

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LXX

1980

IMRAY LAURIE NORIE AND WILSON

1981

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

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BY
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THE INHERITORS OF BARNWELL PRIORY

P. V. Danckwerts*

Barnwell Priory (1112-1538)

The first Augustinian priory in Cambridge was founded in 1092 by Picot, Norman sheriff of Cambridge, as a thank-offering for the recovery of his wife Hugoline from illness. It was probably on the site of Magdalene College and was dedicated, with its church, to St Giles. Picot was involved in a plot against Henry I and his estates were forfeited and given to an Englishman, Pain Peverel, who had been on the Crusade and had brought back sacred relics from Antioch. Peverel wished to increase the size of the monastery and obtained from Henry I a grant of land at Barnwell, where he re-founded the monastery in 1112. The site lay somewhere between the Newmarket Road and the river, and River Lane and Elizabeth Way. A chronicle of the Priory up to about 1296 exists in manuscript and an edited version in Latin (*Liber Memorandum Ecclesiae de Bernewelle*) was published by J. W. Clark in 1907.¹ Translations of parts of the MS, paraphrases, a conjectural ground-plan, etc. may be found in various publications.^{1,2,3,4,5,8}

The Dissolution

The penultimate Prior, Nicholas Smith, was obliged to resign in 1534.² No blood was spilled and he received a pension of £20 which was reasonable but not over-generous for the head of such a large House.¹⁰ He was succeeded by John Badcock (appointed by Royal Warrant to supervise the Dissolution), who received a pension of £6. The Commissioners for the Dissolution, the notorious Dr Legh and William Cavendish, arrived in November 1538 and received a deed of surrender signed by the Prior and six canons. They took an inventory of movable and removable objects and some cattle.³ A number of "roffes" (tiles or lead?) were included so that many of the buildings must have been left roofless. Dr Legh bought some lots, but most were bought by a farmer called John Lacy who leased the Priory lands and tithes for some years.² The lease was subsequently taken over by the last Prior, John Badcock, who retained it until shortly before his death in 1551. Nichols² describes him as "being then the incumbent of Barnwell". However, he does not seem to have been the incumbent in the sense of being the Parish Priest (see below).

In 1550 the Priory and its lands were granted to Sir Anthony Browne (it is perhaps

* Professor Danckwerts is the current leaseholder of the Abbey House, Barnwell.

surprising that there had been no attempt to realise their capital value, by sale or by way of patronage, before then), and passed through various hands including those of Lord Clinton and Saye who sold them in 1553 for 800 marks to Thomas Wendy of Haslingfield.¹¹

The Wendys (1553-1655)

Members of the Wendy family owned the site of the Priory and associated buildings and other landholdings for a century. I am not sure of the amount of land involved. The Prior of Barnwell is said to have had 391 acres in 1279¹² and this corresponds roughly with the amount of land enclosed by the Act of 1807 which was allotted to Thomas Panton II (*q.v.*), so perhaps this area represents the core of the estate, although at the time of the Dissolution the Priory held lands in Chesterton and Cambridge. These are listed in the will of Thomas Wendy I.¹³

Thomas Wendy I (c. 1500-1560), son of Thomas of Clare, was a man of many parts.¹³ He took his M.A. at Cambridge (Gonville Hall) in 1523, his M.D. (incorporated from Ferrara) in 1527 and in 1519 became a Fellow and was subsequently President of Gonville Hall. He was a friend of his fellow-physician, Dr Keys, who re-founded the College. He was Royal Physician successively to Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth (on Mary's death he bought a pardon from Elizabeth for his allegiance to Mary for 26s.8d, i.e. 2 marks).

Both Henry VIII and Edward VI granted him estates. He bought Haslingfield in 1541 and built the Manor House (25 hearths. It was uninhabited after 1714, and was finally dismantled in 1814-19 for the restoration of Bourn Hall. Now only a fragment of wall remains). Barnwell was only one among his several estates and I know nothing of what happened there during his lifetime.

In 1553 he was put on a Commission for effecting the "Great Pillage" of the Town of Cambridge – an inventory of all the valuables of the churches and guilds.¹³ He was a member of the Royal Commissions appointed to visit the University in 1546 and 1559. He was M.P. for St Albans in 1554 and for Cambs in 1555. No doubt he was feared as much as respected in Cambridge, both by Town and Gown. He is described as "a wily courtier and trusted physician of the Tudor Sovereigns", and it is said that by his adroitness he once saved the life of Katherine Parr from the King's anger.¹³

He was married twice, first to Margaret Butler, who was alive until 1550 at least, and then in 1552 to the widow Margaret Atkins who had a son and three daughters by her first husband (she married again after T.W.'s death).

Thomas I died without issue and is buried next to his first wife in Haslingfield church. His will expressed the wish that his heir Thomas II (the son of his brother John) should marry one of the Atkins girls "if any of them can so like and fancy". In fact he had married Elizabeth in 1559. The Barnwell estate did not pass to Thomas II until the death of Margaret (now Worthington) in 1570.

Thomas II (1535-1612) was another substantial man, who became High Sheriff three times. He was a zealous puritan and the chief financial supporter of the preacher

William Perkins who drew great crowds to hear him at St Andrew the Great. In 1588 he provided timber for the puritan foundation of Emmanuel. He made a dramatic impact on Barnwell in 1578, when he gave most of the stones of the Priory to build the Chapel of Corpus Christi (Bene't) College – 182 loads, together with what the tenants of the college could take away with their teams in two days.⁴ He was reprovved for this in 1837 by Marmaduke Prickett: "Our own Protestant forefathers succeeded in demolishing error while they failed in building up the truth. If the present ecclesiastical wants of Barnwell Parish could have been foreseen by the destroyers of the Priory Church they were no true sons of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of England, or they would have spared it to be dedicated to her reformed ritual".⁸ This seems a ridiculous proposition as the population of Barnwell was about 200-250 until after the Enclosure Act of 1807, and could have been collectively crammed into the surviving "Abbey Church"; while the Abbey itself was probably roofless in 1578 and had no supporting income, the Tithes having been alienated. If Thomas II had not given the stones away the most we should have had today would have been one of England's ruined Abbeys at the bottom of our garden.

A possible date for the building of the first part of the Abbey House is thus about 1578; it might have housed a bailiff and the Cellarer's Chequer and any other surviving buildings might have been used as barns. However, the house seems to have been too elegant for a bailiff and the Cellarer's Chequer by itself too small for the storage of crops. In 1601 Barnwell was part of the settlement¹⁴ made on the marriage of Thomas II's son and heir William to Blanche, daughter of Sir Henry Coningsby of Herts., and conceivably the house was built for them to live in until the death of Thomas II. However, this is pure speculation.

William (1558-1623) erected an elaborate monument to his parents, to be seen in Haslingfield church. He was made K.B. in 1618 and was High Sheriff three times. He died without issue and his heir was Thomas III (1613-73) the son of his brother Francis. Francis had married in 1610 Elizabeth Wentworth, the daughter of an enormously wealthy coal merchant of Lillingston Lovell, Oxon., where Thomas III was born. Thomas III, unlike the previous Wendys, went to Oxford – in fact to Balliol College where a Wentworth cousin was a scholar. He spent less than two years (1631-3) at Balliol, and did not graduate. As in many colleges, earlier in this century, low academic entry standards which admitted wealthy undergraduates who did not graduate bore fruit in benefactions and influence. Thomas III gave the College some books on his matriculation, in 1667 he contributed £50 towards the College's debts and on his death the College received his library of 2,000 books. His portrait hangs in the College hall.

