

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN  
SOCIETY



VOLUME XLII  
JANUARY 1948 TO DECEMBER 1948

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1949

THE CHURCH OF  
ST MARY THE GREAT

THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH  
AT CAMBRIDGE

by

W. D. BUSHELL, M.A.

with a Foreword by

PROFESSOR G. M. TREVELYAN, O.M.

*Master of Trinity College, Cambridge*

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The Church of Saint Mary the Great, in Cambridge, may justly be described as one of the most interesting in the country, deeply associated as it is with the growth and spread of the Reformation in England, with the history of the University of Cambridge and with the great scholars who have preached in it. Mr Bushell has written not merely an architectural history of the church, but has done full justice to the many aspects of its story, social, political and religious.

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From the  
**FOREWORD**

by PROFESSOR G. M. TREVELYAN, O.M.

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THIS INTERESTING AND VALUABLE RECORD of the history and antiquities of Great St Mary's, in all aspects architectural and human, should receive a warm welcome both from town and gown. As High Steward of the borough as well as Master of a college, indeed of the college which holds the patronage of St Mary's, I may be allowed to speak for both the two sides of Cambridge life, to whom St Mary's is respectively the University church and the central church of the borough.

The assiduous scholarship of Mr Bushell has been admirably employed in collecting and ordering this large mass of material, all of it interesting in one way or another to Cambridge folk. An old Trinity man, Mr Bushell spent the greater part of his life in arduous and valuable public service, but since his retirement the historical and antiquarian instincts which he has inherited from his father the Reverend W. D. Bushell, F.S.A., of St John's College and of Harrow School, have prompted him to this labour of love, by which he has put Cambridge greatly in his debt.

G. M. TREVELYAN

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# THE AUTHORSHIP OF A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY HARVESTS' ACCOUNT BOOK FROM FOWLMERE

(Based upon a paper read to the Society in 1940)

W. P. BAKER, M.A.

ABOUT forty-four years ago Mr A. H. Arkle of Elmhurst, Oxton, Birkenhead, wrote to *The East Anglian*, describing a manuscript in his possession: it was an account of 'Old-fashioned Harvests' in the years 1682-4. 'Evidently a record', he says, 'of a farm in the neighbourhood of Royston, which some reader may be in a position to identify. . . . I may say the MS. is very well written, but in the tiniest characters, so as almost to need a magnifying glass.'

*The East Anglian* printed Arkle's note and a portion of the manuscript in November 1905 (vol. XI, pt. ccli). In the following issues the rest of the MS. appeared, eight instalments in all; and with the third instalment in February 1906, there came a reply from the Rev. A. C. Yorke, to Arkle's query about the identification of the MS. Yorke was a well-known antiquary and had the advantage of being Rector of Fowlmere at the time; he had no difficulty in showing that the MS. was from Fowlmere.

He showed first that field-names in the MS., such as North and South Fields, Duck-Acre Shott, More or Moor Shott (in North Field), Waterden Shott (in South Field), Branditch Shott (in Barr Field), were identical with names recorded in the transcription of an Old Field Book of about 1615, the Glebe Terrier of 1639, and a note-book of the glebe and other holdings dated 1821, all in the Church Chest at Fowlmere. Some of the field-names are remembered in Fowlmere to-day, and it is noteworthy that the lane which led to the Barr Field is known as Barr Lane (it is the approach to Fowlmere School).

Secondly, Yorke pointed out that many of the names of persons in the MS. were to be found in the Church Registers at Fowlmere. For instance, John Casbourne, who is named in the MS. as a dresser of corn, appears in the Registers when his son John is baptized in 1674. Widow Preston of the MS. is identified with Christian Preston who was buried in 1683. There are also others. We may add that William Thrift appears very many times in the MS. and Yorke assumes that they are his or his son's initials above the window of the 'Chequers Inn' at Fowlmere.

Thirdly, Yorke hazarded a guess as to the authorship of the MS.; his guess was based on three points:

(1) The writer speaks of the harvests in 1682-4 as being his seventh, eighth and

ninth; those years 'are therefore the seventh, eighth, and ninth of his connection with the land in Fowlmere'.

(2) 'He so speaks that it is evident he is the owner of the "maulting"'—these are Yorke's own words, but his conclusion is hardly justified.

