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## In this issue

Notes and news: BLARS booking system

Rich and poor Bedfordshire clergy in the 18th century: Pt 1

RICHARD MORGAN

Bedfordshire in 1670: evidence from the hearth tax, Pt 2:

DOROTHY JAMIESON

Books: TED MARTIN

## Notes and news

**BLARS have introduced a booking system** for people wishing to visit the Record Office. Prospective visitors are asked to contact them in advance on 01234 228833 or e-mail: [archive@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:archive@bedford.gov.uk)

## Rich and poor Bedfordshire clergy in the 18th century: Pt 1

The first article I contributed to *History in Bedfordshire* was on 'Rich and poor Bedfordshire clergy and their patrons in the 19th and 20th centuries'.<sup>1</sup> I pointed out that in 1830 out of 125 livings in the county, some 12 had incomes of over £400 pa while 13 parishes had incomes of less than £100 – this at a time when an income of £300 pa was reckoned enough for a 'gentleman' to live on. Income of 19th century clergy is clearly set out in the *Clergy List* and *Crockford's*, but for the 18th century some explanation of how the system worked is necessary before we can understand such figures as survive.

### Clergy incomes till 1704

Income for early 18th century clergy came from glebe (land attached to the living designed to provide an income for the incumbent); tithes (10% of all produce levied as a tax on all parishioners); Easter dues (parishioners' voluntary gift which survives today as the Vicar's (or Rector's) Easter Offering); and 'surplice fees', i.e., fees for each wedding, funeral, churching, etc, though they were at best uncertain and often very small.<sup>2</sup>

The income was also subject to what can only be described as taxes: First Fruits and Tenths. First Fruits (also called Annates) were a custom whereby part of the income for the first year after a new incumbent had been inducted was paid to his bishop. In about 1305 it was taken over by the Pope. Tenths had their origins as a tax to pay for the crusades, systematised by Pope Gregory IX as an annual tenth of all clerical income. These payments (First Fruits and Tenths) were not levied on the actual full value of the income but were based on a nominal valuation

(rather like the rateable value in old local council rates).

Naturally Henry VIII had a view about this. In 1532 he secured an Act of Parliament to get these moneys payable to the Crown. The valuations on which they were payable came to be referred to as 'The King's Book'.<sup>3</sup>

At about the same time, following the dissolution of the monasteries, it was found that the income of livings belonging to such monasteries had already been appropriated to the monastery (or cathedral chapter, or Oxford or Cambridge college), the incumbent receiving a small salary (stipend) as vicar and the monastery or other corporate owner becoming the rector. Henry VIII granted many of these monastic rectories to 'lay improPRIATORS', whose heirs continued to hold them.

The vicissitudes by inheritance of lay improPRIATORS became increasingly complex and perhaps nowhere more so than in the case of Flitwick, which had belonged to Dunstable Priory. By the time of the Flitwick Enclosure Act of 1806,<sup>4</sup> the improPRIATOR was John Carrington, Baker of Biggleswade, in trust as to two-ninths for the Vicar of St Neots, two-ninths for the Rector of Conington, Hunts, one-ninth for the Vicar of Biggleswade, two-ninths for the Free School at Biggleswade, and two-ninths for the Free School at Holme, Hunts (near Conington). This extraordinary set-up was devised in the will (1726) of Sir John Cotton, 4th Baronet, which also established the two schools at Biggleswade and Holme.

### Queen Anne's Bounty

In 1704, Queen Anne was prevailed upon by the clergy to remit the First Fruits and Tenths back to the Church, and a Corporation of Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne was established to receive these moneys and use them to augment poorer clerical incomes.