Thomas III was Sheriff; a Commissioner for disarming Popish recusants; an M.P. in the Convention Parliament in 1660; and in 1661 he was made K.B. by Charles II at his coronation and elected M.P. in the Long Parliament. He presumably moved into Haslingfield manor at some time as he and his wife Lettice Willoughby are buried in the church, along with many other Wendys. They left no issue.

Thomas III had sold the Barnwell Priory estate in 1655/6 to Messrs Knight and

Browne;¹⁵ and in 1656 Sir Thomas Chicheley (who was a neighbour of Wendy's at Wimpole) sold it to Nevile Alexander Butler and his son.

The Butlers (1656-1759)

The main source of the history of the Butlers in Barnwell is "Squire Butler's Hexateuch", six stone tablets erected in the Abbey Church by Jacob, the last of the Butlers, some years before his death in 1765 (two years after Boswell met Johnson). A transcript is given by Nichols.² The first three tablets gave a detailed family history and the second three were an *apologia pro vita sua* by Jacob Butler (*q.v.*).

According to the Hexateuch Nevile Alexander Butler (d. 1674) exchanged his estates at Orwell for those of Sir Thomas Chicheley at Barnwell; the documents, however, show that the Barnwell estates were sold in 1656 for £5400 to Nevile and Thomas (his eldest son).¹⁶ According to the Hexateuch, again, Nevile was the first owner to live there since the Dissolution. Sir James Gray¹⁷ states (without citing evidence) that Nevile went to live at the Abbey House. Others have said that he built the house, but if its dating to the late 16th century is correct they acquired the house with the estate and presumably lived in it. The property passed from Nevile to his second son, Ambrose (1637-85), who added a large extension to the house, bearing the date 1678 which can be seen on the "Dutch gable". A glimpse of life at the Abbey House in 1669 is given by Alderman Newton, describing the "Barnwell Collation" which appears to have been a customary accompaniment to the opening of Stourbridge Fair. On 16 June a visit was paid by the Mayor, Alderman and City officials. They were met by Mr and Mrs Butler who served them with "Gamon of Bacon, creame and stued prunes, beere and cake, and the Town sent wine and sugar (nothing given to servants by Mayor or anyone els)".¹⁸

On the death of Ambrose the estate passed briefly to his daughter who died in 1688, and was succeeded by her uncle the Rev. Dr John Butler (1645-1714), Rector of Wallington in Herts., who "enjoyed that living 44 years". He had 11 sons and 5 daughters, most of them buried at Barnwell like himself. Four of his children, aged from 2 to 10 years, died of smallpox and were buried on the same day in one grave "under the family seat" in 1696. Altogether there are some 24 Butlers buried in and around the abbey church, but not a legible memorial remains.

Dr John's eldest son and heir Jacob (1681-1765), generally known as "Squire Butler", who outlived all the others, has been the subject of innumerable articles because of his eccentricities. The material for these is based on his Hexateuch or on the following passage in Hone's *Everyday Book*¹⁹ which itself quotes from the Hexateuch and gives a crude reproduction of a portrait etching by the Rev. Michael Tyson of Bene't College; the original is reproduced by Nichols.²

"Jacob Butler, Esq., who died on the 28th of May, 1765, stoutly maintained the charter of Stourbridge fair: he was of Bene't-college, Cambridge, and a barrister-at-law. In stature he was six feet four inches high, of determined character, and deemed "a great eccentric" because, among other reasons, he usually invited the

giants and dwarfs, who came for exhibitions, to dine with him. He was so rigid in seeing the charter literally complied with, that if the ground was not cleared by one o'clock on the day appointed, and he found any of the booths standing, he had them pulled down, and the materials taken away. On one occasion when the wares were not removed by the time mentioned in the charter, he drove his carriage among the crockery and destroyed a great quantity.

"The rev. John Butler, LL.D. rector of Wallington, in Hertfordshire, father of Mr Butler, who was his eldest son, endeavoured in the year 1705, to get Stourbridge fair rated to the poor. This occasioned a partial and oppressive assessment on himself that involved him in great difficulties. Dr Butler died in 1714, and Jacob Butler succeeded to his difficulties and estates in the parish of Barnwell. As a trustee under an act for the turnpike road from Cambridge to London, Mr Butler was impeached of abuses in common with his co-trustees. Being obnoxious, he was singled out to make good the abuse, and summoned to the county sessions, where he appeared in his barrister's gown, was convicted and fined ten pounds, which he refused to pay, and was committed. He excepted to the jurisdiction, wherein he was supported by the opinion of Sir Joseph Yorke, then attorney-general, and to save an estreat applied to the under-sheriff, who refused his application, and afterwards went to the clerk of the peace at Newmarket, from whom he met the like treatment; this forced him to the quarter-sessions, where he obtained his discharge, after telling the chairman he felt it hard to be compelled to the trouble and expense of teaching him and his brethren law. He appears to have been a lawyer of that school, which admitted no law but the old common law of the land, and statute law. In 1754, "to stem the venality and corruption of the times, he offered himself a candidate to represent the county in parliament, unsupported by the influence of the great, the largess of the wealthy, or any interest, but that which his single character could establish in the esteem of all honest men and lovers of their country. But when he found the struggles for freedom faint and ineffectual, and his spirits too weak to resist the efforts of his enemies, he contented himself with the testimony of those few friends who dare to be free, and of his own unbiassed conscience, which, upon this, as well as every other occasion, voted in his favour; and upon these accounts he was justly entitled to the name of *the old Briton*". He bore this appellation to the day of his death. The loss of a favourite dog is supposed to have accelerated his end; upon its being announced to him, he said "I shall not live long now my dog is dead". He shortly afterwards became ill, and, lingering about two months, died.

"His coffin, which was made from a large oak by his express order, some months before his death, became an object of public curiosity; it was of sufficient dimensions to contain several persons, and wine was copiously quaffed therein by many of those who went to see it. To a person, who was one of the legatees, the singular trust was delegated of driving him to the grave, on the carriage of a waggon, divested of the body: seated in the front, he was to drive his two

favourite horses, Brag and Dragon, to Barnwell church, and should they refuse to receive his body there, he was to return and bury him in the middle of the grass-plot in his own garden. Part only of his request was complied with, for the body being put into a leaden coffin, and the leaden one into a shell, was conveyed in a hearse, and the coffin made before his death was put upon the carriage of his waggon, and driven before the hearse by the gentleman above mentioned; when arrived at the church door, it was taken from the carriage by four men, who received half-a-guinea each; it was then put into the vault, and the corpse being taken from the hearse was carried to the vault, there put into the coffin, and then screwed down”.

It is recorded that he left £5000 in legacies of £100 to his relatives, and a similar amount on the death of his wife (Rose Butler, his first cousin, who outlived him by 13 years).

