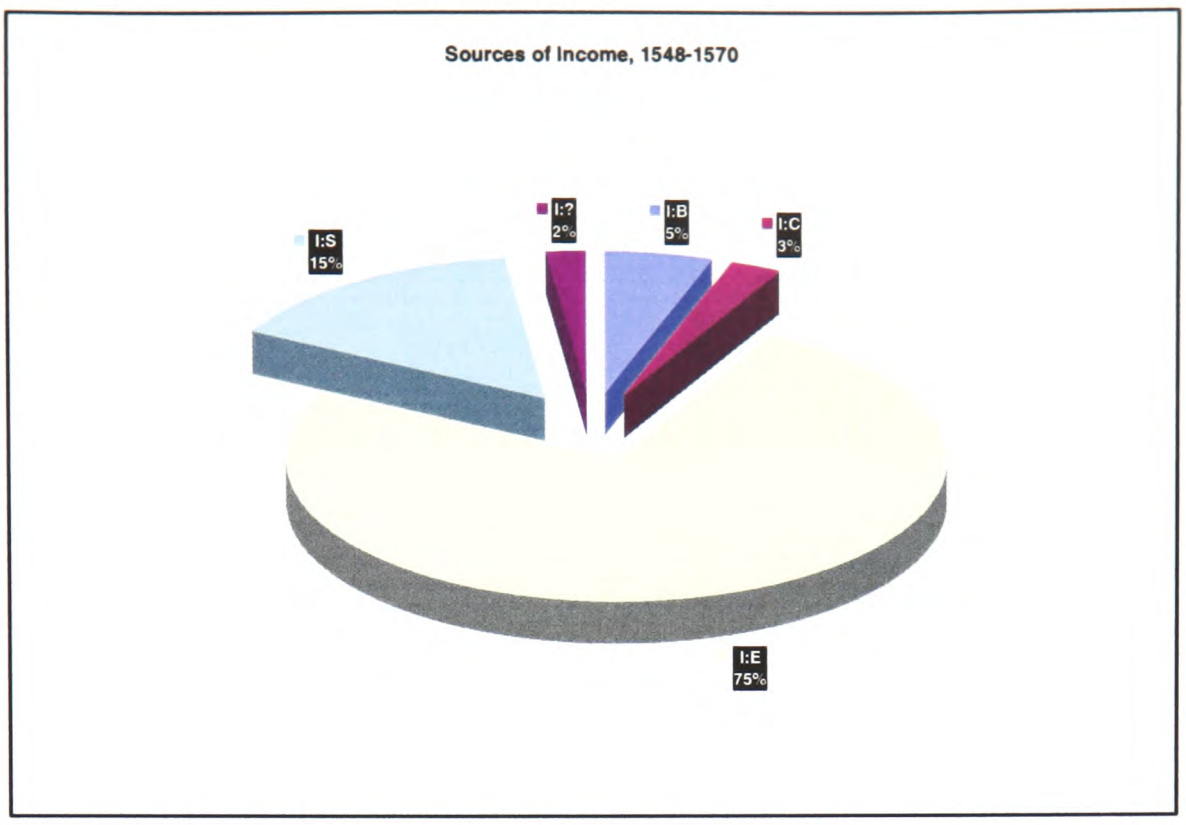
III. Reformations of the Parish Community

i. Dramatis personae

The Stonor family worshipped apart. Nonetheless, they and their kin made very real contributions to parish life. Generations of Stonors supported almshouses in Assendon.[20] Moreover, it was Sir Adrian Fortescue – who was related to the Stonors through marriage, and who arranged for his wife to be buried at Pyrton – who provided the parish church with its 'vestment of blak velvett with thappurtenaunces' in around 1520.[21] Yet, if the Stonors contributed any money to the churchwardens' funds, they contributed very little indeed. Over the period in question, the churchwardens relied on the profits of their ales to provide some three-quarters of their overall income, as the chart below demonstrates.

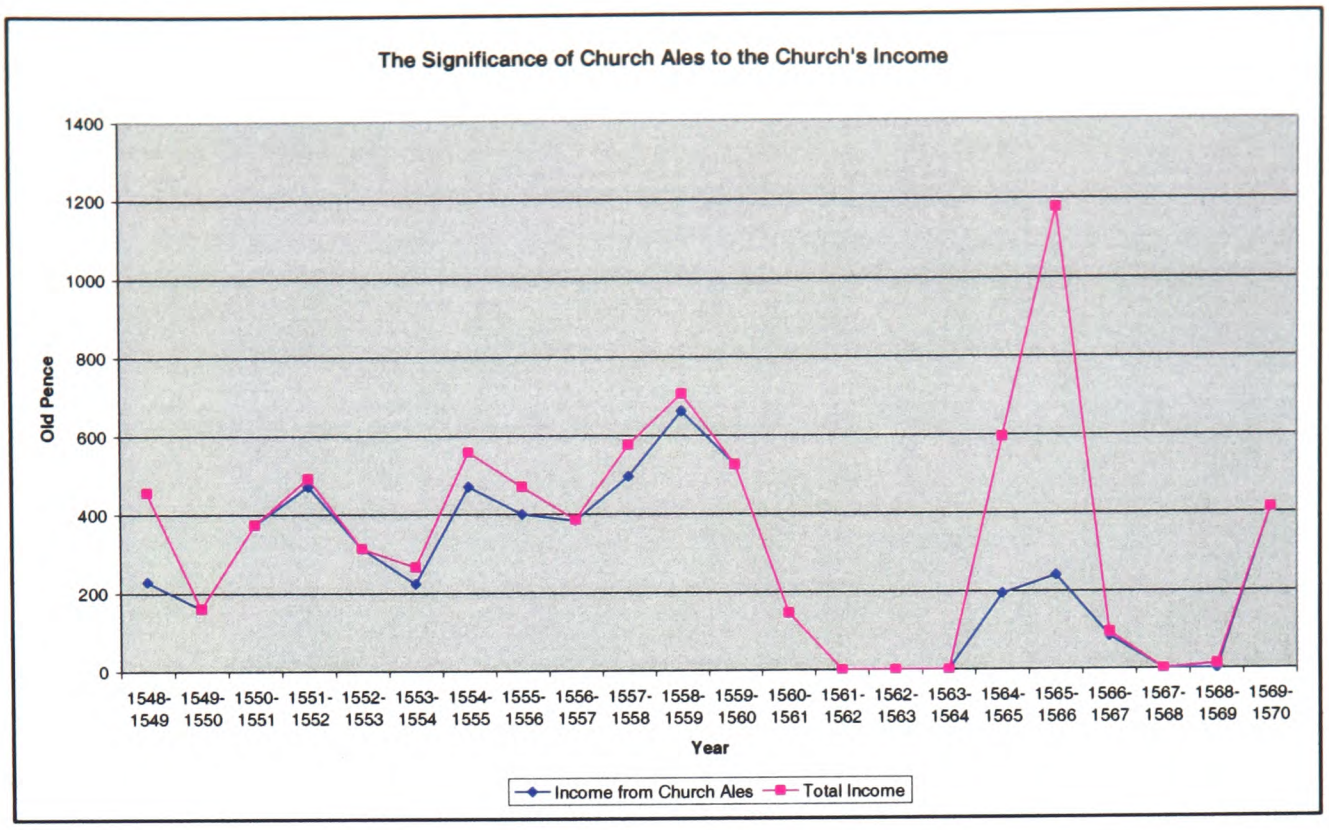
---

[19] *The Chantry Certificates and the Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods*, ed. Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Soc., i, 1919), p. 108.
[20] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, viii, 177.
[21] Thomas (Fortescue) Lord Clermont, *A History of the Family of Fortescue in all its Branches*, 2nd edn (London, 1880), pp. 280-5, esp. p. 283. The Fortescue claim to Stonor Park was challenged, with the matter being brought into Star Chamber.



Relevant Income Categories			
I:B	Benefactions	I:S	Sales of Church Goods
I:C	Collections	I:?	Indiscernible
I:E	Entertainment		

Indeed, a graph comparing the wardens' income from ales with their overall income demonstrates the extent to which the profits of ales were crucial to the funding of the parish.

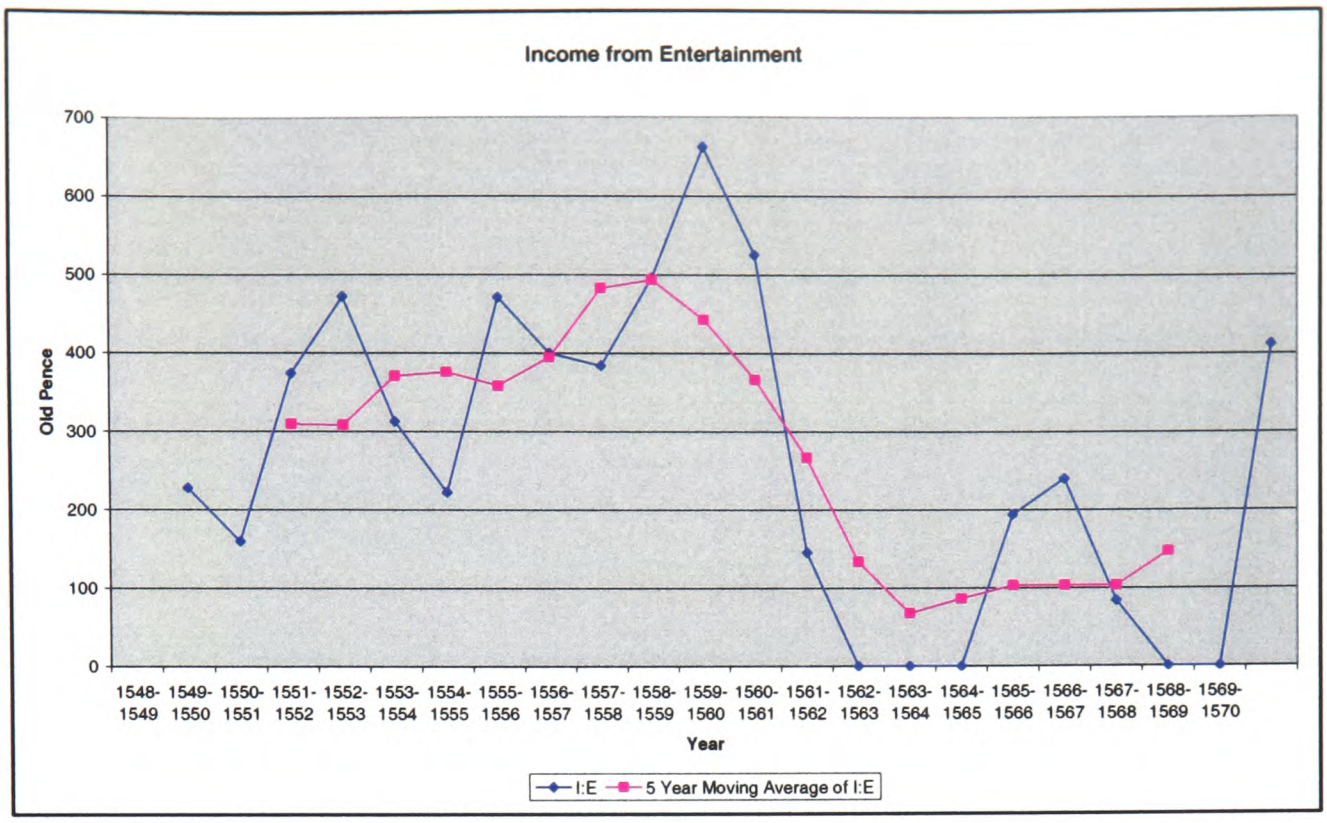


This meant that Pyrton's churchwardens were at least as reliant on the giving of their parish community as were the wardens at Thame.

ii. Data interpretation

The profits which Pyrton's churchwardens' made from their ales were by no means constant, even when five-year moving averages are employed.[22]

[22] The rationale for using five-year moving averages is detailed in Chapter IV.



The pattern of giving is, however, easier to determine at Pyrton than it is at Thame. The smaller time-frame ensures a more constant parish population. It also means that there was less variance in the quantity of circulating coinage.

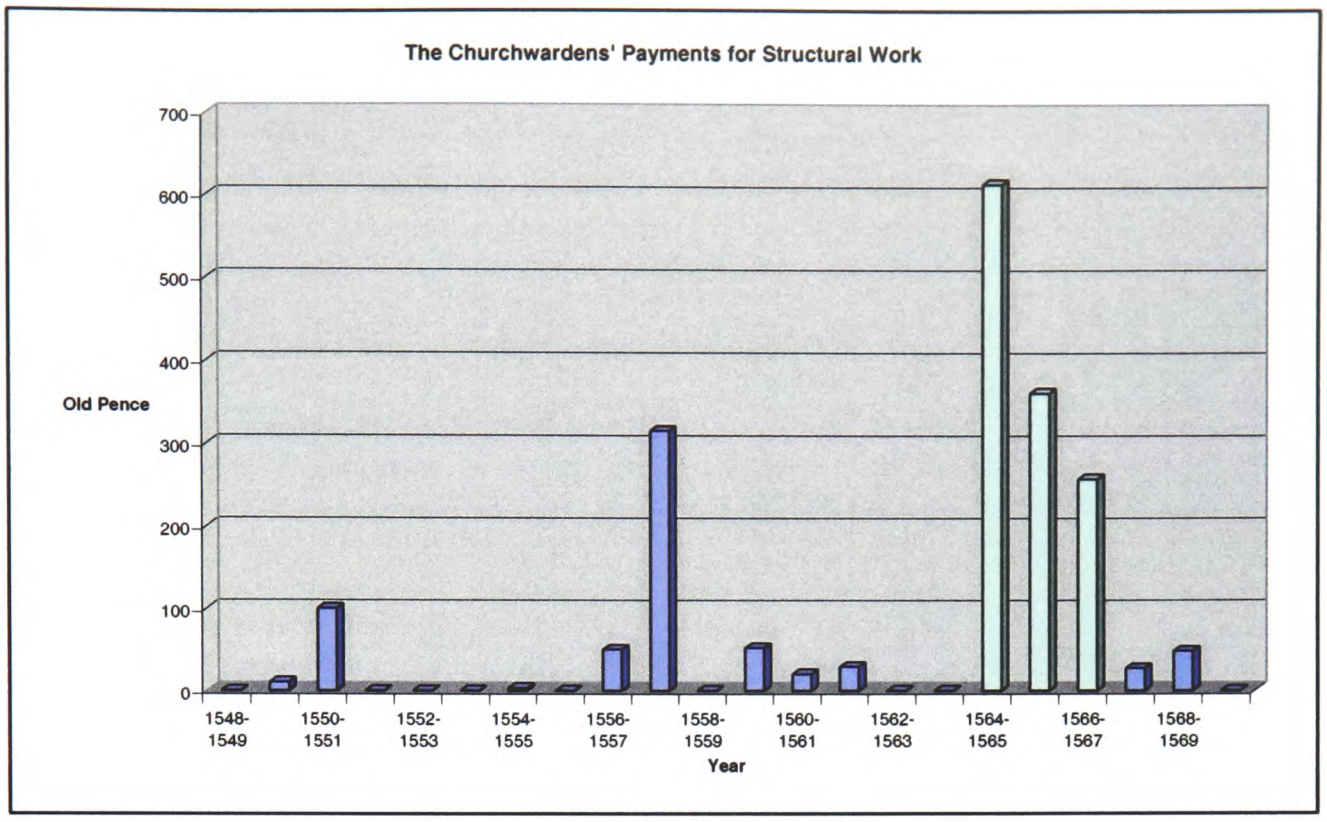
The wardens did not host ales every year. But in those years in which they held them, it is clear that Pyrton's parishioners varied how much they spent. (It is also possible that, at times, Pyrton's parishioners encouraged those from neighbouring parishes to attend their ales: Carew's *Survey of Cornwall* explains that 'neighbour parishes' would often 'spend their money together'.)[23]

iii. Determinants

As was the case at Thame, Pyrton's churchwardens were not automatically granted funds to meet their needs. The wardens undertook, in terms relative to the parish, substantial structural work on the church building between 1564 and 1566, as a graph illustrating the wardens' expenditure on the church fabric demonstrates. (The relevant years' expenditure is denoted in green.)

---

[23] *The Survey of Cornwall by Richard Carew*, ed. John Chynoweth, Nicholas Orme, and Alexandra Walsham (Devon and Cornwall Record Soc., new ser., xlvii, 2004), fo. 68v.

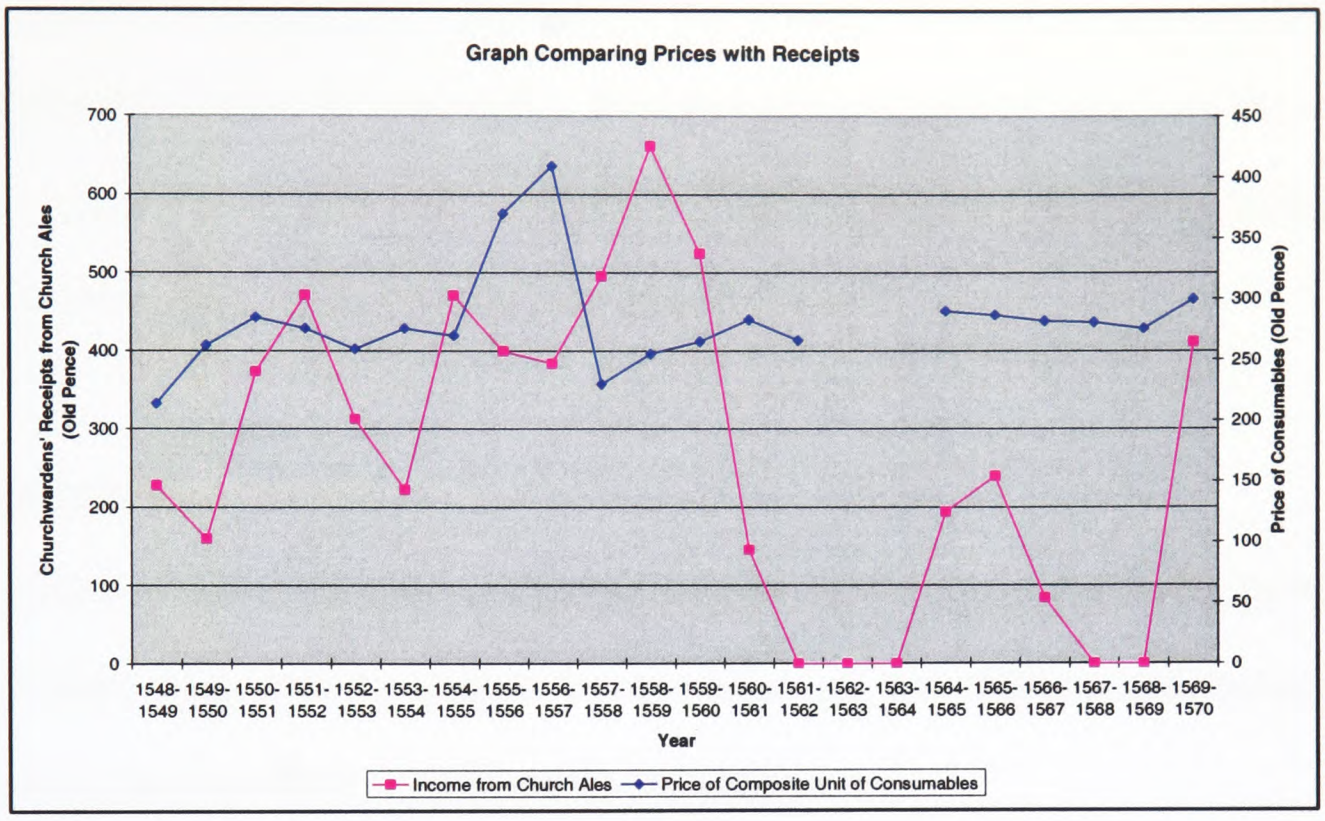


But the great disparity between the overall income received in these years, and the amount that was derived from the church ales, is significant. The churchwardens' ales actually raised less money in these years than was customary, meaning that the work had to be funded through alternative means. Whilst the relevant entries in the churchwardens' accounts are not explicit, it seems that much of this work had to be paid for through the sale of church goods, as well as by the generous contributions of 'Mr barnard vycore of pyrton' and 'goodman symeon'.[24]

To a considerable extent, Pyrton's parishioners could – and did – determine their wardens' receipts. External pressures did not force events: the Phelps Brown and Hopkins' ratios suggests that the parishioners' giving was not determined by socio-economic conditions. The graph below – which compares the churchwardens' receipts from entertainments (in those years in which they experienced receipts) with the Phelps Brown and Hopkins' ratios for the prices of consumables – demonstrates the lack of correlation between the parishioners' giving and the socio-economic

[24] Pyrton CWAs, p. 148, 46.

pressures that they faced. (Had the wardens' receipts been determined by price-levels they would have been, broadly speaking, inversely proportional to them. This is manifestly not the case.)



iv. Stimuli

The vacillating nature of orthodox religion expressed itself clearly in the parish of Pyrton. The evangelical Thomas Barnard was the incumbent under Edward VI and Elizabeth; but, during the reign of Mary, he was temporarily replaced by the Catholic Richard Marshall, dean of Christ Church.[25] In these circumstances, it is scarcely surprising that Pyrton's churchwardens should enable the reform of parish practices to the letter. The Prayer Books of 1549, 1552, and 1559 were acquired at the right times; and there is evidence of the successive destruction, reconstruction, and destruction of the altar and Rood over the period.[26] Indeed, as the years passed, it seems that at least some members of the community became more accustomed to the

[25] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, viii, 170; the New *Dictionary of National Biography* sub Richard Marshall [retrieved 26 April 2006].
[26] The purchase of the Prayer Books: Pyrton CWAs, pp. 29, 31, 39.

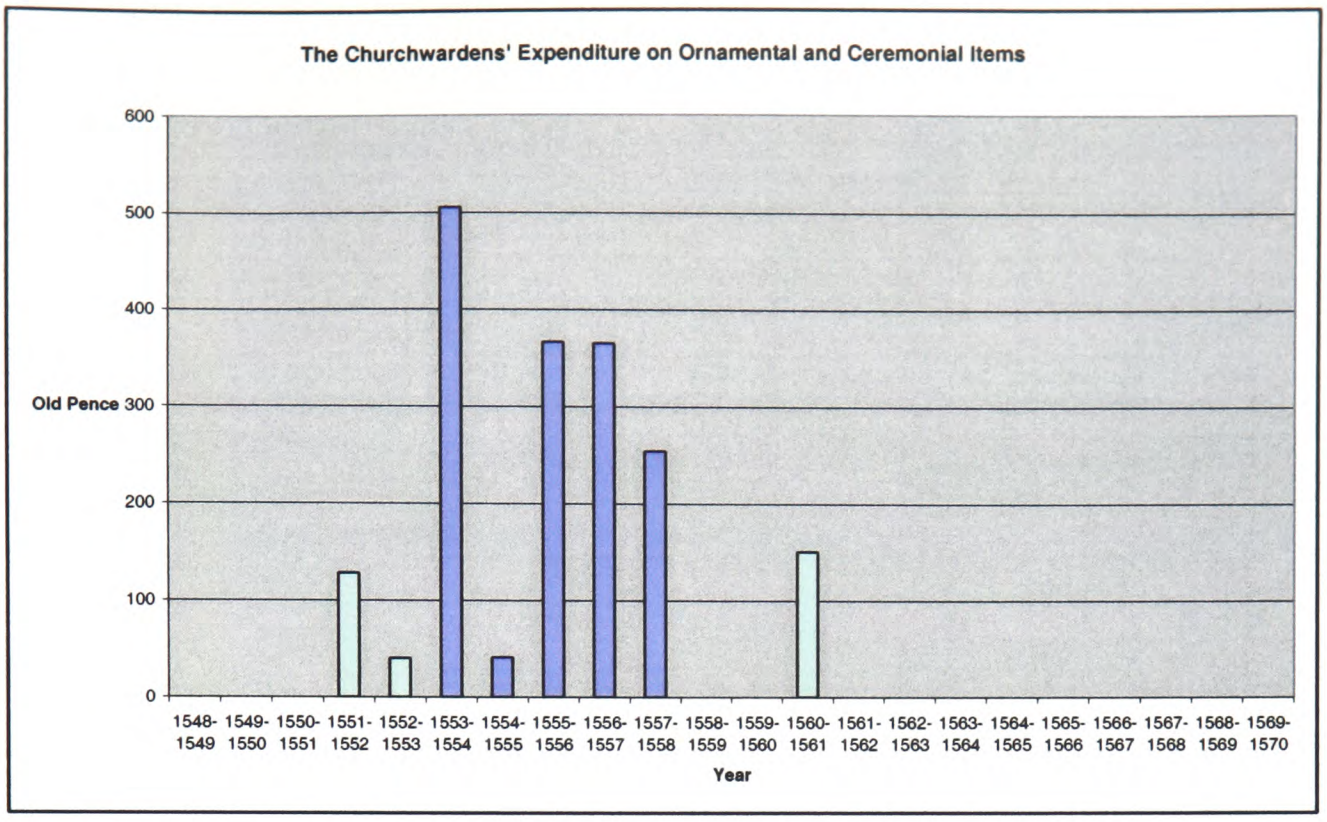
vacillating nature of orthodox religion, deeming it increasingly necessary to be seen to be conforming. The tone of the churchwardens' accounts alters: as time passes, it becomes more explicit about the changes that the parish church witnessed. In the reign of Edward VI, it may only be assumed that the altar was removed because a Lord's Table was purchased.[27] In contrast, it is clearly written in the account made in 1560 that the serving churchwardens, John Reading and John Woods, paid the clerk 8d 'for pullyng downe the alter', with the account for the next year commenting that 18d had been spent on the 'wipinge oute of the Images'.[28]

v. Conclusions

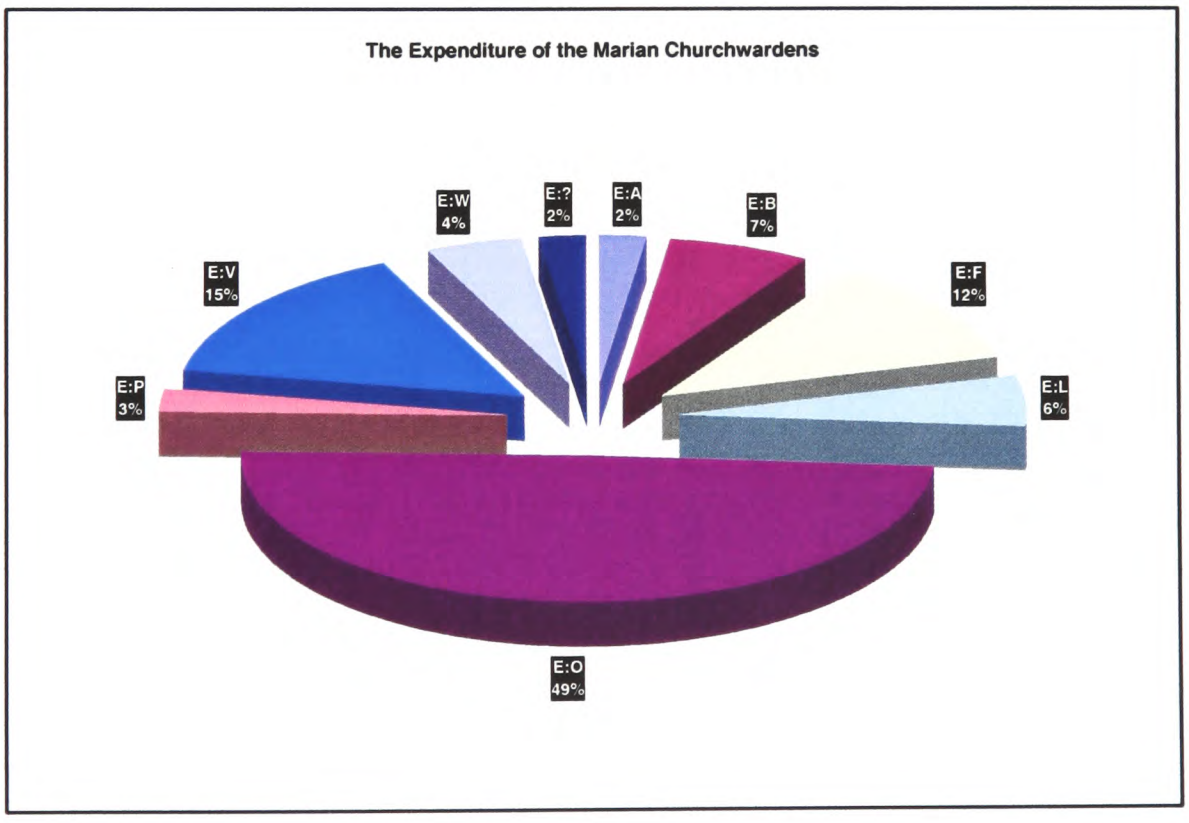
It is evident that, despite it being a period of acute socio-economic hardship, Pyrton's parishioners were keen to support the operations of their Marian churchwardens, promoting the restoration of religious traditionalism.

Most sets of Pyrton's churchwardens spent little or nothing on ornamental items and ceremonial costs, as the graph below illustrates. (Blue denotes Pyrton's Marian churchwardens' spending on ornamental items and ceremonial costs. Green represents the spending of the other sets of churchwardens.)

[27] Ibid., p. 31.
[28] Ibid., p. 40.

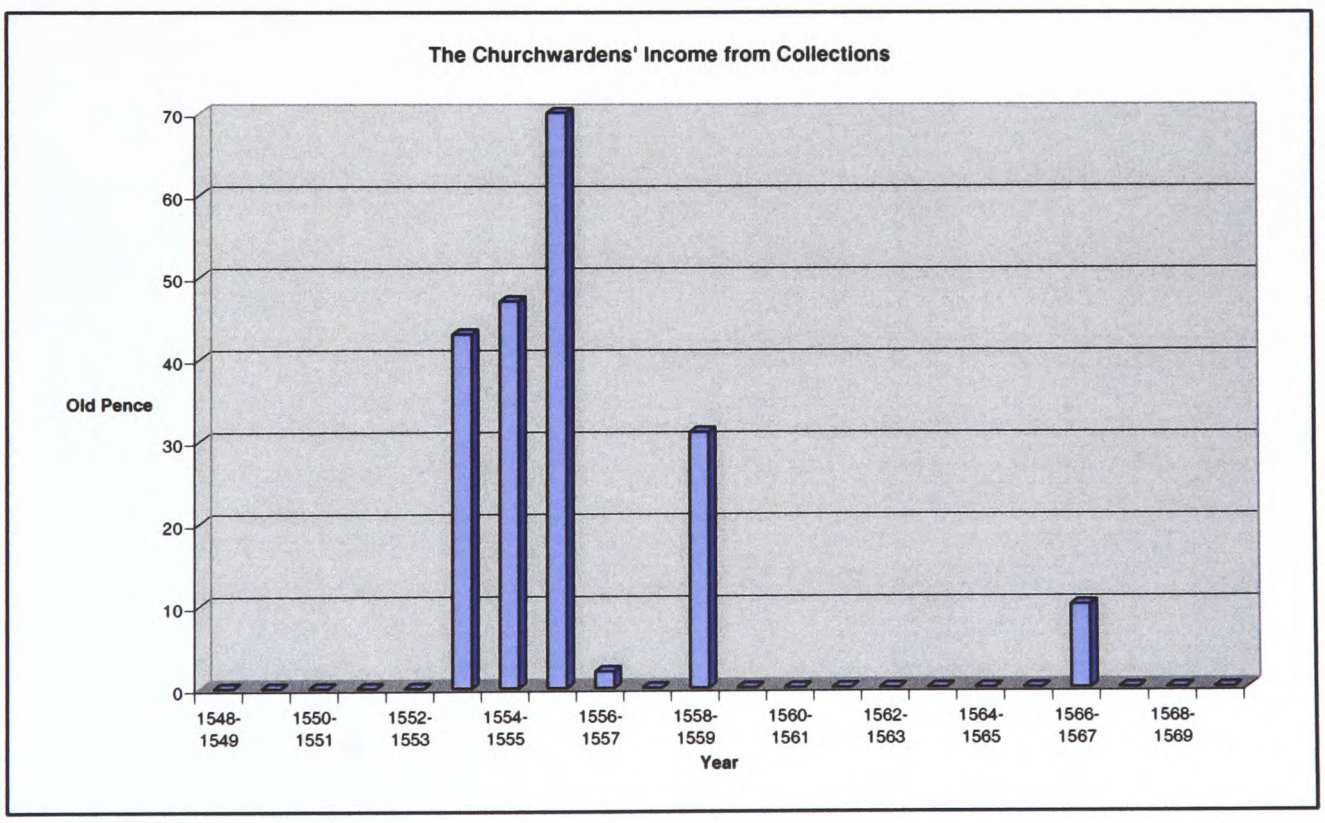


Yet the Marian wardens devoted almost half their total expenditure to these causes, spending a further 15% on vestments – illustrated by the chart below.



Expenditure Categories			
E:A	Administrative Costs	E:P	Public Works
E:B	Bells	E:R	Relief
E:C	Clocks	E:S	Stipend of Clerk
E:F	Church Fabric	E:V	Vestments
E:I	Inflation & Debasement	E:W	Wax etc.
E:L	Liturgical Works	E:/	Other
E:M	Music	E:?	Indiscernible
E:O	Ornamental & Ceremonial		

The Marian wardens were effecting liturgical change – and they were effecting it swiftly, aided by the parishioners' unusual willingness to contribute at parish collections as well as at church ales. (The graph below displays the wardens' income from collections during the entire period.)



The parish community of Marian Pyrton was eager for the trappings of traditional worship to be returned to its church and, in this light, the financial problems early in Elizabeth's reign seem indicative of a disillusioned community. Pyrton's parishioners were, by and large, prepared to conform to England's

Reformations. Nevertheless, they seem to have remained more steadfast in their support for religious traditionalism than did their counterparts at Thame.[29]

[29] This can only have been encouraged by the presence of the Stonor family in the parish. It is even possible that certain parishioners attended services in the Stonors' chapel, although this must remain a matter for conjecture.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PARISHES OF OXFORD, 1521-1570

I. INTER-PAROCHIAL ANALYSIS

The analysis of sets of churchwardens' accounts from individual parishes is revealing. However, because causative factors can only begin to be properly identified through the use of 'controls' – by eliminating possible causal factors in a systematic manner – it is advantageous to study a cluster of parishes which belong to a common borough. Parishes within a single borough shared even more of the same pressures than did those merely within a common diocese and county: they were subject to the law enforcement of a single civic government; and social, political, and economic factors were more uniform than would usually be the case between parishes. This means that any differences between these parishes' religious practices – and between the attitudes of their communities – can be more closely associated with circumstances peculiar to the parish than they can be elsewhere. Accordingly, we look now to the city of Oxford.

II. THE OXFORD PARISHES

i. The city

The Crown's interest in Oxford began early. The town was already a royal fee farm when Henry II granted a charter to it in around 1155. This charter confirmed the liberties and privileges that Oxford's citizens had enjoyed under Henry I. These included their guild merchant; quittance of toll and transport dues throughout England

and Normandy; all the customs, liberties, and laws of London; and the right not to be impleaded outside Oxford in any lawsuit, settling all disputes according to the law and custom of London. In 1542, the establishment of the new diocese conferred city status to Oxford. This status was confirmed in 1546, when the see was transferred from Osney to Christ Church.[1]

Oxford's municipal records are relatively poor, making any reconstruction of civic government complex. However, it is evident that the borough was served by a mayor, two bailiffs, and four aldermen from the thirteenth century; and that a council assisted these officers. By the sixteenth century, the town council incorporated a considerable proportion of the borough's freemen. Yet Oxford's government was not particularly broadly-based. Mayors could only be elected from amongst the aldermen, meaning that mayors commonly served the office many times. Change was, however, effected in 1554. From this date, most mayors were elected from what was effectively an inner council, dubbed 'The Thirteen', and were prohibited from serving a second term within a certain period of time.[2]

The city sent representatives to Parliament. The borough was also linked to the central government through the office of High Steward. This position was created in the early sixteenth century, with its first recorded incumbent being Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, whose death in 1545 was marked by the tolling of church bells throughout the city.[3]

The city's governance was entwined with that of the University. Personal relations between town and gown were frequently close. In 1556, alderman Edmund

---

[1] *Royal Letters Addressed to Oxford and now existing in the City Archives*, ed. Octavius Ogle (Oxford, 1892), pp. 2-5, 158-68.
[2] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, iv, 58, 130-1, 145.
[3] Three Oxford parishes have accounts extant for this year and, in each parish, the churchwardens paid for their church's bells to be tolled: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 8v; St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 120; St. Peter-in-the-East's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 59r.

Irish bequeathed the sum of 6s 8d to the rector and fellows of Exeter College 'desyering theym to fetche me to churche the daye of my buryall', whilst his wife Margaret left 'John James Principall of whyte hall a sylver cuppe with the cover'.[4] But friction between the two bodies was ever-present, exacerbated by the inherent inequalities that existed between them. The University enjoyed far greater liberties and privileges than did the borough, such as the right to excommunicate and to discommon. Moreover, to add insult to injury, the city's burgesses were expected to partake in ceremonial displays of their subjugation to the University, with the Privy Council expressly commanding that the mayor, burgesses, and citizens attend the University's St. Scholastica's day in February 1547.[5]

ii. The citizens

By the sixteenth century, Oxford was, and had long-since been, one of the best-connected towns in England.[6] It was not, however, a particularly prosperous one, with Oxford's High Steward, Sir Francis Knollys, claiming in October 1574 that the townsmen acknowledged 'ye university to be ye grounde and Cause of ye wealth of their towne, if any there be'.[7] The assessments made for the 1523 lay subsidy indicate that Oxford's population, including privileged persons but excluding scholars, was small: approximately 2,665 people.[8] Moreover, whilst this population had a high turnover, its total remained remarkably steady throughout the sixteenth century, only

---

[4] Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.30v-31r (Edmund Irish's will), MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.61v-62v (Margaret Irish's will). John James also served as a witness to Margaret Irish's will.
[5] *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1542-1547, p. 522. The annual attendance of 63 burgesses at a ceremony at St. Mary the Virgin's church on St. Scholastica's day (10 February) was one of the foremost symbols of the borough's subjugation to the University: *VCH*, Oxfordshire, iv, 155-60.
[6] E. J. S. Parsons, *The Map of Great Britain circa A.D. 1360 known as The Gough Map: an introduction to the facsimile* (Oxford, 1958); John Speede, *Oxfordshire described with ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of yt famous Vniuersity. Ao. 1605* (Facsimile published by the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 1998).
[7] Bodleian Library, MS. Twyne IV, p. 265. Twyne states that Knollys' letter was 'Taken out of ye originall in a Certayne Chest in ye towne office, ye originall was without any direction'.
[8] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, iv, 75.

rising significantly towards the end of it.[9] Oxford was comparatively poor. It ranked, on the basis of assessed wealth, only 29th out of English provincial towns and cities in 1523, with the average assessed wealth of an Oxonian taxpayer being only a little more than half of that of a taxpayer in Norwich.[10]

Most of Oxford's townsmen were either shopkeepers or small craftsmen, and there was little in the way of manufacturing.[11] Consequently, Oxford was heavily reliant upon local consumption, making the University's decline during the sixteenth century – as well as the dissolution of the borough's religious houses – especially significant for the local economy.

iii. The parishes

Thirteen parishes were operational in sixteenth-century Oxford. Significant numbers of churchwardens' accounts survive for the parishes of St. Martin, St. Michael-at-the-Northgate (hereafter referred to as St. Michael), St. Peter-in-the-East, and St. Peter-le-Bailey. These four parishes were all ancient ones. The church of St. Peter-in-the-East was probably a tenth-century foundation, and only closed in 1965 with its conversion into St. Edmund Hall's library. The parishes of St. Martin and St. Michael were in existence by the eleventh century; and the parish of St. Peter-le-Bailey was granted to St. Frideswide's Priory in 1122. In the sixteenth century, the Crown acquired the advowsons of two of these parishes – presenting to St. Peter-le-Bailey's following the dissolution of St. Frideswide's Priory in 1524, and to St. Martin's church after Abingdon Abbey's closure. St. Michael's church was annexed to All Saints and St. Mildred's churches in 1427, with these churches subsequently being made into a

---

[9] This has been deduced from lay subsidy returns and from extant parish registers.
[10] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, iv, 101-2.
[11] This may be concluded from Oxford's lay subsidy returns, wills, and the city's records of apprenticeship.