The minimum stipend seems to have been thought to be £80 pa. The Governors began to provide £200 to each of the poorest livings, to be used to purchase property to provide an annual income in perpetuity. A return of 4% was usual then, so the living might by each such augmentation increase its income by £8 pa, which to use a modern term was index-linked.<sup>5</sup> £8 does not sound much but there were 1,216 livings in the country worth less than £20 pa in 1711, and some worth less than £10 pa. The

poorer livings also benefited by being discharged (i.e., excused) from paying the First Fruits.<sup>6</sup>

When the Governors began work, they found the moneys had not always been collected assiduously and there were reckoned to be substantial arrears. In addition, earlier less pious sovereigns than Queen Anne had saddled the First Fruits and Tenths with annuities to various people. The Governors first needed to bring in the arrears, and then either buy the annuitants out or wait until they died. So no distributions were made till 1715.<sup>7</sup>

John Ecton, a Queen Anne's Bounty servant, published books on the workings of the Bounty.<sup>8</sup> After his death, his figures were used in 1754 by that celebrated if eccentric scholar Browne Willis (whose name should be familiar to all who bother to look over the Bedfordshire county boundary into north Bucks, for he figures in the Purefoy letters).<sup>9</sup> Helpfully for us, Willis is less concerned with the Bounty and more with the actual income and other details of the livings.<sup>10</sup>

### Bedfordshire parishes in 1754

There were about 126 Bedfordshire parishes – a figure similar to that a century later.<sup>11</sup> Browne Willis describes all parishes and shows clearly the valuations of 67 in Beds where First Fruits (King's Books) are still paid. He also shows those 54 Bedfordshire parishes which have been 'discharged' – i.e., no longer pay First Fruits because their income was less than £50 pa.<sup>12</sup> A third very small category is 'Not in Charge', i.e., for some reason they were not in the King's Books at all, apparently because they were not parishes in 1532.<sup>13</sup> Of five such livings in Bedfordshire, Dunstable was a richer parish at £53 pa, and no figure is given for St John's Bedford, but the rest are fairly poor:

Upper Gravenhurst (Chapel to Shillington): Clear Value £25.

Northill (Curacy formerly a College, Grocers Company, London): Stipend £20.

Woburn (Duke of Bedford Patron and Impropiator): Stipend £36.

Neither the First Fruits valuations nor 10 times the Tenths gives us the actual income of a living, so we have incomplete data for undischarged (richer) parishes. However, valuations for discharged parishes are headed not 'King's Books' but more helpfully 'Clear Yearly Value' – presumably recorded by the Governors when they were approved for discharge.

A further complication is that the income of rectories tended to go to lay impropiators. This is clearly shown by Leighton Buzzard which appears twice. Whereas 'Leighton Bosard' rectory appropriated to the Bishop of Lincoln was a reasonable £68 16s 0½d pa, the vicarage was worth a mere £15 0s 0d, though it had chapels attached to it at Billington £20 pa, Eggington £20 pa, Heath (and Reach) £11 pa and Stanbridge at £8 pa.<sup>14</sup>

### Notes

1. HIB, Winter 2002/2003, pp 2–3.

2. Alan Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne's Bounty* (London: SPCK, 1955), p 97: a letter from the vicar of

Pannall (Yorks) stated that surplice fees there did not exceed £2 a year. Church rates were payable by parishioners but for the upkeep of the parish church not the incumbent. Similarly some parishes were saddled with pensions payable out of parish, not incumbent's, funds. The only Beds pension was at Eaton Socon which paid £1 annually to New College Oxford (see also J G Jenkins, *The Dragon of Whaddon being an account of the life and work of Browne Willis (1682–1760) Antiquary and Historian* (High Wycombe, 1953), p 46).

3. Savidge (n 2, above), pp 1–3. Act of 1532 is 23 Hen 8, c 20.

4. 46 Geo 3, c cxxviii. 5. Savidge (n 2, above), p 91.

6. Under 4 & 5 Ann c 24 poorer parishes were excused both First Fruits and Tenths, but the next year (6 & 7 Ann c 27) Tenths were reimposed on all parishes.

7. Savidge (n 2, above), pp 33–35, 42–45.

8. *Ibid* p 50 and ODNB. *Liber Valorum et Decimarum* 1711; *A State of the Proceedings of the Corporation of the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne*, 1719 (revised 1721).