Squire Butler’s autobiographical epitaph reads in part as follows:

“As his sentiments were founded in principle, so his conduct in private life, wherein it would be hard to decide whether his conjugal affection, his firmness in friendship, or benevolence in charity, truly christian, shone the brightest; for he was conspicuous in all...

Now reader

Behold the hardships and ill usage of his life. ...”

When he succeeded his father in 1714 the yearly value of the estate was £355, never let for more; but owing to his father’s ill-advised attempt to get the Fair rated to the poor, taxes amounted to £635. Squire Butler managed to get this reduced to £420, but he had a mortgage of £4000,²⁰ seven brothers and sisters to pay, four annuities of £240 p.a., and suffered two disastrous fires in 1717 and 1731. Only after legal proceedings did he get partial compensation, and that from a court in which one of the justices was the son of his father’s horsekeeper.

To support himself he had to farm the estate himself, although as a barrister he was quite unqualified to do so. Litigation occupied much of his attention. Apart from the turnpike affair mentioned above (here too the Chairman of the quarter sessions was the horsekeeper’s son) he was at various times involved in cases concerning a dog-kennel erected on his land by an Alderman without his authority; a brace of greyhounds; a farmer who ploughed-up common land; and his own high-handed pounding of other peoples’ horses and cows.

He concludes:

“He feared his God; He honoured the King;
And despised his foes; And valued his friends”.

In addition to his civil litigation he had a brush with Canon Law. In 1733 he declared the Abbey Church to be a *libera capella* (free chapel) and refused to receive any visits or citations from the Archdeacon or the Bishop of Ely, or to render any records to the Diocese (they were kept in the Church Book, which has disappeared). He was cited by

the Bishop (Butler) but his case was upheld by the Chancellor. This situation continued at least until 1811.⁷

Another characteristic vignette of Jacob Butler comes from a letter written in 1802: "I have often heard him say, a God, a God I know all the land on ye fields of Barnwell and no one else Does; for I have got a Terrier [i.e. catalogue of fields], which belonged to the first purchaser of ye estates after the Priory was Broke up (I wish I should live to see all *the Monks* of ye Present Day Driven from their Cells in ye Colleges, I would be Master of Jesus for that Belongs to my Estate)".²¹ Of course, it did not.

William Cole of Milton gives a sad impression of him in his dotage "...on quitting the Priory House he came and lived at an house ... at the corner of Emmanuel Lane. He was bred up in Christ's College [the *Everyday Book* says Bene't, but as he is not listed in Venn he presumably neither matriculated nor graduated], but within these last few years has put his name upon the boards of Emmanuel College to qualify himself to vote in the Senate, which was disputed before ... He is ... looked upon as cracked in his intellects ... the Cambridge Newspapers had constantly some articles about him, wrote by himself and styling himself Old Briton. In the last Cambridge Chronicle (17 Nov. 1764) is this article about him: 'It is said that a Professorship of the Laws of England will shortly be founded here by the oldest Barrister at Law in the Kingdom, who ... lives in the Town of Cambridge'."²²

As to his quitting the Abbey House, although this is not mentioned in the Hexateuch of the *Everyday Book*, it is borne out by the Abstract of Title (1723-1808)² which shows that the Squire had a mortgage of £4,000 on the estate and that he contracted in 1756 to sell it to Alderman George Riste for 9,999 gns. Riste tried to back out on the grounds that the title was not good. In Squire Butler's last case the Court of Chancery found for him and specific performance was required of Riste; so that in 1759 the Squire paid off his mortgage and had some £6,500 in hand, but unless he rented it back he cannot have passed his last days in the Abbey House as is usually assumed.

His three children died in infancy.

The Pantons and the Gwydir (1763-1813)

Ald. Geo. Riste died in 1762 and the estate passed to his sister and heiress who lost no time in selling it, in 1763, to Thomas Panton I of Newmarket, who paid £8,700.²⁰ Comparison with the 9,999 guineas which Riste was forced to pay Squire Butler in 1759, may account for his reluctance to honour the contract.

I know little of Thomas Panton I (1697-1782) except that his father was a general²³ and that although he became Master of the King's Running Horses to George II he was described by Horace Walpole²⁴ as a "disreputable horse-jockey of Newmarket". He bred some fine horses including "Blaze", "Whitenose" and "Spectator". He evidently prospered, as he bought Fen Ditton in 1749²³ and probably much else besides. He had two children who both married well and are among the Inheritors. Mary, to whom I shall revert, became the Duchess of Ancaster and Kesteven; she was described by

Walpole²⁴ as Panton's "natural daughter" although her putative parents were legally married at some stage. His son, Thomas II (1731-1808) was one of the greatest Turfites of his time.^{25,26,27} He was a Fellow Commoner of Emmanuel, but never graduated. His life was devoted to the race-course (although he was said to have kept hounds and became High Sheriff). He won the seventh Derby in 1786 with Noble (a 30-1 outsider which never achieved much else). He married in 1767 Elizabeth Byrd of Roehampton who was said to have "brought him a fortune of upwards of £100,000".^{23,28}

A late obituary describes his life thus:

"The year 1809 (*sic*) saw the last of two of the oldest among English sportsmen – men whose names are handed-down to posterity in the Stud-Book and the Calendar. Mr Wentworth and Mr Panton were among the oldest members of the Jockey Club. These venerable gentlemen were 87 and 88 (*sic*) years of age respectively at the time of their deaths. Mr Panton had known intimately all the great Turf men of his time and had rarely in his life been absent from an interesting or important race".³⁵

He became one of the early members of the Jockey Club, and was a Steward at the time of the great "Escape" scandal of 1791. The Prince of Wales ran Escape in a race one day; although it started as favourite it came in last. The next day it started in a race at 5-1 against and won easily. It was discovered that the jockey, Chifney (the champion jockey of his day) had bet on Escape to win in the second race but not the first. The Stewards took a strong line and told the Prince that "no gentleman would be found to make book or to run horses in any race in which this jockey might ride". H.R.H. said he would never set foot in Newmarket again – and never did. He gave Chifney, with whom he was on over-familiar terms, an annuity.²⁵

Thomas Panton II was widely-known as "Polite Tommy Panton" because of his "address" which must have been a great asset to the Club in such vicissitudes. He is assumed in Fen Ditton to have lived in the Hall. If he did so this would have been after his marriage in 1767 until his father's death in 1782, but Cole, while mentioning the marriage, says nothing of him living at Fen Ditton.²³ His only interest in Barnwell was to get it enclosed and in this he was helped by his association with the Peerage at Newmarket (a plan dated 1787²⁹ shows, apart from the Panton stables, those of the Prince of Wales, H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland and several other peers including Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, the subsequent Chancellor of the University and owner of the "Kite" area.). The University was against the Enclosure Bill and had got Lord Onslow to speak against it in the Lords. When he got up to oppose the Bill someone called out "This is your friend Tommy Panton's Bill", whereupon the noble lord sat down and never uttered another word.⁵ The Act was granted Royal Assent in 1807.