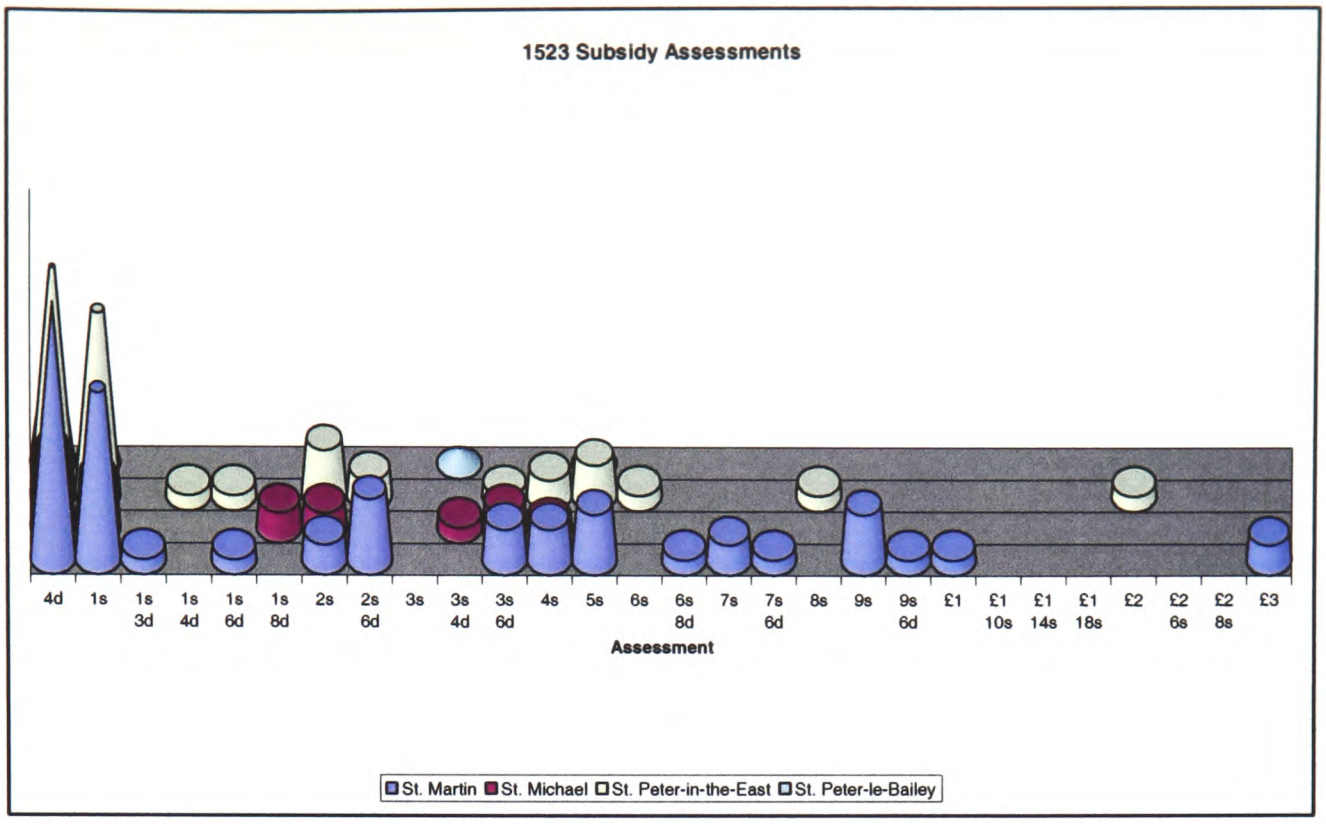
collegiate church for the foundation of Lincoln College. Thereafter, St. Michael's was usually served by chaplains or curates appointed by the college. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, St. Peter-in-the-East's advowson was held by Merton College.[12]

The parishes operated independently to one another, drawing their parishioners from different areas of the city. There was enormous disparity in the value of the livings. In the clerical subsidy collected in 1526, the vicar of St. Peter-in-the-East's church was assessed at £16 13s 4d – far more than were the rectors of St. Martin's (£8) and St. Peter-le-Bailey's (£4); whilst St. Michael's stipendiary priest was worth only 26s 8d.[13] The parish communities were equally distinctive. The parishes of St. Martin and St. Peter-in-the-East were the more populous: the 1523 lay subsidy returns suggest that they housed about 305 and 230 people respectively, compared with St. Michael's 90 and St. Peter-le-Bailey's 95. These more populous parish communities were also the ones which housed the wealthier parishioners. The mean tax assessments of the taxpayers in the larger parishes were 4s 10d (St. Martin's) and 2s 6d (St. Peter-in-the-East's); whilst the mean tax assessments of the taxpayers of St. Michael's and St. Peter-le-Bailey's churches were only 1s 6d and 11d respectively. Moreover, as the chart below demonstrates, the greater wealth of St. Martin's and St. Peter-in-the-East's taxpayers was fairly widely experienced, inasmuch as these parishes housed a significant number of parishioners who were wealthier than any of those resident in St. Michael's or St. Peter-le-Bailey's parishes.

---

[12] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, iv, 369-406. All thirteen parishes did not, however, operate throughout the whole century.

[13] *A Subsidy Collected in the Diocese of Lincoln in 1526*, ed. H. Salter (Oxford Historical Soc., lxiii, 1909), xv. It is worth noting, however, that Oxford's clergymen often gathered emoluments from other sources as well.



St. Martin's was not only the most populous of the four parishes assessed. It was also the one which harboured the wealthiest parish community. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that it should be St. Martin's parish which provided most of the city's officers – including, in 1523, the serving mayor, John Austen.[14]

III. The Oxford Parishes' Churchwardens' Accounts

There are numerous churchwardens' accounts extant for the Oxford parishes of St. Martin, St. Michael, St. Peter-in-the-East, and St. Peter-le-Bailey – although, as the chart below demonstrates, they do not survive in anything like continuous series. (The year referred to is the one in which the account was made.)

Year	St. Martin's	St. Michael's	St. Peter-in-the-East's	St. Peter-le-Bailey's
1520				
1521				
1522				

[14] Since the assessments for the 1523 subsidy are recorded by parish rather than by ward, it is possible to use these figures to produce approximations for the populations of Oxford's parishes. To do this, I have used the principles established by Julian Cornwall: 'English Population in the Early Sixteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, second ser., 23 (1970), 32-44, esp. 35-6. The relevant subsidy returns: National Archives, E 179/161/198, rots. 4-5. The figures generated are accurate to the nearest penny.

YEAR	St. Martin's	St. Michael's	St. Peter-in-the-East's	St. Peter-le-Bailey's
1523			■	
1524			■	
1525		■		
1526		■		
1527		■	■	
1528		■		
1529				
1530				■
1531		■	■	■
1532		■		■
1533		■		
1534		■		
1535		■		■
1536				■
1537		■		
1538		■		■
1539				■
1540				■
1541			■	■
1542				
1543				■
1544	■			
1545	■	■	■	
1546	■	■	■	■
1547				
1548		■		■
1549				
1550		■		
1551				
1552	■	■		
1553	■	■	■	
1554	■			
1555	■			
1556				■
1557		■		
1558	■	■		
1559	■	■		
1560	■			
1561				■
1562		■		
1563				■
1564	■	■		■ [15]
1565	■	■		
1566	■	■		
1567	■	■		
1568		■		
1569	■			
1570		■		

Complete Churchwardens' Accounts

These accounts are complemented by supplementary parish material. A number of St. Michael's chapel-wardens' accounts survive, being very similar to the

[15] It is possible that these two last accounts for St. Peter-le-Bailey's church were made in 1564 and 1565 respectively. The matter is discussed below.

churchwardens' accounts in their format.[16] In addition to this, parish inventories are extant for St. Martin's and St. Michael's churches; and St. Martin's parish archive includes miscellaneous sub-accounts and receipts.

The churchwardens' accounts of these four Oxford parishes are all suited to the application of detailed analysis, and can be subjected to quantitative techniques. Whilst Oxford's accounts were intended for show, they were not simply 'show texts'; and the level of detail that they offer enables reconstructions of the churchwardens' activities that are extremely comprehensive. The accounts' arithmetic is almost perfect – which is no mean feat, given that the churchwardens sometimes recorded over a hundred separate entries in a year. The fact that the carried-over totals for St. Michael's accounts are at odds with one another is not indicative of inadequate record-keeping. Rather, it is a consequence of the churchwardens using the 'church box' as a float, rather than as a repository for the church's funds. The only area in which the Oxford accounts are significantly flawed is in their dating, with there being a few (largely one-off) mistakes. However, a single mistake which was made by the wardens of St. Peter-le-Bailey's church during the mid-1560s created such confusion that two of their accounts can only now be assigned to one of two years.[17] Since the dating of Oxford's churchwardens' accounts was generally based on saints' days and regnal years, such problems are perhaps to be anticipated – although it is worth noting that an account which had been correctly dated by St. Martin's churchwardens was subsequently assigned a different (incorrect) date.[18] Such mistakes could, however,

---

[16] The chapel-wardens' accounts are bound into the same volume as the parish's churchwardens' accounts.
[17] St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs, -32, -33.
[18] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 14r.

have far-reaching implications, with a single mistake causing a whole series of St. Michael's churchwardens' accounts to be misdated during the 1530s.[19]

Although the analysis of all the accounts is justifiable, they may not be crudely compared – let alone amalgamated. The accounts were made for very different parishes. St. Martin's parishioners were, for example, far more numerous – and far more prosperous – than their counterparts in St. Michael's parish; and this was reflected in their parish worship. St. Martin's parishioners could – and did – lavish their church with valuable goods, with a 'whyte clothe to cover the front of the hyghe alter in lent wyth a crucyfyx of the same of Marye & John of nedyll woorke of venese [Venice] gold' being 'the gyfte of master flemen [Flemming]'.[20] Indeed, the inventory which was made for St. Martin's church in 1547 lists so many goods that serving churchwardens Thomas Cogan and Thomas Foster felt it desirable to specify where in the church each item was kept: in the Rood loft, in the higher and lower vestries, in the body of the church, and at the high and lady altars.[21] In contrast, the inventories of St. Michael's church were far more modest in their scale.

The duties of the churchwardens varied also, with parish custom having a role to play. Unlike their counterparts in St. Michael's and St. Peter-le-Bailey's parishes, neither St. Martin's nor St. Peter-in-the-East's churchwardens paid for parish banners to be borne in Oxford's processions. This was not because the parishes did not bear banners, since both parishes possessed them. The churchwardens' account made in 1541 records that St. Peter-in-the-East's wardens paid 2s for the 'payntyng of the

---

[19] The accounts' misdating (nos. 113, 114, 116, 117) has been recognised by both *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Michael's Church, Oxford*, ed. H. E. Salter (Transactions of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Society, lxxviii, 1933), and by the Oxfordshire Record Office. I have, however, supplied my own dates for these accounts. (It is possible to date the relevant accounts by determining their sequence, and identifying non-regnal years from within the body of the text.)

[20] This item is listed in an inventory of church goods which was compiled in 1547: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 11r-11v.

[21] Ibid., fos. 11r-11v.

pacion baners'.[22] Equally, St. Martin's church owned 'a baner of linen paynted withe the Image of seynt Marten'.[23] Thus it seems that it was unnecessary for the wardens of these parishes to offer any financial inducement to their banners' bearers.

Given the inherent differences between the parishes – in themselves and in their operation – direct (quantitative) comparisons are only appropriate between accounts drawn from a single parish; and, even then, it is necessary for some accounts to be 'standardised'. Most notably, St. Michael's and St. Peter-le-Bailey's churchwardens assumed the responsibility and the resources (mainly from tithes, and the income from offering houses and tithe pigs) to appoint and support stipendiary priests during this period, making the 'standardisation' of their accounts necessary if any long-term assessments are to be attempted.[24]

IV. Reformations of the Parish Communities

i. Dramatis personae

Oxford's churchwardens were funded in a manner similar to their counterparts in Pyrton and Thame. Whilst Oxford's wardens could – and did – raise enormous sums of money through the sale of their churches' goods, they did this only in exceptional circumstances: to fund large-scale building projects, public works, and the payment of fifteenths – with the profits of these sales contributing little (if anything) towards their regular expenses. Just four sources of revenue – collections, entertainments, occasional receipts, and rental income – provided over 80% of the wardens' total

---

[22] St. Peter-in-the-East's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 57r.
[23] This item is listed in the inventory made in 1547: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 11v.
[24] The first evidence of this new responsibility occurs in the 1550s in the case of both parishes. The churchwardens' new income, however, did not exactly equate to their new expenditure: the churchwardens were the recipients of any profit; but, equally, parish funds were obliged to make good any shortfall.

incomes in each parish.[25] Occasional receipts, which were generally to ensure burial within the church building, provided only between 3 and 4% of these totals; and were, understandably, somewhat unpredictable sources of revenue. Collections, entertainments, and rents were far more reliable – and profitable – sources of income. St. Michael's wardens received about half their total income from rental property, whilst the other wardens received over half of their incomes from collections and entertainments – with the latter being about twice as profitable as the former in these parishes.

Collections were held in Oxford's parishes at least twice a year, with the most important taking place at Christmas and Easter. It is clear that some of the collections which took place in the city involved an element of rating. For instance, the collections which were made for the 'holy loaf' raised consistent annual revenues since they gathered set sums of money from those houses in which the clerk did not have board.[26] Moreover, rating was not confined to this single type of collection, as the annotated receipts which survive for St. Martin's parish make clear.[27] In spite of this, however, no set of Oxford churchwardens could determine what the total annual contributions that their parishioners would make to collections would be, and the wardens' revenues from collections fluctuated considerably. Consequently, various sets of the city's wardens sought to encourage giving by holding supplementary collections in the name of specific projects. For example, during the reign of Mary, Richard Leonard and William Joiner, who were the churchwardens of St. Martin's

---

[25] These figures are intended only to provide a general impression of the churchwardens' fundraising regimes, since it is possible only to use those churchwardens' accounts which are extant. Although the collated data from St. Michael's parish demonstrates only that 79% of the churchwardens' income was derived from collections, entertainments, occasional receipts, and rental income, it seems reasonable to assume that the actual figure exceeded 80%, since the source of some 21% of the parish's total income is indiscernible.

[26] This is made clear in St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 119v.

[27] ORO, PAR/207/4/F4/1-3, PAR/207/9/F1/1.

parish, held collections severally 'for the patten of the Challys', 'towardes the makyng of seynt Thomas aulter', and 'towardes the sute of the Churche landes'.[28]

In Oxford, the hosting of Whitsun ales was the most popular (and profitable) form of parish entertainment. Less is known about the organisation and format of Oxford's ales than about those at Thame. But they were jolly occasions, which often engaged the services of a minstrel. Also popular in Oxford were the Hocktide celebrations.[29] These were sometimes staged by the 'wives' of the parish, and they usually involved the sale of ale. In addition to these events, there was a variety of lesser entertainments. St. Peter-le-Bailey's church held ales for Our Lady light during Lent; and, in Elizabethan Oxford, the young men of St. Michael's parish raised money on May Day.[30] The evidence from St. Martin's churchwardens' accounts suggests that Oxford's churchwardens did not seek city-wide participation in their entertainments. They were designed principally as parish affairs. The supper that was incorporated into St. Martin's Whitsun celebrations seems intended to have encouraged a sense of parish exclusivity. Moreover, the account which was made by St. Martin's churchwardens on 25 November 1545 explicitly states that the 31s 6d raised by that year's Whitsuntide ale was 'of the gyft of the paryssheners as apperythe by a byll of there namys wyth the somes of money pertycularly uppon theym'.[31] Indeed, if Oxford's event-organisers had sought city-wide markets, it seems highly improbable that they would have held their principal events on the occasions that they did: on the same days as did their neighbours, thus entering into direct competition with them.

---

[28] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 22r.
[29] The celebration of Hocktide is discussed in Chapter II.
[30] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 135.
[31] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 8r.

ii. Data

The analysis of the data generated from Oxford's churchwardens' accounts is complex. The source-survival is patchy, and the fact that Oxford's wardens derived a smaller proportion of their revenues from voluntary giving than did their counterparts in Pyrton and Thame complicates matters further. Fruitful analysis is nonetheless possible, and is made all the more feasible by there being material extant from multiple parishes. The manner in which each of the Oxford parishes operated was certainly unique. For example, the poorer parish community of St. Peter-le-Bailey's church contributed more per head to collections and entertainments than did their richer counterparts in St. Martin's parish, perhaps in part owing to their church's relatively low income from rents. However, the comparison of the conclusions made from each parish's data permits deductions which are more far-reaching that they could otherwise be.

The funding regimes of Oxford's churches altered over time, with change being particularly pronounced in the parish of St. Martin. In the early 1540s – around the time when the first churchwardens' accounts survive for the parish – the wealthy parishioner William Flemming bequeathed three properties to St. Martin's churchwardens, with the intention that they rent them out so as to generate a sustainable source of income for their funds.[32] In return, Flemming expected an elaborate annual dirge, threatening that non-compliance would lead to the properties passing over to the city. (Whilst there are subtle differences between the precise

[32] These properties lay in the Oxford parishes of St. Martin, St. Peter-le-Bailey, and St. Ebbe. Flemming made his arrangements meticulously. The indenture and will of William Flemming survives amongst the parish records of the Oxford parish of St. Martin: ORO, PAR/207/13/1D/1. The original indenture was made on 6 June 1540, and the will was made on 26 June 1540. A copy of these documents was made at a later date, and is also preserved amongst the parish records: ORO, PAR/207/13/1D/2. A later will, which refers to the arrangements made on 26 June 1540, survives amongst Oxfordshire's probate records: ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 178, fos. 158v-160v. Flemming's will is also recorded in Oxford's *Liber Albus*: ORO, A.5.1, fos. 176v-177v.

terms of Flemming's various wills, the gist of his intentions remains the same.) The income from these properties made a dramatic impact on the funds available to St. Martin's churchwardens – but only temporarily. Flemming's bequest fell foul of the Edwardian Chantries' Act and so, just a few years after Flemming had bequeathed the properties to the parish, most of their revenue had to be forfeited to the royal representative 'Master Parrett'.[33] (A scribe drew hands in the margins of the churchwardens' accounts, pointing accusatory fingers at the offending entries.)[34] St. Martin's churchwardens were, in this Act's immediate aftermath, allowed only to retain a small portion of the properties' income – owing to the fact that the provision for the poor which Flemming had made in his will was deemed not to be superstitious.[35] Consequently, St. Martin's churchwardens received much less money to spend at their discretion than William Flemming had intended, with this being compounded by a simultaneous fall in the properties' value, before the properties were eventually confiscated early in the reign of Elizabeth.[36]

Circumstances dictated that funding regimes had to change, although how they did so varied from parish to parish. However, the changes in church-funding which the Reformation period witnessed were not all due to alterations in the churchwardens' circumstances. It is clear that the willingness of Oxford's parish communities to provide funding for their churches altered also – although, since the data is more complex to interpret, it would not be constructive to set this out in tables or graphs.

---

[33] This is evident in the parish's churchwardens' accounts.
[34] For example: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 22r.
[35] This much is implied in St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 28v, where the account has been annotated.
[36] This much is made clear by the comparison of successive accounts.

iii. Data interpretation and determinants

In the Oxford parishes of St. Martin and St. Peter-in-the-East, the parishioners' enthusiasm for funding their churchwardens fell markedly during the Edwardian period, constricting the wardens' activities. Although the income which St. Peter-in-the-East's churchwardens received from collections and entertainments fell throughout the 1540s, this did not indicate a change in community attitudes in the early years of this decade. An increase in the value of this parish's rental properties reduced the need for voluntary giving at this time, since the wardens' income was already at an all-time high (by recent standards, at least). By the later 1540s, however, this was no longer the case. The wardens' income from rents fell dramatically at this time, but an increase in voluntary giving was not forthcoming. In other words, St. Peter-in-the-East's churchwardens were under-funded, but their parishioners were not prepared to fundraise at a level which they had done so just a few years previously in order to make good the difference.[37] St. Martin's wardens fared similarly at this time, enduring – like St. Peter-in-the-East's churchwardens – simultaneous declines in their revenues from rents and from voluntary giving from the later 1540s onwards.

Matters were different elsewhere in the city. The enthusiasm that St. Michael's and St. Peter-le-Bailey's parishioners displayed for funding their churchwardens declined from an earlier date. From the mid-1530s, the wardens of these parishes experienced falling receipts from collections and entertainments. St. Peter-le-Bailey's wardens generally relied on these two sources of revenue for some 70% of their annual income. Moreover, whilst St. Michael's churchwardens typically received about half their income from rental properties, these were unprofitable in the

[37] Whilst only one complete churchwardens' account is extant for the Oxford parish of St. Peter-in-the-East from the reign of Edward VI, the supporting evidence (such as balance-figures for other churchwardens) indicates that this account reflects a more general state of affairs.

1530s, with certain wardens making net losses on them. Thus the concurrent decline in the wardens' receipts from collections and entertainments meant that St. Michael's churchwardens had to fund the structural work on their steeple and tower in the late 1530s through an extensive sale of the church's goods.[38]

The accounts of St. Peter-in-the-East's wardens are not extant after 1553. But the accession of Mary witnessed a change in the parishioners' attitudes to fundraising in the other three parishes. The income of St. Peter-le-Bailey's wardens rose at this time to be well in excess of their expenditure. Their revenue derived from voluntary giving rose simultaneously with that of the parish's rental property. Similarly, St. Michael's churchwardens enjoyed an increased level of funding during Mary's reign – one which was on a par with that which they had enjoyed in the 1520s. St. Martin's parish community likewise lent strong financial support to its wardens' activities. The parishioners donated unusually large sums of money at collections during Mary's reign, and ensured that the profits of the parish's ales were unprecedented. Indeed, although the parish owed money to certain of its churchwardens at this time, this was not due to the wardens experiencing low levels of funding. Rather, it reflected the scale of this period's spending on building works, and ornamental and ceremonial costs, coupled with the parish's new-found financial confidence.

iv. Stimuli

The attitudes of Oxford's parishioners towards funding their churchwardens varied between the parishes. It is pertinent, therefore, to consider how the devotional practices of Oxford's parishes differed to one another during the Reformation period.

---

[38] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, nos. 117r-117v.

It is clear from their churchwardens' accounts that the forms of worship practised in Oxford's parish churches had undergone significant transformations by about 1548.[39] St. Martin's, St. Michael's, and St. Peter-le-Bailey's churchwardens had in the past – practically without exception – made annual payments for the Easter font-hallowing, and for the guarding of their sepulchres. St. Michael's and St. Peter-le-Bailey's wardens had spent money on participating in processions. And St. Martin's, St. Peter-in-the-East's, and St. Peter-le-Bailey's wardens had held annual dirges for their churches' benefactors. Font-hallowing persisted in St. Michael's church for a year after the wardens had ceased funding the guarding of their sepulchre.[40] Otherwise, all these practices suddenly died out early in Edward's reign.

Oxford's Reformations – as they were enforced by the city's churchwardens – shared basic similarities. But they were by no means identical. Perhaps most notably, in the aftermath of the 1538 injunction against superstitious lights, the wardens of the Oxford churches of St. Michael and St. Peter-le-Bailey radically reduced their expenditure on wax. This was a significant change, since it indicated a meaningful alteration in the churches' devotional practices (and one which proved permanent in the case of St. Michael's parish). In contrast, the churchwardens of the Oxford parishes of St. Martin and St. Peter-in-the-East did not reduce their expenditure on wax at all at this time, thus implying that the devotional practices of these parishes continued more routinely than they did elsewhere in the city. It is, however, revealing of the pressures being experienced in the city of Oxford at this time that St. Martin's churchwardens should choose this year to be particularly assiduous in recording to what use they put their wax.[41] St. Michael's churchwardens were also prepared to use the title 'Supreme Head of the Church of England' in their accounts more than three

---

[39] The pattern of survival of Oxford's churchwardens' accounts prohibits greater precision.
[40] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 122.
[41] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 3r.

years before any of their counterparts did so – employing it in 1537 – whilst, ironically, there is no evidence for St. Martin's churchwardens ever using this title before Mary acceded the throne.[42]

Mary's accession heralded a rapid turnaround in the practices of the Oxford parishes. The devotional practices of Mary's reign did not exactly mirror their pre-Reformation counterparts. If, for example, Oxford's parishes resumed the practice of bearing banners at processions, the Marian churchwardens no longer funded it. (The churchwardens of the parishes of St. Michael and St. Peter-le-Bailey had paid for the bearing of their banners in the pre-Reformation period.) It is clear, however, that the essentials of traditional worship were revived, with Oxford's churchwardens making payments for traditional ceremonies such as guarding the sepulchre and holding dirges. Indeed, in Oxford, change was effected extremely swiftly. Altars were erected in the parish churches within the first few months of Mary's reign, whilst St. Martin's churchwardens (William Spencer and Richard Whittington) replaced 'Comunyon breade' with 'syngyng brede' on the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady [15 August] – some three days before Mary's ambiguous proclamation regarding religion, and a full six before Mass was celebrated in the Tower for Northumberland and his associates.[43]

Thus a pattern emerges. In the years preceding Elizabeth's accession, Oxford's parish communities registered their collective attitude as being one of religious conservatism. The piecemeal changes that were made in parish religion

---

[42] St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 116. This account was made on 12 March 1537. The earliest use of the title 'Supreme Head' to be found in the extant accounts of the other Oxford parishes is in the account made by St. Peter-le-Bailey's churchwardens on 25 November 1540: St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs, -23. St. Martin's churchwardens' use of the title: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 22r.

[43] The erection of altars is recorded in the churchwardens' accounts of the Oxford parishes of St. Martin, St. Michael, and St. Peter-in-the-East (the relevant account for St. Peter-le-Bailey's church is not extant): St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 19r; St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, no. 125; St. Peter-in-the-East's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 63r-63v. For evidence of the change from communion bread to singing bread in St. Martin's parish: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 19r.

during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI were met with a common disenchantment whenever and howsoever they were implemented: in the 1530s in the parishes of St. Michael and (to perhaps a lesser extent) St. Peter-le-Bailey; and in the 1540s in the parishes of St. Martin and St. Peter-in-the-East. In contrast, the restoration of traditional practices which the accession of Mary precipitated was met with relative enthusiasm in all parishes for which relevant churchwardens' accounts survive. It cannot be said that parish worship was the sole factor which affected the attitudes of Oxford's parishioners towards their parish churches, and towards religion more generally. Other influences, not least preaching, doubtless had significant roles to play. It must, moreover, be noted that it was the smaller and poorer parishes which experienced a decline in voluntary giving first. However, what the comparative analysis of Oxford's parishes does establish is that, in the city of Oxford, change in the devotional practices of the parish churches played a significant – in fact, probably the critical – role in determining the attitudes of Oxford's parish communities towards fundraising for their churchwardens.

v. Complexity

The accession of Elizabeth witnessed widespread change in the devotional practices of Oxford's parish churches. At least some parishes retained valuables which were more fitting for use in a traditionalist environment: an inventory which was made for St. Martin's church on 4 January 1560 lists 'a banner clothe with the image of our lady yn hytt'.[44] However, only one churchwardens' account discloses the funding of any 'outdated' ceremonies. In the mid-1560s, the churchwardens of St. Peter-le-Bailey's church, William Forrest and Richard Brympton, spent 10d 'at Easter for

[44] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 32r.

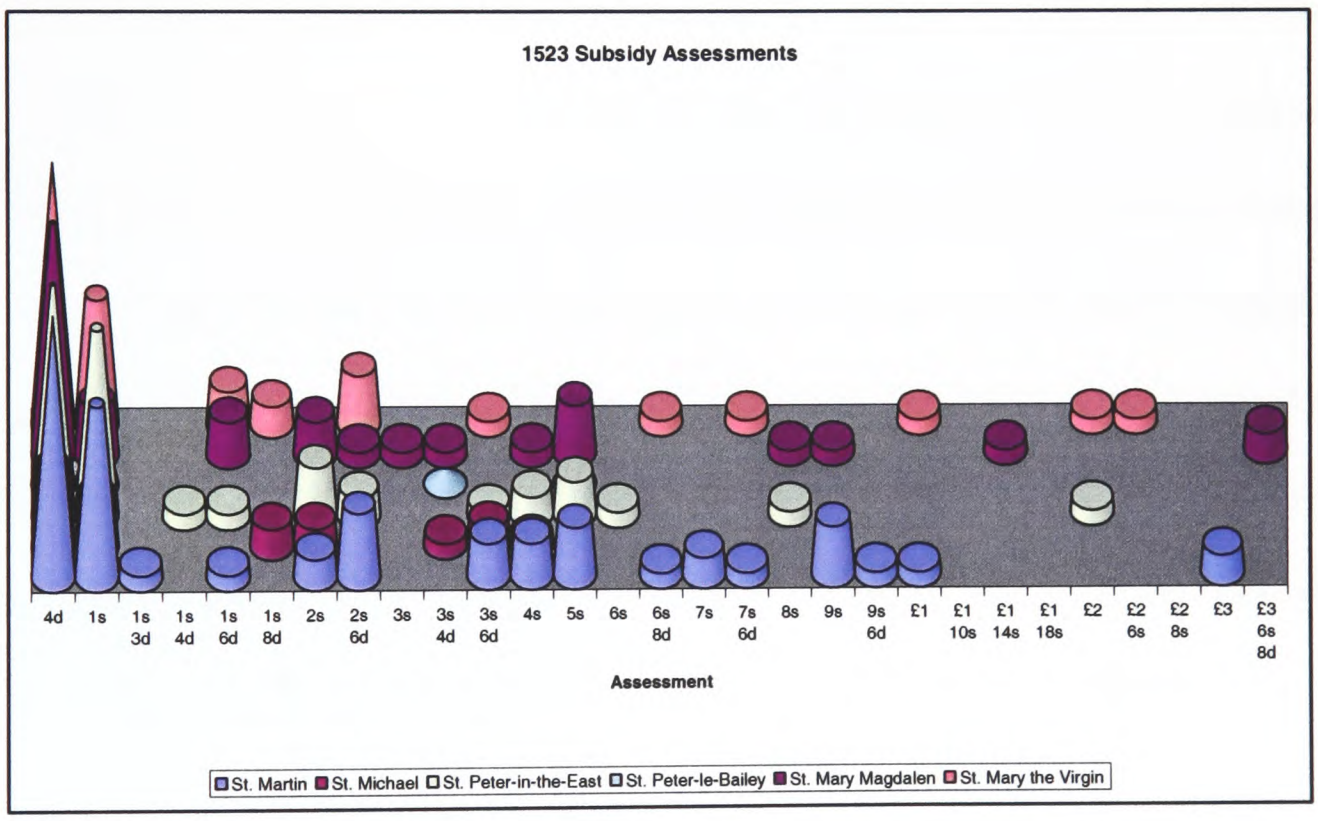
watchynge the Sepulkur', and 6d on 'the founders Dirige'. However, the account's (unnamed) auditor was distinctly unimpressed with this. He struck through the phrase 'for watchynge the Sepulkur', and replaced the word 'Dirige' with 'Preyer'; and it is significant that the next year's wardens funded neither practice – howsoever it was described.[45]

In the years preceding Elizabeth's accession, Oxfordshire's parish communities had registered their collective attitude as being one of religious conservatism. In contrast, however, Oxford's Elizabethan churchwardens were financially well-supported by their respective parish communities, despite their orchestration of more evangelical methods of parish worship than had been practised during Mary's reign. Admittedly, the funding regimes of the Elizabethan churchwardens were more *ad hoc* than those of their predecessors had been. Perhaps most notably, parish entertainments were held only sporadically at this time. But Oxford's wardens were on sound financial footings nonetheless. St. Martin's churchwardens not only had reserves of cash, but their parishioners raised funds whenever necessary. Indeed, the wardens' income from entertainments fluctuated only because a Whitsun ale was not always deemed a necessary supplement to the parish's Hocktide celebrations. In St. Michael's parish, the unusually high values of the parish's rental properties were coupled, in the 1560s, with the wardens' ability to host profitable ales; and it was also at about this time that St. Michael's wardens began to profit from their responsibility to appoint the parish's stipendiary – not least because they now collected tithes from some of the University's colleges. The 1560s was also a period of relative comfort for St. Peter-le-Bailey's churchwardens, as they received funds sufficient for (relatively) large-scale expenditure. Moreover, like St.

[45] St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs, -33, -32. One of these accounts has been misdated so it may only be concluded that -33 was made on 17 December 1563 or 1564, and that -32 was made on 14 December 1564 or 1565.

Michael's wardens, their responsibility to appoint a stipendiary also became profitable at this time.

Solid financial support was forthcoming from two further Oxford parish communities at this time: those of St. Mary Magdalen's and St. Mary the Virgin's churches. Nine churchwardens' accounts survive from the 1560s for St. Mary Magdalen's church; six for the church of St. Mary the Virgin. St. Mary Magdalen's and St. Mary the Virgin's parishes were medium-sized ones, housing approximately 195 and 210 parishioners respectively.[46] The parishes were also relatively wealthy, possessing a high proportion of higher-rate tax-payers in the 1523 lay subsidy, as the chart below demonstrates.



On 29 September 1566, the wardens of St. Mary the Virgin's church recorded that they had had to pay 40s 'for glasyng the wyndoes wyche were taken downe when the quenes grace was in the churche'.[47] Queen Elizabeth made her first visit to Oxford in the late summer of 1566, having visited Cambridge some two years earlier.

---

[46] These estimates have been produced in a manner identical to that employed for the other Oxford parishes, using the 1523 lay subsidy returns.
[47] St. Mary the Virgin's, Oxford CWAs, -4.

She arrived on Saturday 31 August 1566, leaving on the following Friday. During her visit, Elizabeth lodged exclusively at Christ Church. Indeed, she visited no other colleges in person during her week-long stay, although the earl of Leicester, the Spanish ambassador, and various courtiers went to see New College at this time.[48] Thus this entry in St. Mary the Virgin's churchwardens' accounts suggests that the effect of Elizabeth's visit was more widely felt than one might have initially supposed – or the visit was, at least, used as an occasion for the ceremonial destruction of stained glass.

In spite of this episode, however, the devotional practices of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Mary the Virgin's churches seem to have been as conformist as those experienced elsewhere in the city during the 1560s. Yet, as was the case in Oxford's other parishes, the churchwardens received adequate financial support for their endeavours nonetheless. The income of St. Mary the Virgin's wardens exceeded their expenditure by quite a comfortable margin; and, whilst St. Mary Magdalen's expenditure often exceeded its income, parish fundraising proved responsive to the churchwardens' needs. Thus, whilst Pyrton's religious conservatism proved steadfast, there is every sign that parish communities within the city of Oxford could – and did – learn to adapt to religious change just as readily as did the parish of Thame.

---

[48] T. H. Aston (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (8 vols., Oxford, 1984-), iii, 397-9.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CO-OPERATION AND COMPLIANCE

We have, thus far, considered Oxfordshire's Reformation in terms of how it was negotiated by parishioners collectively: how the churchwardens implemented religious changes through the active participation of their parish communities. But we need now to look within these communities. We need to explore the different ways in which individuals within communities such as these could, and did, engage critically with religious change; to consider how the Reformation created tensions and generated conflict within local communities; and to appreciate how these pressures could co-exist with a sense of 'community consensus'.

This requires subtle terms of engagement. If we were to identify only those instances in which the Reformation was rejected entirely, we would normalise conflict and render 'conformity' an unhelpfully broad category. We must, instead, attempt to realise the full spectrum of critical engagement: a wide and varied range of reactions to, and relationships with, religious changes.

This chapter considers the enforcement of religious change within Oxfordshire, and the extent to which the commons proved compliant. The following chapter, in light of this, can then consider instances of religious dissidence and disobedience within Oxfordshire, and their implications for the county.

I. The Co-operation of the County's Law-Enforcers

i. The question of jurisdiction

Religious dissent could only be defined and proceeded against through and in the terms of the law, and by those who wielded its power. In the prosecution of religious offences, the ecclesiastical and the secular authorities were designed to work in tandem – each having a role to play, although not always a distinct one.

Within Oxfordshire, the activities of the various authorities seem to have been remarkably well-integrated. Perhaps most notably, the borough of Oxford was able to work in close co-operation with the University, despite the tension that often existed between the two bodies. When Emerson, a fellow of New College, informed the College's warden that he had had communication with Crofte, a priest from the College chapel, on matters including the pre-eminence of the pope, the warden proceeded by bringing Emerson and Crofte before officials from both parties: the borough and the University. These officials, in turn, wrote to advise Cromwell of the matter on the very next day.[1] Such close co-operation was evidently perceived necessary, not least because intimate relations could exist between townsmen and scholars. When borough and University officials examined an Oxford bookseller by the name of Horman Men on 3 April 1539, during which examination Men admitted that he and his family had eaten flesh during Lent, the co-practitioners whom Men named included academics as well as Men's fellow booksellers.[2] There is similar

---

[1] State Papers 1/133, fos. 196r-197v, esp. fo. 196r. (*Letters and Papers*, Henry VIII, 13 Part 1 (1538), p. 463.)

[2] SP 1/146, fos. 252r-252v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 14 Part 1 (1539), p. 339.) This appears to relate to an undated letter – written by the bishop of Lincoln and addressed to Cromwell – which relates that townsmen and scholars have been eating flesh on fasting days in Oxford, and that some of them have been apprehended. Since this latter letter was written on Easter Eve, it can thus be dated as 5 April 1539. See SP 1/131, fos. 129r-129v. This letter is incorrectly dated in *Letters and Papers* as 20 April 1538: *LP*, Henry VIII, 13 Part 1 (1538), p. 300.

evidence that the religious houses also worked with Oxford's borough officials, particularly over the seditious preaching of monks.[3]

Co-operation was widespread. Yet the legal system remained complex; and it is not always clear what lay within whose jurisdiction at any given time.[4] In Oxfordshire, Dr. William Leson was proceeded against – for two remarkably similar misdemeanours, and within the space of six years – by the spiritual authorities in one instance, and the secular in the other. The episcopal visitation of 1538 recorded that Dr. Leson, vicar of Cropredy, had

> hadde a yonge woman in the house of James ... of banburye, aboute a forkenighte paste, and ther he didd lye in the same house the all the tyme of his abydinge ther, the same woman beinge in the saide house. And as some didd saye, she was kyneswoman to the saide doctor leson.[5]

By early 1544, Leson was in trouble again, and over a very similar matter. On this occasion, however, Leson was tried according to the common law. This was because, in the meantime, the Act of Six Articles had made sexual activity on the part of the clergy a statutory offence. On 10 January 1544, an inquiry at Oxford indicted Leson for having had carnal knowledge of a spinster of Ducklington by the name of Alice Swynfeld.[6]

So, much depended upon circumstance; and it is impossible to draw any hard-and-fast conclusions as to how the system operated in any given jurisdiction, or at any given time. There can, however, be little doubt that the course of the Reformation made the relationship between the ecclesiastical and the secular legal systems ever

---

[3] This is indicated in, for example, SP 1/132, fos. 145r-146v (a letter to Cromwell from the mayor of Oxford and others concerning a sermon made by a monk in the parish church of St. Mary Magdalen in Oxford, dated 25 May 1538), and SP 1/77, fos. 187r-187v (a letter to Cromwell from the mayor of Oxford, dated 11 July 1533, concerning the sayings of a monk). (Reference to these incidents may be found in *LP*, Henry VIII, 13 Part 1 (1538), p. 391; and *LP*, Henry VIII, 6 (1533), p. 354 respectively.)
[4] Sir John Baker (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Laws of England* (12 vols., Oxford, 2003-), vi, 241-4.
[5] Lincolnshire Archives, Vj. 10, fo. 73r.
[6] Leson's indictment was sent into King's Bench: National Archives, KB 9/557/21-3. An indictment concerning an armed assault on William Leson at Ducklington in October 1542 also survives: NA, KB 9/553/54-6.

closer, or at least more complex. The 1534 Treason Act was vitally significant. The pre-existing treason law dated from 1351. The law's scope had increased markedly since the fourteenth century. However, the changes of the 1530s wrought fundamental transformation. In 1534, whilst the notion of treason by words alone was not novel, the new legislation made it possible for the private expression of opinion to be construed as treason.[7] Moreover, it was from this point in time that – despite the legislation's various repeals and reinstatements – words could sometimes constitute an overt act of treason, for example where someone confided traitorous plans to another.[8] Thus, whilst the Crown wrought its successive changes in the sphere of religion, from 1534 it became probable that overt instances of serious religious disobedience would be proceeded against in the secular courts, rather than in those of the Church.

ii. Prosecution

Legislation was, however, only the tool with which dissent *might* be proceeded against. In order for the law to function, the mechanism of prosecution had to have been activated in the first place. And, to be identified as a religious dissident – and thus to stand a chance of prosecution – one needed to step outside the acceptable spectrum of behaviour within one's own community.

As a consequence, prosecutions did not necessarily bear a direct relationship to the transgression of the law; and this was not least because the precise terms of the law could be difficult to fathom. A certificate prepared by Sir Simon Harecourt and William Fermour, on an examination taken at Burford on 11 April 1538, illustrates

---

[7] Baker (ed.), *Oxford History of the Laws of England*, esp. vi, 586.
[8] Ibid., vi, 581-94. See also G. R. Elton, *Policy and Police: the enforcement of the Reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge, 1972); and Christopher Randall Duggan, 'The advent of political thought-control in England: seditious and treasonable speech, 1485-1547' (Northwestern Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1993).

the type of confusion that could prevail. Apparently, in the month of June prior to the examination, Thomas Thomson, who had then been bailiff of Burford, had ordered his fellow bailiff, John Jones, to arrest a certain Baynam for treason, as Baynam had opposed Thomson's shutting of the town gaol's doors. Jones had duly attached Baynam. However, Jones had set Baynam at liberty the following day. Jones claimed, during his examination, that he had set Baynam at liberty because he had never arrested him for treason in the first place. According to Jones, the charge against Baynam was only of misdemeanour and contempt. Thomson had, however, taken issue with Jones' actions; and had asserted to the town's burgesses that Baynam had committed petty treason. Consequently, Jones and the other burgesses had sent for Thomas Wenman, the nearest Justice of the Peace in the county, to determine the matter. Wenman made various enquiries, before eventually deciding (rather ambiguously) that Baynam ought to be punished as an example, as he was 'unthrifty'. However, what is most significant about this case is that the depositions made by the various witnesses seem to reveal a genuine uncertainty as to whether Baynam should have been (and was) arrested for treason or not. Even when – or perhaps because – the charge was so very serious, perceptions of an incident could be very different indeed.[9]

However, although the transgression of the law did not, in itself, necessitate one's prosecution under it, it may nonetheless be concluded that a high proportion of the law's transgressors must have been proceeded against. It required, after all, but a single allegation for the mechanism of prosecution to be set into motion; and, any information was almost certain to be acted upon, provided that it reached the ears of the local gentry.

---

[9] SP 1/131, fos. 63r-65v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 13 Part 1 (1538), p. 278.)

iii. The role of the gentry

Although Oxfordshire's gentry have enjoyed a reputation for being religiously conservative, they implemented and enforced the successive religious changes within their sphere of influence nonetheless. Indeed, insofar as we can tell, Oxfordshire's gentry acted immediately on hearing report of sensitive information. For instance, on the evening of 26 June 1536, the bailiff of Bampton heard allegation that two men – John Hill of Eynsham and a certain William Saunders – had, earlier that evening, been talking treasonously in the house of a shoemaker by the name of John Joyes. Allegedly, Saunders had said that the king had put Anne Boleyn and her associates to death only because he had wished to do so. Saunders also desired that the king of Scots [James V, who was burning heretics at this time] become king of England.[10] The bailiff did not advise a member of the local gentry – in this case, Simon Harecourt – of the matter until three days later: on 29 June. In contrast, Harecourt wrote to Cromwell the very day after he had heard the allegation.[11]

Oxfordshire's gentry had various reasons for behaving as they did. When Sir Walter Stonor wrote to Cromwell on 17 April 1534, he declared that he was doing so out of a bounden duty of obedience – since Harry Kebyll of Henley-upon-Thames had come to Stonor House earlier that day, alleging that a certain John Snappe had spoken treasonously at dinner. (Snappe had declared, amongst other things, that if he had £2,000 he would bestow it, as well as his life, on the Princess Mary's title, against the issue that would come of Anne Boleyn.)[12] However, three years later, Stonor's

---

[10] Saunders' counter-claim was that it had been Hill who had said these words. Saunders was, however, unable to find any witnesses to support his case, and so he was committed to ward by the bailiff.

[11] Harecourt's letter to Cromwell: SP 1/85, fos. 2r-2v. The allegations against John Hill: SP 1/104, fo. 205r. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 10 (1536), pp. 504-5.)