9. G Eland, *Purefoy Letters* (2 vols 1931), especially pp 266–272, 394–401; J G Jenkins (n 2, above); and ODNB.

10. *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum being an account of the Valuations of all the Ecclesiastical Benefices in the several Dioceses in England and Wales*, etc (London, 1754).

11. In my earlier article I mentioned the difficulty of deciding exactly what a parish was and how to count them. The 18th century is equally complicated.

12. The eligibility for augmentation was raised from £40 to £50 pa in 1707 (Ecton (see text at n 7), pp 4–5, Savidge, pp 54, 108).

13. The Archdeaconry of St Albans was created in 1542 but moved to the Diocese of London only in 1550, and as a result several of its parishes were never charged First Fruits or Tenths (Willis, p 281).

14. Ecton 1719, p 139, list these chapels and says Stanbridge 'hardly amounts to' £8. (To be continued in HIB 6.9)

RICHARD MORGAN

## Bedfordshire in 1670: evidence from hearth tax returns, Pt 2

This is Part 2 of an article (see HIB 6.7 for part 1) based on data from Bedfordshire Historical Record Society (BHRS) publications, *Populations 1671 etc*, volume XV1 (1934) by Lydia M Marshall, and from other sources.

### Large towns

*Bedford* had an estimated population 2,130, almost twice the populations of Luton and Leighton Buzzard, the next largest towns. Almost half of the people (1,140) lived in the east and west wards of St Paul's parish. Households paying tax numbered 231. A further 74 people were discharged by certificate, and 30 people received collection, suggesting overcrowding and poverty in the centre of the town. In the other four wards of this parish no-one was discharged by certificate or was in receipt of poor relief. There were forges in St John the Baptist parish, and in East and West wards and Wellestreet Ward of St Paul's parish. In a further five wards no discharges by certificate of payments of collection are recorded, suggesting that these were the most desirable part of the town in which to live. They were: St Mary's High Street, St Paul's Prebend, Wellestreet, Mill Lane and St Loy's.

*Luton's* estimated population includes a further figure of 846 from hamlets, making a grand total of 1,985. Here there was only one forge, three empty houses where tax was paid and moderate numbers of people discharged by certificate or receiving benefit.

*Leighton Buzzard* was more prosperous with an estimated population of 1,113, four forges, no empty houses, a moderate number discharged by certificate and no-one receiving poor relief.

*Potton's* estimated population was 876. Its importance as a centre is indicated by the fact that it had four forges.

*Eaton Socon* was also an important town, with an estimated population of 816. It had two forges, but a relatively large number of empty houses paying tax, suggesting that it may have been in decline, despite its position adjacent to the River Ouse and the Great North Road.

*Toddington* had an estimated population of 781. It had two forges, moderate numbers of people discharged by certificate and receiving benefit, but three substantial houses, and a school house and a hospital 'not fully endowed.'

*Woburn*, with an estimated population of 727, had the largest number of forges (five) in the county, due perhaps to the business generated by the big house and the town's importance as a coaching stop. There were three other medium-sized houses, moderate numbers of people discharged by certificate, but only a few receiving poor relief.

*Cranfield* was larger than Woburn, with an estimated population of 761, but the reason for this large size is not clear. There was one forge, three empty houses paying tax, moderately high numbers discharged by certificate and low numbers receiving benefit.

*Kempston* was also larger than Woburn. Its estimated population of 752 is a surprise in this list of larger towns at the time. It had three forges, low numbers of people discharged by certificate and relatively few people receiving benefit.

The estimated populations of moderate-sized towns in 1670 were: Dunstable 680, Biggleswade 642, Ampthill and Maulden each 599, Marston Moretaine 565, Shillington 548.

### **The study of surnames in the county**

The names listed in the returns are an important feature of Lydia Marshall's book and many have Roman numerals printed after them. In Patricia Bell's preface to a 1990 reprint of Marshall's book<sup>4</sup> she explains that the Roman numerals indicate that the surname appears in the same town or village in one or more of the four surviving Subsidy Rolls for Bedfordshire which are dated 1545–46 (I), 1580–81 (II), 1596–97 (III), 1627–28 (IV), though 'through some oversight, nowhere in the original (1934) volume is this stated'. Miss Marshall's original pencil transcripts of the Subsidy Rolls are held by Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service. Photocopies of them, including evidence of the researches of Miss Bell are kept at CRT 100/9, 93/2, 93/3.