The tenants of "Barnwell Abbey Farm" (including the Abbey House and the Priory site) during the latter part of the 18th century and up to 1809 at least, and probably up to 1813, were successively John and George Bullen, members of a well-known Cambridge family. They evidently took some pride in the house. During their tenancy a squared freestone pavement was dug up on the Priory site and laid on the ground

floor of the house⁷ (it has worn badly during the last 200 years); and some early 17th century oak panelling was brought in to line one of the rooms. I have been told this "came from Jesus about 1800". It might have come from Rhadegund Manor which was leased by Jesus to an unsatisfactory tenant, John Bullen, or it might have come from Fen Ditton Hall which contains similar panelling and was subject to modification and partial demolition.

Tommy Panton's marriage had been the occasion of a settlement of amazing complexity.²⁰ Suffice it to say that he died without issue (although he had married a second time to a Miss Gubbins³⁰) and that, while he held a life interest in Barnwell and other estates, the vested remainder resided with Tommy's brother-in-law Peregrine Bertie, 3rd Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven, who died in 1778 and left his interest to his son and heir Robert (4th Duke) who died in 1779, aged 22, of a "scarlet fever brought on by rioting and drink".²⁴ The Barnwell property was not entailed on Brownlow, Peregrine's brother and the 5th Duke, but was bequeathed by Robert in tail to his sister Priscilla Barbara Elizabeth and her son Peter Burrell.²⁰ She had married Peter Burrell (according to Walpole "she fell in love with him and would marry him, not at all at his desire"²⁴) who became successively Knight, 2nd Baronet and 1st Earl Gwydir (cr. 1796). She, by some complex turn of events became Baroness Willoughby d'Eresby in her own right, a title which carried with it the status of Lord Great-Chamberlain of England (her husband deputised for her). The comments of Horace Walpole on the Burrells and the Ancasters are scurrilous and amusing, although not accurate in detail.²⁴

Tommy Panton was entitled to sell part of the Barnwell estate to pay the expenses of the Enclosure. A small part was put up for sale in 1808 and some of it bought by Downing College. Tommy died on the day of the sale³⁰ and the eventual vendors were Lady Gwydir and Peter Burrell her son and his wife.^{20,31}

As they wished to bar the entail on the rest of Barnwell and the other Panton estates it was necessary to go through an elaborate legal charade, namely a feigned conveyance to a nominee, who was thereby enabled to sell on their behalf with a clear title.³¹ In 1809 they put up for auction estates at Barnwell, Fen Ditton, Horningsea and Waterbeach (all of which, I imagine, had come to them via the Pantons).³² The first lot was Barnwell Abbey Farm (about 340 acres, including the Priory Site and Abbey House, together with rights of common and sheepwalk for 500 sheep on Coldham's Common, "Stirbitch" Fair Green, Christ's Pieces, Parker's Piece and Cow Fen Leys). According to a pencilled note on the back of the catalogue, this was bought in at £25,000, last bid £21,900. On the day of the sale the Rev. Dr James Geldart bought part of the lot east of River Lane including "Stirbitch" Fair Green and some property on the other side of the Newmarket Road.³³ In 1813 he bought the Priory site itself.^{34,51}

The Geldarts (1813-86)

Dr Geldart, who owned the advowson of Kirk Deighton in Yorkshire, and was the Rector at his own presentation, described himself as "Lord of the Manor" of Barnwell,

but as a matter of fact it does not seem that there was ever a manor in the legal sense (e.g. it is not mentioned in the Enclosure Act).³⁵ He leased the Abbey House to George Pryme, who became the first Professor of Political Economy in the University.³⁶ Mrs Pryme affected to call her daughter "Miss de la Pryme". A visitor said "that's a very pretty name you have given your daughter. I think I shall christen my baby Della".³⁷

George Pryme lived in the house until 1847 and this was perhaps the latest date at which the whole house served as a single residence. Thereafter it seems to have been divided into three "tenements"; the Cambridge street directories from 1867 on suggest that the usual pattern was one middle-class family occupying the "grand" 16th century rooms and others, and two artisans in the rest. However, the pattern was variable. From about 1900 the situation is complicated by the suggestion that the house was divided into four parts, but in fact a new house (No. 4 Abbey Road) had been built between the Abbey House and Newmarket Road.

Dr James Geldart had three sons: James William (1785-1876) who, while enjoying the hereditary Rectorship of Kirk Deighton, became Tutor and Vice-Master at Trinity Hall and Regius Professor of Civil Law (1814-1847); Richard John (1786-1871) who seems not to have been distinguished; and Thomas Charles (1797-1877) who was Master of Trinity Hall (1852-1877).

The only vivid picture of one of the Geldarts which I have discovered is by Noel Annan:

"...Dr Geldart, the Master of Trinity Hall, an ancient megatherium, who liked his bottle in the evening and asked only to be left in peace. But now he resembled a barnacled dreadnought, straddled by salvos from port and starboard, his young radical colleagues on the one hand and on the other his wife, a formidable Mrs Proudie of the Evangelical persuasion. One day she sent her husband into a College meeting with strict instructions not to grant the Chaplaincy of St Edward's, in the gift of the College, to F. D. Maurice on the grounds that he held lax views on the subject of Eternal Punishment. Stephen and Fawcett guessed what had happened and innocently enquired the exact nature of the allegedly heretical passages. The Master, unable to make a signal to base, foundered with all hands, and to their delight Maurice was appointed. Far from disliking him the rebels regarded Dr Geldart with unassailable affection; and when he lay on his death-bed Fawcett visited him and so invigorated the old gentleman that he called for a bottle of port and his fishing tackle to the infinite scandal of Mrs Geldart who forbade a repetition of the visit ... Mrs Geldart found it most difficult to get her husband into a seemly frame of mind. "I don't know why it is", she complained, "but I can't get poor dear Charles to take any interest in the arrangements for his funeral". As a good Evangelical she waited anxiously for her husband's last words which would indicate that his thoughts were fixed on higher things, but Dr Geldart remained lamentably mixed with the dross of this world. Feeling the death pangs hard upon him, the flame lit up for the last time. "You will let the undergraduates have some of the old sherry", he gasped, and

thereupon expired. Mrs Geldart, writes Thomas Henry Thornely, was so appalled that she called for an autopsy and joyfully exclaimed, when the surgeons proclaimed that there was evidence that the Master's mind had become unhinged at the end, "Clearly not responsible! Clearly not responsible!"³⁸

I do not know what plans the speculative Dr James Geldart originally had for the Priory site. After his death his estates seem to have been held as joint family property and in 1879, after the death of the last of his sons, four of his grandsons (all clergymen, one of them Rector of Kirk Deighton) were appointed trustees to sell the site (and other property) and divide the proceeds into fourteen parts for various members of the family.³⁹ Before then only 7 acres of the 26-acre site had been sold, notably the Newmarket Road frontage east of the church.

The University Statutes had been amended in 1878 to allow Fellows of Colleges to retain their Fellowships despite marriage; it may have seemed to the Trustees that there would be a market for ample building sites to accommodate married Fellows and their families. An auction catalogue of the site, dated 1879, survives; the plots offered were typically about 2 acres, with 200ft street frontages.⁴⁰ The area was described as "accommodation land and brickyards". The sale was abortive. The part of Barnwell lying across the Newmarket Road was by that time an atrocious slum and the neighbourhood would probably not have been attractive to prosperous householders.