[12] SP 1/83, fos. 87r-87v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 7 (1534), p. 201.)

motives for offering information seem to have sprung from a different origin to that which he had professed in 1534. In April 1537, Stonor appealed to Cromwell to intervene with John Daunce, since Daunce owed Stonor the sum of £5 for an office which Stonor had served. That Cromwell obliged is evident from Stonor's subsequent letter of thanks, in which he enclosed 'such wordes as a pore mane dyd speke in the towne of Watlyngton consernyng the kynges grase'. The case against the pauper seems entirely suspect. By Stonor's own admission, the accused was but 'a very sympyle persone' who 'axyth from dore to dore'; only one person had charged him; and even this accuser had admitted that the beggar had been 'dronkyn when he spake'. To compound the matter, the letter which the beggar had allegedly carried in his cape had been cut in the process of its retrieval. And so, the principal motive for including the beggar's words in any correspondence seems likely to have been to signify Stonor's loyalty to the regime, in return for the favour which it had just shown him.[13]

The driving forces behind the behaviour of Oxfordshire's gentry may have been loyalty, politics, or even self-interest. Yet it is evident that they proceeded diligently against any religious disquiet in the county throughout the period, not just during Cromwell's ascendancy. Gentry who were perceived not to have done their duty in imposing order in the county were treated severely. Robert Kelloway esquire came before the Privy Council on 10 May 1551, following the report of an innkeeper from Woodstock. The Privy Council charged Kelloway with having received 'a seditiouse lettre and a lewde message' from a man called Tracie. However,

> forasmuche as the saied Kelowaie hathe not onlie shewed the lettre which he long kept secret, but also neither denyeth nor confesseth the messaige, saieng he was so troubeled with the foolishnes of the lettre that he remembreth not what messaige it

---

[13] SP 1/117, fos. 217r-217v (first letter), 218r-218v (second letter). (*LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 1 (1537), p. 354.)

> was, therfore he was committed to the Fleete ... till the comming up of Traicie, that the matter may be further examyned.[14]

Kelloway was indeed imprisoned. Eight days later, the Privy Council conceded 'to suffer Mr. Kellowayes wief to resorte to her husbonde and speake with him in the prison, and to bring him suche necessaries as the saied Warden shall thinke meete'.[15] However, men who behaved as Kelloway had done seem, in Oxfordshire at least, to have been few and far between.

iv. The process of investigation

Religious dissent was liable to be recognised, and prosecution was extremely likely. However, the interpretation and enforcement of the law does not seem to have extended beyond its legitimate boundaries. Whilst Oxfordshire's gentry were assiduous in taking action, they seem never to have automatically assumed guilt.

The gentry's examinations were uniformly thorough, and they often discovered that personal grievance lay behind the charge of dissent. When John Dawson of Watlington was examined by Sir Walter Stonor in June 1534, he reported that Joanne Hamilton, also of Watlington, had alleged before various witnesses that, around Whitsuntide in the previous year, a certain Mistress Burgyn had been in labour, and had sent for her to act as midwife. Well pleased with Joanne's services, Mistress Burgyn had, allegedly, commented that Joanne was good enough to be midwife for the queen of England – but not for Anne Boleyn, who was a whore and a harlot. Thus John Dawson and constable William Goode had brought the two women

---

[14] *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1550-1552, p. 272. I have found it impossible to establish Kelloway's identity with any degree of certainty. It is, however, probable that it was the same Robert Kelloway (or Kelway) who had profited from the dissolution of the county's chantries. Kelloway had £5 *per annum* out of the chantry of St. John the Baptist at Chipping Norton. He also got a lease of Minster Lovell's chantry lands for twenty years at £2 *per annum*, which afterwards passed as a free gift from the king to Sir Andrew Dudley. See *The Chantry Certificates and the Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods*, ed. Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Soc., i, 1919), xix.

[15] *APC*, 1550-1552, p. 274.

before Sir Walter and other local notables, for Joanne to repeat her allegation. Upon this examination, however, Joanne conceded that she would never have made the accusation had not Mistress Burgyn said certain insulting things about her in the past.[16]

Indeed, it is worth noting that the veracity of evidence was never assumed, even in those cases in which the accuser was of high standing in the local community. Humphrey Schokborough of Broughton wrote to one of the justices of assize for Oxfordshire, Sir Thomas Inglefield, in August 1537. Schokborough alleged that the curate of Broughton (Richard Crowley) had not only upheld the power of the pope in his preaching, but had also defended More and Fisher's cause. In addition to this, Schokborough claimed that Crowley had observed the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus on the previous Sunday. The assizes were, at that time, being held at some considerable distance from Broughton: at Wallingford. Therefore, Inglefield delegated the investigation to William Fermour, since Fermour resided close by. However, problematically, in the course of Fermour's examination it became clear that Schokborough's allegations against Crowley could be corroborated by only one other man. Thus Fermour thought fit to investigate whether Schokborough had other reasons for making his allegation, not least because the alleged incidents had lain unreported for some time. Fermour's suspicions were well-founded. He discovered that Schokbrough and the curate had been quarrelling over tithes for the previous twelve months. (It is in this light interesting that the only supporter of Schokborough's claim, constable Robert Aleyn, was a crony of Schokborough's –

[16] SP 1/84, fos. 117r-117v, 178r-178v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 7 (1534), pp. 315-6.) Mistress Burgyn denied the allegations, but made certain counter-claims about Joanne.

Schokborough being one of only two named witnesses to Aleyn's will on 18 December 1545.)[17] Fermour concluded accordingly.[18]

At Broughton, the investigative process was concluded in a matter of days. But there was scope for it to take considerably longer. Allegations of counterfeiting that were made at Thame in May 1535 were still being investigated over a year later.[19] Moreover, appeals could be made within the system. In the course of a treason investigation in 1538, a clerk named Hatley protested that his examination by a certain Master Carter had been unjust, and called for redress.[20] However, what is perhaps most indicative of the thoroughness of the investigative process is the manner in which allegations could and did backfire. The most spectacular example of this is the celebrated case of John Parkyns. Early in 1537, Parkyns alleged that several priests and monks had spoken seditiously, and he accused two abbots of treason. However, since a commission of inquiry, issued on 18 January, concluded Parkyns' claims to lack substance, it was Parkyns who suffered punishment. First, Parkyns was committed to prison. He was, after several days had elapsed, then commanded to appear in Oxford's marketplace bearing a sign: 'for false accusation'. Following a second period of imprisonment (this time in Bocardo), Parkyns was then commanded

---

[17] Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 179.134r.

[18] SP 1/95, fo. 43r (the letter to Thomas Inglefield from Humphrey Schokborough); SP 1/124, fos. 40r-41v (William Fermour's examinations, sent to Cromwell). (*LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 2 (1537), pp. 196-7.) *Letters and Papers* misdates Schokborough's allegation as 7 August 1535, as does Ethan Shagan: *LP*, Henry VIII, 9 (1535), p. 12; Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 40. This is because neither *Letters and Papers* nor Shagan connects (the undated) SP 1/95, fo. 43r with SP 1/124, fos. 40r-41v (which alludes, for example, to an examination made by Fermour on 11 August 1537).

[19] SP 1/92, fos. 191r-193v; SP 1/94, fos. 3r-8v; SP 1/104, fos. 183r-184v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 8 (1535), pp. 295, 397-8; *LP*, Henry VIII, 10 (1536), p. 489.)

[20] SP 1/130, fos. 74r-75v; SP 1/132, fos. 11r-12v; SP 1/132, fos. 13r-13v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 13 Part 1 (1538), pp. 196, 333-4.) Also relevant is *LP*, Henry VIII 13 Part 1 (1538), pp. 312-3, but I cannot, however, find record of this in the State Papers.

to avoid the shire, although he continued to protest his innocence to Cromwell all the while.[21]

Yet, whilst it could take the time when it was necessary, the process of county government was generally very swift. On 22 February 1538, Sir William Windsor wrote to Cromwell, advising him that he had sent a certain Thomas Bright to be arraigned at Oxford before the justices of assize, for treasonous words spoken at Boarstall (in Buckinghamshire). Only four days later, on 26 February, Sir Edward Montagu was able to notify Cromwell of Bright's fate. Bright had been attainted at Oxford of high treason, drawn through the town, and put to execution – with dignitaries from the town, shire, and University in attendance.[22]

v. Complications

It is possible to conclude that religious disquiet would have been proceeded against swiftly in Oxfordshire, provided it had taken a treasonous or seditious form. However, we need now to consider those forms of dissent which were less likely to be proceeded against according to the common law: matters of disbelief (as opposed to disobedience), and instances of religious disobedience which did not touch upon the Crown – or could not be readily interpreted as doing so. In doing this, it becomes clear that the evidence available is skewed towards religious conservatives rather than evangelicals, since the former would be accused of treason, the latter of heresy.

There are fewer records extant from the ecclesiastical authorities than there are from their secular counterparts. It has also to be recognised that the types of religious

---

[21] A summary of the case can be gleaned from *LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 1 (1537), pp. 78-9, 107-8, 123-7. Record of the case was recorded into Oxford's Council Act Book: ORO, A.5.3, fos. 206v-208v. The case also came before Star Chamber: NA, STAC 2/34/11.

[22] SP 1/129, fos. 55r (Bright's treasonous words), 85r-85v (letter to Cromwell from Sir William Windsor), 97r-97v (letter to Cromwell from Sir Edward Montagu). (*LP*, Henry VIII, 13 Part 1 (1538), pp. 103, 114, 124.)

disquiet which fell within the ecclesiastical authorities' jurisdiction were much less likely to be proceeded against than were those falling obviously within the jurisdiction of the common law, and especially those which could be construed as treason. The allegation of heresy, for example, was not one which would be made lightly. The two means of proceeding against heresy in England were accusation and denunciation; and it was difficult to obtain witnesses for either process. This was because if they were proved incorrect, the accusers faced the same punishment as did a proven heretic. (In contrast, the suspicion of concealing treason could lead to an accusation of misprision of treason.) In addition to this, even if a charge of heresy were successfully brought, it was fairly straightforward for the culprit to be acquitted – provided he was prepared to do penance. It cannot be assumed either that all instances of religious disobedience would have been proceeded against. Visitations focused more on social issues than they did on matters of (fairly minor) religious disobedience. Essentially, parish communities were more immediately concerned with issues such as bastardy – which, of course, inflicted a financial drain on the local community – than they were with parishioners failing to attend church and the like. Thus, in any analysis, we need to bear this disparity in mind.

vi. Conclusions

The co-operation of the different branches of the law meant that the successive religious alterations were assiduously enforced in Oxfordshire throughout the Reformation period in such a way that it seems unlikely that serious and sustained transgression would have failed to leave record. However, we must ensure that we adequately contextualise any such evidence, given that we have much less systematic record of the less blatant transgression of the law, and still less of those who did not

openly violate the law, but were critical of the Reformation nonetheless. It is possible, however, to draw conclusions from the material available.

II. The County's Conformity

i. The extent to which conformity may be assessed

The records extant for Oxfordshire pose inherent difficulties. The records of the Church are patchy and incomplete. From the period in which the county was included within the diocese of Lincoln, we have only the odd set of court records, a handful of visitation returns, and a single bishop's register. The material surviving from the later period is even more sparse: some depositions (which can be dated only approximately), and a few court records from the very end of the 1560s. The secular courts have left even less record in the county: no assize or Quarter Sessions' records survive for Oxfordshire. Indeed, the only reason we know as much about the 1530s as we do is because of the survival of Cromwell's papers.

The difficulties caused by this paucity of source-material are compounded by the fact that non-treasonous or seditious forms of religious dissent would have been unlikely to have generated legal record at all. For instance, a heretic prepared to submit would not generate a signification of excommunication.[23] And, even when culprits were punished for their dissidence, the Tudor *penchant* for making local examples means that surviving references are sparse, especially given the paucity of borough records that survive for the county. The account made for Banbury corporation on 14 November 1556 mentions the pillory, cage, stocks, and 'cucking stool'; and so it is unfortunate that there is no other contemporary account extant for

[23] Significations of excommunication were mainly issued by bishops. They were warrants sent into Chancery in order to secure the issue of a writ under the Great Seal for the arrest and imprisonment of an excommunicate. Individuals became liable to signification once they had remained contumacious for forty days following excommunication.

the borough.[24] Thus, it is only the Acts of the Privy Council that record that John Jones of Shirburn was ordered to be delivered to the sheriff of Oxfordshire and carried to Oxford on 13 November 1552 – where, on the next market day, Jones was to be set upon the pillory, and labelled a mover of sedition and a spreader of false rumours.[25] Equally, it is only because the Privy Council sent a letter of thanks to the mayor and aldermen of Oxford on 11 July 1557 that we know that 'the slater of Wallingford' had earlier been committed to prison 'for his lewde wordes'.[26] Occasional references such as these are, moreover, often tantalisingly obscure – especially pardons, which tend not to be specific.

However, despite these limitations, we know a great deal about religious disquiet in the county nonetheless. As regards what lay within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, we know that, despite the see being vacant for long periods, the parishes were closely governed. The extant churchwardens' accounts demonstrate the efficiency of visitations: the parishes were visited frequently (although the accounts tend not to specify by whom these visitations were performed), and their churchwardens' accounts audited (quite probably at the time of these visitations). It is also possible to add flesh to bare bones, due to the survival of several sets of visitation returns and an itinerary for the visitation of Oxford Archdeaconry in 1540 – which took place between 7 and 16 October, touring the deaneries of Bicester, Woodstock, Deddington, Chipping Norton, Witney, Oxford, Cuddesden, Aston, and Henley-upon-Thames.[27] We may also conclude from the extant material that the Church courts were fully functioning, even if many of their records are no longer extant.

---

[24] ORO, B.B. XVII/i/1, fos. 168r-171v.
[25] *APC*, 1552-1554, pp. 168-9.
[26] *APC*, 1556-1558, p. 119.
[27] This itinerary: LA, Vj. 11, fos. 96r-96v.

Equally, although the records of the secular county courts no longer survive, we do know that Sessions were held around the county as they ought to have been. We also have record of such business as was sent into the various central courts of law. Cases might be sent into Star Chamber and Chancery – for any number of reasons. Yet Oxfordshire's justices systematically sent certain types of indictment into King's Bench.

In many cases, an indictment was sent into King's Bench through a duty of obligation. Special commissions of *oyer* and *terminer* were required to submit report to King's Bench, as they did not constitute courts in and of themselves. Coroners were also obliged to submit their findings – and it is clear that they did so. Upon concluding that a scholar (Hugo Weston) had killed the son of the eminent Oxonian Richard Flaxney the coroner duly sent his indictment into King's Bench.[28] But this treatment was not reserved for the deaths of the great and the good – and their sons. An inquest held at Bampton in 1568 concerned the death of a vagrant named Robert Kyrkes.[29]

However, the Oxfordshire justices submitted a great many indictments for reasons other than these types of obligation. Indeed, it appears that the policy which the Oxfordshire justices adopted was to advise King's Bench of any serious or sensitive case in the county, with armed robbery proving a particular favourite. In the period from 1534 – when the new treason legislation was introduced – until the close of the 1560s, there were 143 legal terms, of which the indictment files are extant for 132 of them.[30] A full ninety of these files contain indictments emanating from Oxfordshire – and generally quite a number of them.

---

[28] NA, KB 9/530/1-4. Weston had attacked Thomas Flaxney on 3 October 1533.
[29] NA, KB 9/1014/251.
[30] Three terms are listed in the National Archives' index as not having had a session. Thus eight files appear to be missing.

It is evident from these files that Oxfordshire's secular courts proceeded against religious disquiet that was deemed treasonous, sending record of it into King's Bench. This much is demonstrated by the King's Bench indictment of the vicar of South Newington, William Lovett. Thomas Watson, an apparitor to the bishop of Lincoln, had come to the village of South Newington on 15 August 1535. There Watson had delivered a copy of an instruction 'under the Byshoppes Seall in prynt' to Lovett. (At the beginning of June, Cromwell had ordered the bishops to preach the Word of God and the king's supremacy every Sunday and feast day throughout the year. And, since Cromwell had decreed that the bishops' clergy should do likewise, Bishop Longland had printed two thousand copies of the letter for distribution throughout his vast diocese of Lincoln.)[31] At South Newington, the apparitor had requested that the vicar give him 'a good reward' for his pains in delivering the order, despite Lovett having given him nothing in the past. However, Lovett's response was unequivocal: 'Yea feyth Somner if the kyng were a rightfull Juge & his Lawes rightfull then were I able to geve the some what'. This defiance induced Watson to threaten: 'Beware Master Vykar what ye sey agenst the kynges grace for I will shewe my master [the bishop] of yor wordes'. The vicar's treasonous response – 'I may chose whether I will Rede hit [the letter] or not other for the kyng or the bysshop except my matters were better endyd' – can only have ensured Lovett's subsequent prosecution in the county.[32]

The nature of the record (and its imperfect survival) makes it impossible to draw conclusions that are entirely concrete. It is not possible for us to be certain that the indictment of every 'serious' case was sent into King's Bench. But, the considerable extent to which the King's Bench indictment files reflect the 'serious'

---

[31] Susan Wabuda, *Preaching during the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 94-6.
[32] NA, KB 9/977/52-3.

business of the county is demonstrable by the way in which we can use the files to trace ongoing conflict. In Easter Term 1565, the inquisition *post mortem* of Thomas Watson of Clanfield was sent into King's Bench. This inquisition concluded that Matthew Jackson, also of Clanfield, had attacked Watson.[33] The matter had not, however, ended there – as the next term's indictment file demonstrates. Watson's widow was out for revenge. At the Session of the Peace held at Oxford on 20 February 1565, Agnes Watson was indicted, along with several accomplices, for the armed robbery of Jackson's house.[34]

ii. The level of conformity

The King's Bench indictment files suggest that instances of serious religious disobedience were neither widespread nor even common within Oxfordshire. Besides the vicar of South Newington's treasonous language, the only other indication of religious disquiet takes the form of a single inquisition *post mortem*. When a jury considered the death of a prisoner at Oxford Castle – Richard Davy, who was a husbandman from Great Tew – on 5 January 1544, they recorded that he had been imprisoned on the grounds of suspected heresy.[35]

This impression from King's Bench is corroborated by the other sources available for the county – not least the records of the Church. The Church court books which are extant do record instances of heresy. On 16 November 1526, a certain Thomas Wattes of Grafton was examined for heresy for alleging that: there were no saints in heaven; God was not in heaven but with the Jews; the sacrament was under God, not God; and that Our Lady and the saints did no miracles but by the

[33] NA, KB 9/610/137.
[34] NA, KB 9/612/57-8.
[35] NA, KB 9/558/179.

power of God, saying that 'or lady woold assone shyte as doo enny miracle'.[36] However no such cases involve individuals from Oxfordshire.[37] And, whilst there are enormous gaps in the court books' coverage, the other records which were generated by the Church support the impression of Oxfordshire being an outwardly conformist county.

Oxfordshire's parishes were visited regularly and frequently, even when the diocese was minus a bishop, as the county's churchwardens' accounts demonstrate. (There was no bishop of Oxford between December 1557 and October 1567, and from October 1568 until the end of the period in question.) Four sets of visitation returns are extant, albeit none of them dating after 1540. There are returns for 1517-20, 1530, 1538 (albeit incomplete), and 1540. Using visitation returns as evidence is not altogether straightforward. We have, for one thing, only that information which was requested. For example, the second visitation seems to have asked fewer direct questions about the condition of the clergy than did the first. Moreover, parishes could respond in more or less detail. In the first visitation, when asked about any debts owing to the church, the parish of Nuneham Courtenay simply stated that diverse people owed the church diverse sums.[38] Consequently, the findings of individual visitations cannot be crudely compared to one another in order to assess the changing religious climate. Whilst the first visitation deemed that all was well in only

---

[36] LA, Cj. 3, fos. 33r-34v. Depositions were taken from four men – William Broke, John Shyrley, John Palmer, and John Symond – who deemed, as did the defendant himself, that he had been drunk at the time of his saying these words. Wattes' penance was on 22 November 1526.

[37] There were several settlements by the name of 'Grafton' in the (old) Lincoln Diocese. However, this does not appear to be that settlement which was contained within Oxford Archdeaconry since there is reference to Grafton parish church, and the 'Grafton' which existed within Oxford Archdeaconry was not a parish in its own right.

[38] *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-1531*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (3 vols., Lincoln Record Soc., 1940-7), i, 119-40, esp. i, 138.

3 out of the 156 parishes inspected, the second visitation found 83 out of a possible 191 parishes entirely satisfactory.[39]

The returns are, nonetheless, instructive. The visitation returns indicate that, whatever the local religious climate was, Oxfordshire's parishioners were concerned far more immediately with matters of social regulation that they were with religious dissidence. Reports of fornication, adultery, and other lewd conduct constitute the vast bulk of the intelligence submitted to the authorities. Religious misdemeanours were reported – and not simply to bolster other grievances. In particular, parishioners in Oxfordshire were presented for not having attended divine service, or failing to receive the sacrament. At Bloxham, in October 1540, the parish presented Edward Counsell for not having attended divine service on feast days on no fewer than forty occasions, and for not having received the Eucharist at the parish church at the last three Easters. (On interrogation, Counsell alleged that he had received the Eucharist at Haseley at the previous Easter.)[40] However, the relative paucity of reports of religious misdemeanours suggests that very few Oxfordshire parishioners engaged in serious opposition to their communities over matters of religion.

This picture of widespread religious conformity is further borne out by the fact that very few significations of excommunication survive for the county: David Suylton and Lucia Williams of Henley-upon-Thames in 1523; Richard Robertes of Oxford University in 1531; Alicia Bookebynder, Agnes Webbe, and Agnes Weste in 1536; John Frenche of Aston in 1555; and Dorothea Thomas *alias* Plummer from the

---

[39] Ibid., i, 119-40 (first visitation), and ii, 32-69 (second visitation).
[40] LA, Vj. 11, fo. 149r.

suburbs of Oxford, and Joanna Suldren of Witney in 1557.[41] Very few individuals were prepared to remain in open defiance over matters of faith.

However, perhaps the most convincing evidence for Oxfordshire being an outwardly conformist county comes from the works of John Foxe. Besides Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, Foxe declares but one martyr to have suffered in the county: William Dighel. (It should be noted that martyrs tended, at this time, to suffer punishment in their locality.) And all that Foxe feels qualified to say about Dighel is that

> About this time [October 1555] suffered William Dighel, most constantly offering his body a burnt-sacrifice unto God, forsaking the world, life and all, for the love of his holy truth. This holy martyr suffered at Banbury in the county of Oxford.[42]

Indeed, Foxe – who had so much vested interest in making evangelicalism seem as popular as possible from the earliest possible date – ascribes very little to Oxfordshire at all, since he does not emphasise the county's conservatism either. Foxe claims, in his *Acts and Monuments*, to draw upon certain (now lost) records of Bishop Longland – even supplying his readership with folio numbers. And yet even Foxe can only drum up one instance of widespread evangelicalism in Oxfordshire: heretic networks which were operative in 1521, and which will be discussed in the following chapter.

There seem, therefore, to have been few religious extremists of either persuasion. During most of the Reformation period, Oxfordshire generated very few martyrs, traitors, heretics, or exiles. Instead, outward conformity was the norm. And so it was not surprising that, when the earl of Bedford wrote to Cecil in September 1561, he commented that when it came to 'thelection [*sic*] of an honest and religious

---

[41] NA, C 85/115/14 (David Suylton and Lucia Williams), C 85/209/37 (Richard Robertes), C 85/115/22 (Alicia Bookebynder, Agnes Webbe, and Agnes Weste), C 85/204/1 (John Frenche), C 85/204/2 (Dorothea Thomas *alias* Plummer, and Joanna Suldren).

[42] *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe,* ed. Josiah Pratt, 4th edn (8 vols., London, 1877), vii, 583. There were, in addition, exceedingly few Marian exiles from Oxfordshire: Christina Hallowell Garrett, *The Marian Exiles: a study in the origins of Elizabethan Puritanism* (Cambridge, 1938).

governor amonge them for there Maior' the townsmen of Oxford were 'well affected'.[43]

[43] SP 12/19, fos. 106r-107v, esp. fo. 106r. (*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1547-1580, p. 186.)

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISSIDENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE

Although Oxfordshire was generally a 'conformist' county, its commons nonetheless engaged critically with religious change. Oxfordshire fostered both unlicensed evangelicalism and traditionalism throughout the Reformation period, with large numbers of the county's commonalty being in some way party to these. Indeed, the only basis for Oxfordshire being deemed a 'conformist' county at all is the fact that, for most of the period in question, the commons' engagement with religious change manifested itself in forms more subtle than open and popular insurrection.

I. EVANGELICALISM

i. Overt dissent

Evangelicals were active within Oxfordshire from a very early date. Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* record that, in 1521, Bishop Longland had cause to take action against heresy in his diocese. Most of the heretics whom Longland proceeded against were from Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, with a great many of them emanating from a region which had been an old Lollard stronghold: the area around Amersham. Nonetheless, almost sixty named individuals can be identified as coming from Oxfordshire, including no fewer than three 'John Brabant's, together with their respective wives. Moreover, although Foxe claims the evangelicals to have been 'simple poor men', Oxfordshire's evangelical corps included the bailiff of Witney, and the Burford schoolmaster Edward Red. William Gunne, a tanner from Witney,

seems also to have been of substance. Gunne's inventory (which was, admittedly, made nearly thirty years later, in 1548) values him at the considerable sum of £64 5s. Oxfordshire's evangelicals were well-connected also, through ties of kinship, employment, and business – some of which extended as far as London. John Edmunds, for example, accused his daughter Agnes, admitting that he had 'brought her [Agnes] to the house of Richard Colins to service, to the intent that she might be instructed there in God's law'. With Colins, Agnes 'had learned likewise the Ten Commandments, the five wits bodily and ghostly, and the seven deadly sins'. The Oxfordshire evangelicals who gathered together to read and worship stemmed from quite disparate locations from within the county. Yet it is perhaps not surprising that they were clustered along the two major routes in the north-west of the county emanating from Oxford. Burford was detected as an especial hub of heresy, as it was the principal site at which the heretics had gathered.[1]

Early evangelicalism was certainly on a significant scale in parts of Oxfordshire. However, Foxe's interpretation of events has to be taken with a pinch of salt. Foxe was naturally inclined to over-emphasise certain elements of evangelical activity. Thus, whilst Foxe claims that 'few or none [of the Oxfordshire heretics] were learned, being simple labourers or artificers', they are (somewhat improbably) presented as being a cohesive group, orthodox by Elizabethan standards, whose activities seem virtually exclusively to have been the reading of the Scriptures. It should, in addition to this, be noted that none of the Oxfordshire heretics counted amongst those who were burned: those who had abjured in the past, but had now lapsed. Moreover, the members of this evangelical corps seem not to have been as steadfast in their beliefs as Foxe might have wished to imply. The wills of four of the

[1] *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe,* ed. Josiah Pratt, 4th edn (8 vols., London, 1877), iv, 219-46.

Oxfordshire heretics survive: Joanne Collins of Astall (1533), Thomas Ryley of Burford (1545), William Gunne of Witney (1548), and John Clerke of Clanfield (1557).[2] Gunne bequeathed his soul 'to god allmyghtie my maker and redemer', as might reasonably be expected during the Edwardian period. The bequests of the other three heretics' souls, however, were all markedly traditionalist. Collins's was 'to almyghty god to owre lade saint mare & to all the saintes in evyne'; Ryley's 'to allmyghtie god & to his blessed Mother saynt marye & to all the holly companye of heaven'; and Clerke's 'to allmyghtye god my makere & Redemer to the blessede Virgine marye & to all ye celestyall companye of heavene'. This, alone, cannot be said to prove that the beliefs of these individuals were traditionalist by the point at which they made their last will and testament. But it surely implies a certain outward conformity to the *status quo*. Moreover, Joanne Collins in particular made much more copious bequests to traditional religious institutions than could possibly have been expected by convention alone. Joanne gave 12d to the mother church of Lincoln; 16d to the high altar of her parish church for tithes forgotten; a bushel of malt to Our Lady of Pity; a sheep to St. Nicholas; a bushel of malt to St. Katherine; a bushel of malt to the Rood light; a pair of vestments to the parish church; 4d each to St. Thomas, St. George, St. Anthony, and Our Lady in the Chancel; a sheep to the Trinity; three ropes for the bells; and a sheep to the church at Bicester. Joanne, moreover, bound her sons, Robert and William, together with their heirs, to pay 4s *per annum* in perpetuity 'to the purre pepyll beyng in the almms howse of burford at 4 certen tymys in the yere'.[3]

---

[2] It is possible to identify the wills of these four heretics with a reasonable degree of certainty. The dates given for the wills are the years in which the wills were made.

[3] Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills Oxon 182.53v-54r (John Clerke), MS. Wills. Oxon. 178.95r-96r (Joanne Collins), MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.14r-14v (William Gunne), MS. Wills. Oxon. 179.97r-97v (Thomas Ryley).

ii. Covert dissent

Evangelicals were never proceeded against in large numbers after 1521. However, this was not because support for evangelicalism in Oxfordshire waned in the years following Longland's investigation. Far from it: proscribed evangelicalism prospered throughout the Reformation period. Seditious preaching, for example, generated sufficient support in the mid-1530s for it to be considered a serious threat. In the course of May 1536, Bishop Longland sent several reports to Cromwell concerning the activities of seditious preachers operating in the Thames Valley. Longland reported of a certain Sir Swynnerton that

> He resorteth unto light people, and to their houses, whiche dothe leave their worldely labour, and fall all the daye to readynge of englishe bookes. By reason whereof they fall into povertie, and muche ydlenes, and assembleth many tymes together. And where ever this priste dothe preache, they have monicion, oone frome another, thoughe itt be 6 or 8 myle frome them, ther to be with hym.[4]

What did change after 1521, however, is the level of secrecy that evangelicalism's supporters managed to maintain in their activities. Indeed, it was even possible for evangelical networks to remain operative during the reign of Mary.

Oxfordshire's evangelical community could count Cuthbert and Anne Warcup amongst its number. The Warcups were a well-to-do couple, holding extensive lands in the south-east of Oxfordshire, residing at their manor of English before they fled to Frankfurt early in Mary's reign. Cuthbert described himself in his will as a citizen and mercer of London, and merchant of the Staple of Calais. Yet the Warcups were also religious dissidents, with their evangelicalism finding expression through their very close friendship to a woman by the name of Joanne Wilkinson. Cuthbert Warcup appointed Joanne (his 'verie lovinge frende') as an overseer to his will. Joanne, likewise, named Cuthbert as one of the two men assigned to distribute very

---

[4] State Papers 1/103, fos. 231r-232v, 271r-271v, 302r-303v, esp. fo. 231v (here quoted). (*Letters and Papers*, Henry VIII, 10 (1536), pp. 339-40, 352, 371-2.)

large sums of money to exiled congregations after her death.[5] Wilkinson was a wealthy widow who lent considerable support to Marian Protestant prisoners – and who, by December 1556, had gone into voluntary exile.[6] The Warcups, likewise, corresponded with Protestant prisoners, and provided them with funding. The imprisoned John Bradford urged Cuthbert and Anne Warcup, Joanne Wilkinson, and 'other of his [Cuthbert Warcup's] godly frendes with their families' to stand firm in their faith, and be prepared to suffer the consequences of so doing.[7] Bishop Hooper, on the other hand, was grateful for Anne Warcup's 'louing token', and was delighted at her assertion that she intended to remain constant in her faith.[8] Indeed, the Warcups' contact with evangelicals was not restricted to their friendship with Joanne Wilkinson. John Bradford asked a certain Elizabeth Browne to

> Commende me to my good Mother Mystres wylkynson, and to my verye deare Syster Mystres Warcuppe. I shall dayly commende you all to GOD, and I praye you do the lyke for me.[9]

The evangelical network which the Warcups formed part of was not county-specific in its membership. Joanne Wilkinson, for example, seems not to have had any interests in the county. But the network did take direct action within Oxfordshire. The imprisoned Nicholas Ridley reported from Oxford to Bradford and his fellows in London that 'Mistress Wilkinson and mistress Warcup have not forgotten us, but, ever

---

[5] National Archives, Prob. 11/42B, fos. 351v-352r (Cuthbert Warcup), Prob. 11/42B, fos. 233r-235r (Joanne Wilkinson), Prob. 11/53, fos. 320r-320v (Anne Warcup).
[6] Cranmer, Hooper, and Bradford all wrote to Wilkinson – with Bradford's letter thanking her for her 'tokens'. See Myles Coverdale, *Certain most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters of such true Saintes and holy Martyrs of God, as in the late bloodye persecution here within this Realme, gaue their lyues for the defence of Christes holy gospel: written in the tyme of theyr affliction and cruell imprysonment* (London, 1564), fos. 23-4 (Cranmer to Wilkinson), 131-2 (Hooper to Wilkinson), 342-4 (Bradford to Wilkinson). (Although labelled as being foliated, the volume is in fact paginated.) Cranmer's correspondence with Joanne Wilkinson is also included in Foxe: *Acts and Monuments*, ed. Pratt, viii, 100.
[7] Coverdale, *Certain most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters*, fos. 280-6.
[8] Ibid., fos. 132-4. This letter is almost certainly addressed to Anne Warcup, although it is labelled only 'To my dearely beloued Syster in the Lord maistres A.W.'.
[9] Coverdale, *Certain most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters*, fos. 412-3.

since we came to Bocardo, with their charitable and friendly benevolence have comforted us'.[10]

It is impossible to ascertain how many evangelical networks operated in Marian Oxfordshire, and how they might have been related to one another. However, the network of which the Warcups were members was certainly not operating in isolation. John Careless corresponded with an anonymous Oxfordshire woman, 'K.E.', during his imprisonment in London, writing probably in the early part of 1556.[11] It is clear that 'K.E.' supported Careless financially during his imprisonment. In return, Careless provided 'K.E.' – who was, apparently, supported in her faith by neither her husband nor her friends – with spiritual guidance. Careless's correspondence also indicates that there were closet evangelicals besides 'K.E.' active in the north-west of the county, in which 'K.E.' appears to have dwelt. Careless advises 'K.E.' that

> I haue sent unto my good brother Henry Jones of Witney, a true and christian confession of my faith, the whiche I would wish you to reade, and in all points to be ruled thereby. My good brother Richard Brice wil help you to it well inough: I haue spoken to him and to my brother Henrye also.[12]

It is, moreover, 'by credible persons' that Careless is informed that 'K.E.' has attended Mass, contrary to his instructions.[13]

There can be little doubt that Oxfordshire's evangelical corps extended far beyond the individuals named in the published letters of the Marian regime's religious prisoners. Rose Hickman – who was later to join her husband in exile in Antwerp,

---

[10] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, ed. Pratt, vii, 424-5.
[11] Nicholas Ridley, *A pituous lamentation of the miserable estate of the churche of Christ in Englande* (London, 1566); Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, ed. Pratt, viii, 192-3. Three letters from Careless to 'K.E.' survive in the appendix to the 1566 edition of Ridley's *Piteous Lamentation*. One of these letters (the first in Ridley's collection) is also published in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, albeit in a heavily edited form. I am grateful to Megan Wheeler for alerting me to the existence of this evangelical network, and advising me of the probable dating of the letters. John Careless died in King's Bench in July 1556.
[12] Ridley, *Pituous lamentation*, Letters of John Careles, fos. 4r-9v, esp. fos. 7r-7v (here quoted).
[13] Ibid., Letters of John Careles, fos. 10r-16v, esp. fo. 11v (here quoted).

and who consulted with the bishops in Oxford concerning the baptism of her newborn child – was lodged at Chilswell, in all probability by a gentleman of the name of John Merry. And, although Chilswell was technically in Berkshire, it lay but four miles from the city of Oxford.[14]

The evidence for Marian evangelicalism is inevitably biased towards the prosperous and well-connected. These were the men and women who could provide prisoners with financial support, and who were liable to be engaged in extensive correspondence with them. Yet they seem to have shared at least one characteristic with their more humble fellows. Not one of them was prepared to sacrifice all for his faith. Both Cuthbert and Anne Warcup managed to outlive the Marian persecution in some degree of comfort, with Cuthbert dying only shortly before 15 October 1559.[15] The anonymous 'K.E.' was no more selfless. Indeed, it is highly significant that Foxe should suppress two of the letters that Careless wrote to her, and heavily edited the third in his *Acts and Monuments*. 'K.E.' and her circle were evidently not quite the kind of Marian evangelical group that Foxe wanted to present. One of the letters which Foxe suppressed reveals that 'K.E.' regularly attended Mass. The other indicates that 'spronge up heretikes' – by which Careless meant 'the Arrians and Anabaptistes' – were at large in the county.[16] In addition to this, Richard Brice and

---

[14] Rose Hickman's autobiography is contained in 'The recollections of Rose Hickman', ed. M. Dowling and J. Shakespeare, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 55 (1982), 97-102. 'Chilswell' seems, in the sixteenth century, to have comprised a single isolated farm – and to have remained so for some time. See John Leland, *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (5 vols., Carbondale, 1964), v, 75; and British Library., Additional MS. 28666, fos. 419r-431v, esp. fo. 419r ('The Antiquities of Chilswell', 1728). A Chancery case, dated between 1556 and 1558, concerns a certain John Harrys, 'then & now' the servant of John Merry of Chilswell, gentleman: NA, C 1/1440/13-4. Merry's associations with London, which are evident in this Chancery case, may well be the reason why there is no evidence of him in the subsidy returns for Cumnor parish.

[15] This is the date on which Cuthbert Warcup's will was proved: NA, Prob. 11/42B, fos. 351v-352r.

[16] Ridley, *Pituous lamentation*, Letters of John Careles, fos. 4r-9v (heretics), 10r-16v (Mass). Freewillers were likely to be a key concern in any Careless correspondence since, from 1555, the Reformed cause in the King's Bench depended upon Careless's leadership. It was, however, in Foxe's interests to present the Reformed Church as a united one; and it is likely that deliberately chose not to

Henry Jones – who were recommended to 'K.E.' by Careless – went on to prosper in the years following Mary's reign. Brice, a scribe, became clerk of the borough court, and held various other local positions before his eventual death in April 1596. Jones, one of Witney's wealthier clothiers, also played an active role in borough affairs, going on to become the town's bailiff.[17]

Thus significant numbers of Oxfordshire men and women engaged in unlicensed evangelicalism during the Reformation period; and this evangelicalism developed into sophisticated forms during the reign of Mary. Admittedly, the evangelical correspondence from Mary's reign names only a few individuals. But, since this correspondence is inevitably biased towards those who had both the inclination and the ability to correspond with and fund the regime's religious prisoners, we can only hazard at the true number of people involved. Indeed, it is even possible that a series of underground congregations existed, presumably led by laymen. Within the right circles, the identity of Oxfordshire's evangelicals was well-known, and the connections between individuals well-established. And yet, any sophistication in the organisation of this unlicensed evangelicalism did not inexorably lead to its overt display. It nonetheless became embedded within society.

iii. The assimilation of religious change

Individuals did not always engage with evangelicalism for reasons that were straightforwardly confessional. This was inevitable, since the manifestation of

---

publish correspondence that suggested to the contrary. See D. Andrew Penny, *Freewill or Predestination: the battle over saving grace in mid-Tudor England* (Woodbridge, 1990).

[17] The wills of Richard Brice's mother, Alice, and his brother, Thomas, are extant: ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.176r-176v (Alice Brice), MS. Wills. Oxon. 179.265r-266v (Thomas Brice). Richard Brice and his mother feature in a subsidy return of 1551: NA, E 179/162/293, m. 3. Richard Brice and Henry Jones are both listed in a subsidy return for 1559: NA, E 179/162/320, rot. 6d. Much information about both men may be gleaned from the Witney borough records: *Calendar of the Court Books of the Borough of Witney, 1538-1610*, ed. James L. Bolton and Marjorie M. Maslen (Oxfordshire Record Soc., liv, 1985).

religious disquiet was never entirely unobtrusive. Indeed, at times, religious dissidents positively touted for a reaction from the wider public. Bishop Longland thought it imperative that 'some ordre and punyshement ... be taken' with 'infecte persones in oxenford [Oxford]' in June 1528 because he feared that they would otherwise incite others. Longland declared that 'if sherpenes be nott nowe in this used, many oon shalbe right bold to doo yll', being especially concerned about 'suche famous lybelles and billes as be sett uppe in night tymes upon chirche doores'.[18] Yet religious disquiet influenced the wider population regardless of whether this was the specific intention of its perpetrators. The anonymous 'J.A.' was a religious conservative. Yet, as a bystander at Cranmer's burning in Oxford, he nonetheless admired 'hys [Cranmer's] pacience in ye torment, [and] hys corage in dyeng', admitting that

> yf yt had byn taken other for ye glory of god, ye welth of hys countrey, ye testimony of truth, as yt was for a pernycious error, & subverscion of true Relygion, I could worthely have commended ye example.[19]

Thus, whilst the spectacle of Cranmer dying for his faith did not cause 'J.A.' to convert, it must nonetheless have affected his perception of evangelicals – and, consequently, their cause.

It was impossible for religion to be separated from the rest of society; and thus disconnected events impacted upon religious practice. For instance, any conflict that involved clerics, or that took place within ecclesiastical buildings, could have very direct implications for the performance of worship. Thirston Standishe, the parson of Tadmarton, brought a case into Chancery in the mid-1540s.[20] Standishe asserted that

---

[18] This is a letter from Longland to Wolsey, dated 26 June 1528: SP 1/48, fos. 206r-207v, esp. fo. 206v (here quoted). (*LP*, Henry VIII, 4 Part 2 (1526-1528), pp. 1934-5.)
[19] This letter forms part of the collection of Foxe's papers that were bought by Strype and, although it is written in a contemporary hand, it appears to be a copy of the original: BL, Harley MS. 422, fos. 48r-49v, esp. fo. 49v (here quoted).
[20] The case was brought during Wriothesley's Chancellorship (1544-1547).

during the previous April Thomas Holloway had forcibly entered his parsonage together with six or seven other men, expelled Standishe from his possession, and instructed his parishioners to withhold their tithes until the right to them was settled. This dispute had inevitable consequences for parish worship. When Standishe had come to church to say Mass and to preach at Matins time on Palm Sunday, Holloway, who had been waiting for Standishe in the choir, had shut the choir door, and had prevented the congregation from entering. Holloway had also refused to allow Standishe to say divine service. Thus Standishe pleaded for speedy action to be taken in Chancery, as he feared that the celebration of Easter would be disturbed.[21] In other words, whilst Holloway never challenged Standishe's credentials as a cleric, simply his right to the living, his actions ensured that the religious life of Standishe's parishioners was affected nonetheless.