(3) The acres and 'stetches' specified in the MS. as his own land can be traced in the Fowlmere Field Book (in the Church Chest).

As to the first point, Yorke finds no new name in the Registers between the years 1675 and 1683. But 'in the latter year appears the name of a man who, as in (2), is a maltster. In that year is baptized *Benjamin*, the son of *Benjamin & Mary Wedd*'.

Yorke proceeds with considerable ingenuity to identify the fields mentioned in the MS. with land occupied by one Daniel Smith in the Fowlmere Field Book, c. 1615. He assumes that this land passed to the first Benjamin Wedd, whose son was baptized in 1683.

This all seemed conclusive enough and there the matter rested. But in 1937 a continuation of the Fowlmere MS. turned up in a curious way, and in a way which is of particular interest to members of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. Sir Cyril Fox inherited in 1937 from his mother some family papers including a farm MS. from 1685 to 1692. It is the continuation of the MS. printed in *The East Anglian* in 1905-6. Sir Cyril Fox lent it and other papers to the late Dr W. M. Palmer, who lent the farm MS. to the writer of this paper. A pencil note, in a comparatively modern hand, on the cover of the MS. reads: 'Rev. Crakenthorpe, D.D. Vicar of Foulmire Cambridgesh', and below in a different hand: 'Glebe Farm accounts of Dr John Crakenthorpe, D.D. Rector of Foulmire.' But Dr Palmer observed that Yorke had proved that the MS was by Benjamin Wedd.

A first reading of the MS. raised some doubts;<sup>1</sup> it looked much more like the work of John Crackenthorpe, Rector, than Benjamin Wedd, farmer and maltster. Here is some of the internal evidence drawn from the printed and the unprinted portions of the MS.:

(i) In 1683 he speaks of the rye from '15 acres of gleabe land; besides a single stetch of my owne'; in 1689 we read: 'An account of the Pease brought in, in that Harvest: I had none of my owne land sowne; they were all Tythe.' These occasional references to glebe and tithe were puzzling; could Wedd have farmed the Rector's glebe and tithes?

(ii) Under the year 1690 there is a phrase which seems to come oddly from a layman, even if he farmed the Rector's glebe: 'I had this year 6 stetches in Southfield, & two acres & a stetch in Barr field, of my own temporal estate; that is 4 Acres & two Roods & half.'

(iii) Neither would one expect to find a farmer and maltster in the seventeenth century with a study; but in 1684: 'Of the 5th dressing [peas] June 6, there was in all 2 quarters & 2 bushells which was part of the middle reeke [rick] against the study

<sup>1</sup> Alderman W. C. Jackson of Fowlmere, who read the MS., also thought that Crackenthorpe was more likely to have been the author than Wedd.

window... ' And on 4 June: 'the rest [Oats] laide into the granary for our owne use, this was part of the middle reck that stood against the study window'.

Whose study? The Rector's, surely. But perhaps Wedd hired the Rector's farm buildings and rickyard, and knew the study? In 1693, however, there is something more conclusive: 'the little rick of Barley that lay against *my* study window'.

(iv) The writer who thus speaks of his study also makes little thanksgivings in Latin:

On Tuesday, this August 12 [1690] there was a dreadfull tempest of thunder and lightnning (*sic*); which began a little before supper time and burnt all William Botterells houses of Chrissol with 9 horses in his stable, and one Cottage adjoining, So that they had nothing left, the fire being sudden: Laus Deo, me & alios suâ omnipotentiâ protegenti. Amen.

And again:

On the 12 day at night, or rather on the 13 day of August [1692] in the morning it being about one or two of the clock, was a dreadful tempest of lightning, which was more terrible with us, than the thunder; followed at last with a great puff of wind & raine; & was altogether very terrible; & a malting at Babran, & an house at paper mills, by Sturbridge faire, burnt by that lighting: Laus Deo me immerentem & omnia mia protegenti.

This all pointed to the Rev. John Crackenthorpe rather than Benjamin Wedd, and the conclusion reached from reading the MS. was corroborated quite simply when the writer of this paper was able to consult the other papers inherited by Sir Cyril Fox. They included some sermons, dated 1688, 1689, 1693 and 1717. Some of them are headed 'Flmr', and all are in the same neat and concise hand as the farm MS.