In 1884 a prospectus for the "Abbey Estate Freehold Land Society" was issued.⁴¹ The intention was that the members should purchase building land at 3s 3d per sq. yd., and appoint Trustees and a Committee. The land was marked out in lots of, typically, 1/5 acre. The Abbey House was allocated a lot of 0.6 acres and the house would have been thrown in with the price of the land. The tenant of the house at that time was Rev. H. R. B. Streeten (Secretary to the Missions to Seamen), with two sub-tenants. This project, too, was abortive.

Finally, in 1886, the major part of the Priory site (19 acres) was sold to the property speculator Joseph Sturton for £7,750.³⁹ Sturton sold the Abbey House (less a large slice of its garden bordering the Newmarket Road – boundaries as now) to Streeten for £800 and gave the "Cellarer's Chequer" to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. In the same year the Western part of the site was put up for auction in lots with 18ft. frontages, suitable for terrace artisan houses.⁴² Most of the site was eventually sold in this way by Sturton; Godesdone Road, Abbey Road, Beche Road, Priory Road and Saxon Road being laid-out in addition to the existing Walnut Tree Lane (up-graded to Avenue), River Lane and the Haling Way (re-named Riverside). The lots were not snapped up and some were sold, for instance, as late as 1902.⁴³ Many of the houses which now fill the site were built by Mr Clark (a speculative builder) to a standard ground-plan; he built himself a house at the corner of Godesdone Road and Beche Road. Mr Clark was an energetic builder; for instance he bought a plot of land on Riverside from Sturton for £365 in June 1902, and re-sold the plot with 10 terrace houses on it for £1000 in November 1902. Two of the ten houses were sold back to Clark in 1917 for £1200. Clark's houses have mostly lasted well, but many of those on

Riverside suffer from settlement because they stand on made-up ground over alluvial silt. A number of shops were built on the Newmarket Road frontage, and "The Old Abbey" pub (no longer serving) in Beche Road.

Today the Priory site is a General Improvement Area, and will be protected from the fate of the Kite. The Magnet Joinery warehouse (formerly an engineering works run by several generations of the Lister family) has been an anomaly, but it is shortly to move, and it is to be hoped that the site, which belongs to the Council, will be used for decent small houses. The outline of the Priory site in the 12th century as conjectured by Clark³ remains very much as it was, except that Elizabeth Way has destroyed Walnut Tree Avenue. A lay-by alongside the Elizabeth Bridge has, however, retained the name.

The Abbey House

The Rev. Streeten sold the house in 1899 to Thomas Askham for £1,120³⁹ (a reasonable profit at a time when house prices in general were falling). Thomas Askham was from 1874 onwards the landlord of the "Woodman's Arms", almost next door to the still-existent "Bird in Hand" near the Cambridge Evening News building. For a time this was also the address of "Askham and Son, Carriage Works". He did not move into the Abbey House. Thomas Askham seems to have been hardworking and enterprising, and to have made a good deal of money. His son, Arthur Askham, moved into the house about 1922, and lived mainly in the part known as No. 2. He was a great character, still remembered by many. According to recent letters to the Cambridge Evening News⁴⁴ he was fond of drinking with his friends and had an eye for the ladies, and did as little work as possible, although he owned the Hippodrome in Auckland Road. He kept the garden in beautiful condition, and used to have children's parties with country dancing on the lawn. In his later years, however, the grass grew tall and he kept goats, and was supposed to live on goats' milk and bottled stout. He was asking £3000 for the house in 1932, but eventually sold it (in very bad condition) in 1945 for £3,675 to Lord Fairhaven of Anglesey Abbey. Arthur Askham died in a Red Cross home in Chaucer Road some years later.

Huttleston Broughton, Lord Fairhaven, was the first Baron, although his mother had borne the title of Baroness Fairhaven because her husband died after the offer of a peerage and before its conferment. His parents were enormously wealthy; his father made a fortune from mining and railways in the U.S.A. and his mother, Cara Rogers, was a New York heiress. Lord Fairhaven used to accompany his mother regularly on her sumptuous yacht Sapphire (with a crew of 60). She gave Runnymede to the nation. Lord Fairhaven and his brother bought the remains of Anglesey Abbey (the eastern neighbour of Barnwell Priory) and he renovated it and filled it with a miscellany of *objets d'art*. The flat Cambridgeshire fields surrounding it were converted (as though in the days of Capability Brown) into a landscape garden of note. The house and grounds were left to the National Trust on his death in 1966.^{45,46}

In 1946 Lord Fairhaven made over the Abbey House to the people of Cambridge, in

the form of the Folk Museum, "in recognition of V.E. Day and thank-offering for deliverance from the perils of war". The plan was that the Museum should move into the house but although a good deal of money (borrowed, I think, from the Council) was spent on essential repairs the move never took place. The factors involved may have included lack of money, sitting tenants and an unsuitable location. The house remained as three residences until my wife and I took a long lease in 1964 on Nos. 1 and 2, which were easily thrown into one. In 1973 the Folk Museum presented the freehold of the house to the City Council and in 1977 our lease was extended to include the whole house, which remains two dwellings.

Not until the date of writing has the Council been able to take in hand essential repairs to the house, but it appears that most of these will be done in 1980. The future of the Abbey House, which has been in continuous use as a dwelling for some 400 years, is uncertain. The Council has no certainty of gaining vacant possession until A.D. 2027.

The architectural features of the house are described at length in the City of Cambridge Survey of the R.C.H.M.⁴⁷ The part attributed to the late 16th century is curiously unsymmetrical, leading to speculation as to whether it was all built at one time. Some 25 years after the building of Ambrose Butler's extension in 1678 the house was "modernised" by brick-facing and making-flush the exterior and panelling the interior walls of the 16th century part. Behind some of the panels can be found timber and plaster walls with early 17th century painted decorations. Two curious features not mentioned in the survey are the outhouses at the eastern extremity of the building. One is a bakehouse which contains instead of an oven an enormous hot-plate such as might be used for cooking drop-scones or hamburgers. The other is a communal five-holer W.C. with automatic flushing, probably of 19th century origin.

There is the usual story of an underground tunnel, running either to St Rhadegund's or to Anglesey Abbey. Either of these destinations would take the tunnel below the water-table and involve sophisticated civil engineering. There is a structure in the cellar which looks like the entrance to a tunnel but now, at any rate, there is earth behind it. I have been told that there used to be a tunnel and that one of the Askhams sent a dog down it, which did not return and then a pig, which did. Such anecdotes must regretfully be dismissed, along with some of those of the Haunting. The tunnel is also discussed by Gauld.⁴⁸

The Haunting

An authoritative and critical account of the Haunting of the Abbey House was published in 1972 by Alan Gauld.⁴⁸ The principal evidence comes from signed statements from Mr and Mrs J. C. Lawson, who lived in the house with their family from 1903 to 1911. "Jock" Lawson was a Fellow of Pembroke College and a distinguished classical scholar and served as Senior Proctor. People who knew him did not regard him as credulous or fanciful.

The very first night they spent in the house the maids and children were disturbed by

bangs on their doors and spent the night in terror. The next morning the maids declared they could not spend another night in the house, but Mrs Lawson persuaded them that it had been the Labrador dog (but there were no scratches on the doors) and there was no recurrence of this kind of "haunting".