Miss Bell writes that 'all the Subsidy Rolls are defective to a greater or lesser degree'. Very few records from the first series, dated 1545–46, survive; those that do are mostly concentrated in the Biggleswade, Clifton and Wixamtree Hundreds. Entries from the second series, 1580–81, are more numerous, though no consistent pattern emerges, for example, in the Manshead Hundred, where there were returns from 28 towns and villages, 3 of these had no names shown for any Subsidy Rolls, 13

showed evidence from 1580–81, 1596–97 and 1627–28 subsidies; and 12 had evidence from only 1596–97 and 1627–28 subsidies. The borough of Bedford is excluded completely. Miss Bell observed that only the more prosperous inhabitants were taxed and that 'the absence of a Roman numeral does not mean that there was no person of that surname in that place in 1628 or earlier, merely that no example was found in the sources used'. Despite that, her work shows wide variations in the wealth of people listed in the Subsidy Rolls, with most of them living in houses with one, two or three hearths, but Stephen Bourne, constable of Knotting had 11, and Thomas Crawley, constable of Barton-le-Clay, had 12 hearths.

The distribution of people whose surnames appear over a period of 90 years (from 1580 to 1670) varied throughout the county, giving hints about differences in mobility in different places. In Cranfield at least 8% of the surnames had been there for at least 90 years. However, because the returns for 1545–46 and 1580–81 are so incomplete it is impossible to draw firm conclusions about the county as a whole.

Miss Marshall's lists of names, and her transcriptions of the Subsidy Rolls, include the use of upper case letters as a sort of shorthand to indicate features of the entries. The entry for Leagrave uses 'B.D.' which may indicate 'Bachelor of Divinity', but there are three of them, so is this possible or likely? The letters 'B' and 'C' are also used, without any explanations. In her pencil transcripts of the Subsidy Roll for 1628 she lists the names of parishes in some parts of the county, and uses the letters 'L' or 'G' against them. Willington is 3L and 4G. There could have been three large houses perhaps, but what does 'G' mean?

All the names which appear in the Hearth Tax records for Bedfordshire are listed in Miss Marshall's index. There are single entries for Abell, Gostwick and Yule, 55 for Carter, a similar number called Clarke or Clerke, about 70 Taylor or Taylers, 140 Smyth or Smithes. There were several families called Bird, Coote, Crow, Dove, Falconer, Parratt, Partidge, Peacock and Pheasant, Ravens, and some families are named after types of fish or animals.

### **Conclusion**

The data in Miss Marshall's work on the Hearth Tax returns give us glimpses of a diverse county, with wide variations in wealth, and mobility, and clues about economic activity which justify further research. One of the questions which I find very puzzling is: 'Why are Kempston (752) and Cranfield (761) more populous at this time than Woburn (727) and why is Marston Moretaine relatively large (565)? Perhaps it was something to do with gravel extraction and clay pits in the Ouse valley.

### **What has this told me about Willington?**

Lydia Marshall's book has added to our knowledge of Willington in the second half of the 17th century. She has estimated that the population in 1670 was 110. This figure was calculated by multiplying the number of named householders, plus the five people who

received poor relief (a total of 26) by 4.25 which was what Miss Marshall considered the average size of a household in the county at that time. Population estimates should be approached with caution, if not scepticism, and this number may be too low..

Two of the 10 entries for towns and villages in Wixamtree Hundred, of which Willington was part, do not record the name of the constable and the constables of Northill and Ickwell, Blunham, Moggerhanger, Cople and Willington, that is half of the parishes, could not sign their names, suggesting that this part of the county had the lowest level of literacy.

Wixamtree is one of the three Hundreds where there are significant numbers of names recorded for each of the surviving Subsidy Rolls from this period and there is evidence of several families living in this area from before 1545. Willington residents include Sir William Gostwick, records of whose family living in the village can be traced back from the late 13th century, if not before. The family name of John Osborne, the constable who signed himself 'O' in 1670, appears in the Manor Court Rolls from 1394.