A visit to Fowlmere, where the Rector, the Rev. O. G. Bolton, kindly allowed the Registers to be inspected and photographed, rounded off the inquiry. The Registers, prior to 1667, were in a bold, rough hand, but in that year the hand of the farm accounts and the sermons begins. It continues to 1718, when a ruder hand succeeds again.

But how, one may ask, did Yorke make his mistake? First, it is probable that he had not seen the MS. in the possession of Arkle when he wrote his note, though it is curious that one who must have known that tiny writing in his own Parish Registers extremely well, should not have been struck by Arkle's description of the MS.: 'very well written, but in the tiniest characters, so as almost to need a magnifying glass'. It is certainly odd that the identification did not occur to him when he inspected the Registers for entries about Benjamin Wedd.

In the second place, the references to the study and to glebe in 1683 were printed in *The East Anglian* AFTER Yorke's mistaken identification, but one would have expected a further note from him when the whole of the 1682-4 portion had been printed. No such communication seems to have been made. He probably lost interest after he thought he had proved the authorship of Wedd; for in 1909 Arkle presented the MS. to Fowlmere Church, and there in the Church Chest it lies in an envelope on which Yorke has written a note dated 1909 and still attributing the authorship to Benjamin Wedd.

Thirdly, Yorke assumed too readily that the writer was a maltster by trade. The evidence appears to be in references to a 'mault house' among his buildings, and to prodigious quantities of his barley being malted 'for my owne use'. But there is no indication that he ever did his own malting. From the harvest of 1682 eleven quarters of barley altogether were 'carryed in to Goodman Sell of Triplow to be maulted for our owne use', and from the following year's harvest over forty-four quarters 'to Goodman Kefford of Triplow to be maulted for my owne use'. Forty-four quarters of barley would make more than that volume of malt, or about twenty-five times as much as William Cobbett in his *Cottage Economy* allows for a labourer's family in a year. A more fitting comparison might be made with the household of Henry Loder, a substantial farmer in Berkshire in the early seventeenth century. From 1613 to 1616 Loder's household consumed on the average a little over 12 qrs. malt a year (*Robert Loder's Farm Accounts 1610-20*, edited for the Royal Historical Society by G. E. Fussell, Camden Third Series, vol. LIII, 1936).

So from the harvest of 1683 Crackenthorpe was using approximately four times as much barley for malt as a substantial farmer had required seventy years earlier. The phrase 'for my owne use seems' to suggest home consumption, but Yorke preferred the hypothesis that the author of the accounts was a maltster.

It must be admitted that this problem deserves further investigation. Even larger quantities of barley from later harvests went to Thriplow to be malted, though the phrase 'for my owne use' appears less often and is sometimes replaced by the less informative 'for me'.

The quantities malted in the eleven years of the accounts are as follows:

Harvest	Qrs.	Bushels	Harvest	Qrs.	Bushels
1682	11	0	1688	95	2
1683	44	5	1689	101	6
1684	20	4	1690	63	4
1685	41	2	1691	39	0
1686	11	0	1692	23	0
1687	53	3			

References to what became of the malt are tantalizingly few, except for the harvest of 1688. In that season Matthew Payne, returning from carrying barley to Thriplow to be malted, 'brought 2 bushels of my new malt, for himself & John Casbourne'. Similarly, 'Will: Thrift, brought back from Richard Sels, a bushel & half of malt for himself, and by my appointment.' On another occasion the farm servants 'brought ten quarters of new malt from him [R. Sels], & laid it in the garner at home'. Particularly interesting is the statement that on 8 February the men 'brought back to carry to Ware 9 quarters of the old malt', and, on the next visit on 16 February, 'they brought back all that was left of the old malt, viz. 8 quarters 3 bushels & a peck; that were sold to Ware also'.

Is it reasonable to suppose that the Rector had large quantities malted for the use of his own household and servants, but also sometimes had malt made for sale rather than simply selling the barley, and early in a new season would send off what remained

of the old malt to the breweries at Ware? A note at the end of the record of his barley for the harvest of 1691 implies that malt was sold; for, after giving the quantities sown and 'spent', the author says: 'all the rest sold', which includes the 39 qrs. malted that year.