There were however two durable apparitions, 'The Animal' and 'The Nun'. The animal was seen by both parents as well as the children, and looked like a hare with cropped ears, pattering audibly about, upright on its hind legs. The children called it 'Wolfie'. The connection with Squire Butler's favourite dog seems tenuous.

The 'nun' appeared in the first-floor room at the S. (16 C.) end of the house which was the Lawsons' bedroom. It came in through the (closed) door, paused at the foot of the bed and then disappeared through a curtained window. It would wake Mr Lawson up with its heavy tread but Mrs Lawson heard nothing (a later resident has told me that the 'heavy tread' emanated from operations at the gas-works). The figure was dressed in nun-like robes; on one occasion it prodded Mr Lawson on the foot. It was exorcised by Mrs Lawson who found its nightly visits tiresome (not frightening) after a long spell of being laid up in bed. At last one night she sat up in bed and making the sign of the cross towards it said "In the Name of the Holy Trinity, poor soul, rest in peace". It was not seen again.

In 1972 none of the Lawson children remembered anything about the haunting. Gauld makes the point that too much weight should not be put on the evidence of children or of people who have been told that a house is haunted (the Lawsons were not told of the existing tradition of haunting before their experiences began). This perhaps rules out the less substantial records of haunting since the Lawsons left.⁴⁹ In 1955 Professor F. J. M. Stratton, President of the Society for Psychical Research, obtained possession of No. 1 Abbey House for a week and senior and undergraduate members of the University made up a rota of watches. Nothing happened and nothing significant has happened since.

The "Abbey Church"

This early 13th century church, now the mother church of the parish of St Andrew the Less, was no doubt built by the Prior of Barnwell as a chapel to serve the lay community. An architectural description may be found in the Cambridge Survey of the R.C.H.M.⁴⁷

For some decades after the dissolution there was no incumbent; in 1561 the episcopal return reported the windows in decay and the pavement in the church lacking.⁵⁰ The earliest surviving Bishop's transcripts of the parish register date from 1599 (C.R.O.) in which year a marriage took place in the church. After the Civil War, in 1649, St Andrew the Less was the only Anglican church in Cambridge with a minister serving the cure.⁹

The parish was originally vast, stretching from Coldham's Brook to Parker's Piece and from the river south to Hobson's Brook (Trumpington Road).⁵² It also contained enclaves and salients of other parishes. Nowadays the parish does not run south of

Mill Road and a number of daughter churches have been built.

At the time of the Barnwell Enclosure Act in 1807³⁵ the population of the parish was less than 250 but 35 years later it had risen to nearly 10,000 (greater than the entire population of Cambridge before 1807).⁹ Much of the newly-urbanised area consisted of slums, the haunt of murderers, thieves and prostitutes. The income of the church was £50 p.a.⁸ and the building was in a very bad condition. In these circumstances the Rev. Charles Perry decided in 1835 to forego the comforts of a College fellowship and to devote himself to the provision of an adequate place of worship and a spiritual centre for the 'profligate poor' of the parish. He purchased the advowson, and an appeal for a new church was launched, backed by a small book written by Marmaduke Prickett, Chaplain of Trinity College.⁸ This book contains some interesting historical information and opinion about Barnwell Priory. Prickett's tone is evangelical. Apart from his comments on the gift by Thomas Wendy II of the stones of the Priory to Bene't College (noted above) he says: "Founded by zealous patrons of a corrupt church the monastic institutions may be regarded as the fruits of a sincere though mistaken piety, anxious to secure those delusive privileges which the church of the Middle Ages held out to its devoted followers. Yet if freedom from an imaginary purgatory, procured by masses for the departed soul, could lead so many to impoverish their heirs and vainly seek to buy admission into heaven by splendid endowments, what shall be said for the professors of the reformed faith if higher motives and purer hopes have been unproductive of self-denying exertions in the cause of Christ".

In a less austere passage he notes that a place and portion had been laid for Pain Peverel at the Priory table through the ages and compares this custom unfavourably with the current practice of holding an annual Founder's Feast.

A subscription was raised to build Christchurch, on the other side of the Newmarket Road and nearer Cambridge. The church was consecrated in 1839.⁵¹ Perry was the first incumbent; later he became Bishop of Melbourne (Australia).

The Abbey Church was at that time unfit for divine service and was closed from 1846 to 1854, during which time it was 'restored' by the Cambridge Architectural Society. In view of the sentiments prevailing at Christchurch, it is piquant to find that the design of the organ front is attributed to Pugin (the co-architect of the present Palace of Westminster). A Roman Catholic convert who described the Anglican Communion as a "blasphemous charade" and wrote a vitriolic attack on the subscription fund for the Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford, he and his sponsors can have had little meeting of hearts and minds with the clergy and congregation at Christchurch.

The restorers made a clean sweep of the church. No Butler memorials remain. The Hexateuch was removed and set up against the West wall of the churchyard. At this date the six slabs are almost featureless, but faint traces of the lettering in protected corners show that they were set up in the wrong order.

The Abbey Church became a vigorous organisation, perhaps in rivalry with Christchurch, and well into the 20th century had a good congregation, a choir,

outings, etc. As late as 1955 an addition was made to the building. Now it is locked against vandals and used for Evensong once a month.

The Cellarer's Chequer was given by the C.A.S. to the City Council. It is now locked, empty and unused. The only extant part of Barnwell Priory which can be said to serve an everyday purpose is the badly-eroded 'precinct wall' which is now the north wall of the Abbey House garden and has roses trained upon it.

I have used here the sources which lay most readily to hand and which I could read. No doubt a professional historian and archaeologist could find out a good deal more than I have done about the history of Barnwell and the Abbey House. However, I have traced the line of ownership of the Priory site, which has been garbled in most previous accounts.

I am indebted to the following who have provided information or led me to sources: Mr A. P. Baggs, Mrs C. P. Hall, Mr S. C. Humphrey, Mrs F. Jones, Mrs I. Lister, Mrs D. M. Owen, Mr V. Quinn, Mr D. C. H.-C.-Borgnis.