It follows that the manner in which an individual engaged with religious change was not necessarily sympathetic to his confessional sympathies – let alone directed by them. The Privy Council recorded the recognisance of an Oxford draper by the name of Thomas Malleson on 28 August 1555. Malleson's recognisance was conditional. Malleson had to return a chalice, which he had seized as a means of enforcing payment, to St. Ebbe's church in Oxford. Malleson was also bound to attend the church in person on 8 September, so that he could there 'declare before his neighbours that he did yll in taking of the said chalice, and ... openly cry God mercye and them for his so doyng'.[22] Malleson was a man of substance. An alderman of the city, and sometime churchwarden of St. Martin's church, Malleson's wealth placed him amongst the top 10% of taxpayers for the city and suburbs of Oxford in the lay

---

[21] NA, C 1/1156/64.
[22] *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1554-1556, p. 176.

subsidy assessment of 1543.[23] There is, however, absolutely no indication that Malleson held evangelical sympathies. To the contrary, he appears to have been a religious conservative. He made his last will and testament less than two years after the date of his recognisance, on 17 April 1557; and probate was granted the next month. He bequeathed his soul in a traditionalist manner: 'to allmyghtie god our blessed ladie and to all the holly cumpanye of heaven'. It appears, moreover, that Malleson meant what he said. He left instructions to his wife that she was to bestow £20 at both his burying and at his month's mind [his memorial service a month after his death]. In addition to this, Malleson ensured that the £200 which he entrusted to the mayor of Oxford to be 'occupyed onely in the arte or misterie of clothinge in the said Citie' was conditional on the city's keeping an elaborate annual obit for his soul. If the city did not fulfil its duties adequately, the warden and fellows of New College were to acquire the stock for the use of the college.[24] In this light, Malleson's requisitioning of St. Ebbe's chalice seems much more likely to have been driven by a pragmatic desire for payment than by any wish to effect change in the parish's worship. Yet it had religious implications nonetheless.

It must be recognised, however, that non-confessional engagement with religious change was not always so incidental. The language of religious change was, on occasion, harnessed to serve other ends quite deliberately. We have already discussed the case of Humphrey Schokborough – who, owing to his grievances with the curate of Broughton over tithes, accused the curate of upholding the power of the pope.[25] But it must be appreciated that what happened at Broughton was anything but atypical.

---

[23] Malleson was churchwarden from 1543 to 1544: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 6r-6v. Oxford's 1543 subsidy returns: NA, E 179/162/224.
[24] Malleson's will: ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.99r-100v.
[25] This incident is discussed in Chapter VII.

Individuals might employ the language of religious change for reasons that were broadly speaking religious. This was the case in July 1537 when the parishioners of All Hallows in Oxford strove to save the position of their curate, Robert Wisdom – who had incurred the wrath of Bishop Longland for preaching without licence. Wisdom was certainly an evangelical by the time he was based in London in the 1540s.[26] Yet, whatever Wisdom's activities in Oxford had been, his 'hooll Parysh' defended him by declaring Wisdom's actions as having been essentially traditionalist. The parishioners pleaded to their bishop that Wisdom's instruction had simply served to remedy the long-existing deficiencies in their knowledge. They claimed that they had never used to know the Ten Commandments, nor the Articles of Faith, and

> yt greveth us sore that we were not instructyde in them no soner and more wold greve us yf now he hath began to teach then he shuld be thrust by yll wyll or malycyouse forgyng from us And we yoked to our Former blyndenes yf your lordshypp mystrust us that this we have wryten parcyally We dowbt not But we may bryng of the universyte both worshipfull doctors and well lerned men and of the Town no small nombre to testyfye the same.

This was evidently a necessary tactic. The fact that Wisdom's parishioners pleaded that Longland should not 'admit those malycyouse parsons that we thynk have myss enformed you of him' reveals that others had presented Wisdom very differently – as being a curate who had sought to evangelicalise his flock.[27]

The deliberate harnessing of the language of evangelicalism was not, however, necessarily confined only to those issues which touched directly upon religion. This much is implied by a case which came into Star Chamber during the reign of Mary. The case concerned the steward of Banbury, a certain John Lovett, who claimed that he attended Mass daily through both a sense of duty and his well-liking of it. Lovett

---

[26] Wisdom is mentioned in the works of both Strype and Foxe: John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (3 vols., Oxford, 1822), i, part i, 567; Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, ed. Pratt, v, 448.
[27] SP 1/123, fos. 146v-147v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 2 (1537), p. 153.) Further record of the case is to be found in SP 1/105, fos. 101r-103v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 11 (1536), pp. 56-7.)

claimed also to have induced others to attend Mass who had used not to come, blaming and rebuking 'suche as wold not comme'. Lovett sought, in this way, to imply that his bringing a case into Star Chamber against various members of the Weston family – quite likely between November 1555 and November 1556 – was for reasons of piety and religious obedience.[28] Lovett alleged that William Weston the elder, William Weston the younger, and John Weston

> being new lerned men in the scriptures to the intent to bringe in evell opynion your graces pore Orator hath not onely by their lettres written unto your said Orator with their owne handes But also in diverse places of the shire declared and called your said Orator a Rebellion a Traytor and Villaine.

Lovett also alleged that the Westons had called him a 'popyshe and masse monger villaine', libelling him by alleging to the town of Banbury that Lovett was unlearned in the laws.[29]

Lovett's case, however, seems somewhat suspicious. For one thing, Lovett's grievances seem to have been directed principally against only one of the Westons: William the younger. Although the allegation of riot needed to be made for a case to be brought into Star Chamber – requiring that there be at least three defendants – the alterations which were made to the Star Chamber bill indicate that it had originally only concerned William the younger, with the other names being added to it subsequently, along with other changes to the document being made. In addition to this, it is only the answer of William the younger that is incorporated into the record. (William the younger claimed, as one invariably did, that the bill was uncertain and insufficient in the law, contained many vain and untrue matters, and, even if it were true, would not have been determinable at common law in any case. William the younger wished, therefore, to be remitted, with his reasonable costs and charges.)

---

[28] This date seems a probable one as the Accounts of Banbury Corporation for that year record the receipt of payments for writs for both William Weston the elder and William Weston the younger: ORO, B.B. XVII/i/1, fos. 168r-171v.
[29] NA, STAC 4/6/67.

Lovett was long acquainted with the Weston family. The jury at an inquisition *post mortem* over which Lovett had presided at Banbury on 10 July 1552 had included William Weston (presumably the elder).[30] Moreover, whilst there is no indication other than Lovett's accusation that William the younger (or indeed any of the Westons) possessed evangelical leanings, it does seem that the young William could be something of a 'wild child'.[31] In January 1557 – probably a little after Lovett had brought his case into Star Chamber – William the younger was indicted twice by commissions of *oyer* and *terminer* for two (apparently unrelated) crimes in Cropredy.[32] One conviction was for the armed break-in and entry of Richard Trust's house, where William had struck Trust's wife Marian, and insulted and endangered Richard.[33] The other was for assembling with arms in Brown's Close – together with a tallow-chandler named John Copland, and a tailor named Thomas Mumforde, both of Banbury – on 30 December 1556. There they had expelled six cows belonging to the land's owner, Thomas Sargent.[34] (These indictments were deemed to be true: 'billa vera' is written on the reverse of both of them.) It seems likely, therefore, that Lovett – whose religious principles were not such that they prevented him from serving the Edwardian, Marian, and Elizabethan regimes successively – had elected to

---

[30] NA, KB 9/1004/147. Lovett and Weston seem, moreover, to have been of a similar standing within the local community. In 1559, Lovett was taxed on goods worth £6 whilst William Weston the elder was taxed on goods worth £5: NA, E 179/162/326.

[31] When Lovett brought his Star Chamber case against William the younger the latter must have been a young man. Although it is implicit that when William the elder made his will (on 2 February 1561) William the younger had attained his majority, not one of William's three brothers – Thomas, Edward, and Francis – had yet reached the age of twenty-one: ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 184.17v-18r. The will was proved on 28 June 1561. William Weston the younger had, however, been serving as under-sheriff by the time of Mary's accession: NA, KB 9/998/32.

[32] NA, KB 9/590/50-2a.

[33] NA, KB 9/590/51.

[34] NA, KB 9/590/52.

deploy the language of evangelicalism in order to take issue with a troublesome local youngster.[35]

II. TRADITIONALISM

i. Overt dissent

Unlicensed evangelicalism, whilst rarely manifesting itself in the form of outward religious disobedience, became embedded within Oxfordshire society. Its covert practice was widespread and sophisticated, and its ideas, and particularly its language, grew to be entrenched. Yet, despite the popularity of evangelicalism, and the manner in which it became assimilated into Oxfordshire society, traditionalism never died away entirely. On the contrary, it remained a force to be reckoned with.

On 20 November 1541, it was ordered that the Oxford tailor John Willison be pilloried for 'saying he should see or he died friars and monks up again'.[36] Moreover, conservative elements never died away completely. Some twenty-three years later, on 23 November 1564, the Privy Council sent a letter to the sheriff of Oxford and Henry Norris esquire. The Privy Council commanded that George Etheridge, a physician of Thame, 'be sought for and apprehended either now or when he shall returne home'. (Born in Thame, Etheridge was both a distinguished physician and classicist. In 1547, he had been appointed Oxford's regius professor in Greek – a chair which he vacated in 1550, following the royal visitation. Etheridge was reinstated within a month of Mary's accession. However, Etheridge's refusal to take the oath of supremacy in

---

[35] During Elizabeth's reign there is evidence for Lovett serving as coroner on 14 December 1562 (NA, KB 9/606/93), on 25 April 1563 (NA, KB 9/607/167), and in September 1567 (NA, C 66/1051, mm. 13-4). A pardon survives in the patent rolls for a 'William Weston' of Banbury. It is dated 15 January 1559. It is unclear, however, whether this pardon is for William the elder or William the younger. Whilst it is for William Weston 'senior', it ascribes him the occupation of yeoman – which was the occupation awarded William the younger in his King's Bench indictments: NA, C 67/68, m. 14.

[36] *LP*, Henry VIII, 16 (1540-1541), pp. 628-9. I have been unable to locate this reference in the State Papers.

1559 was followed by his deprivation from his lectureship.)[37] The Privy Council commanded that

> an inventory [be] taken of his [Etheridge's] goodes and sent hither, and he also to be sent to the Comissioners for Causes Ecclesiasticall ... and to send to the Commyssioners all such bokes which they shall finde worthy the knowledge of the said Comyssioners ... [and Etheridge is] to answer sundry notorious disobediences in causes of Religion.[38]

It is, in this light, interesting that Foxe should choose to suppress some of the material available to him for the county. Amongst those papers of Foxe's which were later bought by Strype is a letter from a certain Francis Hall, written at Thame on 13 September 1569. Hall writes of Richard Raunce *alias* Childe of Thame, who died during the reign of Queen Mary. (A sometime churchwarden, Raunce's will was administered on 6 September 1555.)[39] Of Raunce's death, Hall writes that

> he [Raunce] was soudenly strycken beyng at the church at evenyng prayer som sayth it was the same daye ꝧt doctor chedsey preached and in his sermon he willed them to complayne of sutch as was suspected to professe godes wordes or kept any bookes contrary to ther relygion.

Raunce, 'beyng an horrible papist', apparently 'ded marvelously reioyce' in this opportunity – until he was 'stricken ... and after ꝧt never spoke but dyed myserably'. This would have been a good tale for Foxe to tell. But Foxe was evidently unwilling to reveal to a wider public that Hall was 'not able to get anny ꝧt will or are able perfectly to reporte it' even so far into the reign of Elizabeth.[40] Indeed, traditionalist elements remained at large throughout the Reformation period, with George Danvars having to advise William Cecil of the 'examination off certen massemongers' at Oxford as late as April 1570.[41]

---

[37] The New *Dictionary of National Biography* *sub* George Etheridge [retrieved 26 April 2006].
[38] *APC*, 1558-1570, p. 168. George Etheridge maintained his links to Thame. In the few months prior to his apprehension, he had acted as sole executor to the will of his mother, Beatrice: ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 184.166v.
[39] Raunce/Childe's will: ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.269r. Raunce/Childe had served as churchwarden between 1544 and 1546: Thame CWAs, pp. 69-79.
[40] BL, Harl. MS. 416, fos. 188r-188v.
[41] SP 12/67, fos. 186r-187v. (*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1547-1580, p. 371.)

ii. The threat posed by traditionalist dissidence

Traditionalist elements expressed themselves rather differently to their evangelical counterparts. Admittedly, there is not the same level of evidence for the covert operation of traditionalism as there is for evangelicalism. There was, moreover, less opportunity for the assimilation of traditionalist ideas and language into wider society as the years passed – although John Lovett played up his religious conservatism in presenting his case against the Westons. And yet, traditionalism was the stronger force in Oxfordshire in a very real sense. In contrast to unlicensed evangelicalism, unlicensed traditionalism had the potential to pose a very real threat to order within the county.

Around the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace, religious traditionalists claimed to speak on behalf of their local communities. In July 1537, Thomas Stribblehill was aggrieved that the feast of St. Thomas à Becket had been celebrated at Thame earlier that month, reporting that 'greate Rynginge and claterynge of Belles was there made in the Churche of Thame ... and solempne service was there hadde and done. & in like maner In the morowe at mattyns and mas.'[42] Stribblehill was in the right. These celebrations had flouted the Convocation decree of July 1536 and the royal order of 11 August 1536, which had said that Mass could be said on the abbrogated saints' days, but it could not be said solemnly or with the ringing of bells. Stribblehill was, however, made to feel in a minority. When he attended church the following morning – where he asked the vicar from whence he had had the authority to 'have kepte a Solempne Feaste this daye' – the vicar alleged that he had celebrated the feast thus because his parishioners 'wolde have it so'. There seems, moreover, to have been

[42] Investigation into the matter was made in July 1537. Thus, as Stribblehill alludes to the feast of 'Seynte Thomas Evynne the martir last past', he is most probably referring to the translation of St. Thomas à Becket, which is celebrated on 7 July.

some substance to the vicar's claims. When Stribblehill asserted that 'Within a myle and a hallff of your Churche this daye men did carye haye and went to the Carte', Richard Childe – that 'horrible papist' of Mary's reign – intervened in the dispute. Childe declared angrily that 'he that went to the carte this daye I wolde his horse neekes hadde byn to braste and his Carte fittad'. Indeed, although Stribblehill retaliated – 'We have a kynge to whome of dewtie we owght to be Obedient But I thinke thow [Childe] ar of the Northerynne secte thow woldes rule the kynges Highnes and not be ruled' – Childe remained resolute in his assertion that it was not just he but 'the hole parisshe' who had felt that the feast ought to be thus observed.[43]

This phenomenon was not confined to the town of Thame. There were divisions within local communities throughout the county. Perhaps the most commanding evidence of these divisions stems from the behaviour of those who governed at this time. The mayor of Oxford demanded that the curate of All Hallows church make 'A Collacion to the mayntenawnce of our moost noble Prynces dignitee And suppressyon of all his Rebellis' at the procession which was made for the safe delivery of Jane Seymour's unborn child.[44] Moreover, a letter written by a certain Thomas Reynton – which was probably sent in March 1537, and which was addressed to Robert Hatchet in Durham – implies that men had risen in Oxfordshire, and that their rising had been severely repressed. Writing from Oxford, Reynton advises Hatchet that

> the most of them that was up of this contre was boys and here a man may not speke one word but he schall be hangyd up by & by and youre enyemyes here in this contre hathe bene so oft up and down that they say or they risse onsse again the kyng schall as sone hange them up at ther owne doris and they have a boike in prynt upon youe all that be notherone men that ye be all traitors to the kyng.[45]

---

[43] SP 1/123, fos. 121r-124v. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 2 (1537), pp. 143-4.)
[44] SP 1/123, fos. 146v-147v, esp. fo. 146v (here quoted). (*LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 2 (1537), p. 153.)
[45] SP 1/117, fos. 219r-219v, esp. fo. 219r (here quoted). (*LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 1 (1537), p. 354.)

Indeed, that this personal correspondence should end up amongst the State Papers may be significant in itself. It suggests that London was keeping an especially close eye on Oxfordshire.

It is impossible to ascertain the extent to which the paranoia of those who governed was justified. Yet the severity with which a rumour that the king and the marquis of Exeter were dead, that circulated in Oxfordshire and Berkshire during December 1537, was treated is demonstrative that their anxiety for the region was greatly heightened, especially in those cases involving rumours. The investigative process was, for such a complex case, exceptionally swift. The abbot of Reading only informed Cromwell of the rumour – which was yet to spread into Oxfordshire – on 12 December. However, by Christmas Eve, Walter Stonor, William Essex, and Thomas Vachell – who had received a commission to investigate from the king – were able to advise Cromwell that their inquiries were almost at an end. Their investigation had been extremely thorough, with even a pregnant woman, whose condition was such as to exempt her from being personally proceeded against, being called upon to testify. The punishments were equally savage, as one might expect for seditious words being spoken at a time of trouble. A fuller of Newbury named Edward Lyttelworke claimed only to have repeated the words of '2 persons walkyng affore hym in the strete'. Yet the commissioners

> made a precept to the mayre & officers of Wallyngford that they shuld sett the same Edward on the pyllory there one ower in the myddest of the market day his yaers [ears] fast nayled. and after to be cut of by the hard hed and then he to be tyed to a Cartys ayrse & to be strypped naked to the wast of his body & so to be whypped round aboute the towne.

Indeed, Lyttelworke's punishment did not end there. Once the inhabitants of Wallingford had had their fill of punishing him, Lyttelworke was delivered to the mayor and officers of Reading later the same day

> and there on saturday beyng market day there he [Lyttelworke] was sett on the pyllory by one ower space & then & there whypped Round aboute the same towne, as he was at wallyngford afforseyd and at Redyng he remaynyth in Gayle styll untyll the kynges pleasure be further therin declared.

Thus the governing classes demonstrated through their actions that they were simply not prepared to take chances with the Thames Valley at this time – as Edward Lyttelworke discovered to his cost.[46]

III. Conclusions

Oxfordshire appears a conformist county because there were few occasions of unconcealed religious disobedience, with even most of these being of little note to contemporaries. It is, moreover, worth considering whether the individuals involved in most of these episodes – who were dealt with at a local level, and of whom formal legal record was only sporadically generated – ought really to be regarded as 'religious dissents' *per se*. They were, after all, deemed 'redeemable' in the eyes of the authorities, with their public punishment being regarded as an effective deterrent to any who might be similarly disposed.

And yet, even in a county in which there was so much outward conformity, the imposition of the changes wrought by the English Reformation did not secure anything like a smooth passage. Evangelical opposition was, for the most part, covert in its nature. But it could be both widespread and sophisticated; and religious change was drawn into many other aspects of society. It was, however, religious traditionalism which was the force capable of engendering widespread action. There was undoubtedly cause for concern around the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and in the immediate aftermath of the pillaging of the county's religious houses. At Thame, there was disputation over the celebration of the feast of St. Thomas à Becket. But –

---

[46] SP 1/127, fos. 46r-46v, 66r-66v, 99r-99v, 101r-113v. (The fate of Edward Lyttelworke: SP 1/127, fo. 110r.) (*LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 2 (1537), pp. 423, 430, 439, 441.)

and perhaps more significantly in light of what was to follow – this dispute incorporated a debate as to whether Henry VIII would seize goods from Thame's parish church just as he had pillaged the country's religious houses (although not, as yet, Thame Abbey). John Stribblehill alleged that Robert Johns, as he came from evensong on Sunday three weeks before Whitsuntide, had told him that he feared the king would have the crosses and jewels of their church, and proposed to sell the jewels as the church was in decay.[47] However, the events of July 1549 and July 1553 overshadowed even this. In these months, Oxfordshire was the scene of widespread and popular uprisings in the support of religious traditionalism. That little record of either of these episodes survives is testimony to the grave danger that the first of them posed, and to the success of the second. It is to these events that we now turn.

[47] There were several protagonists in the matter: SP 1/123, fos. 121r-124v, esp. fo. 122r. (*LP*, Henry VIII, 12 Part 2 (1537), pp. 143-4.)

CHAPTER NINE

THE OXFORDSHIRE RISING OF 1549

The hot heady summer of 1549 was remembered thereafter as 'the commotion time'. At Whitsuntide, rebels rose in the west, and laid siege to the city of Exeter. These rebels opposed the government's religious reforms, specifically the new Book of Common Prayer. Besides Devon and Cornwall, no fewer than twenty-five other counties were in crisis at about this time. In East Anglia, there was Kett's Rebellion, led by the tanner Robert Kett. In contrast to his western counterparts, Kett's complaints were founded upon diverse socio-economic grievances. The East Anglian rebels thus appealed to the government for remedy, with relations worsening on 21 July when the king's herald's offer of pardon induced great offence. Elsewhere in the country, socio-economic and religious grievances coalesced, into varying compounds – generating a climate of emergency. In the midst of all this, was the county of Oxfordshire.[1]

At the beginning of July 1549, the duke of Somerset and his council were confident about the state of Oxfordshire. Or, at very least, they judged problems elsewhere in the realm to be more pressing. Although a blueprint as to how to treat any 'Commotions and Uprores' in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire 'Iff any suche shall Happen' was produced early in the month, the government intimated its confidence in Oxfordshire through its actions. The provisions made in the July

[1] I have delivered papers based on the material contained in this chapter to the Early Modern Britain seminar at Oxford University (January 2005), and to the Tudor-Stuart seminar at the Institute of Historical Research (February 2006). I am grateful to the audiences at both seminars for their comments. I am also obliged to Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch for commenting on an early draft of this chapter.

blueprint relied upon the active participation of the counties' gentry. It prescribed that any suspected rebels or mutineers were to be examined before two Justices of the Peace and two members of the gentry, with the examinations of the guilty being sent to the relevant marshal for that quarter of the county (yet to be appointed). Execution was then to be immediate: at the nearest market town, on the next market day.[2] However, in early July, the government ordered most of Oxfordshire's leading gentry out of the county. On 1 July, the government commanded Sir Thomas Pope, Sir John Williams, Sir Walter Stonor, Sir William Barantyne, Sir John Browne, Sir William Raynsford, Sir Francis Knollys, Leonard Chamberlayne esquire, Richard Fynes esquire, and William Dormer esquire – together with 'suche nombers of hable men both horssemen and Footemen as yow might be hable to Furnishe of ... your favorers' – 'to repayr to our castell of Wyndsor'.[3]

The government's confidence – however misplaced – held for a time. As late as 10 July, the Lord Protector and his council informed Lord Russell that, the west aside, the rebels 'be appeased and throughly quieted in all places saving only in buckingham shyre'. In this latter county there were 'a fewe light persons nuely assembled whome we trust to have also appeased within twoo or three dayes'.[4] There is, indeed, no evidence that Somerset was aware of any problem in Oxfordshire before 12 July. On this day, Somerset wrote to Lord Russell to advise of 'a sturr here in Bucks and oxfordeshire by instigacon of sundery preistes (kepe yt to your self) for these matyers of religion'.[5] Somerset must also have been aware of Kett's Rebellion

---

[2] State Papers 10/8, fos. 27r-30v. This Order was probably produced on around 8 July 1549.
[3] SP 10/8, fos. 1r-5v.
[4] This letter survives in a letter book kept by, or prepared for, Lord Russell: The Library of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, Petyt MS. 538, volume 46, fos. 431r-470v. For the letter of 10 July, see fos. 435r-436r. I thank the Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple for permission to consult this collection. This letter book is printed in *Troubles Connected with the Prayer Book of 1549*, ed. Nicholas Pocock (Camden Soc., new ser., xxxvii, 1884).
[5] IT, Petyt MS. 538, vol. 46, fo. 437r.

by this time. The officials at Norwich first appealed to the government for assistance on 9 July.

The anonymous London chronicle which provides the only narrative of events explains that the Oxfordshire dissidents felt 'great angre towards sir John wyllyams'. Consequently, the dissidents

> dysparkyd his [Williams's] parke called Thame parke and kyllyd all ye dere, from thens they went unto Rycote & ther dysparked ye parke called Rycote parke [which was also owned by Williams] & kyllyd all his dere, entered into ye place and dranke theyr fyll of wyne ale & bere, slew many shepe & ete them with dyvars othar myscheves.[6]

Their mischief done, this mob then proceeded north-west: participants from the south-east of the county were eventually captured at Chipping Norton.[7] First, the dissidents headed from Rycote to Oxford. According to a letter later sent by the College's fellows to Archbishop Cranmer, the dissidents here pillaged Magdalen College's estates.[8] In contrast, Corpus Christi College provided supply for 'the commens passyng the town'.[9]

It is unclear whether these dissidents actually entered the city. Members of Corpus Christi may simply have acted as intermediaries for them, whilst Magdalen lay outside the city walls. But there was trouble in Oxford nonetheless. No longer able to teach, the reformist Peter Martyr was conveyed to London by his friends, leaving his wife and household to hide from the seditious mob as best they might.[10]

---

[6] British Library, Harley MS. 540, fo. 11r. This chronicle is printed in *Two London Chronicles from the collections of John Stow*, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., xviii, 1910).
[7] Thomas Bowldry of Great Haseley and William Bowler of Watlington were taken at Chipping Norton.
[8] The letter is dated '7 March', and was evidently sent in 1550: Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 127, p. 426. I thank Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch for providing me with a xerox of this letter.
[9] This is recorded in the college account for that year: Corpus Christi College, Oxford, C/1/1/3, fo. 64v.
[10] Peter Martyr, *Loci Communes*, I, sig. cii [1583, RSTC 24668]. For a sixteenth-century translation into English, see *The Common Places of the most famous and renowmed Diuine Doctor Peter Martyr*, ed. Anthonie Marten (London, 1583), fo. Qqiiv.

(Martyr seems to allude to this separation in a simile used in his *Tractatio*.)[11] It seems likely that townsmen joined forces with those dissidents passing their city. Josiah Simler's 1583 biography of Martyr implies as much.[12] It is also significant that Thomas Bowldry of Great Haseley (the parish in which Rycote Park lies) should be condemned, along with two others, to suffer death in the city.[13]

From Oxford, the anonymous London chronicler records that the dissidents 'went unto woodstocke & then herynge ꝧt my lorde graye with ꝧe kyngs powre was comynge towards them many of them forsoke theyr companye, and thos whiche remaynyd went unto a towne callyd chyppynge norton where they encampyd them selves'.[14] Although the chronicler does not state the purpose of the dissidents' stay at Woodstock, it seems highly probable that their target was the town's royal manor and deer park, where it is likely that further disparking took place.

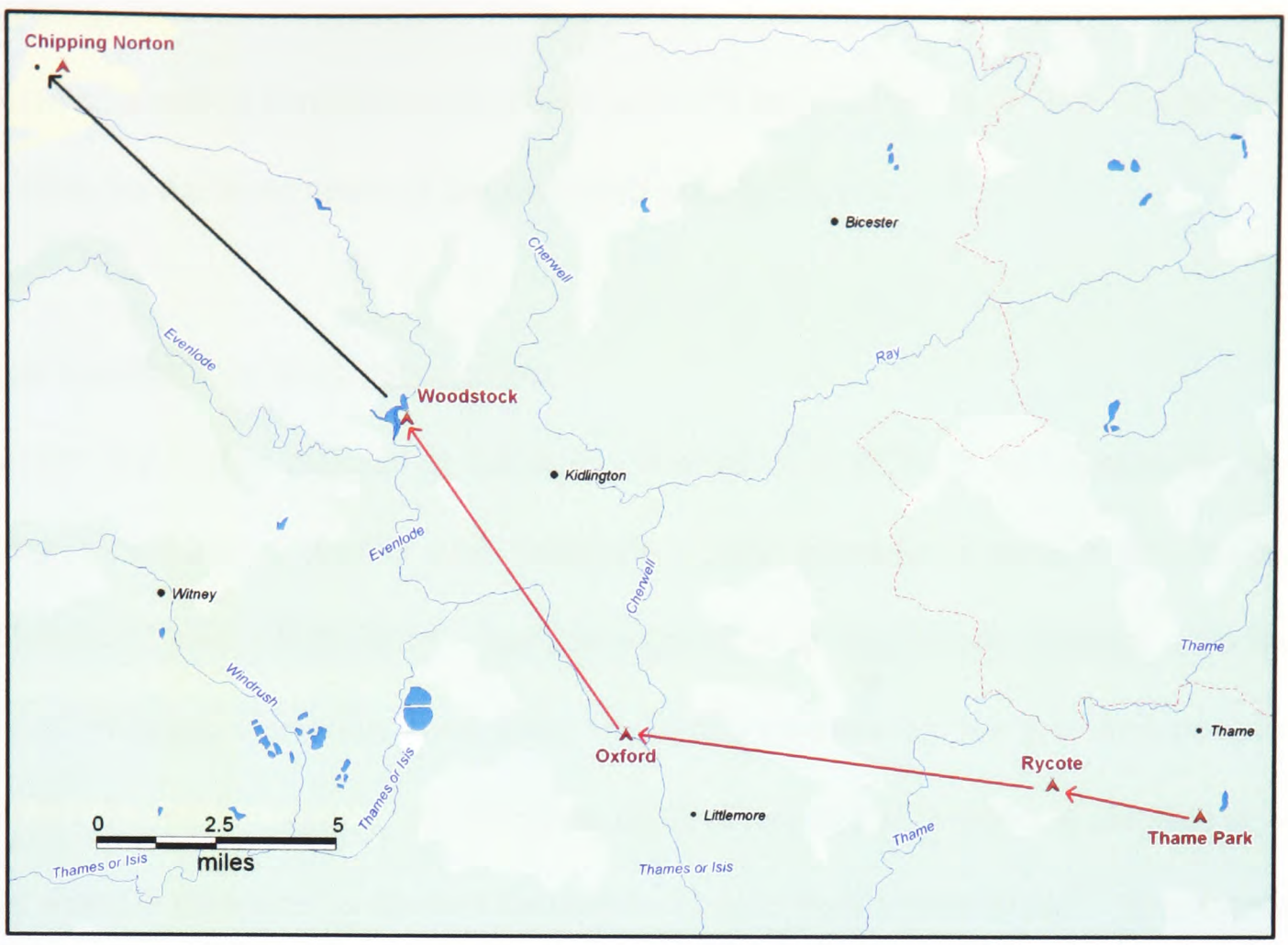
---

[11] *The Oxford Treatise and Disputation on the Eucharist, 1549*, ed. Joseph C. McLelland (The Peter Martyr Library, series one, vii, 2000), pp. 14-5. In the *Tractatio*'s dedication to Cranmer, Martyr describes the nature of the Eucharist using the simile: 'If it sometimes happens that a man stays in London while his wife remains at Cambridge or Oxford, this union of flesh between husband and wife is not prevented. Their separation and lack of physical contact which cannot then exist shows only that wife and husband themselves remain one and the same flesh.'

[12] Martyr, *Loci Communes*, I, sig. cii.

[13] This was decreed in Grey's Order of 19 July 1549: SP 10/8, fo. 55r.

[14] BL, Harl. MS. 540, fo. 11r.



The Rebels' Route through Oxfordshire

The dissidents were almost certainly armed. Both Peter Martyr and the fellows of Magdalen College later professed to having been in fear of their lives, with Martyr claiming that it was only after the commotion that the dissidents in Oxford *no longer* dared to meet openly with arms.[15] In spite of this, however, Lord Grey's treatment of the Rising was a brief one. Although it is unclear as to quite when Grey left Oxfordshire, the Order that he issued at Witney on 19 July may be construed as drawing his direct involvement in the affair to a close. Grey's Order, which survives amongst the State Papers, was issued to members of the Oxfordshire gentry. It commanded them to execute some fourteen rebels, including four clerics, at no fewer than nine different locations throughout the county: Banbury, Bicester, Bloxham,

[15] Martyr, *Loci Communes*, I, sig. cii (emphasis is my own); letter from Magdalen's fellows: CCCC, MS. 127, p. 426. Although it is probable that these 'arms' took the form of farming equipment, their effect ought not be underestimated. Conventional utensils such as pitchforks and hedging tools would certainly have proved threatening to the unarmed, with their effect being exacerbated by their being wielded noisily and *en masse*.

Chipping Norton, Deddington, Islip, Oxford, Thame, and Watlington. It was, moreover, decreed that the rebels' heads were 'to be sett Upp in the Highest place in the same for the more terror of the said evell people'.[16]

I. The Context of the Commotion

Because the source material is extremely limited, it is difficult to explain why the Rising took place. Hooker and Sotherton – who provided commentaries on the Western and Kett's Rebellions – have no equivalent in this county. Indeed, even the *Life* of William, thirteenth Lord Grey of Wilton (written by his son Arthur, quite possibly during the latter's imprisonment in the Fleet in 1575) refers to the Rising in only a single sentence, as the text focuses on Grey's exploits overseas.[17] The limited administrative material that survives for the county sheds little light on events either. The few borough records that survive do not mention it; nor do those surviving in neighbouring counties.[18] Whilst the parish priest of Morebath, Christopher Trychay, recorded the costs of the 'goyng forthe' of his five young parishioners who took part in the Western Rebellion, no such payment appears in any of Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts.[19] Not one of the county's thirty-three parish registers recording events prior to 1553 provides any comment.[20] There is, moreover, astonishingly little by way of legal record.

Amanda Jones' work on the 1549 commotions has illuminated the widespread nature of the summer's disturbances, convincingly emphasising the long-term socio-

---

[16] SP 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.
[17] *A Commentary of the Services and Charges of William Lord Grey of Wilton*, ed. Sir Philip de Malphas Grey Egerton (Camden Soc., old ser., xl, 1847), p. 17.
[18] I have consulted the most relevant records available for Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Gloucestershire. I thank the archivists of these county record offices for their assistance.
[19] Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and rebellion in an English village* (New Haven & London, 2001), pp. 134-41. There is no allusion to the Rising in the extant churchwardens' accounts of Berkshire and Wiltshire either.
[20] These parish registers are held by Oxfordshire Record Office.

economic foundations of some of them.[21] And, whilst we must avoid simply projecting the problems experienced elsewhere in the kingdom upon Oxfordshire, it seems probable that socio-economic grievance had some role to play in the Oxfordshire Rising. The evidence for socio-economic grievance is, admittedly, less extensive in Oxfordshire than it is in many other counties. Much of it relies heavily on the records of Star Chamber, which are unhelpfully formulaic.[22] Nonetheless, it is clear that socio-economic issues, including enclosure, loomed large on the Oxfordshire landscape during this period. (Indeed, the issuing of the second enclosure commission on 8 July may even have had some influence once the Rising was under way.) The northern part of Oxfordshire was rich in pasture land. The unknown author of the contemporary treatise which blames the decay of England on enclosure, and on sheep-farming in particular, focuses his attention on the counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Northamptonshire.[23] The socio-economic problems which Oxfordshire faced in this period were, moreover, enough to provoke widespread action. On 1 April 1549, over eighty men rioted at Witney in attacks targeting the local landowner Thomas Brydges.[24]

In spite of this, however, it cannot be concluded that July's troubles stemmed directly from socio-economic grievances, or were even directly related to them. The jury which sat at Woodstock to consider the fates of some of the Witney rioters (on 9

---

[21] A. C. Jones, ' "Commotion time": the English risings of 1549' (Warwick Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2003). Jones' conclusions are extensively referred to in Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, 5th edn (Harlow, 2004), pp. 65-89.

[22] Alison Wall, *Power and Protest in England, 1525-1640* (London, 2000), esp. Chapter 9. Star Chamber's records from the period do not appear to allude to the events of July 1549.

[23] *Four Supplications, 1529-1553 A.D.*, ed. J. Meadows Cowper (Early English Text Society, extra ser., xiii, 1871). Circumstantial evidence points to this treatise being written between 1550 and 1553.

[24] These men seem, for the most part, to have been involved in the cloth industry, and were proceeded against in two groups: National Archives, KB 9/981/16-7, KB 27/1152, fo. 13v, KB 29/182, fo. 17v; NA, KB 9/573/49-51, KB 27/1152, fo. 13r, KB 29/182, fo. 9v. Socio-economic pressures continued to be a problem for the county. In December 1550, the Privy Council addressed letters to five members of the local gentry to inquire into an enclosure riot committed near Banbury Castle: *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1550-1552, pp. 181-2.

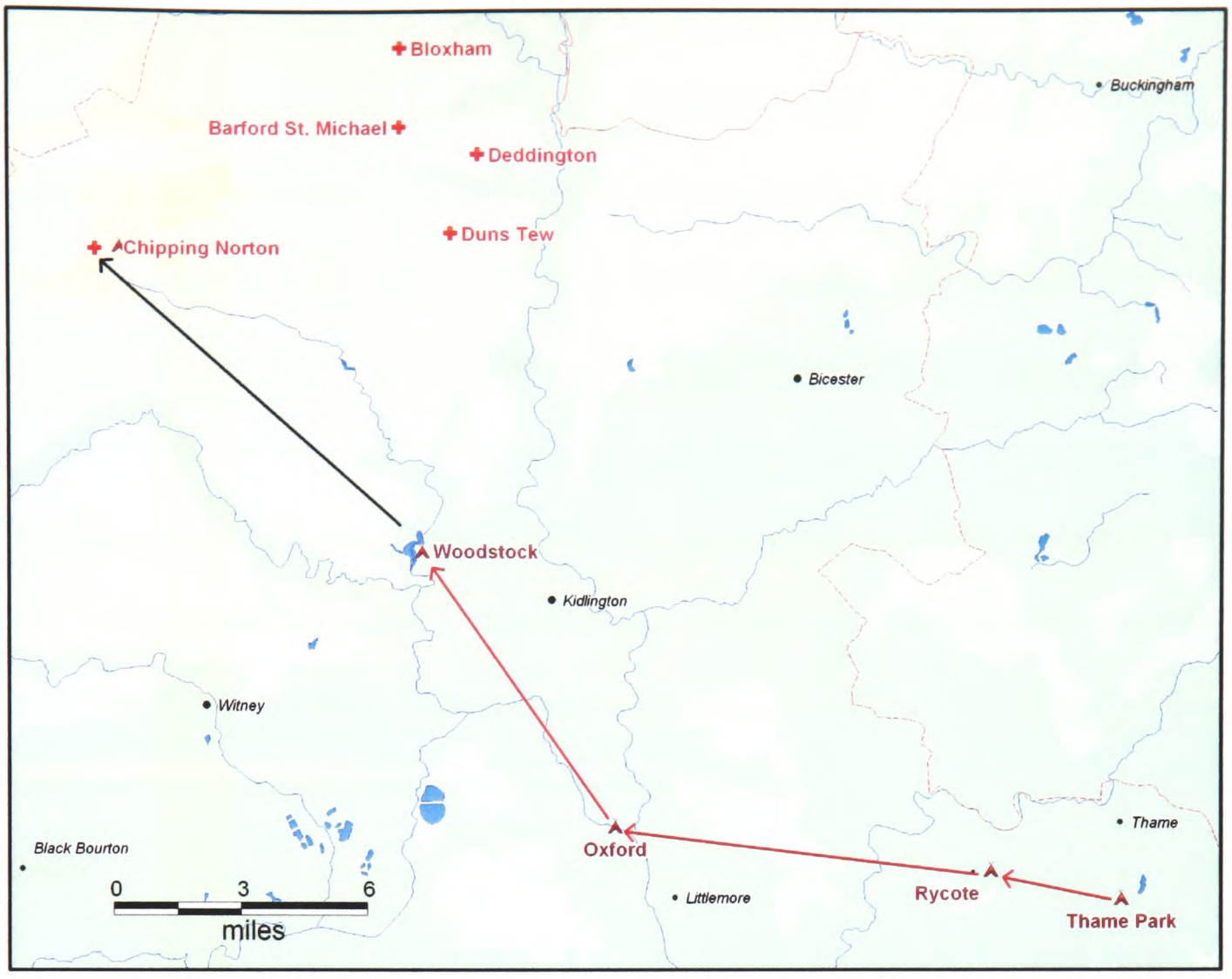
April 1549) included George Raves, who was later to be condemned to death for his part in the July Rising.[25] Recent scholarship has done much to contextualise the commotions of 1549, advancing our understanding of them. Yet it is equally important not to overlook, or to marginalise, those elements which were more atypical – which do not rest easily with the broader trends. Certainly, the Oxfordshire of July 1549 cannot and should not be divorced from the county's longer-term trends. Yet the Rising needs also to be seen for what it was: out of the ordinary. In July 1549 religious grievance coalesced with the county's longer-term socio-economic concerns, producing widespread action. And it is on this less characteristic element – this catalyst for action – that I propose to focus.

II. Religious Grievance

Protector Somerset perceived from the outset – in his letter to Lord Russell on 12 July – that the disquiet in Oxfordshire had been caused by 'matyers of religion'.[26] Although clerics were more likely than laymen to be held up as an example, the fact that the government believed that no fewer than five parish priests had provided leadership for the dissidents suggests that it understood the Rising to have been driven by religious concerns. (The clerics said to be involved – and who were condemned to death – were Henry Joyes of Chipping Norton, Henry Matthew of Deddington, Richard Thomson of Duns Tew, John Wade of Bloxham, and James Webbe of Barford St. Michael.)

---

[25] The jury list: NA, KB 9/573/50.
[26] IT, Petyt MS. 538, vol. 46, fo. 437r.



Red Crosses: Priests' Parishes; Arrows: Rebels' Route

This perception of the Rising seems justified by events. The reformist John Ab Ulmis, writing to Heinrich Bullinger from Oxford on 7 August 1549, implicitly links the 'Oxfordshire papists' with the rebels in the south-west of the country.[27] However, the relationship between the dissidents and the University of Oxford is still more revealing.[28]

---

[27] *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation, written during the reigns of King Henry VIII., King Edward VI., and Queen Mary: chiefly from the Archives of Zurich*, ed. Hastings Robinson (2 vols., Parker Soc., xxxvii-xxxviii, 1846-7), ii, 389-92.

[28] I thank the archivists of Oxford University and the University's colleges for their interest and assistance. I have consulted the records of all colleges for which college accounts survive. I have discovered relevant material in the records of Corpus Christi College, Lincoln College, Magdalen College, The Queen's College, and in the University Archives. The material available from All Souls College, Balliol College, Brasenose College, Christ Church, New College, and University College has no direct bearing on the commotion. Certain of Merton College's accounts are in need of conservation before they can be consulted.

During the commotion, Oxford's colleges appointed and paid for guards.[29] To do this in the mid-sixteenth century was not entirely out of the ordinary. Colleges appointed guards in the following year also. But what makes 1549 different is that the measures taken in this year were at the express instruction of the University authorities. It was 'at the commandement of the vicechaunceler' that Lincoln College paid 4d 'to the bible clercke for wachyng for the college'.[30] Moreover, Vice-Chancellor Walter Wright spent 6s 8d of his own funds on night-watching at this time.[31] The guarding of University buildings would seem a reasonable precaution during any kind of uprising. But, during the summer of 1549, it seems that high-level officials within Oxford deemed the University a specific target – on the grounds of religion.