The late Dr W. M. Palmer provided the information that Crackenthorpe's daughter, Hester, married Benjamin Wedd the second, a farmer and dissenter of Fowlmere, son of the Benjamin Wedd whom Yorke thought to be the author of the MS. So, if the family were maltsters in those days, as they were later, perhaps some of Crackenthorpe's malt found its way into Wedd's business. But the curious thing is that so meticulous a person as the author of the MS. apparently did not record systematically the sale or disposal of several hundred quarters of malt.

Not very much is known about Crackenthorpe himself, except that he probably came to Fowlmere in 1666, and his neat writing first appears in the Registers in 1667. But the MS. says that the harvest of 1682 was his seventh crop, so his interest in the land began with the harvest of 1676.<sup>1</sup> It may be that he only took over the land ten years after becoming Rector; he would be a very young man in 1666.

He died and was buried in the chancel of Fowlmere Church in 1719. Some notes of the late Dr Palmer (probably from the MSS. of the eighteenth century-antiquary, William Cole) say that he was a 'Puritannical kind of man', all his children but one becoming dissenters. One son in Orders lived at Royston (an old man in Cole's day), but he was really a Quaker, and was a Preacher or Speaker among them.

Sir Cyril Fox's possession of the Crackenthorpe MS. and other things, including a memorial ring inscribed: 'Benjn. Crakanthorp OB 24 Apr. 1799 aet. 79', is explained in this way: Sir Cyril Fox's mother was a Paul, the daughter of Robert Wedd Paul, who was the son of Robert Paul and Maria Wedd, apparently a descendant of the seventeenth-century Benjamin Wedd of Fowlmere, who married Hester Crackenthorpe.

The main purpose of Crackenthorpe's account book was to record the amount of grain harvested and how it was disposed of each year. Sometimes the amount sown per acre and the yield can be ascertained. Prices are given in detail. The dates of the beginning and ending of harvest are also given. There is thus much material of interest to the economic historian. It is to be hoped that at some future date the whole of the accounts may be printed and interesting statistics provided, particularly with regard to corn yields.

For those who are interested in the human or social history of Cambridgeshire there is perhaps not very much of interest, but there is a little. Personal names are interesting: Mr Brian, at Cambridge, a baker; and 'one Cook a meale man at Cambridge'; corn-dealers at Royston and Ashwell; maltsters at Thriplow; and of course many Fowlmere names including Nash, Wedd, Law and others. There are a few human touches like the following illustrations of the use of wheat and rye: in

<sup>1</sup> Amongst Sir Cyril Fox's papers is a pedigree of the Crackenthorpe family from 1567-1795, and against the name of John Crackenthorpe, Rector of Fowlmere, is a faint pencil note saying: 'His books are dated 1676.'

1682 a few pecks of rye are given to the poor, 'to Widow Whitby, Wid. Dury, Wid. Carrington, Wid. Cornhill'; in 1685 a peck of wheat is given to R. Woollard, 'being poor & sick'; in other years rye is given to the poor; in 1688 the author uses some rye himself 'in house-keeping', but that was possibly for the servants; in 1689 two pecks of wheat are 'given to Mat. Law being new married'. In 1684 half a bushel of barley is 'sent to Mill for fowles, by my wife'; and in 1689 two pecks of barley 'my wife had for fowles'. These seem to be the only references to any other member of his family.

In spite of his careful reckoning, amounts do not always tally and we find remarks like this: 'so that there is 5 bushels squandered or misreckoned, or the like.' Sometimes he blames mice and rats, sometimes careless measuring. Occasionally he suspects his servants: in 1690, 'So that there is 1 qr. & 5 bus. clearly lost... which could not happen by loss in skreening or any such way, nor without fraude of the horsekeeper, or some other... so much loss could not be fairely.'

This paper would not have been written without the encouragement of the late Dr W. M. Palmer, to whom the writer owes more than he can say, for stimulating his interest in the history of Cambridgeshire and for many other good things. Thanks are due to the Rev. O. G. Bolton, Rector of Fowlmere, for his readiness on more than one occasion to permit the registers and other contents of the Church Chest to be examined; and to Sir Cyril Fox for lending the MS. and for allowing it to be shown when this paper was read to the Society.

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