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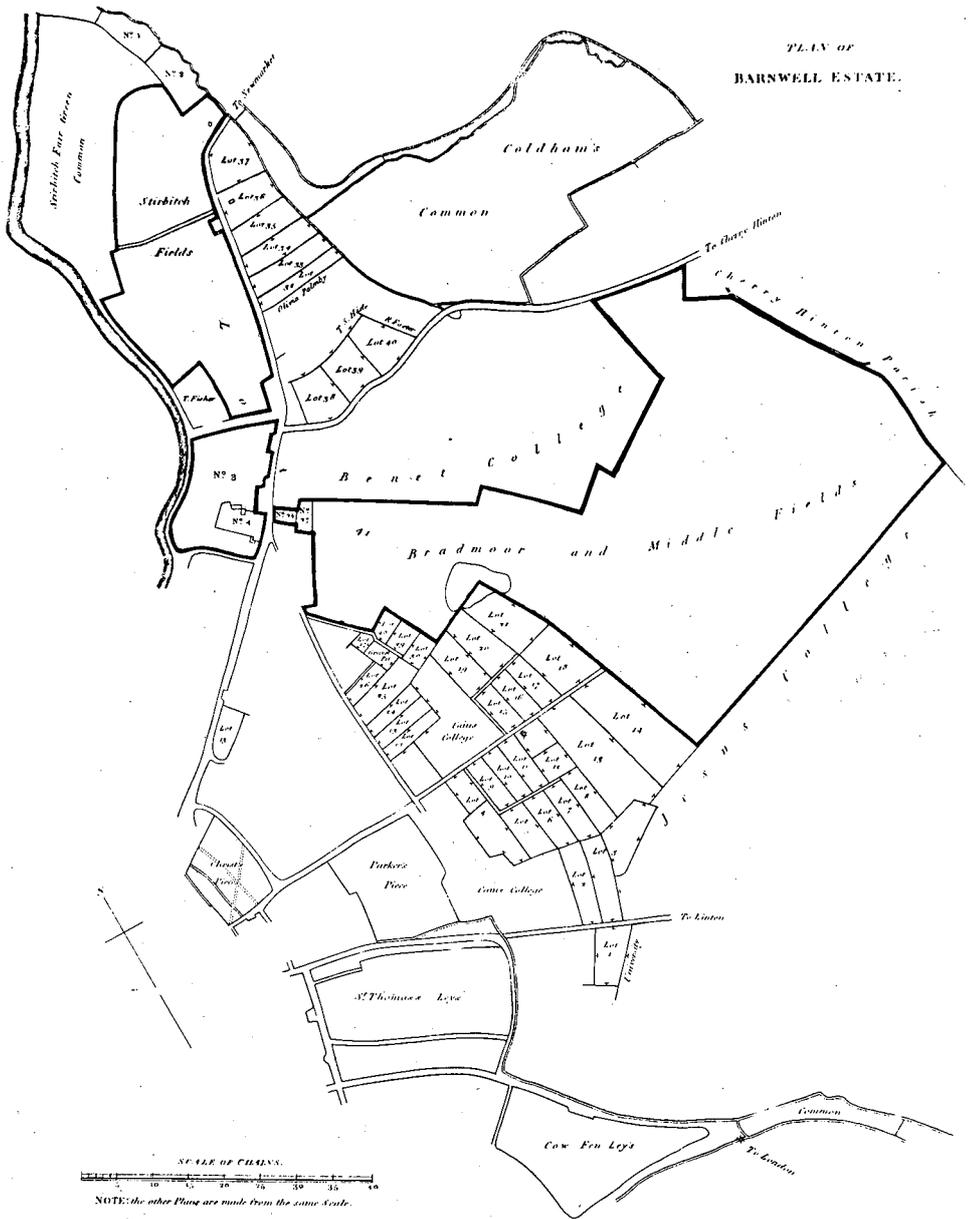


Fig. 1. Auction catalogue plan 1809. Barnwell Abbey Farm outlined.
(Courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.
Ref: Maps PSQ.18.458



Fig. 2. Detail from Cooper's map of Cambridge, 1830. (Courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. Ref: Maps BB 53.83.1)

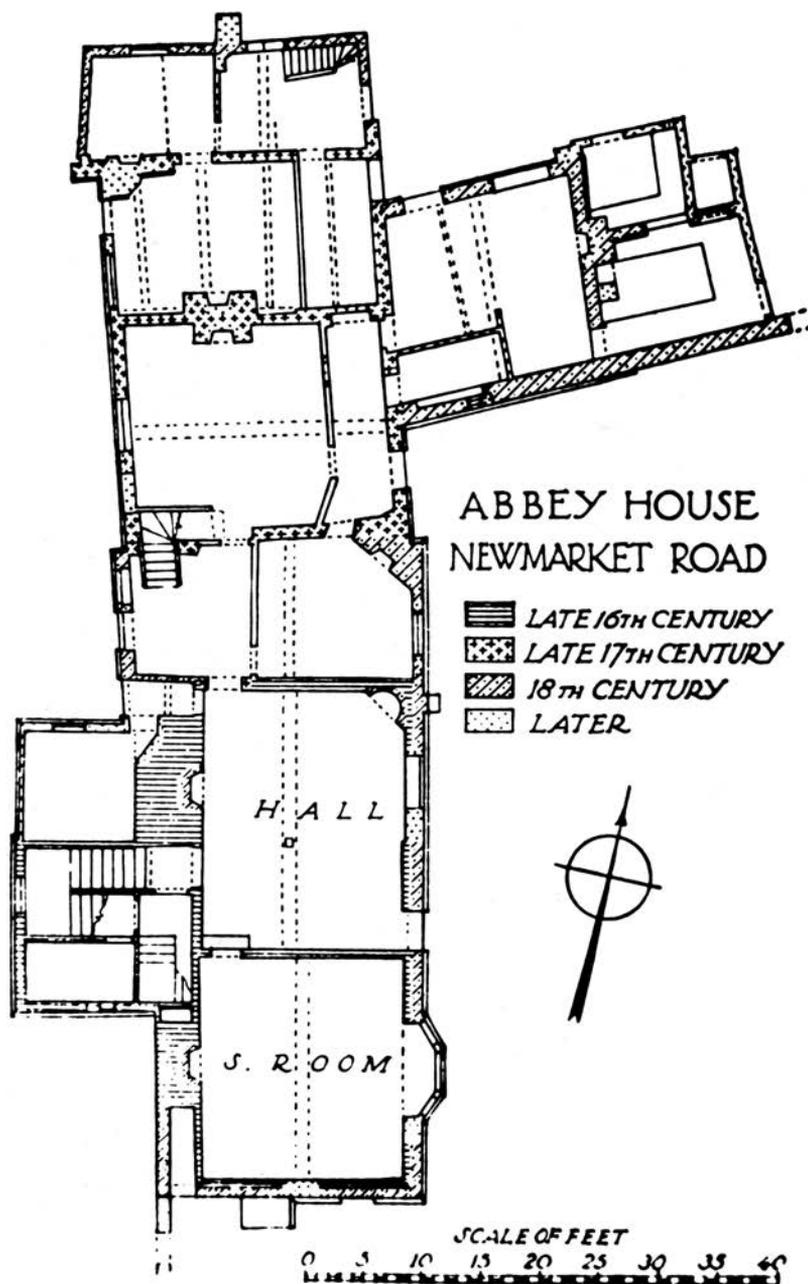


Fig. 3. Ground plan of Abbey House. (Plan by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). Crown copyright.)