It is inconceivable that any Oxford or Cambridge college should support a movement which was (at least ostensibly) socio-economic in its nature. Colleges were landowners of some stature, collecting revenues from all over the country. The contemporaneous grievances in Cambridge mainly concerned unlawful enclosures and the decay of arable husbandry. Thus, in Cambridge, four colleges – Jesus, Trinity, King's, and Queen's – featured prominently in the townspeople's thirty-two complaints.[32] Matters were very different in Oxford though. Following the pattern of the other Oxford colleges, Corpus Christi appointed guards during the summer.[33] Yet, at the same time, Corpus actively furthered the Oxfordshire dissidents' cause. Corpus procured and purchased supplies, and was even prepared to record this explicitly in

---

[29] This is evident in the colleges' accounts: CCCO, C/1/1/3, fos. 64r, 66r; Lincoln College, Oxford, Compoti, vol. 5, p. 17; Magdalen College, Oxford, LCE/5, 1549 (LCE/5 is neither paginated nor foliated) (8d 'pro expensis in excubijs tempore commotionis'); The Queen's College, Oxford, 2P139 ('Item vigilantibus in villa 13d').
[30] LCO, Compoti, vol. 5, p. 17.
[31] The entry 'Item pro impensa nocturna vigile tempore commocionis' appears in the vice-chancellor's accounts: Oxford University Archives, WPBeta/S/1.
[32] *Annals of Cambridge*, ed. Charles Henry Cooper (5 vols., Cambridge, 1842-52), ii, 38-40.
[33] CCCO, C/1/1/3, fos. 64r, 66r.

the final version of the College accounts.[34] Corpus spent 3s 4d 'in byffe for the commens passyng the town', 4s for 'a shepe to them bowght in the town', 2s 6d on '2 dosyn and a halfe of brede', and 3s 8d on '2 kynderkyns of bere one doble'.[35]

That Corpus Christi's reaction to the Rising should be different to that of the University authorities is readily explicable. By July 1549, the 'official face' of Oxford University was unapologetically reformist. Between 28 May and 1 June, the University had held a disputation on the nature of the Eucharist. Here, Peter Martyr had led the reformist cause, and had been supported by the University's chancellor. This reformed view of the Eucharist was not, however, one which had been shared by the University as a whole. The very proposal of this disputation had caused disquiet earlier in the year – both amongst members of the University and amongst the townsmen. Josiah Simler's biography of Martyr claims that 'papists' from within the University

> first denounced him [Martyr] before the common people with their usual accusations – namely that he had attacked the teaching of their ancestors, that he had abolished ceremonies that were well established, that he had profaned the most holy sacrament of the altar and had come close to trampling it under his feet. Then having made all the arrangements without informing him, they posted notices written in the English language in all the churches that the next day would be a public disputation against the presence of Christ in the Sacred Supper. The next day these people took over the auditorium, placed their forces in suitable places, and told them to be ready to make an outcry and tumult, and for a fight too, if the situation required it. Moreover not just the students from all the colleges but also no small group of excited people rushed forward to listen, partly to watch the outcome of the affair, partly to be at hand for either party, if perhaps some tumult should arise.[36]

Loath to cancel the debate, the University authorities had simply delayed the disputation until the king's visitors could be present. The royal visitation had taken place in late May and early June. It had begun with Peter Martyr preaching in the

---

[34] Many entries in the Oxford colleges' accounts are, in effect, totals from sets of sub-accounts. Corpus Christi College produced each of their final accounts on paper, before copying them onto parchment. It is, however, only the parchment copy that survives for the accounting year encompassing July 1549.
[35] CCCO, C/1/1/3, fo. 64v.
[36] For this translation: *Life, Letters, and Sermons: Peter Martyr Vermigli*, ed. John Patrick Donnelly (The Peter Martyr Library, series one, v, 1999), pp. 33-4.

University church of St. Mary the Virgin, and had concluded with the visitors presenting the University with its new statutes.[37] In the course of the visitation, the royal visitors had proceeded around the colleges systematically – being treated, for example, to 'wyne and cakes' in Lincoln College.[38] In so doing, the visitors had implemented reforms – most notably in the college chapels. However, in the face of this, the fellows of Corpus Christi remained resolutely conservative throughout the reign of Edward. Indeed, it was of Corpus Christi that Martyr particularly despaired when he left Oxford in 1553. According to Anthony à Wood's eighteenth-century *History* of the University, Martyr

> heard the little bell ring to Mass, he sighed and said, that "that bell would destroy all the doctrine in that College, which he before had through his and Jewell's labours planted therein."[39]

With this in mind, the opposing attitudes of University officers and Corpus Christi fellows to the events of the summer strongly suggest that there were religious overtones to the dissidents' demands, and that these demands were of a religiously conservative nature.

This case is supported by the spoliation of Magdalen College's estates – not in the act itself, but in Archbishop Cranmer's response to it. That Cranmer suspected Magdalen of aiding the dissidents may be construed from the letter sent by the College's fellows to the Archbishop in the following March. In it, the fellows plead that they had resisted the insurgents by shutting their gates, and had only kept quiet about the matter because it was an issue of private property.[40] It is not at all clear whether Magdalen helped the dissidents or not. The College's confessional climate was much more complex than that of Corpus Christi. Although conservative elements

---

[37] T. H. Aston (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (8 vols., Oxford, 1984-), iii, 136-7.
[38] 16d was spent 'for wyne and cakes when the vysytors where here': LCO, Compoti, vol. 5, p. 20.
[39] Anthony à Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (3 vols., Oxford, 1792-6), ii, 122.
[40] CCCC, MS. 127, p. 426.

included the president Owen Oglethorpe (who was deprived in 1552), there was also a dynamic evangelical corps.[41] The matter is further complicated by the fact that, since Magdalen lay outside the city walls – and, indeed, to the south-east of the city, from which direction the dissidents approached – the attack may simply have been driven by circumstance. Nonetheless, that Cranmer should have even suspected Magdalen of aiding the dissidents – by suggesting that the College had allowed them free access to their lands, and had provided them with supply – indicates that the Archbishop understood Oxfordshire's Rising to have been based on religious grievance.

It is now, at this point, pertinent to note that both Magdalen and Corpus Christi Colleges were Winchester foundations, being founded by Bishops William Waynflete and Richard Fox respectively. Consequently, both colleges retained the bishop of Winchester as their visitor – who was, at this time, the imprisoned Stephen Gardiner. Gardiner had almost certainly been party to Corpus's protestation at Archbishop Cranmer's visitation of 1535.[42] Gardiner's opposition to the visitation of 1549 seems still more virulent. Following the disputation on the Eucharist, Gardiner fiercely criticised Martyr's treatment of the matter. In a letter to Martyr, Gardiner charged that Cranmer discussed the Eucharist

> in a wicked and shameful way; with subtlety and shrewdness you cunningly twist certain considerations to your purpose, and openly and forcibly distort certain others; you treat nothing with honesty and integrity.[43]

In addition to the shared connection with Stephen Gardiner, both Magdalen and Corpus Christi Colleges played host to Martyr and Bucer in the following year – possibly to restore their damaged reputations.[44]

---

[41] Diarmaid MacCulloch has identified a clique of precocious evangelicals existing within the College from the early 1530s, making Magdalen central to English relations with Bullinger and Zurich. I am indebted to Professor MacCulloch for providing me with a copy of his forthcoming paper.
[42] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: a life* (New Haven & London, 1996), p. 132.
[43] This letter is quoted in *Oxford Treatise and Disputation on the Eucharist*, ed. McLelland, xxxv.

The religious dynamic evident in the dissidents' dealings with the University need not be dissociated from the disparking which took place at Thame, Rycote, and possibly Woodstock. Disparking was a consciously symbolic activity, registering the participants' dissatisfaction with the park-owner. However, although disparking has tended to be associated with socio-economic grievance – and, most notably, with enclosure – it must be remembered that disparking could also be demonstrative of other types of complaint. Roger Manning, for example, concludes that the Windsor Forest Riots of 1641 displayed 'a distinct anti-monarchical bias'.[45] Consequently, it is worth considering the possibility that, in Oxfordshire, the disparking of July 1549 was symptomatic of religious disquiet.

The disparking's especial target was Sir John Williams. It has been widely concluded that this was due to Williams' oppressive tendencies as landlord.[46] However, in Oxfordshire at least, this argument is somewhat circular, with there being no independent evidence. In light of this, it should be noted that Williams himself had imparked neither Thame nor Rycote. The park at Thame had been confirmed to the monks of Thame Abbey by Pope Innocent as early as March 1141.[47] Rycote Park was, admittedly, a somewhat newer creation. Yet the park had been created, and the villagers were gone, by the time that Giles Heron had been forced to sell Rycote to John Williams in 1539 – Henry VIII spending part of his fifth honeymoon there. Consequently, the character of Williams should be considered in more general terms than that of landlord – and, what is immediately obvious in so doing, is that Williams

---

[44] This is evident in the colleges' accounts: MCO, LCE/5, 1550; CCCO, C/1/1/3, fos. 37v (parchment account), 47v (paper account). There is nothing in the accounts extant for New College (the third Winchester foundation in existence at this time) to suggest whether or not the College took any action over the Oxfordshire Rising.

[45] Roger B. Manning, *Hunters and Poachers: a social and cultural history of unlawful hunting in England, 1485-1640* (Oxford, 1993), p. 208.

[46] Williams' role as royal official has also been noted – perhaps most notably in Fletcher and MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, pp. 128-9.

[47] *VCH*, Oxfordshire, ii, 83-4.

was a high-ranking government official, and a well-known one at that. Williams was intimately involved with the imposition of religious change within Oxfordshire. It was 'to Thame park' that Thame's churchwardens arranged 'for the Cariage of the bookes to the Bishoppe' in the year preceding 18 May 1550 (presumably in reference to the confiscation of Mass books).[48] Moreover, Williams had profited considerably, and conspicuously, from the Reformation. Williams had benefited enormously from the dissolution of the monasteries, especially in his role as Master of the Jewels. As Treasurer of the Court of Augmentations, Williams profited still further, most notably in Thame – acquiring the manor in 1547, and Thame Park (the site of Thame Abbey) early in the reign of Edward VI.

Likewise, whilst the insurgents' precise actions at Woodstock remain unclear, it is surely significant that at Woodstock was a royal manor and hunting park – which had long lain in the lieutenancy of the Chamberlayne family. The Chamberlaynes' management of Woodstock Park had not been without its problems. In around the 1520s, complaint had been brought into Star Chamber regarding Sir Edward Chamberlayne's handling of the estates – although how accurate the allegations were, and how much they were related to the 'Mysrule & Ryott' of Sir Edward's son and heir Leonard (who was accused of violent behaviour in another Star Chamber case), remain matters for conjecture.[49] Matters seem, however, to have improved by the 1540s.[50] Indeed, this was a time of expansion: the new-making of the kitchen at the lodge and the building of a new house at the park gate were accounted for in

---

[48] Thame CWAs, p. 99.

[49] The complaint concerning the handling of Woodstock Park: NA, STAC 2/17/234. A dispute between William Raynsford and Leonard Chamberlayne is referred to in NA, STAC 3/10/48.

[50] Unfortunately, the manor and park's accounts do not survive for most of Edward VI's reign. There is an account extant for the period from 29 September 1546 to 29 September 1547: NA, E 101/500/26. The next extant account covers the period from 29 September 1553 to 29 September 1554: NA, E 101/670/1. NA, SC 6/ELIZI/1825 – containing various accounts from the reign of Henry VIII until the reign of Elizabeth – contains no account for the intervening period. Later papers for the park are held by Oxfordshire Record Office.

September 1547.[51] By 1554 the park was in a condition suitable to receive the Princess Elizabeth.[52] Thus, whilst it is possible that local tenants had socio-economic grievance with Woodstock Park in 1549, there is no evidence that this was the case – such complaints being usually due to the recent enclosure of common ground, or to the poor maintenance of a park's boundaries. The Chamberlaynes had, however, like Williams, already profited conspicuously from the Reformation by this point, despite their later recusancy.

The argument that Oxfordshire's disparking reflected popular hostility to the government's religious policies is further strengthened by subsequent events. Somerset's disgrace in October 1549 precipitated Catholic riots in Oxford, with Mass being said in some of the college chapels. John Stumphius, writing to Bullinger from Oxford on 28 February 1550, rejoiced in Somerset's recent release from imprisonment. Stumphius reported that up until this event

> those cruel beasts the Romanists, with which Oxford abounds, were now beginning to triumph over the downfall of our duke, the overthrow of our gospel now at its last gasp, and the restoration of their darling the mass, as though they had already obtained a complete victory. They had begun to revive the celebration of their abominable mass in their conventicles, to practise their ancient mummeries at funerals and other offices of that kind, and to inundate themselves with wine, as became the champions of such a religion as theirs.[53]

Stumphius does not specify which colleges were involved in this action, although the timing of these events provides perspective for the correspondence between Cranmer and Magdalen in early March. This behaviour from within the University implies that the Edwardian government, together with its officials, was closely associated with the Reformation in the popular mindset – a challenge to one reflecting disaffection with the other.

---

[51] NA, E 101/500/26.
[52] NA, E 101/670/1.
[53] *Original Letters*, ed. Robinson, ii, 464-6.

III. The Nature of the Religious Grievances

What was the cause of the dissidents' religious grievance? And why were John Williams and Leonard Chamberlayne their particular targets? The collection of letters written by government officials to groups of rebels during the summer of 1549 includes one which was addressed to the Oxfordshire commons.[54] This letter does not, however, reveal the substance of the dissidents' grievances, although it is probable that it was directed towards this group of dissidents. The only means of establishing the grounds for the dissidents' grievance is, therefore, to examine the impact of the Reformation in the county at this time – with an eye to which elements trampled most on popular sensibilities.

In the months immediately prior to the Rising there were a number of significant developments. The most obvious of these was the introduction of the new service in early June. The 1549 Book of Common Prayer was dutifully purchased throughout the county, and so it affected the worship of each and every parishioner. Coalescing with this liturgical change was – in the city of Oxford, and quite possibly beyond – the disquiet caused by the University disputations on the Eucharist, which combined with a more general dislike of foreign-inspired innovation, such as the clerical marriage which Peter Martyr embodied. Whilst Josiah Simler's 1583 biography of Martyr details only that disquiet which had caused the disputation's postponement, Lawrence Humphrey's 1573 biography of John Jewell suggests that the re-scheduled disputation also witnessed conflict – there being two opposing parties, between whom an official was forced to intervene.[55] Although Chancellor Richard Cox's Conclusion states that 'the disputation was peaceful', Humphrey's

---

[54] BL, Additional MS. 48018, fo. 389v, printed in Ethan H. Shagan, 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives', *English Historical Review*, 114 (1999), 34-63.
[55] *Life, Letters, and Sermons*: *Peter Martyr Vermigli*, ed. Donnelly, pp. 33-4; Lawrence Humphrey, *Ioannis Ivelli Angli, Episcopi Sarisburiensis vita & mors* (London, 1573), pp. 44-5. I am indebted to Tracey Sowerby for drawing my attention to this latter source.

portrayal of trouble at this time is consistent with Martyr's *Prefaces* to his *Tractatio*. In these *Prefaces*, Martyr says of his detractors:

> I will not speak of what their insolence has circulated about the disputation I had at Oxford last summer, and how they slandered me to all sorts of men – princes, nobles, commoners, in city and country. For they have done nothing in secret, but every corner, street, house, shop, and tavern still resounds with their lies and boastings and conquests. Nor do I doubt that these evil reports have even reached other lands.[56]

In the summer of 1549, the dissolution of parish religious institutions was also very recent. This represented not only liturgical change, but also an attack on parish property. The parish of Chipping Norton – where Grey's Order commanded that the vicar, Henry Joyes, be hanged from his church's steeple for his perceived leadership of the Rising – had been deprived of no fewer than four of its clergymen during the previous year. This 'great market towne, replenysshe with muche people' had lost its chantries of Our Lady, St. James, and St. John, as well as its Trinity Guild – although the parishioners' petition to ensure the continuance of their school proved ultimately successful.[57] The three chantry commissioners active in Oxfordshire had been Sir John Williams, John Doyly, and Edward Chamberlayne (Leonard's brother) – with Williams apparently taking the lead role.[58]

However, hard on the heels of these dissolutions had come further attacks on church property – and it is these that appear to have been the most significant factor in the Rising's timing. Oxfordshire possessed many other parks besides Thame, Rycote, and Woodstock – with several of them lying close to the route taken by the insurgents through Oxfordshire.[59] The dissidents, however, seem to have left these parks

---

[56] *Oxford Treatise and Disputation on the Eucharist*, ed. McLelland, pp. 288 (Cox's Conclusion), 3 (Martyr's *Prefaces*).
[57] *The Chantry Certificates and the Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods*, ed. Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Soc., i, 1919), pp. 20-2, 45-6.
[58] *Chantry Certificates*, ed. Graham. Sir John Williams was paid £30 on 14 August 1548 for his work on the commission of colleges and chantries in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, and Rutland, and for 'framing and finishing' the revenues of the same: NA, E 315/258, fo. 66r.
[59] A map (produced admittedly in 1605) includes a number of parks: John Speede, *Oxfordshire described with ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of yt*

untouched. The city of Oxford aside, the insurgents specifically targeted the lands of John Williams and Leonard Chamberlayne. But why was this so? The answer seems to lie in parish property. It looks as if the especial targets of the 1549 insurgents – the men whose lands they despoiled and plundered – were the two members of the Oxfordshire gentry who had just implemented the commission for church goods in their county. Given their involvement in other commissions, Williams and Chamberlayne were about the most likely candidates for such a task. Moreover, their supposed involvement seems to be borne out by the Household Book of Sir Edward Don. Amongst his memoranda for July 1549, Don refers to commissioners for Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (although without specifying the commission), naming them as Sir John Williams, Leonard Chamberlayne, and a certain Sir Lee – who, as a Buckinghamshire gentlemen, might be supposed to have been more influential in this latter county.[60]

The 1549 commission for church goods was assigned the task of drawing up inventories of the goods of the parish churches. The account that Thame's churchwardens produced on 2 June 1549 illuminates the procedure which was followed. First, the wardens claim 6s 8d for the dinner that they had provided for 'ye Churchemen and dyverys of the parocheners' who 'were at the makynge of ye Inventory of ye goodes apperteynynge unto ye Churche'. Next, they list the 2s spent on 'Makynge of 3 Bookes of the Inventorye of ye same goodes', with a further 16d spent on '2 bookes Indented made of the same Churche goodes one to be Delyvered unto the Justice & the other to remayne with ye churchmen'. The wardens then list

---

famous Vniuersity. Ao. 1605 (Facsimile published by the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 1998).

[60] Warwickshire Record Office, CR 895/45, fo. 354r. (This Household Book is printed in *The Household Book (1510-1551) of Sir Edward Don: an Anglo-Welsh knight and his circle*, ed. Ralph A. Griffiths (Buckinghamshire Record Soc., xxxiii, 2004).) The 'D.' Lee referred to in Don's Book seems most likely to refer to Anthony Lee of Quarrendon, although this must remain a matter for conjecture.

the wine given 'unto ye Comisioners' at a cost of 21d, whilst a further 2s 8d constitute 'ye expences of ye Churchmen bothe of ye old Towne & of ye Newe in Ridynge unto oxford to Delyver the Inventory'.[61]

That the 1549 commission was interpreted as threatening the property of Oxfordshire's parish churches cannot really be doubted, especially as it followed the swift and systematic dissolution of the county's chantries. Whilst the commissioners of 1549 did not seize goods, the implications of their actions could be readily anticipated. This was not least the case in Thame where, about ten years previously, the churchwardens had purchased a number of items following the dissolution of Thame Abbey; and where a rumour that the church's goods were to be seized in the summer of 1537 had prompted suggestions that they be sold.[62] This possibly explains why Thame's parishioners took action even before 1549. Thame's churchwardens sold some of the parish's valuables in the year preceding 6 May 1548, and had entrusted others to the safe-keeping of certain individuals as early as 24 October 1547.[63] But it was the implementation of the 1549 commission which made action such as this common, with the commissioners for church goods in 1552 being instructed not only to make inventories of the churches' goods, but also to compare these inventories with those former inventories remaining with the churchwardens, so as to detect losses.[64]

The commissioners for church goods visited the parish of Thame around May 1549. (Since Thame's churchwardens tended to record their expenses in chronological order in their accounts, it is possible to date events with some degree of

---

[61] Thame CWAs, pp. 92-3.
[62] Ibid., pp. 50-1: the purchase of goods from Thame Abbey. In 1537, John Stribblehill had alleged that Robert Johns, as he came from evensong on Sunday three weeks before Whitsuntide, had told him that he feared the king would have the crosses and jewels of their church, and proposed to sell the jewels as the church was in decay: SP 1/123, fos. 121r-124v.
[63] Thame CWAs, p. 85.
[64] *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1550-1552, p. 467; *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1550-1553, pp. 393-7.

accuracy.) It seems likely, however, that the perceived threat to parish property escalated still further some time after the commission's implementation: at the beginning of July. The Buckinghamshire gentleman Sir Edward Don resided just a few miles south-east of Thame, at Horsenden, and so witnessed Oxfordshire's troubles at close-hand.[65] Don recorded in his Household Book that, on 11 July 1549, John Williams and Leonard Chamberlayne were at Thame with the bishop of Oxford – with Williams and Chamberlayne returning to the area on 26 July. Thus it emerges that at about the time when the Oxfordshire Rising commenced with the pillaging of Thame Park, the men who had almost certainly served as the commissioners for church goods were back in the area in which they had compiled inventories no more than a couple of months previously. It is tempting, therefore, to hazard that Williams and Chamberlayne's re-visiting of the area was (rightly or wrongly) popularly interpreted as a precursor to their seizing the inventoried goods, especially since the dissidents' subsequent actions were to target and plunder Williams and Chamberlayne's property.

It has also to be appreciated that by the summer of 1549 church goods had already been pillaged illegally, causing tensions in the county. The records of the

---

[65] The relevant memoranda in Edward Don's Household Book: WRO, CR 895/45, fo. 354r. Don was himself a target of the Buckinghamshire disturbances, recording amongst the memoranda in his Household Book that on 5 July, when his nephew Edward Chamberlayne was 'here with the kynges pardon', 'rebels was here at the towne [and] pullyd downe the hedge of my cloiste &c'; and, subsequently, on 14 July, that Henry 'Wyntt' [probably 'Wyntter'] 'with his sunnys &c pullyd downe the gatys & stylys of my sowth woode & put in ther cattell &c'. The published transcription of Edward Don's Household Book dates Henry Wyntter's actions as 13 July: *Household Book (1510-1551) of Sir Edward Don*, ed. Griffiths, p. 434. The text is, however, difficult to construe. Don was not simply responsible for treating his own dissidents. On 8 July, Lord Windsor – who had been commanded by Somerset to repair to Windsor Castle by the order of 1 July – enlisted Don to provide men on horseback 'for to sende sowth'. (Don obliged by sending half a dozen.) Don seems, however, to make a conscious distinction between his own predicament in Buckinghamshire and 'the byscenes [business] at Rycotte &c' – suggesting that the two were not directly related, despite their proximity to one another. The 'byscenes at Rycotte' entry is recorded between memoranda referring to 5 and 8 July. This does not, however, suggest that the Oxfordshire Rising commenced between these dates. Whilst Don appears to have made entries regularly, he does not seem to have contributed to his Household Book on a daily basis. Somerset was certainly not aware of there being any trouble in Oxfordshire as late as 10 July; and he did not report it to Lord Russell until 12 July – the day that Don claims that Lord Grey arrived at Rycote.

Court of Augmentations and General Surveyors reveal that, in the weeks immediately prior to the Rising, there had been widespread anger in the parish of Ducklington, near the market town of Witney.[66] Robert Bullock and Thomas Egerley 'asuell for them selfes as for and in the names of all other Thinhabitantes' alleged that William Boxe of London, grocer, and Leonard Yate of Witney had pretended to the surveyor of the shire that the Chantry Act ought to apply to the chapel at Cokethorpe, a site of pilgrimage that had fallen into decay.[67] Boxe and Yate had succeeded in their aims. They had sold the chapel's land (which, since it was in the tenure of Robert Bullock, does much to explain why Bullock acted as co-plaintiff!) to a certain Francis Chesildon on 21 February 1549.[68] In addition to this, the Ducklington plaintiffs alleged that Boxe and Yate had subsequently pulled down, spoiled, and defaced the chapel – assisted by twenty-three other riotous and evil-disposed persons – and had taken away

> all the leade of the said Churche to the nomber of 10 foddars surveid by a plommer & 3 bells with all the Iron and the glasse for 10 large windows & foure other windowes in the steplle of the said Churche and all the desks and seates and pewes as well in the Chauncelle as in the Churche with the particions and the pulpett over and besides a chalice and all other ornamentes of the said Churche as vestmentes coopes a Crosse alter clothes towells surplesse Crewetes bookes with all other Implementes to the said Churche.

The government had taken action. On 11 April 1549, John Pollard, Thomas Wenman, and John Doyley, acting under the king's commission at Witney, had taken

---

[66] NA, E 315/125/147-54.

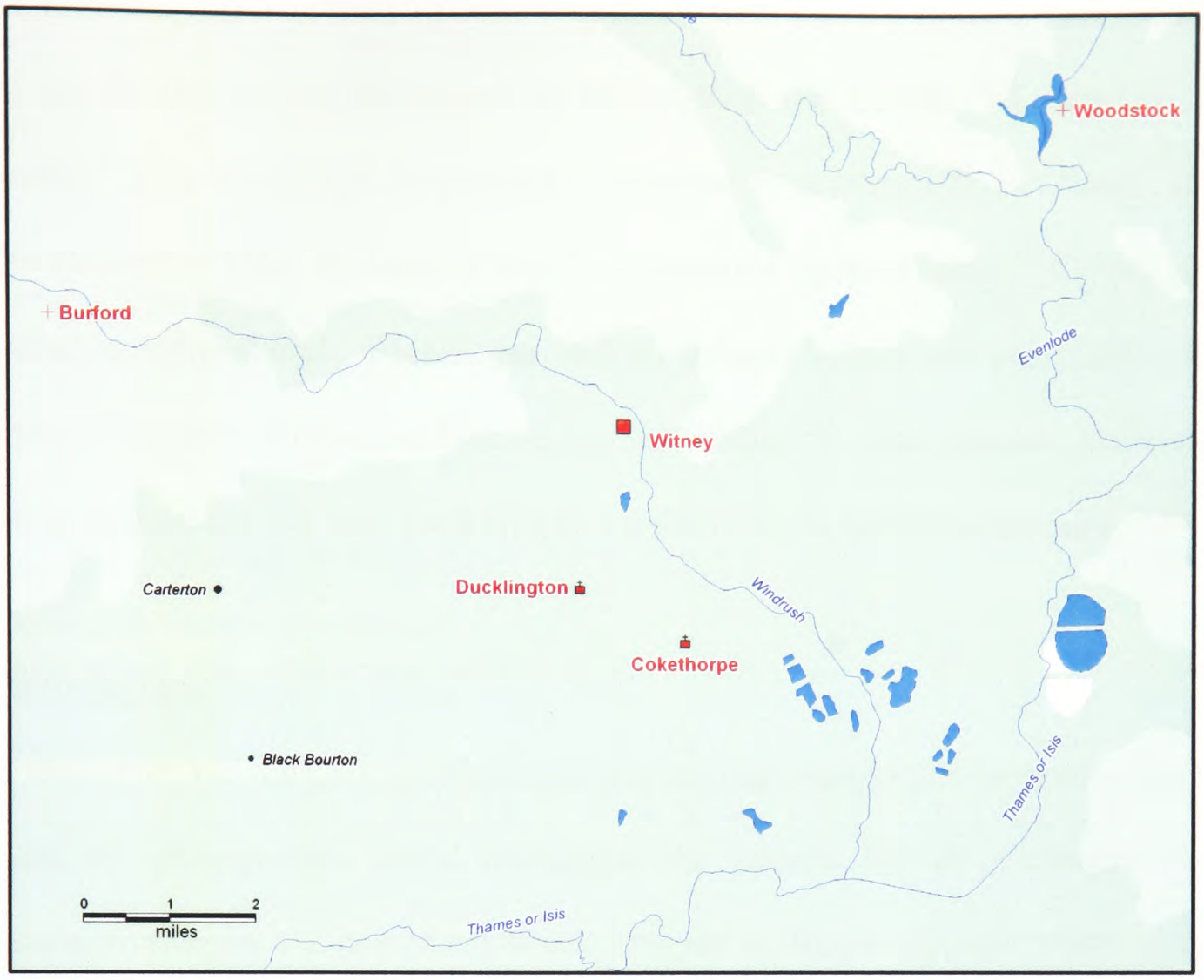
[67] Pilgrimages to the image or picture of the Blessed Mary of Cokethorpe had ceased in the late 1530s, and allowances for the decayed rents from shops associated with the cult were made to the bailiff of Ducklington Manor from 1539: *VCH*, Oxfordshire, xiii, 146. Boxe and Yate were long-acquainted with one another. Record of their serving on a jury together was sent into King's Bench in Hilary Term 34 Henry VIII: NA, KB 9/553/54-6.

[68] NA, E 318/37/2025. Bullock's tenure is revealed by the fact that, on 21 December 1549, Richard Venables and John Maynerde esquires bought 'the arable land (8 ac.) in tenure of Robert Bullocke in Hardewike, Oxon, which belonged to the late chapel of St. Mary of Cokthorpe within the parish of Duckyngton, Oxon, and the parcel of land called le Chappell Yarde (1 ac.) in Hadewike (*sic*) upon which the said chapel was built and which also belonged to it' in the Court of Augmentations: *CPR*, 1549-1551, p. 89. Robert Bullock was evidently a man of means. In 1555 he commenced the lease of a pasture for a period of three score years at the cost of 40s *per annum*. This lease was soon contested by Francis Fetyplace esquire: NA, C 1/1408/71-3.

the depositions of over thirty men, the names of ten of whom survive. They had then, on 4 July, determined that Boxe and Yate were to restore the chapel to its previous condition. The issue, however, remained contentious. This July order resolved nothing. The chapel was not restored, and the Edwardian government was evidently not prepared to force the issue, as a complaint raised in Star Chamber on the accession of Mary reveals.[69] This inertia can only have strengthened the fears of further pillaging. Two of the deponents at Witney, John Bullock (son of plaintiff Robert Bullock) and John Smyth, had alleged that the pillagers had threatened further spoliation. Smyth had stated that one of Boxe's servants had told the parishioners not 'to be so greaved with pullyng downe of that lytle chapell for he trusted to se 20 pulled downe more'. Bullock had been still more specific, testifying that one of the party deemed the parishioners' opposition 'but folie for downe it [the chapel] must & mo in this cuntrey aswell as that namyng Woodstocke Burford & others'.[70] Thus, early in July, passions were running high in this part of the county. This may have been one of the reasons why Lord Grey chose Witney from which to issue his Order. It is, moreover, worth noting that the lord of Ducklington Manor, in whose hands lay the advowson for the parish, was, at this time, none other than Sir John Williams himself, the rector being the Chancery Master William Leson.[71]

---

[69] The matter seems to have come before Star Chamber prior to Mary's marriage (July 1554): NA, STAC 4/4/53.
[70] NA, E 315/125/152-4.
[71] Williams acquired Ducklington Manor at some point before 1547, although he had sold it to Sir John Brome of Holton by 1552. It was, however, still Williams who presented to the living of Ducklington in 1550, demonstrating that he was still lord at this time: *VCH*, Oxfordshire, xiii, 120, 142.



The Case of the Chapel at Cokethorpe

It is the fact that the goods of parish churches were widely perceived to be under threat at this time, from both 'official' and 'unofficial' bodies, that makes the arrest of John Feckenham particularly interesting. The list of prisoners in the Tower made on 22 October 1549 records that 'John Fekingham bachelor of dyvynite and Late Chapplyn to the Late bysshopp of London was arested by the Lord Grey in the Countie of Oxford & sent to london and commytted to the Tower by the duke of Somercett'.[72] Although accepting of Henry VIII's royal supremacy, Feckenham had vigorously opposed the abolition of sacramentals and the introduction of ideas from abroad, articulating his hostility in a sermon at St. Paul's Cross on 16 January 1547.[73] Feckenham was, moreover, a notable champion of church goods. On 25 November

[72] SP 10/9, fos. 90r-94v.
[73] *Letters and Papers*, Henry VIII, 21 Part 2 (1546-1547), pp. 370-1.

1554, preaching again at Paul's Cross, Feckenham asserted that all the property taken from the Church during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI ought to be returned.[74] This was enough to provoke a summons from Mary's Privy Council and, on 29 November 1554, Feckenham was 'commaunded by the Lordes ... to make his apparaunce before them'. Feckenham 'did accordingly appere and exhibited ... his sermon he made at Powles on Sondaie last, in writing'.[75] One wonders, therefore, whether Feckenham had been preaching in a similar vein in the Oxfordshire of 1549.

IV. A Rebellion

In Oxfordshire, the religious grievances of this summer found their expression not in clusters of encampments dotted throughout the county, but in a coherent and organised movement – a movement which gathered its forces together, which armed itself, and which marched up the county. By any definition, this was a rebellion. And it was a rebellion of some size.

Lord Grey was deputed to deal with the rebellion in Oxfordshire. Grey had, recently, been away fighting in the north. But he had returned to his native Buckinghamshire by early July at the latest, heading the list of men from that county who were to report to Windsor.[76] It was, thus, from Buckinghamshire that Grey had been ordered to the south-west of the country to assist Lord Russell, making him the obvious candidate for the government to subsequently divert into Oxfordshire. In Oxfordshire, Grey seems to have headed first to Rycote. The Household Book of Sir Edward Don records that 'the lorde Grey cam to Rycot' on 12 July.[77] However, by this time, the rebels had already proceeded north-west – leaving Grey to follow in

---

[74] The New *Dictionary of National Biography* *sub* John Feckenham [retrieved 26 April 2006].
[75] *APC*, 1554-1556, p. 85.
[76] SP 10/8, fo. 3v.
[77] WRO, CR 895/45, fo. 354r.

pursuit, and lending further credibility to the assertion of the anonymous London chronicler that it was at Woodstock that the rebels first heard of Grey's coming.

We know only a few of the names of the Oxfordshire rebels. But government intelligence concluded them to number several hundred. On 18 July, Protector Somerset and his council informed Russell that Lord Grey had 'chased the Rebelles ... to they howses and taken 200 of them'.[78] This seems also to have been what was told to the young Edward VI, whose Journal records that Grey 'did so abash the rebels that more than half of them ran their ways, and [of the] other[s] that tarried were some slain, some taken, and some hanged'.[79] The government's estimate of the scale of the rebellion seems reasonable. The concurrent events in Buckinghamshire did not create anything like the same degree of government concern. Nonetheless, a JP's notebook – discovered by Diarmaid MacCulloch and analysed by Amanda Jones – points to the involvement of at least 134 named men from twenty of the county's parishes, as well as to the participation of a few from elsewhere.[80]

Oxfordshire's rebellion was one of the commonalty. In Oxford, the fellows of Corpus Christi and Magdalen Colleges, and Peter Martyr himself, all reported the insurrection to have been the doing of the 'commons'.[81] The lack of forfeitures also argues against gentry complicity.[82] Indeed, it was the county's gentry whom Grey

---

[78] IT, Petyt MS. 538, vol. 46, fos. 438v-439r.

[79] *The Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI*, ed. W. K. Jordan (London, 1966), p. 13. This subsequently became the general interpretation that Foxe – and, later, Holinshed and Hayward – adopted: *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe,* ed. Josiah Pratt, 4th edn (8 vols., London, 1877), v, 738; *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (6 vols., London, 1807), iii, 963; *The Life and Raigne of King Edward the Sixth by John Hayward*, ed. Barrett L. Beer (Kent, Ohio, & London, England, 1993), p. 76.

[80] Bodleian Library, MS. e. Museo 57, fos. 109r-113v; Fletcher and MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, p. 68; Jones, 'Commotion Time', esp. pp. 370-7.

[81] Corpus Christi's accounts state that provisions were provided 'for the commens passyng the town' (CCCO, C/1/1/3, fo. 64v); the letter from the fellows of Magdalen College to Cranmer refers to 'seditiosi vulgi' (CCCC, MS. 127, p. 426); and Martyr refers to 'furiosa multitudo seditiosae plebis' (Martyr, *Loci Communes*, I, sig. cii).

[82] The grants of land to the marquis of Northampton, Peter Carew, William Gybbes, William Herbert, and Ralph Hopton – mainly for services against the Western rebels – are not confined to the West Country. So the fact that they do not include lands within Oxfordshire suggests that members of

called upon to implement his Order: to convey the traitors to the towns specified, 'and to be present with theire aide to cause thexecucion to be doon acordingly'.[83]

The notebook of the Buckinghamshire JP records not only the parish but also the occupation or social status of that county's rebels. If a similar source survives for Oxfordshire it is yet to come to light. It is possible, nonetheless, to discern something of the backgrounds of the Oxfordshire rebels through the analysis of the fifteen identifiable individuals who seem to have been involved.

Although no known rebel ranked above the status of commoner, the rebel force included participants of a higher social status than certain of their detractors wished to imply, with rebel captains Thomas Bowldry and William Bowler both being men of substance.[84] It is clear, however, that the rebels were of very varying means and status. On 14 August 1549, Geoffrey Marshe and Richard Noddes were pardoned for their part in the rebellion. These men were both from Blackthorn, in the parish of Ambrosden. However, whilst the patent roll describes both Marshe and Noddes as being 'husbandmen', they could hardly have been more different.[85] In 1549, Noddes was a very young man. His parents were still alive: his father (William) died in 1556, and his mother (Marian) in 1558.[86] And, whilst Noddes died only twenty-five years after the Rising, his seven children (John, William, Randall, Thomas, Mary, Joan, and Marian) all remained minors in March 1574.[87] Geoffrey Marshe was, in contrast, a much older rebel. Dying only eight years after the rebellion, Marshe's will implies that his children had all reached their majority by the

---

Oxfordshire's gentry had not forfeited their land in the wake of the rebellion: NA, C 66/832, mm. 27-30 (Northampton), C 66/833, mm. 7-8 (Carew), C 66/833, m. 44 (Gybbes), C 66/834, mm. 49-51 (Herbert), C 66/845, mm. 33-4 (Hopton).

[83] SP 10/8, fos. 54r-55v. The gentry named do not seem to have been selected on confessional grounds.

[84] The Appendix to this chapter provides details of all the known rebels.

[85] Marshe and Noddes' pardon: NA, C 66/825, m. 13.

[86] ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.45v (William Noddes), MS. Wills. Oxon. 183.171r-171v (Marian Noddes).

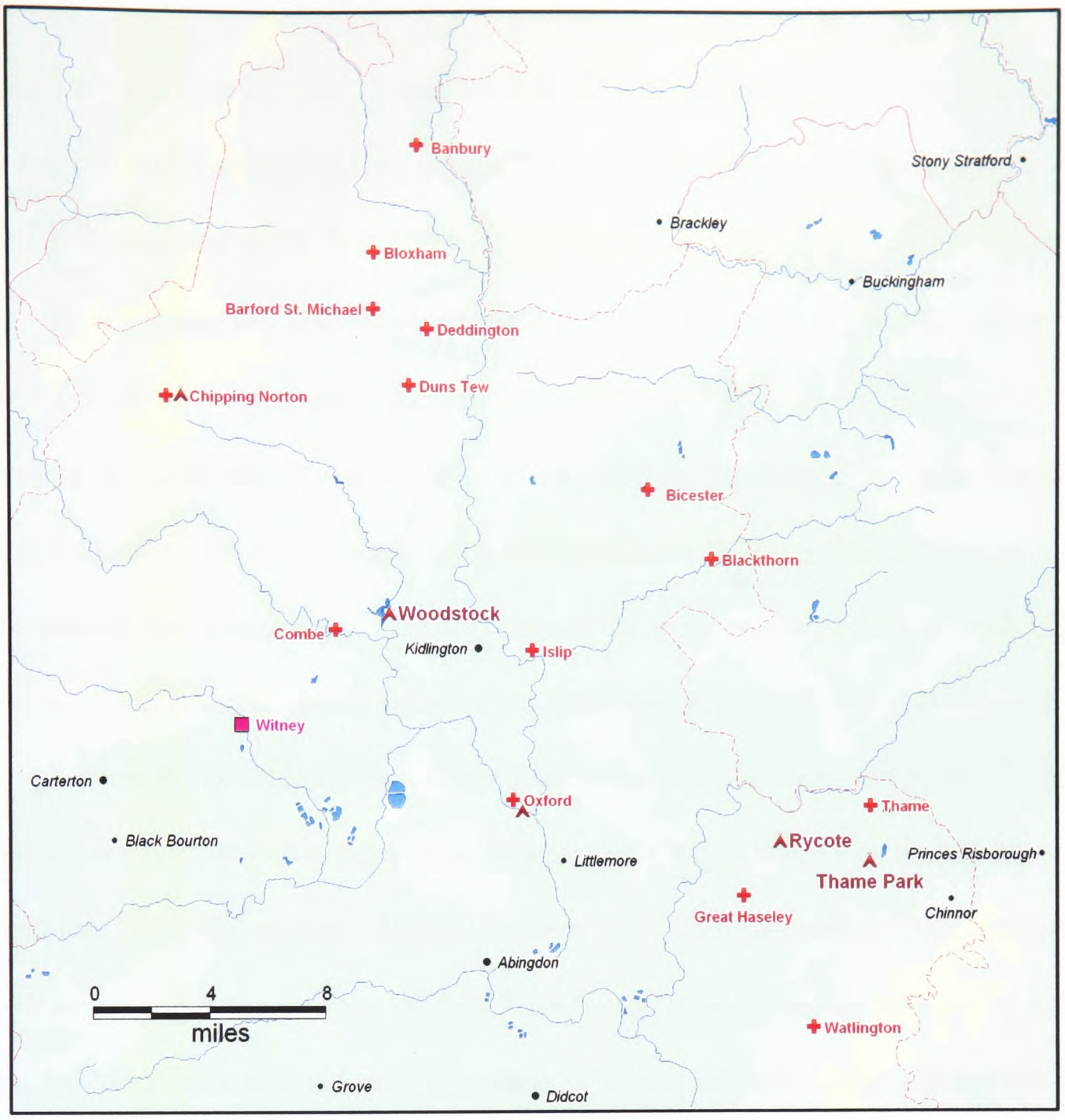
[87] Noddes made his will on 6 March 1574, and it was proved on 23 April 1574: ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 185.246v-247r.

time of its writing; and at least three of them (Margaret, William, and Elizabeth) were already married.[88] In addition to being rather older than Noddes, Marshe's means were by far the greater. A subsidy assessment of 1546 numbers Marshe amongst Blackthorn's three richest residents, whilst his inventory (assessed in 1557) was valued at £60 5s 9d.[89] Noddes's inventory, on the other hand, was only valued at £15 10s 8d.[90] So it is perhaps unsurprising that it should be Marshe rather than Noddes who played an active role in parish government in the years immediately following the rebellion.[91]

In terms of geography, the rebels were similarly diffuse – especially if one assumes involvement in the towns in which Grey ordered executions, as well as in those parishes for which we have named participants. The precise distribution of the rebels suggests, furthermore, that the rebel force swelled in its number as it progressed – and, latterly, was pursued – from the south-east to the north-west of the county, with most of the participants residing close to the route taken through Oxfordshire.