Only 17 other villages in Bedfordshire were smaller than Willington at this time. The great house there, with 18 hearths, belonged to Sir William Gostwick and ranked joint 20th in size with Richard Edwards' house in Clifton and Will Ketteridge's house in Dunstable. Sir William's near neighbours, Oliver Luke Esquire and Sir William Palmer, had houses with 27 and 20 hearths in Cople and Old Warden, respectively.

The other 21 houses listed in Willington contained 37 hearths between them, including a forge, an average of about 1.8 hearths per house; all of which paid the tax.

The forge was probably situated in the logical place, at the village cross-roads, where today the house is called 'The Old Forge' and believed to date from 1622.



Opposite the forge is 'The Timbers' which formerly was the 'White Hart' public-house, also built in the 17th century.



Four of them had three hearths, which is interesting because there is some evidence that for centuries there had been four major tenant farmers here. The others all had one or two hearths. No empty houses were listed, and although no almshouse is recorded, five people received poor relief.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the village in 1671 was not the houses and the Hearth Tax, but the fact that about that time the new lord of the manor, Sir William Gostwick, had political

ambitions. In 1672 he was mentioned as a possible High Sheriff of Bedfordshire. Although passed over on this occasion, he was appointed in 1679. Sir William belonged to the Whig Party and went to great lengths to see that he was elected MP for Bedfordshire in 1698, remaining in Parliament for 15 years, despite having to fight seven elections. However Finberg says in BHRS publications, volume 36 *The Gostwicks of Willington* (p. 112), that 'Sir William's fortune was not so large that it could withstand the expense of seven elections at a time when bribery and treating . . . become as necessary to elections of parliament-men as bread is to life'. Sir William left Parliament in 1713 owing his major creditor, the Duke of Marlborough, £26,700. After he died in 1720, the Duke took possession of the manor.

**Note 4.** The reprint, dated 1990, has the benefit of a preface by Patricia L Bell, then the General editor for BHRS. The reprint does not include most of Miss Marshall's text, only an abridged version of her description of the Hearth Tax. The eleven fold-out tables at the end of the original book were also not included.

DOROTHY JAMIESON

## Books

*Early Dunstable in Maps and Pictures.* By Barry Horne, David Hornby, Vanessa Hornby and Brian Dix, Church End Publishing, Beaumont, Church End, Edelsborough, Dunstable LU6 2EP, 2013. A4 wire-stitched booklet, 56pp, £12 + £1.40 p & p. All profits to BLARS.

Whilst there has been much written about the history of Dunstable in the past, the spatial information was not provided to relate the facts to one another: the flesh was there but no bones.

This book attempts to provide the bones for the early part of the town's story by analysing the tithe map to find the size and distribution of the Medieval town and providing specially drawn maps, with related archaeological finds included where possible. The maps are supplemented by photographs, many in colour, a well-written text, full references and a simple index. It is printed on good paper with good colour printing, well laid out (but paragraph indents would have been helpful and there is overmuch reliance on bold type), but it is an interesting read especially for those who know or have connections with Dunstable.

### Book Notice

*Dashing Dragoon, Anguished Emissary: The story of William Samuel Hogge in southern Africa (1843-1852).* By Hugh Tweed. Information from:

[http://www.troubador.co.uk/book\\_info.asp?bookid=2358](http://www.troubador.co.uk/book_info.asp?bookid=2358). 2013.

ISBN: 978-1-783061-04-4. Paperback, 246 x 168 mm. £14.99. Profits donated to UK charity to help vulnerable children in Lesotho.

This is a book about a former cavalry officer from Bedfordshire sent to southern Africa in the mid-19th century to try to bring order to the troubled lands outside the boundaries of Cape Colony. The drama is made more poignant by Hogge's early death in post.

Of interest to anyone interested in one man's struggle against adversity and to students and followers of Victorian era politics and military history, both in the UK and South Africa.

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