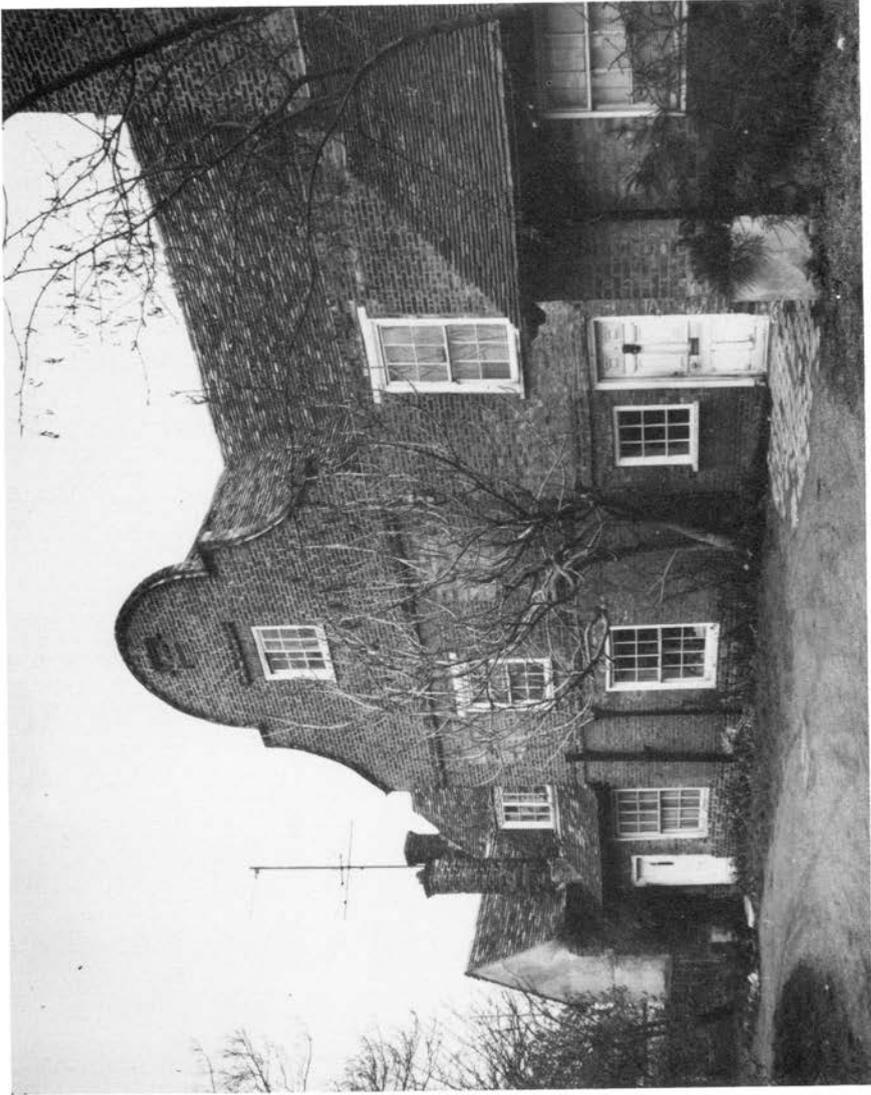


Fig. 4. The Abbey House, W. front. (Reproduced by permission of the City Architect and Planning Officer, Cambridge City Council.)

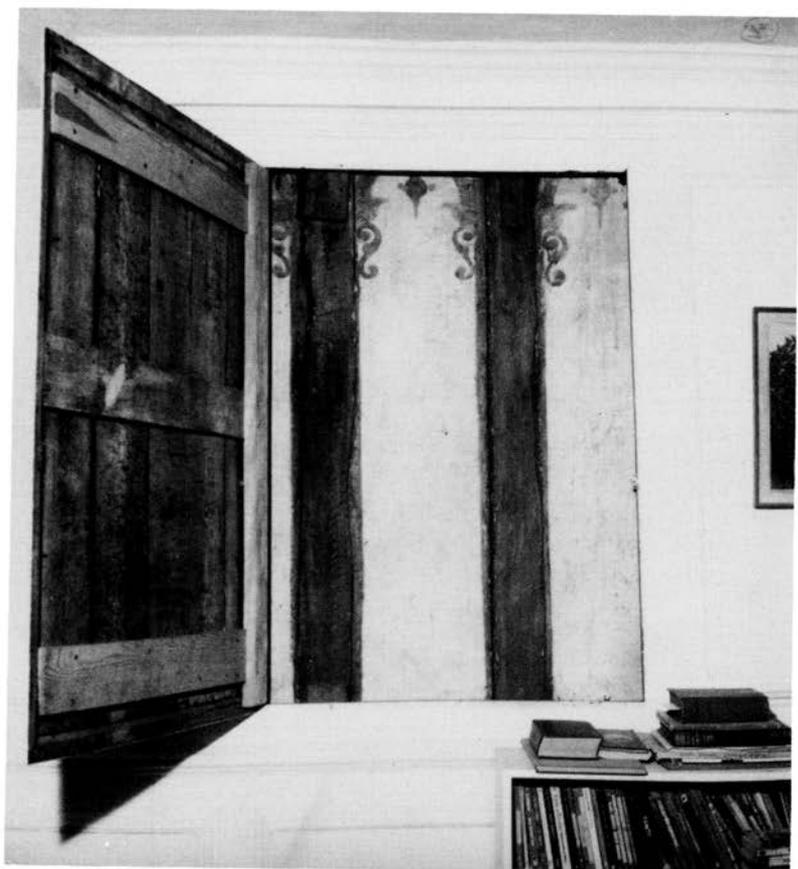
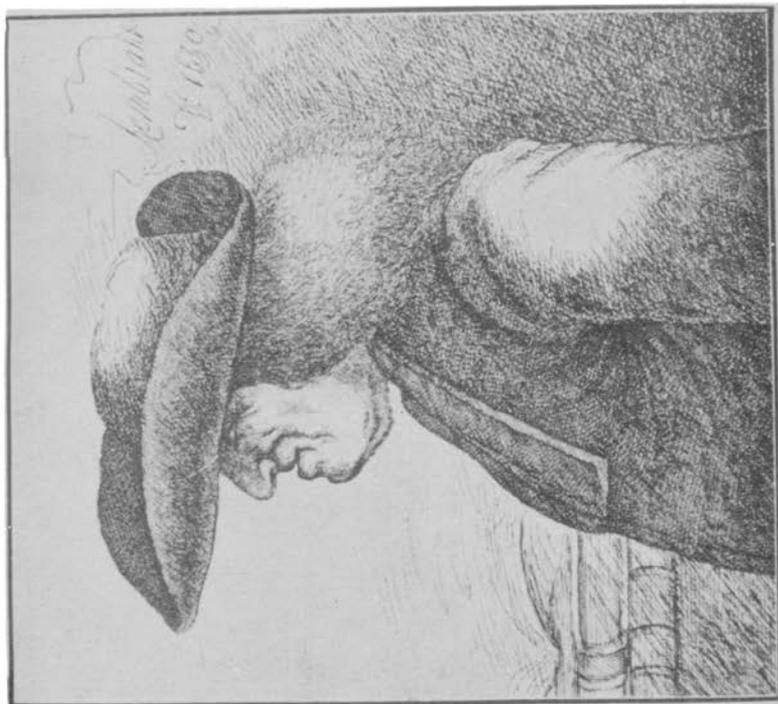


Fig. 5. The Abbey House – wall decorations behind panelling.



SQUIRE BUTLER, from an etching by Michael Tyson, reproduced from Nichols' *Bibl. Top. Brit.* Vol. V.

Fig. 7. Jacob Butler (1681-1765).



Fig. 6. Thomas Wendy III (1613-73). (Courtesy of Thomas Photos and Balliol College, Oxford.)



Fig. 8. Thomas Panton I (1697-1782). (By permission of the Earl of Ancaster; photograph courtesy of the Courtauld Institute of Art.)



Fig. 9. Arthur Askham, the last owner-occupier (about 1945). (Courtesy of Mr D. MacKay and the Cambridge Evening News.)

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