---

[88] ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.155r-155v (Geoffrey Marshe's will); *Oxford Church Courts: depositions, 1542-1550*, ed. Jack Howard-Drake (Oxford, 1991), p. 21 (for reference to Elizabeth's marriage).
[89] NA, E 179/162/250 (this subsidy return is badly damaged); ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.155r-155v (Geoffrey Marshe's will).
[90] ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 185.246v-247r.
[91] Ambrosden's churchwardens' accounts are extant from 1550: Ambrosden CWAs.



Red Crosses: Rebels' Residences; Brown Tents: Camps

V. The Rebellion's Reception

It seems likely that the Oxfordshire rebels were offered their pardon on at least one occasion. The letter which was addressed 'to the Commons in Oxford shire' refers to a pardon 'heretofore sent to yow'.[92] It is uncertain, however, when this letter was written.[93] In 1575, when he gathered the collection of letters together, Robert Beale dated the letter to the Oxfordshire commons as 7 July 1549. But Beale's justification for so doing is questionable. No date appears within the body of the text, and Beale's

[92] BL, Add. MS. 48018, fo. 389v.
[93] I believe Shagan's confidence in the letter's dating to be misplaced: 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions', esp. 39-40.

judgement is dubious elsewhere in the collection. (Beale dates the letter to the Thetford rebels severally, as 17 and 18 July.)[94] In contrast, circumstance, and not least the council correspondence, argues for this letter having been sent later in the month, if it were sent at all.[95]

In any case, the Oxfordshire rebels rejected any general pardons offered to them. Yet, in their subsequent treatment, the blueprint devised early in July – 'for repressing of Commotions and Uprores Iff any suche shall Happen' – was complied with at no time.[96] Instead, the government issued Lord William Grey of Wilton with a commission for 'thappesing and execucion of the evell disposed people' within the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Oxfordshire – although there is no evidence that Grey acted outside the county of Oxford.[97] This commission gave Grey considerable authority. Grey's *Life* states that he was 'sent as lyeftennant into the shyres of Buckingham and Oxford', whilst the unnamed chronicler refers to the coming of 'my lorde graye with ye kyngs powre'.[98] Grey enjoyed a formidable reputation as a warrior: at a later date, Scheyfve reported to the Emperor that 'Grey is held to be the best soldier in England'.[99] Doubtless with this in mind, Somerset expressed confidence in a letter to Russell that Grey would chastise the Oxfordshire rebels 'within a 6 daies Matyer'.[100] He was about right. Any negotiation with Oxfordshire's rebels was not as protracted as was the case in some other places.

---

[94] BL, Add. MS. 48018, fo. 389v.
[95] Michael Bush questions the nature of the source: M. L. Bush, 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: A Post-Revision Questioned', *EHR*, 115 (2000), 103-12, esp. 104.
[96] SP 10/8, fos. 27r-30v.
[97] Record of this commission does not survive in the patent rolls. It is, however, referred to in Grey's Order (SP 10/8, fo. 55r).
[98] *Commentary of the Services and Charges of William Lord Grey of Wilton*, ed. Grey Egerton, p. 17; BL, Harl. MS. 540, fo. 11r.
[99] *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, 1550-1552, p. 389.
[100] IT, Petyt MS. 538, vol. 46, fo. 437r. Somerset made this assertion in a letter written to Russell on 12 July.

The government proceeded against the Oxfordshire rebels as traitors. There is, however, detail surrounding the trial of only one of them. Wriothesley's *Chronicle* states that, on 16 August, James Webbe, the vicar of Barford St. Michael, was, in London's Guildhall, 'indyted and condempned of high treason' for being a rebel and a captain in Oxfordshire. Accordingly, on 22 August, Webbe 'was sent to Alisbury [Aylesbury], there to be drawne, hanged, and quartered'.[101] We can, however, deduce something of how the government proceeded against Webbe's fellows. The evidence suggests that they were proceeded against according to martial law. Proclamations of martial law were issued on 14 June, 16 July, and 22 July.[102] And, whilst Grey's Order of 19 July charged the county's gentry with executing fourteen of the rebels – specifying that the vicar of Chipping Norton and the 'parishe preist' (actually a curate) of Bloxham were to be hanged from their steeples – these executions were evidently not the first in the county, as the wording of the Order makes clear.[103]

James Webbe, the vicar of Barford St. Michael, certainly suffered death. On 11 April 1550, Edward VI presented a certain *Thomas* Webbe to the vicarage of Barford St. Michael, the living having become vacant at *James* Webbe's attainder.[104] At least some of those named in Grey's Order were executed promptly also. The vicar of Chipping Norton, Henry Joyes, was replaced by a certain Edward Large.[105]

---

[101] *A Chronicle of England during the reigns of the Tudors, from A.D. 1485 to 1559, by Charles Wriothesley*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton (2 vols., Camden Soc., new ser., xi & xx, 1875 & 1877), ii, 21.

[102] *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (3 vols., New Haven & London, 1964-9), i, 462-4, 475-6, 476-7. It is inconceivable that, had the rebellion had been treated by common law (probably by a commission of *oyer and terminer*), it would have left no record in the material that is extant. (Most notably, there is no record in the KB 8s, KB 9s, KB 27s, and KB 29s extant in the National Archives.) Martial law would, moreover, have been an expedient means of proceeding: since the Oxfordshire rebels were of the commonalty, the Crown would not have been particularly concerned by the fact that martial law could not secure the forfeiture of the rebels' lands (as well as their goods).

[103] SP 10/8, fos. 54r-55v. The executions ordered on 19 July were for 'furdre execucion ... within the saide countie'.

[104] In Oxford's diocesan register, the reason given for the living being vacant is 'per attinctura Jacobi Webbe clerici Ultimi Vicarij': ORO, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers. d. 105, p. 136.

[105] For Joyes' appointment: ibid., p. 120.

Whilst the entry in the diocesan register (made on 7 December 1549) records Joyes' death as being 'natural', the patent roll makes clear both that Large had been appointed before the end of August 1549, and that the appointment had been made by Edward VI's prerogative owing to Joyes having recently been executed for high treason.[106] Thomas Bowldry – whom the anonymous chronicler describes as a captain at the breaking up of the parks who was afterwards 'hangyd & quarteryd' – does indeed seem to have suffered death also. The parish register of Great Haseley reveals that, whilst Thomas Bowldry had at least four children by July 1549 – William, Thomas, Annes, and Johanna – a fifth, Alice, was not baptised until 10 November 1549. Little Alice was, however, presumably fatherless at the time of her baptism as, just a couple of months later, on 15 January 1550, Bowldry's widow, Agnes, married a certain John Hall – producing further offspring to be brought up alongside the fatherless Bowldry children.[107]

However, the lives of several of the rebels do seem to have been spared. The name of George Raves was deleted from Grey's Order, and it seems probable that it was his will that was proved on 10 January 1559.[108] William Bowler – whom the chronicler describes as being the captain at the breaking up of the parks who 'aftar wards had his pardon' – eventually died in 1597. There is also evidence for the lives of two of the five priests involved being spared. Richard Thomson, the vicar of Duns Tew, was certainly back in his parish by 26 April 1550, with the witnesses to a certain

---

[106] The reason given in the diocesan register is 'per mortem naturalem Henrici Joys ultimi vicarij': ORO, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers. d. 105, p. 134. The patent roll, however, refers to Joyes' 'altam prodicionem', which meant that the living was 'nuper lege naturali executus fuit vacantem': NA, C 66/824, m. 10.

[107] ORO, MS. D.D. Par. Great Haseley d.1, fos. 1r, 1v, 2r, 2v, 3r, 3v, 5r, 35r. Whilst the parish register does not list the names of the infants' parents, there can be no real doubt that this was the pattern of events. With the exception of the 'Katherine Hall' who married Michael Moore on 2 November 1553 (ORO, MS. D.D. Par. Great Haseley d.1, fo. 35v), there are no other entries under the names of either 'Bowldry' or 'Hall' in the period preceding 1570. It seems probable, therefore, that members of the family subsequently moved out of the parish.

[108] ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 183.83v-84r.

John Hellisbye's will including 'Richard Thomson vicar'.[109] Moreover, when Thomson's successor was presented in 1554 it was (apparently) following Thomson's free resignation.[110] Bloxham's curate, John Wade, was also restored to his parish, being appointed supervisor to the will of John Brice on 18 March 1550 (and receiving half a quarter of barley for his pains).[111] Moreover, Wade remained in the parish as late as 1554.[112]

Thus Grey's Order was not nearly so conclusive as it has oft been imagined. When we consider the fates of the ten men named in the Order, together with the three other men whom we know for certain to have been involved in the rebellion (the pardoned Marshe and Noddes, and the cleric James Webbe), we can discern the ultimate fates of nine of them.[113] Of these nine, three were executed (Bowldry, Joyes, and Webbe), and six (Bowler, Marshe, Noddes, Raves, Thomson, and Wade) were pardoned swiftly. Moreover, as Marshe and Noddes' pardons were without fine or fee, it seems likely that the other pardons were without conditions, especially since the clerics were given leave to return to their flocks. These pardons, however, should not simply be interpreted as leniency on the part of the governing classes – let alone as any admission of error. Whilst Tudor government could be savage, it was also considered. On 29 June, Russell had been instructed to slay only such numbers of the Western rebels as to cause them to 'Sodenly ... gyve over and Shrincke'.[114] A similar policy may well have been pursued in Oxfordshire.

---

[109] ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.173v.
[110] The phrase used in the diocesan register is 'per liberam resignacionem Ricardi Thompson': ORO, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers. d. 105, p. 155.
[111] ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.12r-12v.
[112] On 4 January 1554, John Wade witnessed the will of Richard Warde, a husbandman of Bloxham: ORO MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.207r-207v.
[113] The fates of John Brokyns, Henry Matthew, John White, and Richard Whyttington remain unknown.
[114] IT, Petyt MS. 538, vol. 46, fo. 433r.

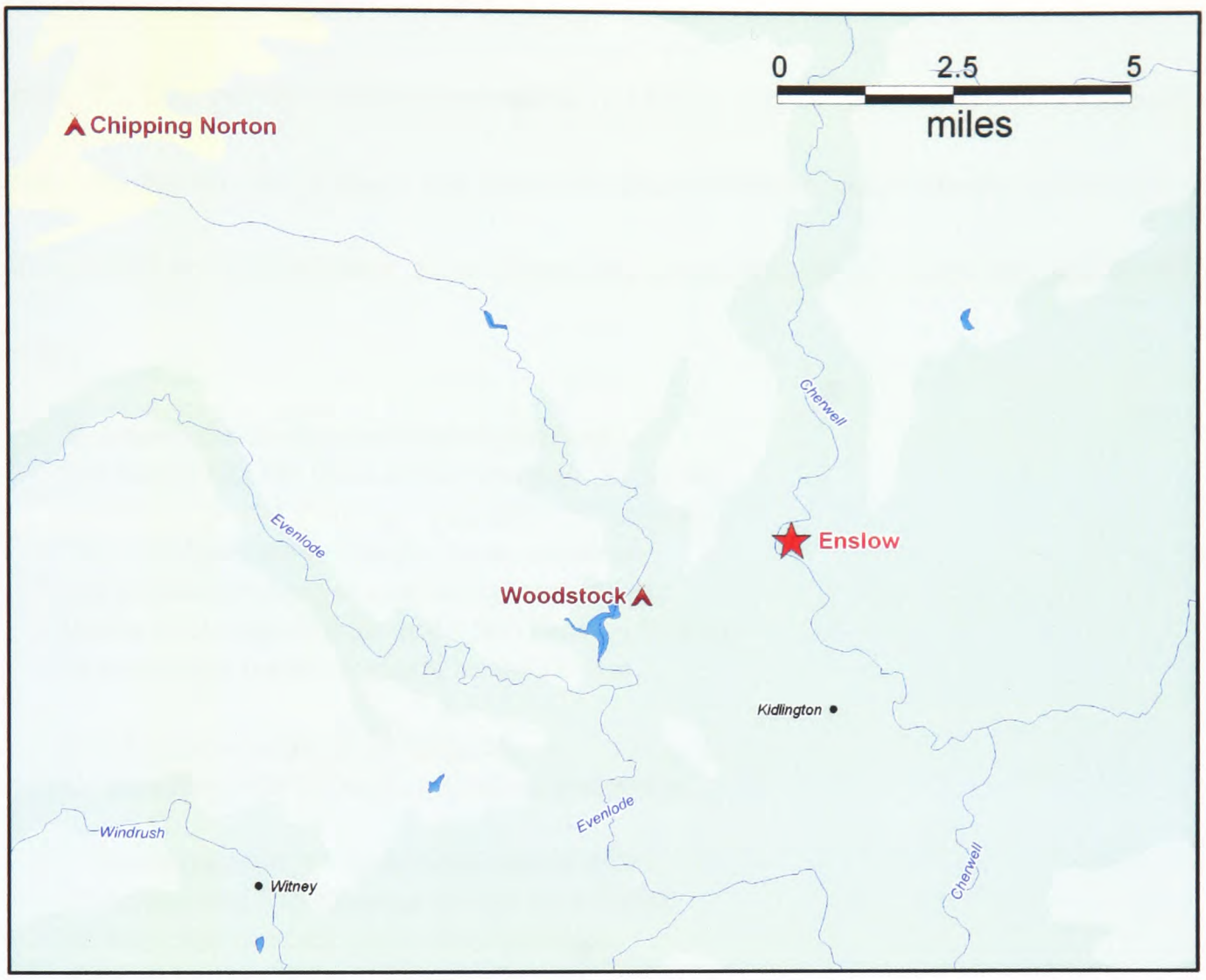
Lord Grey was, after all, in a strong position militarily: the figure of '1,500 horsemen and footmen' in Edward VI's Journal seems realistic when it is compared with Grey's warrants for payment.[115] In mid-July, the government was paying 40s per day to Grey and his horsemen, with the sum of £500 covering only a portion of the retinue's wage for the month.[116] Grey also received help from other sources, besides the county's gentry. Corpus Christi College supplied 'one kynderkyn of doble bere to the lorde grey' – which, at a cost of 2s 4d, was rather less in value than the supplies which they had given to the rebels![117] It was also at about this time that Magdalen College spent 36s 4d 'for appeasing the troops', suggesting that troops came to Oxford treating it as a hostile city.[118]

That rebels were slain in combat cannot be doubted, and there may even be an element of truth in the later story that the opposing forces did battle at Enslow Hill. Collective memory was a force to be reckoned with in Tudor England. In East Anglia, the expression 'a Mousehold captain' entered into local parlance, and was still in use some forty years after Kett's Rebellion.[119] Thus the examinations of Batholomew Steere and of Roger Symonds, following the Oxfordshire Rising of 1596, may well be relevant. These examinations reveal the memory of 'a former rising' at Enslow Hill where 'the risers were persuaded to go home, and were then hanged like dogs'.[120] Enslow Hill was, moreover, a likely spot for such a foray. At Enslow was the closest bridge over the Cherwell for any rebels who, having heard of the coming of Lord Grey, were either fleeing east from Woodstock (rather than

---

[115] *Chronicle and Political Papers*, ed. Jordan, p. 13.
[116] IT, Petyt MS. 538, vol. 46, fo. 438r; *APC*, 1547-1550, p. 305.
[117] CCCO, C/1/1/3, fo. 64v.
[118] The entry reads 'militibus placandis ut patet per billa': MCO, LCE/5, 1549.
[119] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: politics and religion in an English county, 1500-1600* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 312-3.
[120] *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1595-1597, pp. 342-5; John Walter, 'A "Rising of the People"? The Oxfordshire Rising of 1596', *Past and Present*, 107 (1985), 90-143.

retreating to the town of Chipping Norton), or (perhaps) were going forth to do battle with Grey's forces.[121]



Enslow

It was generally considered that in his handling of the Rising Grey had lived up to his reputation. Thomas Smith spoke for many when he declared Grey's doings to be 'better than ten thousand Proclamations and pardons for the quieting of the people'.[122] Grey's reputation was a bloody one. Later in the summer, John Ab Ulmis advised Heinrich Bullinger that the 'Oxfordshire papists are at last reduced to order,

---

[121] Speede, *Oxfordshire*.
[122] *England under the Reigns of Edward VI and Mary*, ed. Patrick Fraser Tytler (2 vols., London, 1839), i, 188.

many of them having been apprehended, and some gibbeted, and their heads fastened to the walls'.[123]

The epic poem 'The History of Grisild the Second: A Narrative, in Verse, of the Divorce of Queen Katharine of Arragon' seems to reflect the bloody scenes of this summer.[124] The poem's official mandate is Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. However, its author, the cleric William Forrest, quite clearly draws on the events of the late 1540s when, after discussing matters such as dearth and rent-raising, he writes

> Somuche the bodye not heere molestynge,
> But hundredfolde more endaungeringe the sowle;
> At Fastynge and Prayinge was made but iestinge,
> The vile Ignoraunte the Clarke to controwle,
> All holye cerymonyes coniuringe the Mowle,
> Eache cockynge Cobler and spittyllhowse Proctor
> In learnynge taken so goode as the Doctor.
>
> In tokne yeat more of Infidelytee,
> Downe went the Crosses in eauerye countraye...
>
> ...Shortelye after, to mende the mateir more,
> Churches and Monasteries downe they went,
> To haue the treasure speciallye thearfore,
> Althoughe they fayned for other entent.[125]

The token reference to the monasteries aside, Forrest's vitriol is here targeted at reforms made early in the reign of Edward VI: the abrogation of ceremonies, the reform of the liturgy, the dissolution of the chantries (here referred to as 'Churches'), and the attack on church goods. It was, moreover, from Oxfordshire, and from the parish of Thame in particular, that William Forrest had witnessed these Edwardian reforms. By May 1552, Forrest had become a sufficiently prominent figure in Thame

---

[123] *Original Letters*, ed. Robinson, ii, 391.
[124] The story of Grisild and Walter is told in 'The Clerk's Tale' in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.
[125] 'The History of Grisild the Second: a narrative, in verse, of the divorce of Queen Katharine of Arragon, written by William Forrest', ed. W. D. Macray (London, 1875), p. 81. The original manuscript, which Forrest presented to Queen Mary in 1558, survives: Bodl., MS. Wood empt. 2. Forrest was the close kinsman, and possibly the nephew, of Franciscan friar John Forest. John Forest was chaplain to Catherine of Aragon, and wrote against the breach with Rome. John Forest was burnt for heresy by Henry VIII in 1538. (New *DNB* *sub* William Forrest [retrieved 26 April 2006].)

to be entrusted with some 40s of the parish's funds.[126] Moreover, Forrest was certainly resident in the parish during the summer of 1549. The will of sometime churchwarden James Watson was witnessed by 'Sir Wyllyam Foreste preiste' on 26 August.[127] It is this that makes Forrest's apparently very personal recollection that

> Goddys servauntes vsed withe muche crudelytee,
> Dysmembred (like beastes) in thopen highe waye,
> Their inwardys pluckte oute and hartis wheare they laye,
> In suche (moste greuous) tyrannycall sorte
> That to to shamefull weare heere to reporte[128]

enormously significant. Forrest is suggesting (admittedly implicitly) the bloodshed of 1549 to be unparalleled, in Oxfordshire at least. It is, moreover, a scene such as this that one can readily imagine Bartholomew Steere and his fellows remembering at Enslow Hill nearly fifty years later.

Grey issued his Order from Witney on 19 July, with Marshe and Noddes' pardons being for their transgressions performed before 20 July.[129] But even Grey's departure for the West Country, where he arrived on 3 August, provided little in the way of closure. John Ab Ulmis's letter to Bullinger, dated 7 August, reports only that the 'Oxfordshire papists are *at last* reduced to order'.[130] And it seems that Ab Ulmis was not simply belated in his communications. Martyr's biography claims that, after Martyr's return, although the papists dared not meet openly together with arms, there were frequent nocturnal disturbances outside Martyr's rooms, where papists used

---

[126] Thame CWAs, p. 113.
[127] ORO, MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.130r-131r.
[128] 'Grisild the Second', ed. Macray, p. 81.
[129] Thomas Kyghtley, George Williat, John Cowper, Thomas Williatte, John Warde, and Edward/Edmund Barton were pardoned for their transgressions in Buckinghamshire performed before 18 July: NA, C 66/825, m. 13. On 31 July 1549, 'Mr. Williams had warrant for v markes to Blewmantell in respect of his charges for carying the Kinges Majestes pardon into Northamtonshire and Buckinghamshire.': *APC*, 1550-1552, p. 307. On 4 August Bluemantle was paid 66s 8d for his being sent with the king's pardon to Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, and publishing the same there for fifteen days: NA, E 315/258, fo. 80r. There is no such record of any pardon being carried into Oxfordshire.
[130] *Original Letters*, ed. Robinson, ii, 391. Emphasis is my own.

stones to attack Martyr's door and, in this manner, shattered his window panes.[131] Indeed, where payment for the guarding of the colleges can be dated precisely, it appears to have generally taken place towards the *end* of July. Payment by The Queen's College was made at some point after 20 July.[132] It is also clear that the guarding of Corpus Christi extended late into the month, payment being made 'to the watchmen the last weke before lammas [1 August] for 4 days'.[133]

Corpus Christi seems to have made much greater provision for its guarding than did most colleges, although it is impossible to be certain.[134] In any case, the College's expenditure on its guarding certainly appears more prominently in its accounts than is the case elsewhere. Instead of a single entry recording the expenditure of a few shillings or pence, Corpus's accounts itemise minutely the many days and nights on which the College watched for trouble. The account lists:

> Item to the fyrst watchmen 20d
> Item to Rychard manciple watchyng 3 nyghtes 18d
> Item to Richard the under coke watchyng 3 nightes 18d
> Item to the butler watchyng 3 nyghtes 18d
> Item to John coke watchyng one nyght 6d
> Item to colyns watchyng one nyght 6d
> Item to the watchmen the last weke before lammas for 4 days 4s
> Item to Colins and trobe watchyng one nyght 12d.[135]

It seems that these several watchmen were positioned in the College Tower, presumably to have the best vantage point, since a further 8d was spent on 'straw to bedes in the towre'.[136]

---

[131] 'armis palàm congredi non auderent, noctu sæpè tumultus aliquos ante ædes Martyris commouerunt, ac lapidibus nunc ostium impugnarunt, modò fenestrarum specularia perfregerunt': Martyr, *Loci Communes*, I, sig. cii.
[132] QCO, 2P139: 'Item vigilantibus in villa 13d'. This account covers the period from 20 July 1549 to 20 July 1550.
[133] CCCO, C/1/1/3, fo. 66r.
[134] Relevant accounts are not extant for all colleges. In addition to this, the colleges' final accounts (which are all that usually survive) are generally summaries of the individual accounts of multiple college officials.
[135] CCCO, C/1/1/3, fo. 66r.
[136] Ibid., fo. 64r.

These extensive measures, being taken after Grey had issued his Order, may well indicate that the fellows of Corpus feared reprisals – either for supporting the rebels, or simply for their conservatism. As much would not have been out of the question. The city of Oxford was kept under a particularly close watch at this time, with the accounts of Magdalen College recording the expenditure of 30s on the reception of 'Mr. Brydges', 'Mr. Giblons' (who is presumably the Thomas Gibbons esquire who appeared in Grey's Order), and other nobles during the month of July.[137]

VI. The Commotion in Perspective

The Oxfordshire Rising of 1549 was something out of the ordinary – even by the standards of that summer. It was, by any definition, a rebellion. Its motivating force was religious grievance, with its insurgents dying by the sword, probably after rejecting initial offers of compromise.

The rebellion was distinctive. It was also distinct. The concerns of the Oxfordshire rebels were certainly similar to those exhibited in the Western Rebellion – and, doubtless, to those of many other groups of dissidents. Yet their grievances were, above all, county-specific. The rebels did not head for London. They were not opposing religious reforms *per se*. Rather, Oxfordshire's rebels were contesting the Edwardian reforms as they had been imposed within their parishes – resenting, in particular, those officials who threatened their churches' goods. Correspondingly, Oxfordshire's insurgents acted wholly within their county, rousing men from within it. Indeed, any evidence for the rebel force being more broadly-based seems to stem from Somerset's initial understanding of there being 'a sturr here in Bucks and

[137] The entry reads 'pro expensis in receptione magistri Bridges giblons et aliorum nobiliorum Julij ut patet per billam': MCO, LCE/5, 1549. Sir John Brydges (Grey's brother-in-law) was fighting the French in 1549. Thus this entry more likely refers to Sir John's brother, Sir Thomas Brydges, who had been granted many lands in Oxfordshire.

oxfordeshire by instigacon of sundery preistes'.[138] Moreover, whilst Grey's commission covered the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Oxfordshire, there is no evidence of him acting outside Oxfordshire. Indeed, the nature of the pardons that were issued to insurgents from Buckinghamshire argue for the insurrection in that county being dealt with on a separate basis.[139]

The threat that Oxfordshire's rebellion posed to the government of 1549 should not be under-estimated. By early July, government resources were already stretched to their limits, and there was also the threat of foreign invasion. In addition to this, Oxfordshire's proximity to the capital made any rebellion in the county, let alone one of this nature, especially dangerous. Thus, despite the many other pressures on resources, Lord Grey was ordered in to orchestrate immediate remedy. It is not surprising, therefore, that the rebellion in Oxfordshire should be dwelt upon so (relatively) extensively in the Journal of Edward VI. Indeed, it is only the Western Rebellion that Edward's Journal covers in more detail – with even Kett's Rebellion receiving only indirect mention.

The severity of the threat posed by the Oxfordshire Rising made the government desirous to suppress intelligence of it. Somerset had, from the outset, instructed Russell to 'kepe yt to your self', presumably hoping that news of insurrection in the Midlands should not encourage dissidence elsewhere.[140] In so doing, Somerset was remarkably effective. Writing from Eton on 19 July, even Sir Thomas Smith admitted that 'Here we can learn no certainty of my Lord Grey's doing'.[141] This secrecy, however, extended far beyond the Oxfordshire rebellion's

---

[138] IT, Petyt MS. 538, vol. 46, fo. 437r.
[139] The Buckinghamshire pardons were dated from 18 July; the Oxfordshire ones from 20 July.
[140] IT, Petyt MS. 538, vol. 46, fo. 437r.
[141] *England under the Reigns of Edward VI and Mary*, ed. Tytler, i, 185-9. Smith's instruction to Cecil that 'Ye must call upon my Lord's Grace to give him thanks, and to animate him to use severity against

imminent threat – and not simply because the manner in which the rebellion was treated ensured that little by way of legal record was created. There can be no doubt that Peter Martyr's biography is well-informed. It was written by Martyr's friend and successor at the Zurich Academy, Josiah Simler, with John Jewell – who served as notary at the 1549 disputation – testifying to its excellence.[142] However, the religious opposition to Martyr which this biography details is lacking in most other sources. Most notably, it is not mentioned in Cranmer's English sermon on the time of rebellion across England, which was founded on two Latin sermons written by Martyr. Cranmer's sermon instead emphasises the socio-economic grievances of the summer, making only the most cursory of remarks about 'subtle papists' persuading 'the simple and ignorant Devonshire men'.[143] Thus, either Martyr or Cranmer – or indeed both of them – were eager to rewrite events in a manner which minimised the opposition that religious reform had induced across England.

The way in which the Oxfordshire Rising was treated made such a rewriting possible – and so means that the evidence surrounding this rebellion is, in relative terms, scant. Speed was the decisive factor. However, it also seems likely that the pardons granted to a high proportion of the condemned rebels, in spite of the bloody repression which Grey had displayed in the field, represent further efforts to draw a line under proceedings, especially in the case of the clergy. Of the five known clerics, only the fate of Henry Matthew of Deddington remains unknown. The fate of Henry Joyes, who was hanged from his steeple at Chipping Norton, was almost certainly sealed when the rebel force retreated from Woodstock. The rebels' hastening to Chipping Norton cast (rightly or wrongly) this town as a stronghold of dissidence, in

---

all those specially as came out of other shires thither' need not, therefore, be indicative that the rebellion in Oxfordshire included a substantial number of participants from outside the county.

[142] *Life, Letters, and Sermons: Peter Martyr Vermigli*, ed. Donnelly, pp. 1-2.

[143] *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1556*, ed. John Edmund Cox (Parker Soc., xxiv, 1846), pp. 190-202.

need of bloody example. However, in contrast, the pardoning, and the swift returning to their parishes, of Richard Thomson of Duns Tew and of John Wade of Bloxham implies that the governing classes were unwilling to create martyrs where it was not altogether necessary. (A chastised and conformist cleric would surely have signalled a different lesson from the memory of a popular priest executed for leading his flock in protest over matters of religion.) The Thomas Webbe who succeeded the executed James Webbe to the vicarage of Barford St. Michael seems most likely a relation.

In the final analysis of the Oxfordshire Rising of 1549, it is necessary to understand the Tudor mindset. Sir John Harrington's maxim – 'Treason doth never prosper: what's the reason? Why if it prosper, none dare call it treason' – illustrates the extent to which the past was bound up with the present. Strong dynasties crushed rebellions. But it was better still not to have had them at all. It is, therefore, only recently that the extent to which England was consumed by commotions in 1549 has come to light. And, whilst it was rather harder for the authorities to gloss over the long-drawn-out Western Rebellion than it was the country's 'lesser risings', the government here chose to attribute blame to a limited number of 'papist' rabble-rousers rather than to the commonalty as a whole. The severity posed by the nature and scale of the Oxfordshire Rising made its long-term concealment desirable. Yet, in contrast with the west, its handling made it possible – and this, too, may have been the case in other parts of England. Perhaps counter-intuitively, therefore, it is the very shadows and uncertainties that still surround this event which testify to the Oxfordshire Rising of 1549 being one of the most effectively-handled Tudor rebellions on record.

CHAPTER TEN

1553: 'GOYNGE FORTH' FOR QUEEN MARY

In July 1553, just four years to the month after the 1549 Rising, the Oxfordshire commons rose again in large number. Faced with the decision whether to accept the *de facto* government of Lady Jane Grey – for the time being, at least – or to rebel in support of Mary Tudor, Oxfordshire chose the latter. In so doing, the county displayed something of its spiritual climate, as well as affecting the course of English history.[1]

In the period between the death of Edward VI, on 6 July, and Mary's proclamation in London, on 19 July, support for the Tudor claim rested upon relatively humble shoulders. Strype's disparaging remark that Mary's supporters 'were generally of the meaner and popular sort, few of the nobility or gentry joining with them, but rather opposing them' possesses an element of truth.[2] The elite were unwilling to take sides at all – with even Mary's cousin, the Emperor Charles V, being prepared only to support her claim insofar as it did not require military intervention.[3]

In these decisive days, the support of 'the meaner and popular sort' counted for most, although these men acted under the leadership of their local gentry. Upon getting 'wind of the aristocratic conspiracy aimed at her destruction', Mary had fled first to the Howard stronghold of Kenninghall in Norfolk. There, Robert Wingfield

---

[1] I am grateful to Professor David Loades for commenting on an early draft of this chapter.
[2] John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (3 vols., Oxford, 1822), iii, part i, 4.
[3] The first peer to join Mary was the earl of Bath. However, the only major noble in attendance at Mary's Suffolk base of Framlingham Castle was Sussex, who was also her only experienced military commander.

records that on being told of the death of Edward VI and of Mary's right to the Crown 'everyone, both the gently-born and the humbler servants, cheered her [Mary] to the rafters and hailed and proclaimed their dearest princess Mary as queen of England'.[4] With her Household behind her, Mary's next priority was to appeal to 'the gentlemen of the surrounding countryside'. Wingfield lists many gentry whom he deems it 'unfitting to relegate to the obscurity of an unthankful silence'.[5]

I. The Gentry of Oxfordshire

Mary's especial champions in Oxfordshire were rather more eminent than most of the gentry detailed by Wingfield: they were Leonard Chamberlayne esquire and Sir John Williams, the very same men who had been the particular targets of the 1549 rebels. Chamberlayne's family seat was at Shirburn Castle in the south-east of the county and, in 1553, he had recently been elected sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire for a second time. Williams was still more distinguished. A sometime sheriff, MP, and JP for Oxfordshire, Williams was particularly prominent in the national arena, possibly explaining why contemporary sources generally cede Williams the dominant role in the raising of the county.[6]

Williams and Chamberlayne were assisted by other members of Oxfordshire's gentry. Thomas Brydges was one of them. Wingfield's account of Mary's accession specifies that 'Sir John Bridges and his brother Thomas, both famous veteran campaigners' took Mary's part.[7] By 1553, Sir John had long since been an influential man at Court, and this had proved crucial to the career of his younger brother

---

[4] *The Vita Mariae Angliae Reginae of Robert Wingfield of Brantham*, ed. Diarmaid MacCulloch (Camden Soc., 4th ser., xxix, 1984), p. 252.
[5] Ibid., pp. 252-4.
[6] S. T. Bindoff, *The House of Commons, 1509-1558* (3 vols., London, 1982), i, 616-7 (Chamberlayne), iii, 620-3 (Williams).
[7] *Vita Maria*, ed. MacCulloch, p. 261.

Thomas. In 1536, the brothers had been named joint keepers of the Oxfordshire parks of Cornbury and Langley. In subsequent years, Thomas had furthered his interests in the north of the county, becoming in the process one of Oxfordshire's most active officials, mustering troops in 1544, and sitting on various commissions.[8] The knighthoods that Mary bestowed on 2 October (the day after her coronation) indicate the involvement of certain other members of the Oxfordshire gentry. Besides Leonard Chamberlayne, Mary knighted: Ralph Chamberlayne (Leonard's brother), Francis Stonor (whose family was based in the south-east of the county), John Pollard (serjeant-at-law), and Thomas Wenman (who was related to Williams by marriage).[9] The honours conferred on this day seem closely related to the events of the summer: the 'Rob. Wyngfield' who later wrote the *Vita Mariae* was amongst those receiving his reward.

Precisely how many of the Oxfordshire gentry raised the banner for Mary cannot be known. However, the county appears to have been united – or, at least, lacking in opposition. This contrasted with the 'Greate stire' in Northamptonshire in which Sir Thomas Tresham proclaimed Mary at Northampton 'with the ayd and helpe of the towne', whilst Sir Nicholas Throckmorton (who was suspected of complicity in Wyatt's Rebellion of 1554) 'was drivene for safetye of his lyfe to take a howse, and so beinge borne amongeste divers gentlemen escaped with much adoe'.[10] Sir William Cecil, who had been amongst those who had advanced the cause of Jane Grey, had every reason to spread culpability as liberally as possible. Yet, when listing the 'Names of Gentlemen &c who transacted affairs for ye Establishment of Queen Jane'

---

[8] The New *Dictionary of National Biography* *sub* Sir John Brydges, *sub* Thomas Brydges [retrieved 26 April 2006].
[9] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, iii, part ii, 181-2.
[10] *The Chronicle of Queen Jane, and of Two Years of Queen Mary, and especially of the Rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyat. Written by a Resident in The Tower of London*, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Soc., old ser., xlviii, 1850), p. 12.

in various counties, Cecil manages to supply only one name for the county of Oxfordshire: 'ye Lord marques northampton'.[11]

II. The Gentry's Resolve

That the Crown was being competed for was soon widely known in the Thames Valley. The minutes of the borough of Reading were eventually to incorporate both 'The copie of the lettre Sent by Quene Marie to the lordes of the Counsaile' and 'Thansuere made by Lady Janes Counsail to the Seid Letter'.[12] What is more, gentry from all over the country were soon called on to take sides. According to Strype, Mary wrote to Sir George Somerset, Sir William Drury, Sir William Waldegrave, and Clement Higham esquire as early as 8 July – only two days after Edward VI's death, and the day before Mary could receive confirmation of this event. On 9 July, Mary 'wrote another letter from Kenningale [Kenninghall] to Sir Edward Hastings, the Earl of Huntingdon's brother, and a zealous Papist'.[13] Certain individuals were even entreated to act by both parties. Although Sir John Brydges took Mary's part, Lady Jane sent a desperate (and unsuccessful) plea to him and Sir Nicholas Poyntz on 18 July – the very day before London declared for Mary – urging them to support her 'Because we doubt not but this our most Laufull possession of the Crowne ... is both playnly knowen, and accepted of you, as our most Loving subiectes'.[14]

By 18 July it must have been obvious that the tide was turning in Mary's favour – although not quite palpably enough for Jane Grey to have abandoned all hope. However, it is clear that Oxfordshire's gentry mobilised for Mary long before this was the case. On 16 July, report was made that

---

[11] British Library, Lansdowne MS. 103, fos. 1r-2v.
[12] Berkshire Record Office, R/AC 1/1/1, pp. 291-4.
[13] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, iii, part i, 14-5.
[14] BL, Harley MS. 416, fos. 30r-31v.

> Sir Edwarde Hastyngs, Sir Edmunde Pekham, Sir Robert Drewrye, Mr. Leonarde Chamberlayne, with others of the force of the shyres of Oxforde, Buckyngham, Berks, Myddlesex, were resolvede to be yesterdaye at nyght, being the 15 of Julye, at Drayton, at my Lorde Paget's howse ... and this day to mershe forth towards the Palaice of Westminster ... and to tayke the armure and munytyone that they shall ther fynde, for the better furnysshyng of theym selfs in the defence of the Queen's Majestes person and here tytle.[15]

To have anticipated reaching Paget's house at West Drayton (Middlesex) by 15 July, having mustered their troops and gathered their forces together, indicates that Oxfordshire's gentry acted immediately on learning of Edward VI's death and Jane Grey's accession, which were only announced in London on 9 and 10 July respectively.

It is, in light of this, important to remember that on the death of Edward VI Mary's accession was anything but assured. The first reactions of counties so diverse as Cornwall and Suffolk were to follow Westminster and declare for Queen Jane.[16] Although London declared for her on 19 July, the about-turn of Mary's fortunes here was very rapid. The imperial ambassadors initially perceived Mary's position as feeble, with men indisposed to declare for her unless the Emperor were seen to be supportive. Indeed, it was as late as 16 July that the ambassadors suggested tentatively in a letter to the Emperor that 'the Lady Mary, if she is able to hold her own in the first encounter, will give him [the duke of Northumberland] a great deal of trouble, induce many more men to join her, and may perhaps come to the throne'.[17] In other words, just three days before her London proclamation, Mary's eventual success could only be hazarded at in the capital. Thus, in declaring for Mary so early, the gentry of Oxfordshire were demonstrating a positive desire that Mary reign – a

---

[15] *Acts of the Privy Council*, 1552-1554, p. 293.
[16] The reactions of both Cornwall and Suffolk: Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: politics and religion in an English county, 1500-1600* (Oxford, 1986), p. 79.
[17] *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, 1553, p. 91.

desire so strong that it was prepared to risk everything in support of Mary's claim to the throne.

III. The Gentry's Motivation

In seeking support, John Foxe claims that it was to Mary to whom

> first of all resorted the Suffolk men; who, being always forward in promoting the proceedings of the gospel, promised her their aid and help, so that she would not attempt the alteration of the religion, which her brother king Edward had before established by laws and orders publicly enacted, and received by the consent of the whole realm in that behalf.[18]

However, despite Foxe's protestations, it is difficult to imagine that Mary's accession would not have been perceived as bringing with it religious alteration. Mary's opposition to the Edwardian religious changes had hardly been secretive! Machyn's *Diary* records that Mary had displayed her contempt for Ridley's campaign against rosaries by riding through London on 15 March 1551 '... with fifty knights and gentlemen in velvet coats and chains of gold afore her, and after her iiij score gentlemen and ladies, every one havyng a peyre of bedes of black'.[19] In addition to this, Jane Grey's government took pains during its short reign to publicly present Mary's candidature as guaranteeing religious change. Strype claims that Bishop Ridley preached at Paul's Cross 'by order of the Council' on 9 July. Ridley

> told his auditory of the danger the nation would have been in, had the Lady Mary succeeded, who was a stiff Papist; of which himself had former experience, when, being one in his diocese, he had endeavoured to bringe her to the knowledge of the Gospel. That therefore, were she Queen, it must be expected she would overturn all the religion so happily established under King Edward, and would betray the kingdom to a foreign power.[20]

Foxe's case for legitimacy being a motivating force is nonetheless valid. Indeed Strype reports that 'the generality of Protestants did readily receive Mary to be their

---

[18] *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe,* ed. Josiah Pratt, 4th edn (8 vols., London, 1877), vi, 387.
[19] *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Soc., old ser., xlii, 1848), pp. 4-5.
[20] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, iii, part i, 6.

Sovereign' in 'consideration that she was established by the King her father and the Parliament, to be successor to her brother, and heir to the crown after him; and their knowledge from the word of God, that obedience was therefore due to her'.[21]

When it came to choosing sides though, considerations were not necessarily so virtuously conceived. There was the question of political survival. The *Chronicle of Queen Jane and of Two Years of Queen Mary* – written by a resident in the Tower of London, where Jane's council was based – has the benefit of hindsight. Consequently, when Northumberland speaks to the London lords in anticipation of his departure for East Anglia, he alludes to 'what chaunce of variaunce soever might growe emongest you in myne absence'. Lord Grey of Wilton comments similarly: 'The people prece [press] to se us, but not one sayeth God spede us'.[22] Politiques were by their nature survivors. During the reign of Mary, the evangelical Edward Underhill described how some of his examiners 'secretly smyled' when he retorted that it was not long since certain of them could define a papist better than he could, implying that his examiners' religious allegiances had changed upon Mary's accession.[23] However, coalescing with the simple issue of survival were virulent personal grievances. The loyalty of the men whom Northumberland had left unattended in the capital was hardly likely to withstand any stern test. Arundel had been in prison, whilst Paget had recently been stripped of his lands. The imperial ambassadors reported to Charles V on 16 July that 'those who have received injuries from the Duke will now take the opportunity of revenging themselves'.[24]

There were within Oxfordshire several members of the gentry personally ill-disposed to the family Dudley. Falling under suspicion at the second fall of Somerset,

---

[21] Ibid., iii, part i, 16-7.
[22] *Chronicle of Queen Jane and of Two Years of Queen Mary*, ed. Nichols, pp. 7-8.
[23] *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation*, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Soc., old ser., lxxvii, 1859), p. 140.
[24] *CSP, Span.*, 1553, p. 92.

Sir John Williams had been imprisoned late in 1551, and was not released until the following year.[25] Moreover, although the council had subsequently recommended to the sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire (at that time Leonard Chamberlayne) that Williams be returned for the Parliament of March 1553, Williams had had to yield first place to Northumberland's brother Sir Andrew Dudley – who was in London at Edward VI's death, going forth from there to East Anglia.[26] In deciding where his loyalties lay, this latter insult may well have been the final straw for Williams – undermining, as it did, his position in the county. Thomas Wenman – whose son Richard married one of John Williams' daughters, and who was himself knighted the day after Mary's coronation – probably felt similarly. Andrew Dudley had, in 1551, been granted considerable tracts of land in Oxfordshire, including the borough of Witney. These gains had not only threatened Williams' predominance in the county, but they had also undermined Wenman's position – essentially making him a Dudley tenant in the area in which he had been previously pre-eminent.[27] It seems probable, therefore, that the 'certaine slaunderous reportes' – for which Wenman was summoned before the Privy Council in the winter of 1551, examined in the course of the following year, and outlawed by March 1553 – had been directed against Sir Andrew Dudley, or his brother Northumberland.[28]

Combining with all these issues, however, was undoubtedly a religious dimension. The Oxfordshire gentry were notoriously conservative in later years. Although a full return was not made for the county, it is clear that few (at most) of Oxfordshire's gentry were deemed supportive of the government's proceedings in

---

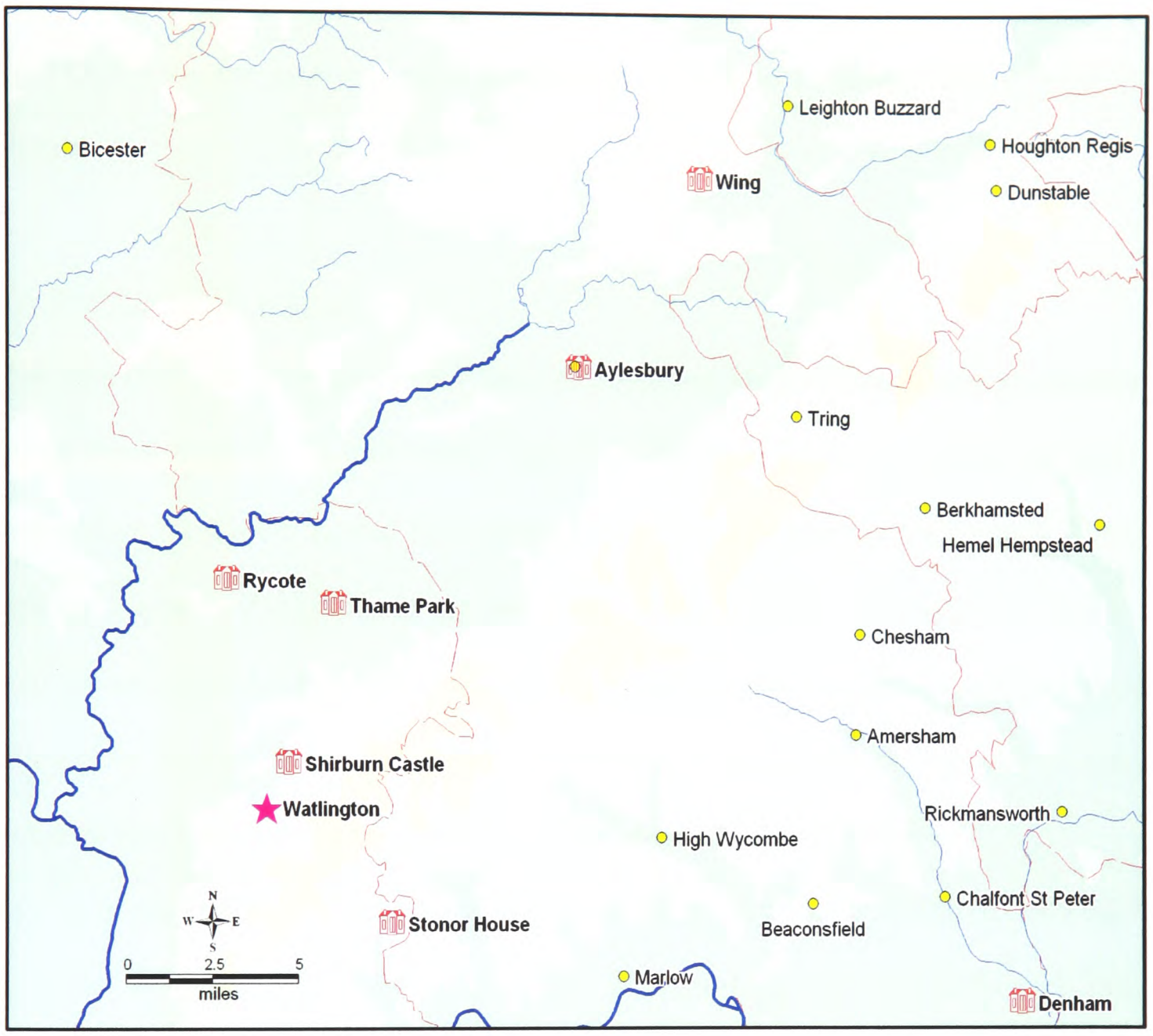
[25] New *DNB* *sub* Sir John Williams [retrieved 26 April 2006].
[26] Bindoff, *House of Commons*, iii, 622.
[27] Ibid., iii, 582.
[28] *APC*, 1550-1552, p. 428; *APC*, 1552-1554, pp. 97, 130, 141, 175, 187, 208, 243.

religion in 1564.[29] The families of Fermour, Chamberlayne, Barantyne, and Stonor were, moreover, notably recusant later in the reign. However, in spite of this, the religious dynamic present in 1553 should not be interpreted in simple confessional terms. It was, after all, these same families which had implemented the Henrician and Edwardian reforms in the county. Indeed, the lands of John Williams and Leonard Chamberlayne had been targeted by the 1549 rebels. So the tempting conclusion that Oxfordshire's gentry rose in support of Mary 'because they were religiously conservative' is problematic. What can be concluded, however, is that Oxfordshire's gentry were eager to support the cause of a candidate whose reign would perceptibly bring with it religious alteration. They were, in addition to this, willing to make common cause with well-known religious conservatives from the surrounding counties. Sir Edward Hastings – whom Underhill later suspected of being 'welle content' with Underhill's sending to the Fleet – was foremost amongst these allies, which also included Sir Edmund Peckham, and Sir Robert Drury.[30] An Italian, resident in London, tendered an account of the events pertaining to Mary's accession to the Emperor on 20 July. In this account, the Italian claims that Edmund Peckham and John Williams had stood up for the Lady Mary at 'Walte' in Buckinghamshire.[31] No such settlement exists; and it is tempting, therefore, to hazard that the Italian was here referring to Watlington (actually in the county of Oxfordshire). Watlington would, in any case, have been a prime location for the convergence of forces. Close to the borders of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire, Watlington was within easy striking distance of many of the key-players – Williams at Thame and

---

[29] *A Collection of Original Letters from the Bishops to the Privy Council, 1564*, ed. Mary Bateson (Camden Soc., new ser., liii, 1895), esp. pp. 81-2.
[30] Underhill's suspicion: *Narratives of the Days of the Reformation*, ed. Nichols, p. 144.
[31] *CSP, Span.*, 1553, pp. 106-9.

Rycote, Chamberlayne at Shirburn, and Peckham at Denham – lying, as it did, on a major road.[32]



Gentry Supporters: Residences

The residences of other supporters also lay close by. The *Life* of Jane Dormer, duchess of Feria, claims (perhaps optimistically) that

> In this noise and tumult of war, to put down the right Queen and maintain the usurper, Sir William Dormer ... called friends and gathered strength to assist Queen Mary. Upon occasion, he went with them to Aylesbury, understanding that the Earl of Bedford would be there with his adherents for the county of Buckingham to proclaim the Lady Jane. Mr. Dormer encountering him there, told him plainly, "My Lord, we cannot hear of any Queen but the Lady Mary; and he that presumes publicly to name

---

[32] John Speede, *Oxfordshire described with ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of yt famous Vniuersity. Ao. 1605* (Facsimile published by the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 1998).

> any other, shall do it to his cost." This so affrightened the Earl that he durst not attempt what was enjoined; and he retiring, Mr. Dormer went with his friends and followers to attend Queen Mary.[33]

The Dormers' Buckinghamshire base was at Wing. It is, furthermore, worth noting that Stonor House – the residence of Francis Stonor, who was amongst those knighted on 2 October – was also very close to Watlington, lying in the neighbouring parish of Pyrton.

IV. The Gentry's Forces

The plea that Jane Grey sent to Sir John Brydges and Sir Nicholas Poyntz on 18 July urged these men to raise all whom they had influence over, as well as the royal retinues on the Crown estates they administered.[34] Jane's letter to Sir John St. Lowe and Sir Anthony Kingstone of the same day required them similarly 'to assemble, muster, and levy al the power ye can possible make, either of your servants, tenants, officers, or friends, as wel horsemen as footmen'.[35] In 1553, this was how it was: when raising forces, the gentry had to look to their servants and tenants.

In Oxfordshire, it was 'by the Comaundement' of Sir John Williams, who held both the manor and park of Thame, that William Lee, one of Thame's serving churchwardens, was paid £10 from the churchwardens' funds 'for the goynge forthe of the Sowldyers in the behalf of our Soveraigne Lady Quene Marye'. A further 7d was 'payd in ale & brede', with Lee being paid 14s 4d in the subsequent year 'above ye Money that he Receavyd for ye Souldyers as Dothe appere by his bill brought in to this accompte'.[36] From these entries it is clear that Williams rapidly organised men into bands, with appointed leaders. Lee was, as befitted a holder of parish office in

---

[33] *The Life of Jane Dormer Duchess of Feria by Henry Clifford*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London, 1887), pp. 48-9.
[34] BL, Harl. MS. 416, fos. 30r-31v.
[35] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, iii, part ii, 172-3.
[36] Thame CWAs, pp. 113, 121.

Thame, a man of some substance. A Chancery case, held between 1544 and 1551, makes clear that Lee had earlier been in the position to pay £40 for a lease.[37] Lee had also headed the jury of an inquisition *post mortem* held at New Thame on 3 April 1550.[38] Sir John Williams could demand that the action taken by his deputies was at least partly funded by the public purse – and there is no reason to suppose that similar means of raising forces were not practised elsewhere in the county.

However, no member of the gentry could necessarily guarantee being able to raise forces at all – perhaps especially Sir John Williams, whose parks at Thame and Rycote had been pillaged by members of the commonalty just four years earlier. The gentry had to look to their tenants and servants, and hope to find them their 'friends'. It is, for example, significant that Thomas Tresham's successful proclamation of Mary at Northampton, which was 'with the ayd and helpe of the towne', should be associated in a newsletter with Tresham's 'beinge borne amongeste them [the townsmen]'.[39] Indeed, the events of July 1553 could not be – and were not – ultimately decided by England's noblemen and gentry. According to the London *Chronicle*, the council in London decided that Northumberland should go to East Anglia in person, 'saying that no man was so fit therefor, because that he had atchieved the victory in Norfolke once already [in dealing with Kett's Rebellion], and was therefore so feared, that none durst once lift up their weapon against him: besides that, he was the best man of warre in the realme'.[40] However, word was soon brought to the Tower that 'the noblemen's tenauntes [had] refused to serve their lordes agaynst quene Mary', presumably in part *because* of Northumberland's past victory

---

[37] National Archives, C 1/1244/22.
[38] NA, KB 9/576/187.
[39] *Chronicle of Queen Jane, and of Two Years of Queen Mary*, ed. Nichols, p. 12.
[40] Ibid., p. 5.

over them.[41] Similarly, it is significant that Wingfield should attribute the credit for the earl of Oxford's (critical) defection from Jane's cause to the demands of the earl's servants. Wingfield claims that Clement Tusser, 'a lawyer and a truly courageous character', had urged Oxford's servants 'to encourage and force their master to obey Queen Mary'. Oxford's servants then

> Manfully and zealously doing their duty on Tusser's initiative ... crowded into the ample space of the castle hall and sent up deafening shouts that they recognized no other queen but Mary, the eldest daughter of Henry VIII; if their lord was willing to join her party, they were ready to give their lives in this most just cause, but on the other hand, if their lord did not wish to give his backing to this cause, the most righteous of any, they threatened immediately to throw off their liveries and set out for Princess Mary.

In response to this miniature *coup*, Wingfield claims Oxford to have 'professed himself much moved by their [his servants'] words', giving 'his agreement' and departing with his servants for Framlingham.[42] Whatever the precise truth of the matter, Wingfield's portrayal of the incident reveals a contemporary acceptance of the autonomy and influence of the commonalty in the matter of the succession, and the extent to which this could steer the actions of their social superiors, and consequently the ultimate outcome.

The gentry of Oxfordshire raised an extraordinary number of men, both horse and foot, with quite astonishing speed. Contemporary estimates may exaggerate. But they indicate a force of some considerable scale. The writer of the newsletter estimates that, on 19 July, John Williams 'hathe 6 or 7000 men'.[43] Such a number seems plausible, given that a report of 16 July advised that the force gathered at Paget's house at West Drayton were 'in nomber tenne thowsande'.[44] Oxfordshire was regarded as one of the country's least populous counties, at least in terms of troops.

---

[41] Ibid., p. 9.
[42] *Vita Mariae*, ed. MacCulloch, pp. 263-4.
[43] *Chronicle of Queen Jane, and of Two Years of Queen Mary*, ed. Nichols, p. 12.
[44] *APC*, 1552-1554, p. 293.

The army levied against France in 1544 included only 1,580 men from the county. A total of twenty-two counties levied more troops than did Oxfordshire, with only seven counties – Surrey, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Rutland, and Cornwall – levying fewer.[45] Consequently, to have raised a force several thousand strong, a considerable proportion of the county's able-bodied men must have followed the lead of Williams and Chamberlayne. The strength of the commonalty's support enabled Oxfordshire's gentry to act. Without them, Williams, Chamberlayne, and their like would have been impotent. Indeed, this groundswell of popular support may even have been what prompted the gentry to act in the first place, although this must remain a matter for conjecture.

V. The Commonalty's Motivation

There was a danger in declaring for either side, even for the commonalty. Jane Grey's letter to Brydges and Poyntz instructs them that those who persisted in supporting Mary should 'receyve suche punishment & execucion as they deserve'.[46]

So why did Oxfordshire's commons declare for Mary in such numbers – asserting their feelings so very forcefully and so very publicly? Without doubt, the commons shared certain of the non-religious concerns of their social superiors. The Petition of Richard Troughton, the bailiff of South Witham in Lincolnshire, records that, at the height of the crisis, Sir John Harrington 'sodenly went into his parlor, & broughte furthe a Statute boke, and layde hit awpen, vppon the borde, that euery man myghte rede hit'.[47] Whilst this episode does not suggest for a moment that each and

---

[45] *Letters and Papers*, Henry VIII, 19 Part 1 (1544), p. 157.
[46] BL, MS. Harl. 416, fo. 30r.
[47] 'Petition of Richard Troughton, Bailiff of South Witham, Lincolnshire, to the Privy Council in the reign of Queen Mary, relating to the share taken by him in the Duke of Northumberland's Plot', ed. Frederic Madden, *Archaeologia*, 23 (1831), 18-49, esp. 31. I am indebted to Megan Wheeler for this reference.

every household was equipped with a copy of the statutes of the realm, it is nevertheless illustrative of the degree to which a sense of legality was embedded within the popular consciousness. Mary's legal right to the Crown was widely understood – according to the provision for the succession made by Henry VIII, and by the general principles of inheritance. Jane Grey's connection to the family Dudley, through her marriage to Guildford on 21 May, weakened her credibility still further. On 16 July, the imperial ambassadors reported that Northumberland was 'hated for his tyranny and ambition'.[48] Three days later, they were still more damning, concluding that Northumberland 'has never given any one reason to love him, and the general suspicion that he poisoned the King in order to bring the Crown into his family has turned the people away from him'.[49]

The case for Oxfordshire's commonalty being motivated by religious considerations is, however, rather more compelling than it is for the county's gentry. The degree to which Oxfordshire's parish communities associated the accession of Mary with a return to traditional religious practices is demonstrated by the rapidity with which change was effected within the county's parish churches – anticipating government instruction to an extraordinary degree. Thame's churchwardens' accounts reveal that the parish's wardens ceased buying bread and wine 'for ye Comunion table' on the feast of St. Bartholomew [24 August].[50] The wardens of St. Martin's church in Oxford were still prompter, changing 'Comunyon breade' for 'syngyng brede' on the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady [15 August] – some three days before Mary's ambiguous proclamation regarding religion, and a full six before Mass was celebrated in the Tower for Northumberland and his associates.[51]

---

[48] *CSP, Span.*, 1553, p. 91.
[49] Ibid., p. 94. Machyn also refers to this rumour: *Diary of Henry Machyn*, ed. Nichols, p. 35.
[50] Thame CWAs, p. 120.
[51] St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 19r.

(These dates compare with 27 August for London's St. Paul's cathedral, and 3 September for the clergy of Shropshire. The Mass was only imposed by law on 20 December, and caused offence in some parts of the country even then.)[52] The Oxford of July 1553 was party to some serious celebration. The wardens of St. Peter-in-the-East's church, after organising 'a Collet to praye for the kynge', provided 'drinke to the Ringers for Quene Marie'.[53] Soon after Mary's accession, church goods began to come out of hiding, with the churchwardens of St. Martin's parish in Oxford receiving 20s 'of master walkelyn for a Chest that was Master alderman Flemmynges for to restore the Challys that was yn gage at master whyttyngtons'.[54]

Events at Oxford University may have provided some lead. Although Mary's Order for a return to the University's ancient statutes was only made on 20 August 1553, her stance on religion was evident in her dealings with the University well before this date.[55] Although officially still an honoured guest of the government, Regius Professor Peter Martyr – the much-maligned target of the 1549 rebels – was, by late July, under house arrest in Christ Church's Tom Quad, although he was eventually allowed safe conduct abroad.[56]

VI. The Significance of the Rising

Oxfordshire's troops never engaged in combat. John Williams, Leonard Chamberlayne, 'and others of the gentlemene of Oxfordeshire' were requested to

---

[52] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: religion, politics, and society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 206-8.
[53] St. Peter-in-the-East's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 63r.
[54] This entry appears in the account which covers the period November 1553 to November 1554: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 22r. The matter of church goods is discussed in more detail in Chapter XI.
[55] Mary's Order: BL, Additional MS. 32091, fos. 145r-146v.
[56] Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'Peter Martyr and Thomas Cranmer', in E. Campi (ed.), *Peter Martyr Vermigli: humanism, republicanism, reformation* (Geneva, 2002), pp. 173-201, esp. pp. 195-6.

dismiss their soldiers and repair to Queen Mary on 22 July.[57] There can, however, be little doubt that Oxfordshire's rising in support of Mary – and thus the attitude of the county's commonalty – played a critical role in securing Mary's accession.

July 1553 was a month in which perceptions of power meant everything, the question being: who would crack first? With the balance of power resting on a knife-edge, the situation could be altered by even the slightest change in circumstance. The writer of the *Chronicle* identifies the warships mutinying for Mary at Yarmouth – news of which reached the capital on 18 July 'or therabouts' – as precipitating the lords' final proclamation for Mary on 19 July. For, 'once the submyssyon of the shipes was knowne in the Tower eche man then began to pluck in his hornes', the politiques then gauging that the victrix lay in East Anglia.[58] Thus timing was of the essence, with even Wingfield acknowledging that Mary's cause had been advanced by Suffolk's delaying longer at Cambridge than he ought to have done.[59]

In these circumstances, the risings in the Thames Valley – in which Oxfordshire was prominent – assume enormous significance. Presented to the lords in London, whose job it effectively was to make the call for queen, were several thousand men under the leadership of some of the most experienced military commanders in the realm, who were already within striking distance of the capital by the night of 15 July. (Paget's house at West Drayton was less than twenty miles distant from the Tower.) It is significant that on 18 July – the very day before her lords betrayed her – Jane Grey's last desperate pleas were for action to be taken in this area, urging St. Lowe, Kingstone, Brydges, and Poyntz, 'to repaire with all possible

---

[57] *APC*, 1552-1554, p. 301.
[58] *Chronicle of Queen Jane, and of Two Years of Queen Mary*, ed. Nichols, pp. 8-9. This opinion is also echoed by the imperial ambassadors' letter of 19 July: *CSP, Span.*, 1553, pp. 94-7.
[59] *Vita Mariae*, ed. MacCulloch, p. 263.

spead towardes Buckinghamshire'.[60] Perhaps Jane still hoped that, if this area could be quieted, her throne might yet be saved.

Lady Jane Grey disparaged Mary's supporters in the Thames Valley as being 'of the base multitude, Whos rage being stirred, as of late yeres hath byn seen, must nedes be the confusion of thole common weale'.[61] However, whatever Mary's views on the 1549 commotions, she regarded Oxfordshire men rather differently, entrusting them with tasks of especial sensitivity during the first few weeks of her reign. When the Princess Elizabeth 'came out of the country, to be ready to congratulate her sister, and now her sovereign' on 29 July she was

> attended ... with 2000 horse, with spears, and bows, and guns, and other weapons. [And] Among the rest in her retinue were Sir John Williams, Sir John Bridges, (both of them afterwards made noble,) Mr. Chamberlain, all in green, guarded either with white velvet, satin, taffeta, and cloth, according to their qualities.[62]

It was again Sir John Williams – this time in conjunction with the earl of Sussex (who led the party), Sir Edmund Peckham and Sir Thomas Tresham – who was appointed 'to staye thassemblies in Royston and other places of Cambrige shire' in early August.[63] Moreover, and perhaps most revealingly, in appointing her personal bodyguard – the men who would safeguard both her person and her title – Mary chose to commission none other than Sir John Williams, Sir Leonard Chamberlayne, and their men of Oxfordshire.[64]

On Mary's accession, the honour and the glory went to members of Oxfordshire's gentry. But it seems probable that Mary ultimately owed more to the county's commonalty than she did to their gentry leaders. For Williams, Chamberlayne, and their fellows, legal and pragmatic concerns loomed large.

---

[60] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, iii, part ii, 172-3; BL, Harl. MS. 416, fos. 30r-31v (here quoted).
[61] Jane Grey's letter to Brydges and Poyntz: BL, Harl. MS. 416, fo. 30r.
[62] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, iii, part i, 22. Henry Machyn describes this scene also: *Diary of Henry Machyn*, ed. Nichols, p. 37.
[63] *APC*, 1552-1554, p. 310.
[64] The bodyguard was commissioned in August 1553: *APC*, 1552-1554, pp. 318, 320.

However, had Oxfordshire's gentry gauged their legal and practical concerns differently – had they elected to support Jane's Grey accession – it is likely that their efforts would have been in vain. It seems improbable that Oxfordshire's commonalty, who were motivated much more clearly by religious considerations than were their gentry leaders, would have supported a pro-Jane gentry in any number. Oxfordshire's commons might, moreover, have risen for Mary's cause independently.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SURVEY

In Oxfordshire, local engagement with the English Reformation assumed many different forms. This study's two-pronged approach has explored a wide range of reactions to and relationships with religious change. The detailed analysis of sets of churchwardens' accounts has revealed how the county's parish communities responded collectively to the religious alterations wrought within their churches through the peaceable medium of church-funding. The second section of the thesis has, in contrast, focused on the occurrence of conflict: the absence or the incidence of religious dissent and disobedience within Oxfordshire. This chapter seeks to synthesise the findings of these two approaches so as to formulate a model of religious change in Oxfordshire.

I. THE PARISH COMMUNITIES

i. Observations

Oxfordshire's churchwardens' accounts reflect the oscillating nature of parish religion during the Reformation period. Although the impact of the Reformation shared many basic similarities in Oxfordshire's parish churches, their worship did not always 'reform' at exactly the same time, or even in quite the same way. This was perhaps most conspicuously the case during the late 1530s. In the aftermath of the 1538 injunction against superstitious lights, the wardens of the Oxford churches of St. Michael and St. Peter-le-Bailey radically reduced their expenditure on wax: a

significant change, given that it indicated a meaningful alteration in the churches' devotional practices (and one which proved permanent in the case of St. Michael's parish). In contrast, the churchwardens of the Oxford parishes of St. Martin and St. Peter-in-the-East did not reduce their expenditure on wax at all at this time, thus implying that the devotional practices of these parishes continued more routinely than they did elsewhere in the city.

Nonetheless, the attitudes of Oxfordshire's parish communities to religious alterations seem to have been remarkably consistent. The parish-level religious changes that were wrought during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI provoked antipathy in the majority of parishioners. These changes induced every parish community for which suitable churchwardens' accounts survive to become less disposed to fund their churchwardens' activities than they had been previously. (The socio-economic pressures of this period, although doubtless influential, do not in themselves account for the wardens' falling receipts.)[1] In most parishes, this antipathy manifested itself most obviously during the reign of Edward VI, when the changes in devotional practices were both rapid and pronounced. The Oxford parishes of St. Michael and St. Peter-le-Bailey experienced the antipathy of their parishioners at an earlier date than did their fellows elsewhere in the city, because these wardens made greater changes in their churches' devotional practices during the later 1530s than did their colleagues at St. Martin's and St. Peter-in-the-East's churches. However, the accession of Mary – and the restoration of many traditional practices, often in anticipation of official edicts – brought a turnaround in all the

[1] See the quantitative analyses performed in Chapters IV, V, and VI.

wardens' fortunes. The receipts of Oxfordshire's churchwardens boomed, as their parishioners once again became enthusiastic to fundraise for them.[2]

Thus, in the years preceding Elizabeth's accession, Oxfordshire's parish communities registered their collective attitude as being one of religious conservatism. The piecemeal changes that were made in parish religion during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI were met with a common disenchantment, whenever and howsoever they were implemented. Indeed, even though these new methods of worship required less in the way of funding than had their more traditional predecessors, there was not enough money even for these; and this was a period of widespread cash-flow problems in the county. In contrast, the restoration of traditional practices which the accession of Mary precipitated was met with widespread enthusiasm, reflected by the fervour with which the parish communities raised funds for their churches, despite the socio-economic difficulties of the period.

Over time, the attitudes of Oxfordshire's parish communities seem to have changed, albeit gradually. Perhaps predictably, the accession of Elizabeth – and the re-instigation of more evangelical methods of worship – brought about a fall in the funding of the parishes studied. However, during the 1560s, the financial position of most of Oxfordshire's churchwardens gradually began to improve. The churchwardens of Thame, and those of the Oxford parishes of St. Martin, St. Michael, St. Peter-in-the-East, and St. Peter-le-Bailey, all started to experience growing receipts. Moreover, the wardens of the Oxford parishes of St. Mary Magdalen, and St. Mary the Virgin – where accounts survive only from the 1560s, with the exception of a single account which was made by St. Mary the Virgin's wardens in 1554 – were well-funded too. Granted, these Elizabethan wardens' levels of funding were not

[2] A 'funding lag' was experienced in the parish of Thame, where the wardens' receipts failed to rise until fairly late in Mary's reign. This does not, however, necessarily intimate there being any lack of enthusiasm for the restoration of traditional religious practices in this parish. See Chapter IV.

equivalent to those which had been enjoyed by their pre-Reformation counterparts. But, even if one accounts for inflationary pressures, these receipts nonetheless indicate a growing popularity for the devotional practices of Oxfordshire's churches. In contrast, however, there was no such revival in the funding levels experienced by Pyrton's churchwardens. During the 1560s, Pyrton's parish church fell into a sustained period of decline – with receipts low, and the parishioners failing to raise sufficient monies for even the church's most basic operations.

ii. Explanatory framework

How is this best to be explained? Why should the parish communities studied, which had hitherto displayed themselves as being religiously conservative, begin to support the activities of their Elizabethan churchwardens? Why should Pyrton buck the trend? And, from this, what can be concluded about religion in Oxfordshire?

The parishes for which suitable churchwardens' accounts survive were always governed within the same episcopal jurisdiction: first the diocese of Lincoln, and then that of Oxford. (Whilst Thame was technically a peculiar jurisdiction – with the bishops of Lincoln and Oxford both exerting their rights to it after 1542 – the evidence from visitations suggests that it was, in practice, governed alongside the parishes of Oxford and Pyrton.) Thus the ordinary's visitations (presumably) demanded identical standards of the parishes. In addition to this, since the successive commissions which visited the parishes were served by the same personnel, one can assume a consistent level (and manner) of enforcement here. It seems, therefore, that if we are to understand why the reactions to the Elizabethan Reformation were dissimilar in Oxfordshire's parishes, we need to explore differences in the parishes'

internal make-up. In particular, we need to consider the role of the clergy in Oxfordshire – who, in most cases, had not been selected by the bishop of the diocese.

In Pyrton, the oscillating nature of orthodox religion expressed itself vociferously in the personnel serving the parish church. In the 1560s, Pyrton's vicar was Thomas Barnard: a committed evangelical. A canon of Christ Church in Oxford, and a chaplain to Cranmer, the cathedral chapter had first presented Barnard to the living in 1548. Barnard had, in all probability, been married at this time: his two sons were old enough to be farming the rectory in 1568. Thus Barnard's subsequent deprivation from the vicarage, which was recorded on 10 May 1554, was probably because he was married. However, developments at Christ Church were important too. Barnard's replacement as vicar, Richard Marshall, was the new dean there. Marshall had enjoyed a reputation as a reformer during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. However, he nonetheless came to be a trusted official of the Marian regime. Marshall served as the University's vice-chancellor in 1554 and 1555. He also presided at the disputation against Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley; appeared as a witness at Cranmer's trial; and silenced Ridley's attempt to respond to the official preacher at his and Latimer's burning. Indeed, Marshall's conservatism became so virulent that he removed the body of Peter Martyr's wife from its grave in the cathedral, and reburied it in the deanery dunghill. By May 1559, however, Marshall had either been deprived or forced to resign as dean, having refused to recognise the authority of Queen Elizabeth's visitors. Marshall lived, thereafter, as a recusant, having been deprived from the living of Pyrton at about the same time. This made

way for Barnard to be restored to the parish of Pyrton, with the churchwardens' account made on 6 May 1565 referring to 'Mr barnard vycore of pyrton'.[3]

It is unlikely that either Barnard or Marshall, who both held multiple offices, were ever actually resident in Pyrton village for significant periods of time. Thus Pyrton's parishioners were, on a day-to-day basis, tended by curates – one of them probably being the 'Sir John Whiller, priest' who was appointed an overseer to Thomas Wallis's will in 1558.[4] However, this arrangement did not mean that Barnard and Marshall's contrasting religious sympathies lacked expression within Pyrton parish church. Far from it: it was the responsibility of the absentee cleric to appoint a deputy, and men of Barnard and Marshall's zeal would have ensured that their deputies shared their religious persuasion. Moreover, a vicar's absenteeism did not equate to his having no personal influence in a parish. Barnard, for example, made much needed contributions towards the costs of the church's building work during the mid-1560s.[5] It is also likely that the cathedral's influence over Pyrton's parishioners was not restricted to the appointment of their vicar. When Richard Croke wrote to Cromwell in March 1537 – begging that he might not be penalised for his absence from Oxford's King's College (the forerunner of Christ Church) as he needed to fulfil his preaching commitments – the supporting letter from the College made it clear that some of the parishes in which Croke had been preaching were in the College's gift.[6] Thomas Barnard and Richard Marshall were known by Pyrton's parishioners both for who they were, and for what they stood for. It is, therefore, inconceivable that the impact of the physical alterations to the church were not supported by concurrent and

---

[3] The *Clergy of the Church of England Database* [retrieved 26 April 2006]; *VCH*, Oxfordshire, viii, 170; the New *Dictionary of National Biography* *sub* Richard Marshall [retrieved 26 April 2006]; Pyrton CWAs, p. 46.
[4] Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 183.371v. Thomas Wallis was a sometime churchwarden of the parish.
[5] Pyrton CWAs, p. 46.
[6] State Papers 1/117, fos. 154r-157v.

significant changes in worship and preaching – not least on the occasion of Barnard's triumphant return to the parish under the Elizabethan regime.

Pyrton's experience of having its living held by an Oxford college seems, however, to have been anything but typical. Although the diocesan records extant for Oxford are patchy and incomplete, it is clear that Oxford's colleges made only about 10% of presentations to the county's livings during this period.[7] There is record of New College presenting clergymen to the parishes of Adderbury with Milton, Chesterton, Stanton St. John, and Swalcliffe; Queen's to Charlton-on-Otmoor; Merton to Cuxham, Ibstone, and the Oxford parish of St. Peter-in-the-East; All Souls to Lewknor; Corpus Christi to Lower Heyford; Oriel to the Oxford parish of St. Mary the Virgin; and Brasenose to Steeple Aston. There is, in addition to this, record of the dean and chapter of Oxford (which was part of the foundation of Christ Church) presenting clergymen to the parishes of Brize Norton, South Stoke, and Westwell – as well as to that of Pyrton. However, Eton College alone made presentations to no fewer than five Oxfordshire parishes in the years preceding 1570: Asthall, Bloxham, Cottisford, Mapledurham, and Minster Lovell. Moreover, the Crown made presentations to at least twenty-six livings, although its influence was concentrated in the city of Oxford. Both these bodies, however, shrink into insignificance when their patronage is compared with that of the laity. In the diocese of Oxford, the vast majority of the presentations made in the period before 1570 were by laymen, with there being record of lay presentation in somewhere in the region of one hundred of the county's parishes.

---

[7] The advowsons seem to have changed hands often. Accordingly, I am adopting an inclusive rather than an exclusive approach to the parishes' patrons – for example, including all individuals and institutions for which there is a single record of presentation, even if their patronage did not persist throughout the period. The confusing nature of some of the records prohibits the use of precise figures.

It is as a consequence of this that it is impossible to make many assumptions and generalisations about Oxfordshire's clergymen, with the matter being complicated further by the sheer number of Oxfordshire's lay patrons.[8] What is clear, however, is that Pyrton's experience was not a common one. There can be little doubt that the vast majority of Oxfordshire's clergymen were more accommodating of religious change than Thomas Barnard and Richard Marshall were. The *Clergy of the Church of England Database*, which has amalgamated the diocesan records available, is an incomplete source. For example, it documents neither Marshall's deprivation nor Barnard's reinstatement. But the fact that record of only ten deprivations survive (besides those which occurred in the parish of Pyrton) is surely indicative that Oxfordshire's priests, for the most part, either conformed to the successive religious changes imposed upon them, or quietly retired out of service – although it should be noted that regime change never brought about a flurry of resignations. Moreover, at least six of these ten deprivations were likely to have been made because the priest was married – a characteristic not necessarily connected to any evangelical tendency, despite the example of Thomas Barnard.[9] It was in the months immediately following Mary's royal injunctions of March 1554 – which ordered the bishops to remove married clergy from their offices – that the following were deprived: the vicar of Chipping Norton, the rector of Ewelme, the rector of Henley-upon-Thames, the rector of Islip, the rector of Stanton St. John, and the rector of Tusmore.[10] Thus, there are only four recorded deprivations in the period up to 1570 – those of the rector of Swinbrook in 1554, vicars of Swalcliffe in both 1556 and 1559, and the rector of

---

[8] Conclusions regarding the clergy serving Oxfordshire's parishes must remain tentative. There were, for example, an unusually high number of clerical deaths in the months immediately following the 1549 Rising, and it is tempting to wonder whether any of these owed something to Grey's butchery. This must, however, remain a matter for speculation.

[9] Helen L. Parish, *Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation: precedent, policy, and practice* (Aldershot, 2000), Chapter 8.

[10] *CCED* [retrieved 26 April 2006].

Hardwick in 1569 – which seem to have been made for reasons other than clerical marriage.[11] In other words, the overwhelming majority of Oxfordshire's clergymen must have complied with the successive religious changes that the Reformation brought about.

The uniformity with which the parishes of Oxford, Pyrton, and Thame complied with the explicit edicts touching upon the physical appearance of their churches – such as those concerning altars and communion tables – implies that the pressures on Oxfordshire's parishes were such as to ensure their conformity.[12] However, in most of Oxfordshire's parishes, it was the same men who performed the new ceremonies as had the old; and it seems inevitable that this must have done more to encourage the (eventual) absorption of change than the vacillation of personnel did in Pyrton – whether or not Oxfordshire's clerics complied with the spirit as well as the letter of their orders. In other words, it seems probable that the assimilation of religious change which, by the 1560s, seems to have been experienced in all but one of the parishes studied, owed at least something to appeasement: to the transformation from the Marian to the Elizabethan Church seeming less aggressive at a parish-level than the changes which had been experienced during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI.

Such a situation presumably owed something to the passage of time. But the influence of a parish clergy which remained consistent must have helped too. Whilst it seems safe to assume that Thomas Barnard imposed evangelicalism

---

[11] Ibid.

[12] In every churchwardens' account in which the purchase of a Prayer Book might reasonably be expected, it occurs: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 14r, 30r; St. Michael-at-the-Northgate's, Oxford CWAs, nos. 122, 124; Thame CWAs, pp. 93, 116, 144; Marston CWAs, fos. 6v, 11r; Pyrton CWAs, pp. 29, 31, 39. Equally, it is evident that the churchwardens replaced their altars with communion tables during the later part of the reign of Edward VI; voluntarily rebuilt them during the early months of Mary; and pulled them down again early in the reign of Elizabeth – whilst simultaneously performing much work about their Roods. Many of these changes can, however, only be discerned through consulting several years' accounts in conjunction with one another.

unapologetically in the Pyrton of the 1560s, quite *how* evangelical the 'average' Oxfordshire parish church seemed must remain a matter for conjecture. It is, however, in this context surely significant that the only definite evidence for any Oxfordshire churchwardens funding an 'outdated' ceremony comes from the reign of Elizabeth. In the mid-1560s, the churchwardens of the Oxford parish of St. Peter-le-Bailey, William Forrest and Richard Brympton, spent 10d 'at Easter for watchynge the Sepulkur', and 6d on 'the founders Dirige'. The account's auditor later struck through the phrase 'for watchynge the Sepulkur', and replaced the word 'Dirige' with 'Preyer'.[13] However, this episode still raises questions as to quite what classified as 'conformity' in parts of Elizabethan Oxfordshire. If a churchwarden were prepared to record payment for these ceremonies in a parish's official account – even if he was, thereafter, prohibited from so doing – how often were such ceremonies practised (or at least echoed) rather more discreetly?[14] It is also worth noting that the earliest evidence for Oxfordshire's churchwardens purchasing communion cups is rather later than that for many other parts of the country.[15] The churchwardens of the Oxford parish of St. Mary the Virgin spent 14s 4d in the year preceding 29 September 1569 on altering their chalice into a communion cup, whilst their counterparts in St. Mary Magdalen's parish paid 33s 8d for a silver communion cup in the year preceding 7 May 1570.[16] Moreover, the purchase of a communion cup did not – in Oxfordshire – necessarily indicate the total abandonment of chalices, with the parish of Marston possessing both in the late 1560s.[17]

---

[13] St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs, -33.
[14] The next year's wardens funded neither practice, howsoever it was described: St. Peter-le-Bailey's, Oxford CWAs, -32.
[15] Examples of when the change from chalices to communion cups occurred in various parts of the country: Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: religion, politics, and society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), p. 247.
[16] St. Mary the Virgin's, Oxford CWAs, -7; St. Mary Magdalen's, Oxford CWAs, -10.
[17] Marston CWAs, fos. 19r, 20r.

II. Dissent and Disobedience

Instances of religious conflict were extremely rare in Reformation Oxfordshire. However, given the religious conservatism displayed by the county's parishes for which suitable churchwardens' accounts survive, it is perhaps not surprising that every one of those few episodes of active insurrection that there were (or nearly were) should stem from traditionalist sympathies: in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace when there appear to have been abortive and short-lived risings, in July 1549, and in July 1553. In spite of this, however, it is impossible to claim that Reformation Oxfordshire was either a 'religiously conservative' or a 'peaceable' county. The reality was much more complicated.

Reformation Oxfordshire was neither 'traditionalist' nor 'evangelical'. It was, at the same time, both of these things – in an unstable compound. The religious conservatism which was displayed by the parish communities studied co-existed with significant evangelical elements. Evangelicalism had manifested itself in Oxfordshire early in the period in question, with Longland's proceedings against networks of heretics dating from 1521. Moreover, this evangelicalism sometimes existed in sophisticated forms, perhaps especially during the reign of Mary. At this time, networks of closet evangelicals, gathered together in what seem to have been something akin to underground congregations, co-existed with the wider society which had risen in quite large numbers to secure Mary's accession, and which enthusiastically brought about the revival of traditional practices in the county. It is, in any case, clear that illicit evangelicalism generated support in Oxfordshire right throughout the Reformation period. Although the fact that the heretics were required to denounce their fellows possibly led to there being a high detection-rate in 1521,

Longland nonetheless discovered heretics in substantial numbers.[18] The seditious preaching of the 1530s only generated so much concern because its local-level backing was feared to be extensive. The evangelical correspondence from Mary's reign names only a few individuals. However, here we are uncovering only the tip of the iceberg. The evidence is inevitably biased towards those who had both the inclination and the ability to correspond with, and fund, the regime's religious prisoners. It is also clear that religious change became assimilated into Oxfordshire society by other means, and for other reasons – which were often not purely, or even predominantly, religious. Motivation ranged from the political to the pragmatic. But it was real nonetheless.

The notion of Oxfordshire being a peaceable county is likewise problematical. Oxfordshire witnessed very few instances of open religious conflict. Yet the insurrection of the summers of 1549 and 1553 were occasions of note – involving, as they did, hundreds of armed participants. It seems, moreover, that the conflict witnessed in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace was on a significant scale also. The kind of disturbance which was investigated at Thame seems to have been experienced more generally, with the letter sent by Thomas Reynton in Oxford to Robert Hatchet in Durham (probably in March 1537) implying that the sedition in Oxfordshire had been far-reaching, as well as having been severely repressed.[19] It is, therefore, necessary to consider why, in a county in which it was otherwise so unusual, religious conflict manifested itself so virulently on the occasions that it did.

---

[18] *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe,* ed. Josiah Pratt, 4th edn (8 vols., London, 1877), iv, 219-46. Foxe claims to draw upon certain (now lost) records of Bishop Longland.
[19] Disturbance at Thame: SP 1/123, fos. 121r-124v. Reynton's letter: SP 1/117, fos. 219r-219v.

III. Synthesis

In Oxfordshire, religious change was insufficient in and of itself to engender widespread insurrection. Even the most substantial alterations in parish worship did not necessarily generate conflict – given the right circumstances. The Oxfordshire commons were never apathetic. Far from it: although churchwardens' accounts only survive for a small minority of the county's parishes, they nonetheless illustrate how Oxfordshire's parish communities could and did engage with the religious changes being made within their churches. However, if Oxfordshire's commons were to rise in large numbers they required something further to religious change.

This 'something' was not simply gentry leadership. Whilst John Williams and Leonard Chamberlayne provided leadership in July 1553, these same men had been the particular targets of the 1549 rebels. It is impossible to determine precisely why the attitudes of the commons changed, and changed so swiftly. But it seems likely that change was promoted by the fact that it had been Lord Grey who had crushed the 1549 rebels, together with his mercenary force. The county's gentry seem, in contrast, to have implemented Grey's Order with some leniency, perhaps in an attempt to ensure the longer-term peace. It could, in any case, never be assumed that Oxfordshire's commons would act in accordance with their county's gentry since they were, on occasion, prepared to express their dissatisfaction with them in the strongest of terms. So why did Oxfordshire's commons rise in large numbers in July 1549 and July 1553? And what do these episodes tell us about the Reformation in the county?

The religious changes of 1549 and 1553 share an important quality in common. Generally speaking, parish-level religious changes were implemented either by the incumbent clergyman, or by members of the parish community. The various authorities might issue orders; visitations might be made to check complicity;

but the practical implementation of the changes – and, critically, any costs or profits incurred by them – remained the responsibility of the parish community. However, this was not the case for those religious changes which sparked the risings of 1549 and 1553. In these years, religious changes were implemented which involved the active participation of outsiders, who were perceived to profit by their actions – monetarily, politically, or both.

The principal catalyst for the 1549 Rising seems – given the rebels' targets and timing – to have been the common perception that the goods of the county's churches were about to be seized by the commissioners for church goods. Similarly, July 1553 saw major religious change which was imposed on Oxfordshire's parish communities from afar. Oxfordshire's commons did not support Mary's claim to the throne, and thus support the county's gentry-led action, solely on the grounds of religion. But the death of Edward, and the expected accession of Mary, was nonetheless expected to bring with it a return to religious traditionalism – which was denied by the London lords' proclamation of Queen Jane. Accordingly, in order to register hostility to the changes of 1549 and 1553, Oxfordshire's commons had no choice but to couch their opposition in terms of force. In 1549, the rebels laid siege to the lands of John Williams and Leonard Chamberlayne. In 1553, they headed south to do battle with the London lords, this time under Williams and Chamberlayne's leadership.

The issue of parish property was clearly one which could arouse considerable antipathy in Oxfordshire – and not just in 1549. The rumour that Henry VIII was going to seize church goods was one of the causes for the antagonism that Thame witnessed in the summer of 1537 – and quite possibly for the troubles which seem to

have been experienced elsewhere in the county at this time.[20] Moreover, the matter of church goods was of some consequence in July 1553 also.

The ultimate confiscation of goods from Oxfordshire's parish churches was a protracted process. On 29 January 1552, letters were sent to the *Custos Rotulorum* of each county, requiring them to deliver the inventories which had been made under the 1549 commission. A new commission was then issued on 16 May 1552, instructing gentry from each county to produce inventories, and to inquire as to whether any goods had been embezzled from the county's parishes. (This was, presumably, what prompted Thame's parishioners to lodge their complaint about the sale of their church's goods.)[21] This commission was implemented between July and October 1552.

The account which Marston's churchwardens made on 23 April 1553 reveals that they had met with the commissioners first at Thame (at the cost of 8d), and then at Oxford (at the cost of 2d); and that they had arranged for an inventory of the church's goods to be drawn up at the cost of 2s to the parish.[22] It was unnecessary for the churchwardens of the Oxford parish of St. Martin to reclaim any expenses for meeting with the commissioners in the city, although they presumably did so. But they, like Marston's wardens, made the necessary trip to Thame – claiming 2s for the costs incurred by them and Richard Ivory in meeting with the commissioners (whom they incorrectly referred to as 'visitors') there. In addition to this, St. Martin's churchwardens spent 12d on making a pair of inventories at this time, with an additional 4d being spent on parchment with which to make the required indentures.

---

[20] Disturbance at Thame: SP 1/123, fos. 121r-124v.
[21] Thame CWAs, p. 545. This is a copy (made by the Public Record Office in 1906) of Inventories of Church Goods (Exchequer, King's Remembrancer) Temp., Edward the Sixth, Oxfordshire, Bundle 7, No. 165, m. 5. See also *The Chantry Certificates and the Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods*, ed. Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Soc., i, 1919), pp. 115-6.
[22] Marston CWAs, fo. 11r.

(One half of the indenture had to be returned to the Privy Council, whilst the other – which still survives in the parish archive – was designed to be kept by the churchwardens.)[23] It was not, however, until 16 January 1553 that matters came to a head, with the government appointing seven commissions to seize the goods of England's parish churches. The Oxfordshire commissioners of 1552 were deputed to carry out the seizures in the county; and the commissioners' returns suggest that they acted on and before 17 and 18 May.[24]

The actions of the 1553 commissioners were, therefore, likely to have incited resentment; and the fact that the Oxfordshire commons did not immediately rise in protest over the matter presumably owed much to the bloody legacy of 1549. The commons did, however, express their opposition to these seizures. They hid large numbers of their churches' valuables from the commissioners, hoping for better days – which, on the death of Edward VI, Mary's accession was perceived to bring. It is impossible to gauge precisely how many goods were stowed away in this fashion. It can, for example, be only hazarded that the chalice which was fetched from Long Crendon early in the reign of Mary to be used in Thame parish church had been hidden there so as to avoid its confiscation.[25] There can, however, be little doubt that some of Oxfordshire's Marian churchwardens were surprisingly well-equipped for men whose goods had recently been confiscated.

The unusually rich archive of the Oxford parish of St. Martin sheds some light on the matter. The inventory of St. Martin's church goods which was produced

---

[23] The churchwardens' account which details this expenditure was made on 25 November 1552: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 14r. The 1552 inventory remains in the parish archive: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 21r. The 1552 inventory does not specify that it is a copy of the one which was made in the fulfilment of the 1552 commission. However, in the absence of any other evidence, it seems reasonable to assume that it is.

[24] *Chantry Certificates*, ed. Graham. The inventories which were produced in the fulfilment of the 1552 and 1553 commissions are transcribed on pp. 57-137.

[25] Thame CWAs, p. 120.

following the May 1553 seizures no longer survives.[26] Yet it seems safe to assume that the commissioners left very few items (officially) in the care of the churchwardens. The inventories from other parishes suggest that Oxfordshire's commissioners intended to leave each set of churchwardens with only a single chalice (without its paten), and the church's bells – although this apparatus could sometimes be supplemented by limited numbers of items such as surplices, towels, and table-cloths. Consequently, the inventory of St. Martin's church goods which was produced on 20 November 1553 (and which survives in the parish archive) is suggestive that significant numbers of the church's goods were concealed from the 1553 commissioners – and, in some cases, from the previous commissions.[27] The November 1553 inventory reveals that St. Martin's churchwardens were extremely well-provisioned with books, vestments, and other goods. But this equipment owed very little to purchases made by the Marian churchwardens, as the study of the churchwardens' accounts makes clear. Indeed, many of the items listed in the November 1553 inventory are explicitly stated to have been 'brought in' or 'given' by (usually named) members of the parish community. Moreover, it is possible to positively identify at least some of the goods listed in the November 1553 inventory amongst those which were itemised in the church's previous inventories: the 1552 inventory, and an inventory which was made in 1547.[28] For example, the blue vestment which was decorated with golden birds – which the November 1553 inventory-makers list as having been brought in by a certain Master Williams – is alluded to in the inventory of 1547, as well as in that of 1552.

---

[26] The making of this inventory is referred to in the churchwardens' account for that year: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fo. 19r.
[27] November 1553 inventory: St. Martin's, Oxford CWAs, fos. 21r-21v.
[28] Ibid., fos. 21r (1552 inventory), 11r-11v (1547 inventory).

Thus, that the 1553 commissioners did not provoke a comparable response to their predecessors in 1549 seems more to reflect the legacy of the suppression of the 1549 Rising than it does any meaningful alteration in the Oxfordshire commons' mind-set. Therefore, this thesis proposes that church goods were a critical issue in the reception of the Reformation in Oxfordshire. They mattered because around them the material and religious identity of the parish coalesced.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSIONS

This study of Oxfordshire supports, and indeed promotes, the premise that England was the scene of many different Reformations. There were differences in precisely how the Reformation was implemented in the parish churches of even this single county; and, partly as a consequence of this, differences in exactly how the Reformation was received in them. However, this study of Oxfordshire raises some more general issues about how the English Reformation ought best to be considered.

Evangelical elements were at large in Oxfordshire throughout the Reformation period, affecting significant numbers of the county's commonalty. It seems, moreover, that still more of Oxfordshire's commons 'collaborated' with religious changes. Chapter 8 details how this 'collaboration' assumed a number of forms, and took place for a variety of reasons which were not necessarily religious – helping to embed these religious changes into local society still further. Phenomena such as these did not, however, lead as inexorably to the widespread revaluation of religious values as historians such as Shagan might seek to imply.[1] The evidence for the Reformation being assimilated into wider society – through mediums such as actions, ideas, or language – does not constitute proof of the development of a new 'religious consciousness' in any meaningful sense. There is in Oxfordshire abundant evidence of such 'collaboration' taking place. Yet, in all those parishes for which suitable churchwardens' accounts survive, the support for religious traditionalism persisted

[1] Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003), esp. pp. 1-25.

long after this 'collaboration' had come into being, with any eventual change apparently owing much to the devotional practices of the Elizabethan churches being relatively moderate in their nature. It would thus be desirable to extend the analysis performed on the county's churchwardens' accounts further into the Elizabethan period in order to more fully gauge the nature of the worship practised in Oxfordshire's Elizabethan churches.

It has, also, to be appreciated that the manner in which Oxfordshire's parishes were run was not common to the country as a whole. In Oxfordshire, the voluntary giving of the parish community – particularly at collections, and at parish entertainments – was crucial to church-funding. However, elsewhere in England, matters were often very different. Indeed, many of England's churchwardens were not dependent on the voluntary giving of their parish community at all. Beat Kümin's *Shaping of a Community* concludes that

> financial regimes varied according to the social milieu: in market towns or rural areas, the lion's share of parish income derived from active fundraising by the living, in central London and provincial capitals like Bristol, it tended to come from the dead.[2]

It is doubtful whether hard-and-fast rules for parish-funding can be constructed for the country as a whole. There was, after all, variety even within Oxfordshire. Nonetheless, it is clear that Oxfordshire's parish communities enjoyed a far greater opportunity of expression than was possible in many other parts of England. The means by which Oxfordshire's parish churches were funded meant that their parish communities were able to register effective responses to changes imposed in parish worship through means which were essentially peaceable. At the same time, however, the way in which Oxfordshire's parishes were funded also meant that any

---

[2] Beat A. Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: the rise and Reformation of the English parish, c.1400-1560* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 111, 115.

perceived threat to church property was especially liable to provoke antipathy – and this had tangible consequences in 1549, 1553, and in the aftermath of the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Oxfordshire witnessed very few instances of acute religious conflict during the Reformation period. But this did not mean that the Reformation was popular – or even that it was greeted with indifference. The Oxfordshire commons had the opportunity to engage with the imposition of the Reformation in their parishes in a peaceable manner; and they seem to have capitalised on this, with widespread insurrection occurring only on those occasions in which they were denied this form of expression. Thus, this study of Oxfordshire suggests that, elsewhere in England, the manner in which parishes were governed – and, perhaps more critically, were funded – was a factor affecting whether, when, and how religious conflict occurred within them. Reformation studies have long-since looked to the parishes for much of their material. But they need to more fully appreciate the churches – as well as the Church – of England.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER NINE: THE REBELS

WILLIAM BOWLER

Grey's Order decreed that William Bowler should be hanged in his home town of Watlington. The anonymous chronicler identifies Bowler as being a captain at the breaking up of the parks. However, this chronicler also states that whilst Bowler was finally captured at Chipping Norton, he was afterwards pardoned for his offences. It seems probable, therefore, that it is Bowler's will which was proved in Oxford Diocese in 1597, having being written by a William 'Boller' of Greenfield, Watlington, in 1592.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

Chronicler's Account: British Library, Harley MS. 540, fos. 7r-21r.

Probate Evidence: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 187.388r-388v. (William Bowler), MS. Wills. Oxon. 3/4/26 (William Bowler – original copy).

THOMAS BOWLDRY

Grey's Order decreed that Thomas Bowldry should be hanged at Oxford. An inhabitant of the parish of Great Haseley, Bowldry was, like William Bowler, identified by the anonymous chronicler as being a captain at the breaking up of the parks. Unlike Bowler, however, the chronicler details that, after his capture at

Chipping Norton, Bowldry was afterwards hanged and quartered. It does indeed seem that Bowldry suffered a traitor's death. The parish register of Great Haseley does not record Bowldry's burial, yet it reveals that his wife, Agnes, remarried in January 1550. (Agnes's new husband was a certain John Hall, and they produced a number of children.)

Thomas Bowldry was not the son of the Thomas Bowldry of Great Haseley who died in 1538. Bowldry was, instead, the son (and heir) of a certain William Bowldry of Westcott Barton. (This village is, interestingly, equidistant from Woodstock and Chipping Norton – making it clear that Thomas the younger was not only familiar with this area of the county, but also had interests in it.) In February 1538, Thomas Bowldry the younger was appointed co-executor and principal beneficiary of the will of Thomas the elder, who died within weeks of this will being made. The death of Thomas the elder's wife, Margaret, later in the same year (which is recorded in the parish register) brought further wealth to Thomas the younger. Thomas the younger was now a man of means – if he had not been so before – inheriting the farm of Great Haseley, tenements, heavy farming equipment, and a considerable quantity of livestock from his benefactors. Indeed, the provisions made in Thomas the elder's will were on such a scale that Sir William Barantyne was included amongst the witnesses to it. Thomas the younger had relocated from Westcott Barton to Great Haseley by 1540, if he had not already done so before Thomas the elder's death – although he did not necessarily reside there on a full-time basis. Thomas the younger's son William was baptised in the parish church of Great Haseley on 20 April 1540. Further Bowldry children were baptised in subsequent years: Thomas (1542), Annes (1545), Johanna (1547), and Alice (1549).

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

Chronicler's Account: British Library, Harley MS. 540, fos. 7r-21r.

Probate Evidence: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 178.135v-136v (Thomas Bowldry the elder), MS. Wills. Oxon. 178.24r-25v (William Bowldry).

Great Haseley Parish Register: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. D.D. Par. Great Haseley d.1, esp. fos. 1r, 1v, 2r, 2v, 3r, 3v, 5r, 35r, 46r.

JOHN BROKYNS

Grey's Order decreed that John Brokyns should be hanged at Islip, listing his occupation as craftsman. Brokyns' background and fate are unknown.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

THOMAS JACKSON

On 20 May 1550, Thomas Jackson was examined, together with Robert Johnson, before the Privy Council upon the accusation of Thomas Lovett touching insurrection. (A Mr. Gifford had been paid 10s for bringing up Jackson and Johnson and others suspected of rebellion.) Jackson and Johnson were both from Thame. Appearing not to be guilty, both men were set at liberty upon a recognisance of £5 apiece for their good abearing.

That this incident was connected to the Rising of 1549 seems quite possible. The town of Thame seems to have supplied certain of the Rising's rebels, since Grey's Order required that two of the most seditious rebels who had not yet been apprehended were to suffer in the town.

Acts of the Privy Council, 1550-1552, pp. 31, 34.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

ROBERT JOHNSON

As above.

HENRY JOYES

Grey's Order decreed that Henry Joyes should be hanged from the steeple of Chipping Norton parish church, and it is clear that Joyes suffered a traitor's death. The entry in the diocesan register that records the presentation of Joyes' successor to the vicarage of Chipping Norton, Edward Large, was made on 7 December 1549, and notes Joyes' death as being 'natural'. However, a patent roll makes clear both that Large had been appointed before the end of August 1549, and that the appointment had been made by Edward VI's prerogative owing to Joyes having recently been executed for high treason.

Joyes had been presented to the vicarage of Chipping Norton in August 1546. It is evident that he was resident in Chipping Norton at least some of the time. Joyes had acted as sole witness to the will of Robert Dew of Chipping Norton which was refused probate on 24 May 1549.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

Patent Roll: National Archives, C 66/824, m. 10.

Diocesan Register: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers. d. 105, pp. 120, 134.

Probate Evidence: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 179.313r (Robert Dew).

GEOFFREY MARSHE

On 14 August 1549, Geoffrey Marshe was pardoned, along with Richard Noddes, for all misprisions, treasons, insurrections, rebellions, etc. committed before 20 July 1549. This pardon was without fine or fee.

Marshe was an inhabitant of Blackthorn, in the parish of Ambrosden. He was not a young man at the time of the rebellion, dying only eight years later, and with his wife predeceasing him. Marshe's will suggests, furthermore, that his children had all reached their majority by the time of his death. Indeed three of them – Margaret, William, and Elizabeth – were already married. Although the patent roll describes Marshe as being a husbandman, his means were greater than this status might initially suggest. A subsidy collection of 1546 numbers Marshe amongst Blackthorn's three

richest residents, whilst his inventory (assessed in 1557) was valued at £60 5s 9d . Moreover, an extant deposition alleges that Geoffrey Marshe of Blackthorn had agreed, when his daughter Elizabeth married Thomas Martyn, to give Martyn £20 on the day of the marriage, 20 nobles [a noble was worth 6s 8d] a year later, and a further 20 nobles in the following year.

In the years following the rebellion, Marshe played an active role in parish government. However, this is not to say that lived out his final years in peace and quiet. A certain Katherine Marshe also inhabited Blackthorn. She was not, however, closely related to Geoffrey. Katherine was married to Edmund Marshe, who died in 1556. (Edmund was, in turn, the son of Thomas Marshe who died in 1532, and his wife Agnes.) Katherine was also the mother of Thomas, William, Annes, and Mary, and the daughter of a certain Richard Taylor. In either 1556 or 1557, Katherine alleged in Star Chamber that Geoffrey (who is described in this record as a yeoman) led the band of men which invaded her property on 20 September 1556, conveying away certain of her goods, and which afterwards continued to threaten her. As an apparent kinsman of Katherine (the two Marshe families evidently had dealings between themselves), Geoffrey may have felt a right to the widow Katherine's property. Katherine did not share this view, and pleaded for writs of subpoena.

Marshe and Noddes' Pardon: National Archives, C 66/825, m. 13.

Probate Evidence: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.155r-155v (Geoffrey Marshe, pardoned rebel), MS. Wills. Oxon. 178.75r-75v (Thomas Marshe, father of Edmund), MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.25v-26r (Edmund Marshe, husband of Katherine).

Subsidy Return: National Archives, E 179/162/250.

Oxford Church Courts: depositions, 1542-1550, ed. Jack Howard-Drake (Oxford, 1991), p. 21.

Ambrosden CWAs.

Star Chamber Case: National Archives, STAC 4/1/19.

HENRY MATTHEW

Grey's Order decreed that Henry Matthew should be hanged at Deddington. The Order states that Matthew was parish priest of Deddington. Matthew is, however, an elusive figure. When William Edlyngson succeeded to the vicarage in July 1558, it was following the free resignation of a certain Master John Browne. Matthew is not mentioned in the chantry certificate extant for the parish, nor is he listed in the 1540 *Liber Cleri*. There is, moreover, no mention of Matthew in the parish wills of this period – although there are references to several other clergymen. Matthew's fate is unknown.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

Diocesan Register: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers. d. 105, p. 183.

The Chantry Certificates and the Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods, ed. Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Soc., i, 1919), p. 48.

Liber Cleri: Lincolnshire Archives, Vj. 11, fo. 107v.

RICHARD NODDES

On 14 August 1549, Richard Noddes was pardoned, along with Geoffrey Marshe, for all misprisions, treasons, insurrections, rebellions, etc. committed before 20 July 1549. This pardon was without fine or fee.

Noddes was an inhabitant of Blackthorn, in the parish of Ambrosden. He was, at the time of the rebellion, a very young man. His parents were still alive: his father (William) died in 1556, and his mother (Marian) in 1558. (It seems more likely, therefore, that it was his father rather than his brother William who served as churchwarden in the early 1550s.) Although Noddes died only twenty-five years after the Rising, his seven children (John, William, Randall, Thomas, Mary, Joan, and Marian) all remained minors in March 1574. Like Marshe, Noddes is described as a husbandman in the patent roll. He was, however, less wealthy than Marshe. Noddes's inventory, which was assessed in 1574, was valued at a mere £15 10s 8d.

Marshe and Noddes' Pardon: National Archives, C 66/825, m. 13.

Probate Evidence: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 185.246v-247r (Richard Noddes, pardoned rebel), MS. Wills. Oxon. 181.45v (William Noddes, father of Richard), MS. Wills. Oxon. 183.171r-171v (Marian Noddes, mother of Richard).

Ambrosden CWAs.

George Raves

Grey's Order decreed that George Raves should be hanged at Banbury, although it seems that Raves' name was later deleted from the Order. (This George Raves ought not to be confused with the 'Raves' who was a prisoner in the Fleet in early 1552, since this latter Raves' Christian name was John.)

The man named in Grey's Order was almost certainly the George Raves who was an inhabitant of Duns Tew – the village where the vicar, Richard Thomson, was implicated in the rebellion. Raves served as one of the parish's four jurors for the 1540 *Liber Cleri*, which was created at the time of the episcopal visitation. This is, moreover, almost certainly the same man who sat on the jury at Woodstock on 9 April 1549 which considered the fates of some of those men who had rioted at Witney on the first of that month. Raves' will – which was made on 18 December 1558, and was granted probate on 10 January 1559 – was couched in very traditional terms. It bequeathed Raves' soul to God, Our Lady Saint Mary, and to all the company of heaven; made provision for the maintenance of divine service at Duns Tew, for the torches, and for the sepulchre light; and commanded his son, Richard, to provide bread for the poor on an annual basis for the rest of Richard's life.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

Acts of the Privy Council, 1550-1552, pp. 440-1, 462.

Liber Cleri: Lincolnshire Archives, Vj. 11, fo. 103v.

Jury List: National Archives, KB 9/573/50.

Probate Evidence: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 183.83v-84r (George Raves).

RICHARD THOMSON

Grey's Order decreed that Richard Thomson, vicar of Duns Tew, should be hanged at Banbury. However, it is evident that Thomson was subsequently pardoned. On 26 April 1550, Thomson witnessed the will of his parishioner John Hellisbye. On 26 June 1554, the appointment of Thomson's successor, James Pollarde, was stated to be following Thomson's free resignation.

Thomson had been presented to the vicarage of Duns Tew in November 1545.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

Probate Evidence: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.173v (John Hellisbye).

Diocesan Register: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers. d. 105, pp. 19, 155.

JOHN WADE

Grey's Order decreed that John Wade should be hanged from the steeple of Bloxham parish church, stating that Wade was parish priest there. Wade was, however, the curate rather than the vicar. The vicar, Ludwyke Thomas, had been appointed in March 1545, and was replaced (owing to his death) by John Scasbrycke in June 1561. Wade seems, however, to have been the more prominent cleric in the parish in the

months immediately prior to the rebellion – being present to witness wills in March 1548 (Thomas Gabell) and June 1548 ('Fouke'), with Gabell referring to Wade as his 'goostly Father'.

It is evident that Wade was subsequently pardoned. On 18 March 1550, Wade was appointed supervisor to the will of his parishioner John Brice (being paid half a quarter of barley for his pains), strongly suggesting that Wade had received his pardon and was back in the parish. Wade subsequently witnessed the wills of several other parishioners: Edward Cousell, gent. (1 June 1550), John Cooke, husbandman (17 July 1551), Mary Counsell, gentlewoman and widow (18 November 1551), and Richard Warde, husbandman (4 January 1554).

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

Diocesan Register: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers. d. 105, pp. 13, 208.

Probate Evidence: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.11v-12r (Thomas Gabell), MS. Wills. Oxon. 179.281r-281v ('Fouke'), MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.12r-12v (John Brice), MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.14r (Edward Counsell), MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.77r-78r (John Cooke), MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.206v-207r (Mary Counsell), MS. Wills. Oxon. 180.207r-207v (Richard Warde).

JAMES WEBBE

Wriothesley's *Chronicle* states that at London's Guildhall on the afternoon of 16 August 1549 James Webbe was indicted and condemned of high treason for being a

rebel and captain in Oxfordshire. Wriothesley states that on 22 August Webbe was sent to Aylesbury to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Webbe, the vicar of Barford St. Michael, certainly suffered. Edward VI's presentation of James Webbe's successor, Thomas Webbe, was recorded on 11 April 1550. The diocesan register records that the living lay vacant due to James Webbe's attainder.

A Chronicle of England during the reigns of the Tudors, from A.D. 1485 to 1559, by Charles Wriothesley, ed. William Douglas Hamilton (2 vols., Camden Soc., new ser., xi & xx, 1875 & 1877), ii, 21.

Diocesan Register: Oxfordshire Record Office, MS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers. d. 105, p. 136.

JOHN WHITE

Grey's Order decreed that John White should be hanged at Banbury, with his residence being listed as Combe. His background and fate are unknown.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

RICHARD WHYTTINGTON

Grey's Order decreed that Richard Whyttington should be hanged at Bicester, listing his occupation as weaver, and his residence as Deddington. His fate is unknown.

Grey's Order: State Papers 10/8, fos. 54r-55v.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: PRIMARY SOURCES

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

R/AC 1/1/1 — 1431-1602 — Reading Borough Minutes

BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD

MSS. D.D. Bertie
MSS. Museo
MSS. Twyne
MSS. Wood

BRITISH LIBRARY

Additional MSS.
Harley MSS.
Lansdowne MSS.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE
MS. 127

INNER TEMPLE

Petyt MSS.

LINCOLNSHIRE ARCHIVES

Vj. 10 & Vj. 11	Visitation Books
Cj. 3	Audience Book (1525-1562)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Chancery	C 1
	C 66
	C 67
	C 85
Exchequer	E 101
	E 179
	E 315
	E 318
King's Bench	KB 8
	KB 9
	KB 27
	KB 29
Prerogative Court of Canterbury	PROB 11
Special Collections	SC 6
Star Chamber	STAC 2
	STAC 3
	STAC 4
State Papers [microfilm]	SP 1
	SP 10

OXFORD UNIVERSITY

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE	
C/1/1/3	Libri Magni , vol. 3
LINCOLN COLLEGE	
Compoti, vol. 5	Compoti, vol. 5 (1538-1560)
MAGDALEN COLLEGE	
LCE/5	Libri Computi (1543-1559)
THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE	
2P139	Bursar's Roll (1549-1550)
UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES	
WPBeta/S/1	Vice-Chancellor's Accounts (1547-1554, and 1557-1559)

OXFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS AND RELATED MATERIAL

Ambrosden CWAs	1550-1686	PAR/7/4/F1/1
Marston CWAs	c.1540-1632	MS. D.D. Par. Marston c.2
Oxford, St. Aldate CWAs	1410-1536	MS. D.D. Par. Oxford, St. Aldate a.1, b.17-19, c.15-16
Oxford, St. Martin CWAs	1540-1680	PAR/207/4/F1/1
Oxford, St. Mary Magdalen CWAs	1430-1899	PAR/208/4/F1/1-
Oxford, St. Mary the Virgin CWAs	1555-1971	PAR/209/4/F1/1-
Oxford, St. Michael-at-the-Northgate CWAs	1500-1600	PAR/211/4/F1/2
Oxford, St. Peter-in-the-East CWAs	1444-1600	PAR/213/4/F1/1

Oxford, St. Peter-le-Bailey CWAs	1453-1945	PAR/214/4/F1/1-
Pyrton CWAs	1547-1688	MS. D.D. Par. Pyrton c.1
South Newington CWAs	1553-1684	MS. D.D. Par. South Newington a.1
Spelsbury CWAs	1525-1703	PAR/246/4/F1/1
Thame CWAs	1442-1524 1528-1912	PAR/273/4/F1/1 PAR/273/4/F1/2
Warborough CWAs	C.16th frag.	MS. D.D. Par. Warborough c.3

PARISH RECORDS

MS. D.D. Par. Great Haseley	Great Haseley Parish Records
PAR/207/-	Oxford, St. Martin Parish Records
PAR/209/-	Oxford, St. Mary the Virgin Parish Records
MS. D.D. Par. Pyrton	Pyrton Parish Records

RECORDS OF THE ARCHDEACONRY AND DIOCESE

MSS. Oxf. Dioc. Papers	Diocesan Papers
MSS. Wills. Oxon	Probate Records

BOROUGH RECORDS

B.B. XVII/i/1	Banbury Borough Records
A.5	Oxford Borough Records

WARWICKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

CR 895/106, & CR 895/45	Household Book of Sir Edward Don (1510-1551)

PRINTED SOURCES

By Title

Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1542-1631, ed. J. R. Dasent (46 vols., London, 1890-1964).

Annals of Cambridge, ed. Charles Henry Cooper (5 vols., Cambridge, 1842-52).

Calendar of the Court Books of the Borough of Witney, 1538-1610, ed. James L. Bolton and Marjorie M. Maslen (Oxfordshire Record Soc., liv, 1985).

Calendar of the Patent Rolls ... [of] *Edward III* (16 vols., London, 1891-1916).

Calendar of the Patent Rolls ... [of] *Edward VI* (6 vols., London, 1924-9).

Calendar of the Patent Rolls ... [of] *Henry VI* (6 vols., Norwich, 1901-10).

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth I and James I (12 vols., London, 1856-72).

Calendar of ... State Papers ... Spain, 1485-1558 (13 vols. and 2 supplements, London 1862-1954).

The Chantry Certificates and the Edwardian Inventories of Church Goods, ed. Rose Graham (Oxfordshire Record Soc., i, 1919).

The Chronicle of Queen Jane, and of Two Years of Queen Mary, and especially of the Rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyat. Written by a Resident in The Tower of London, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Soc., old ser., xlviii, 1850).

The Church Records of St. Andrew Hubbard Eastcheap, c.1450-c.1570, ed. Clive Burgess (London Record Soc., xxxiv, 1999).

Churchwardens' Accounts of Marston, Spelsbury, Pyrton, ed. F. W. Weaver and G. N. Clark (Oxfordshire Record Soc., vi, 1925).

The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Michael's Church, Oxford, ed. H. E. Salter (Transactions of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Society, lxxviii, 1933).

A Collection of Original Letters from the Bishops to the Privy Council, 1564, ed. Mary Bateson (Camden Soc., new ser., liii, 1895).

The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603, ed. Alan Dyer and D. M. Palliser (Oxford, 2005).

England under the Reigns of Edward VI and Mary, ed. Patrick Fraser Tytler (2 vols., London, 1839).

Four Supplications, 1529-1553 A.D., ed. J. Meadows Cowper (Early English Text Society, extra ser., xiii, 1871).

Henley Borough Records: assembly books i-iv, 1395-1543, ed. P. M. Briers (Oxfordshire Record Soc., xli, 1960).

Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers, 1290-1483, ed. Christine Carpenter (Cambridge, 1996).

Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts, 1504-1645 and Vestry Book, 1610, ed. Charles Drew (Frome, 1941).

Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, ed. J. S. Brewer *et al.* (21 vols. with *addenda*, London, 1862-1932).

Liber Albus Civitatis Oxoniensis: abstract of the wills, deeds, and enrolments contained in the white book of the city of Oxford, ed. William Patterson Ellis (Oxford, 1909).

Narratives of the Days of the Reformation, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Soc., old ser., lxxvii, 1859).

Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation, written during the reigns of King Henry VIII., King Edward VI., and Queen Mary: chiefly from the Archives of Zurich, ed. Hastings Robinson (2 vols., Parker Soc., xxxvii-xxxviii, 1846-7).

Oxford Church Courts: depositions, 1542-1550, ed. Jack Howard-Drake (Oxford, 1991).

The Oxford Treatise and Disputation on the Eucharist, 1549, ed. Joseph C. McLelland (The Peter Martyr Library, series one, vii, 2000).

The Pre-Reformation Records of All Saints' Church, Bristol, ed. Clive Burgess (3 vols., Bristol Record Soc., 1995-2004).

Royal Letters Addressed to Oxford and now existing in the City Archives, ed. Octavius Ogle (Oxford, 1892).

A Subsidy Collected in the Diocese of Lincoln in 1526, ed. H. Salter (Oxford Historical Soc., lxiii, 1909).

Troubles Connected with the Prayer Book of 1549, ed. Nicholas Pocock (Camden Soc., new ser., xxxvii, 1884).

Tudor Royal Proclamations, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (3 vols., New Haven & London, 1964-9).

Two London Chronicles from the collections of John Stow, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., xviii, 1910).

Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln, 1517-1531, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (3 vols., Lincoln Record Soc., 1940-7).

By Author

Camden, William, *Britannia*, ed. Robert Mayhew (Bristol, 2003).

Carew, Richard, *The Survey of Cornwall by Richard Carew*, ed. John Chynoweth, Nicholas Orme, and Alexandra Walsham (Devon and Cornwall Record Soc., new ser., xlvii, 2004).

Clifford, Henry, *The Life of Jane Dormer Duchess of Feria by Henry Clifford*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London, 1887).

Coverdale, Myles, *Certain most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters of such true Saintes and holy Martyrs of God, as in the late bloodye persecution here within this Realme, gaue their lyues for the defence of Christes holy gospel: written in the tyme of theyr affliction and cruell imprysonment* (London, 1564).

Cranmer, Thomas, *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1556*, ed. John Edmund Cox (Parker Soc., xxiv, 1846).

Don, Sir Edward, *The Household Book (1510-1551) of Sir Edward Don: an Anglo-Welsh knight and his circle*, ed. Ralph A. Griffiths (Buckinghamshire Record Soc., xxxiii, 2004).

Edward VI, *Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI*, ed. W. K. Jordan (London, 1966).

Forrest, William, 'The History of Grisild the Second: a narrative, in verse, of the divorce of Queen Katharine of Arragon, written by William Forrest', ed. W. D. Macray (London, 1875).

Foxe, John, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe,* ed. Josiah Pratt, 4th edn (8 vols., London, 1877).

(Lord) Grey of Wilton, Arthur, *A Commentary of the Services and Charges of William Lord Grey of Wilton*, ed. Sir Philip de Malphas Grey Egerton (Camden Soc., old ser., xl, 1847).

Hayward, John, *The Life and Raigne of King Edward the Sixth by John Hayward*, ed. Barrett L. Beer (Kent, Ohio, & London, England, 1993).

Hickman, Rose, 'The recollections of Rose Hickman', ed. M. Dowling and J. Shakespeare, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 55 (1982), 97-102.

Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (6 vols., London, 1807).

Humphrey, Lawrence, *Ioannis Ivelli Angli, Episcopi Sarisburiensis vita & mors* (London, 1573).

Leland, John, *The itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (5 vols., Carbondale, 1964).

Machyn, Henry, *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. John Gough Nichols (Camden Soc., old ser., xlii, 1848).

Martyr, Peter, *Loci Communes*, I [1583, RSTC 24668].

Martyr, Peter, *The Common Places of the most famous and renowmed Diuine Doctor Peter Martyr*, ed. Anthonie Marten (London, 1583).

Martyr, Peter, *Life, Letters, and Sermons: Peter Martyr Vermigli*, ed. John Patrick Donnelly (The Peter Martyr Library, series one, v, 1999).

Ridley, Nicholas, *A pituous lamentation of the miserable estate of the churche of Christ in Englande* (London, 1566).

Speede, John, *Oxfordshire described with ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of ye Citie and the Armes of the Colledges of yt famous Vniuersity. Ao. 1605* (Facsimile published by the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 1998).

Strype, John, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (3 vols., Oxford, 1822).

Troughton, Richard, 'Petition of Richard Troughton, Bailiff of South Witham, Lincolnshire, to the Privy Council in the reign of Queen Mary, relating to the share taken by him in the Duke of Northumberland's Plot', ed. Frederic Madden, *Archaeologia*, 23 (1831), 18-49.

Wingfield, Robert, *The Vita Mariae Angliae Reginae of Robert Wingfield of Brantham*, ed. Diarmaid MacCulloch (Camden Soc., 4th ser., xxix, 1984).

Wood, Anthony à, *The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford* (3 vols., Oxford, 1792-6).

Wriothesley, Charles, *A Chronicle of England during the reigns of the Tudors, from A.D. 1485 to 1559, by Charles Wriothesley,* ed. William Douglas Hamilton (2 vols., Camden Soc., new ser., xi & xx, 1875 & 1877).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: SECONDARY SOURCES

PUBLISHED WORKS

Aston, T. H., (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford* (8 vols., Oxford, 1984-).

Baker, Sir John (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Laws of England* (12 vols., Oxford, 2003-).

Bindoff, S. T., *The House of Commons, 1509-1558* (3 vols., London, 1982).

Bowker, Margaret, *The Henrician Reformation: the diocese of Lincoln under John Longland, 1521-1547* (Cambridge, 1981).

Brigden, Susan, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford, 1989).

Burgess, Clive, and Kümin, Beat, 'Penitential Bequests and Parish Regimes in Late Medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 44 (1993), 610-30.

Burgess, Clive, 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government: Lessons from London and Bristol', *English Historical Review*, 117 (2002), 306-32.

Burgess, Clive, 'The Broader Church? A Rejoinder to "Looking beyond"', *English Historical Review*, 119 (2004), 100-16.

Bush, M. L., 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: A Post-Revision Questioned', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 103-12.

Carlson, Eric, 'The origins, function, and status of the office of churchwarden, with particular reference to the diocese of Ely', in Margaret Spufford (ed.), *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1725* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 164-207.

Clark, Peter, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: religion, politics and society in Kent, 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977).

(Lord) Clermont, Thomas (Fortescue), *A History of the Family of Fortescue in all its Branches*, 2nd edn (London, 1880).

Collinson, Patrick, 'The English Reformation, 1945-1995', in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997), pp. 336-60.

Cornwall, Julian, 'English Population in the Early Sixteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, second ser., 23 (1970), 32-44.

Cross, Claire, *Urban Magistrates and Ministers: religion in Hull and Leeds from the Reformation to the Civil War* (York, 1985).

Dickens, A. G., 'Some Popular Reactions to the Edwardian Reformation in Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 34 (1938-9), 151-69.

Dickens, A. G., 'The First Stages of Romanist Recusancy in Yorkshire, 1560-1590', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 35 (1940-3), 157-82.

Dickens, A. G., *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558* (London, 1959).

Dickens, A. G., *The English Reformation* (London, 1964).

Drew, Charles, *Early Parochial Organisation in England: the origins of the office of churchwarden* (London, 1954).

Duffy, Eamon, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and rebellion in an English village* (New Haven & London, 2001).

Elton, G. R., *Policy and Police: the enforcement of the Reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge, 1972).

Fletcher, Anthony, and MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *Tudor Rebellions*, 5th edn (Harlow, 2004).

Foster, Andrew, 'Churchwardens' accounts of early modern England and Wales: some problems to note, but much to be gained', in Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat A. Kümin (eds.), *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 74-93.

French, Katherine L., *The People of the Parish: community life in a late medieval English diocese* (Philadelphia, 2001).

Garrett, Christina Hallowell, *The Marian Exiles: a study in the origins of Elizabethan Puritanism* (Cambridge, 1938).

Gould, J. D., *The Great Debasement: currency and the economy in mid-Tudor England* (Oxford, 1970).

Haigh, Christopher, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (London, 1975).

Haigh, Christopher, 'Some Aspects of the Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Peter Alter, and Robert W. Scribner (eds.), *The Urban Classes, the Nobility and the Reformation: studies on the social history of the Reformation in England and Germany* (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 88-106.

Haigh, Christopher, *English Reformations: religion, politics, and society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993).

Haigh, Christopher, 'A. G. Dickens and his Reformation', *History Today*, 51 (11) (November 2001), 7-8.

Haigh, Christopher, 'A. G. Dickens and the English Reformation', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 77 (2004), 24-38.

Hutton, Ronald, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: the ritual year, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1994).

Hutton, Ronald, *The Stations of the Sun: a history of the ritual year in Britain* (Oxford, 1996).

Jurkowski, M., Smith, C. L., and Crook, D., *Lay Taxes in England and Wales, 1188-1688* (Kew, 1998).

Kümin, Beat A., *The Shaping of a Community: the rise and Reformation of the English parish, c.1400-1560* (Aldershot, 1996).

Kümin, Beat, 'Late Medieval Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government: Looking beyond London and Bristol', *English Historical Review*, 119 (2004), 87-99.

Litzenberger, C. J., *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580* (Cambridge, 1997).

MacCaffrey, Wallace T., *Exeter, 1540-1640: the growth of an English county town* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958).

MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *Suffolk and the Tudors: politics and religion in an English county, 1500-1600* (Oxford, 1986).

MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *Thomas Cranmer: a life* (New Haven & London, 1996).

MacCulloch, Diarmaid, 'Peter Martyr and Thomas Cranmer', in E. Campi (ed.), *Peter Martyr Vermigli: humanism, republicanism, reformation* (Geneva, 2002), pp. 173-201.

Manning, Roger B., *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex: a study of the enforcement of the religious settlement, 1558-1603* (Leicester, 1969).

Manning, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers: a social and cultural history of unlawful hunting in England, 1485-1640* (Oxford, 1993).

Oxley, James Edwin, *The Reformation in Essex: to the death of Mary* (Manchester, 1965).

Parish, Helen L., *Clerical Marriage and the English Reformation: precedent, policy, and practice* (Aldershot, 2000).

Parsons, E. J. S., *The Map of Great Britain circa A.D. 1360 known as The Gough Map: an introduction to the facsimile* (Oxford, 1958).

Penny, D. Andrew, *Freewill or Predestination: the battle over saving grace in mid-Tudor England* (Woodbridge, 1990).

Phelps Brown, E. H., and Hopkins, Sheila V., 'Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, compared with Builders' Wage-rates', *Economica*, new ser., 23 (1956), 296-314.

Pugh, R. B., (ed.), *The Victoria History of the Counties of England* (London).

Raven, John James, *The Bells of England* (London, 1906).

Rowse, A. L., *Tudor Cornwall: portrait of a society* (London, 1941).

Shagan, Ethan H., 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 Rebellions: New Sources and New Perspectives', *English Historical Review*, 114 (1999), 34-63.

Shagan, Ethan H., *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2003).

Spufford, Margaret, *Contrasting Communities: English villagers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (London, 1974).

Wabuda, Susan, *Preaching during the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2002).

Wall, Alison, *Power and Protest in England, 1525-1640* (London, 2000).

Walter, John, 'A "Rising of the People"? The Oxfordshire Rising of 1596', *Past and Present*, 107 (1985), 90-143.

Whiting, Robert, *The Blind Devotion of the People: popular religion and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 1989).

Wrigley, E. A., and Schofield, R. S., *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: a reconstruction* (London, 1981).

UNPUBLISHED WORKS

Carnwath, Julia, 'The Churchwardens' Accounts of Thame, Oxfordshire, 1434-1524' (2 vols., Manchester Univ. M.Phil. thesis, 1992).

Duggan, Christopher Randall, 'The advent of political thought-control in England: seditious and treasonable speech, 1485-1547' (Northwestern Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1993).

Jones, A. C., ' "Commotion time": the English risings of 1549' (Warwick Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2003).

Price, F. D., 'The Administration of the Diocese of Gloucester, 1547-1579' (Oxford Univ. B.Litt. thesis, 1939).

Tearle, Barbara M. 'Customary landholding in the principal manor of Pyrton, Oxfordshire, from the 15th to the 18th centuries' (Oxford Univ. M.St. thesis, 1995).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: ONLINE RESOURCES

The *Clergy of the Church of England Database*: http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk

New *Dictionary of National Biography*: http://www.oxforddnb.com