



# A Religious Census of the County of Berks in 1676.

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

*By Walter Money, F.S.A., etc.*

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## THE DEANERIES OF ABINGDON AND WALLINGFORD.

**T**HE return in the Lambeth MS. (described in previous articles) for the town of Abingdon, which has been considered as the county town conjointly with Reading, is incomplete, as the population and other particulars of the parish of St. Helen are not given. The population of the parish of St. Nicholas, with Drayton Chapel and Radley, which were formerly attached to St. Helen's, contained, as will be seen, together, a population of 960 persons; the census 1894 showing about double that number, including the large addition on the part of Radley by the staff and students of St. Peter's College. There were only three Roman Catholics in these parishes in 1676, and the somewhat large number of 106 Separatists or Nonconformists, including Quakers.

The little village of Appleton contained 39 Separatists; and at Buckland there were the comparatively large number of 32 Romanists, this parish being then the residence and chief property of the Yates family, who so tenaciously adhered to their ancient faith, and subsequently of the Throgmortons. The population of this place has only increased 47 in more than two centuries. A very striking instance of depopulation is afforded by the return from Denchworth, which in 1676 had a population of 584, which was reduced to 229 in 1801, and to 209 in 1894. To what cause this surprising diminution in the number of inhabitants is to be attributed we are unable to say, unless, as was the case at Peasemore, a great part of the village was destroyed by fire at some time or other.

Harwell and "Hinton Walrush," a corruption, like its present still more absurd suffix "Waldrist," from St. Walery, having acquired its additional name from the ancient barony of this title, had 27 Separatists, a large proportion in comparison with many neighbouring villages. This number was, however, far exceeded by the little

parish of Longworth, where 47 Separatists were found. The existence of this numerous body of Separatists was no doubt due to the example and influence of the notorious Harry Marten, the chief owner of the place who distinguished himself by his zealous hatred of the Church and State, of which he gave the finishing proof by signing the death warrant of his Sovereign.

Shrivenham, once a small market town, appears to be another instance of depopulation, as the parish contained 650 persons in 1676, whereas in 1894 it numbered only 635, exclusive of the hamlets of Bourton, Fernham, Longcot, and Watchfield. But if these places were included in the 1676 return there would be a material increase in the whole population at the present day.

The Deanery of Wallingford presents few features for comment, except what seems to be the very small population in the combined parishes of St. Peter, St. Mary-le-More, and St. Leonard—only 628. Taking the proportionate population of the remaining parishes of All Saints with Clapcote and the Castle (extra-parochial) the number would not amount to more than about 850. This small number of inhabitants was probably due to the ruin the town underwent during the siege of 1646, when the churches of St. Peter and St. Leonard, with a considerable portion of the town, were laid low, and the ancient castle, which regal armies had once besieged in vain, was almost levelled to the ground. The population appears to have been almost stationary for a very considerable period, and in 1801 only amounted to 1,744 inhabitants, but since that time there has been a gradual, though steady, increase.

The important towns of Faringdon and Wantage do not find a place in these returns, a probable explanation being that as the vicarage of the former place was under the peculiar jurisdiction of the Dean of Salisbury and the latter rectory appropriated by the Dean and Chapter of Windsor, these bodies separately undertook to furnish their part of the enquiry.

#### DEANERY OF ABINGDON.

Parishes.	Ministers.	Popish Recusants.	Separatists.	Inhabitants.
V. Abingdon (S. Hel.) ... ..		—	—	—
{ Radley.....				
R. { Drayton Chapel .....	Miles Sutton ...	03	106	960
{ Abingdon, (St. Nich.)...				

DEANERY OF ABINGDON—*continued.*

Parishes.	Ministers.	Popish Recusants.	Separatists.	Inhabitants.
R. Appleton .....	Richard Delphin (Cur.) .....	00	39	175
V. Ardington .....	Thomas Price...	03	02	217
R. Ashbury .....	.....	—	—	—
R. Besselsley .....	James Martin ...	00	04	078
V. Buckland.....	Joseph Wright...	32	02	700
R. Burwdscott .....	Walter Hunger- ford .....	01	10	120
R. Childrey .....	Thos. Pocock (Cur.) .....	00	10	150
R. Chelton .....	Thomas Law- rence .....	00	00	048
V. Colshill .....	John Pinsent ...	00	06	113
V. Comner .....	John Longford	04	07	572
R. Compton Beauchamp...	Edward Hillary	00	05	058
V. Coxwell Mag .....	.....	—	—	—
V. Denchworth .....	William Millner	00	02	584
R. Dudcott .....	Roger Maunder (Cur.) .....	00	06	080
V. Eaton Hastings .....	John Orchard...	02	01	050
R. East Hendred.....	Robert Norris...	03	08	300
V. West Hendred .....	Thomas Waight	00	11	240
V. Hagbourne .....	Robert Grey ...	00	00	230
V. Hanny.....	Wm. Rawlins (Cur.) .....	00	00	200
V. Harwell .....	Jo. Sayer.....	00	27	280
R. Hatford .....	Wm. Hathaway	00	00	094
R. Hinton Walrush .....	Matth. Abel (Cur.) .....	00	27	200
R. Kingston Bagpuze .....	Robert Salterne	00	00	098
R. Letcombe Bassett .....	Tho. Aldworth (Cur.) .....	00	17	119
West Challow Cap.....	R. Hall (Cur.)			
R. Lockings .....	Tho. Upton ...	00	00	180
R. Longworth .....	John Dale .....	00	47	394
V. Marcham.....	Thos. Boyly (Cur.) .....	01	12	346

DEANERY OF ABINGDON—*continued.*

Parish.	Minister.	Popish Recusants.	Separatists.	Inhabitants.
R. Milton .....	William Blissett	00	02	075
R. Pusey .....	Wm. Rite .....	00	07	036
R. Shellingford.....	Dr. Richard Clayton .....	00	00	120
V. Shrivenham .....	Dr. Benjamin Woodroffe ...	01	17	650
V. Sparsholt .....	Robt. Skeafe ...	00	10	270
V. Stanford in Vali .....	Lawrence Pococke	00	15	260
V. Steventon.....	Thomas Bennett	01	03	200
R. Sunningwell.....	Hons. Jones ...	00	00	196
V. Sutton Courtney .....	Wm. Pound ...	} 2, 5 or 6 ffamilys		344
R. Tubney .....	Dr. Thos. Drope	00	00	024
V. Uffington.....	Robt. Greene ...	01	14	383
V. Witnam Comts. ....	John Bickley ...	00	08	195
R. Witnam Parva } <i>alias</i> Abbots }	Robert Morgan	01	01	071
R. Wightham .....	Anth. Hodges...	00	00	120

## DEANERY OF WALLINGFORD.

R. Ashton Tyrold .....	Devereux Bellin- ger (Cur.) ...	00	00	111
V. Bassledeane.....	James Gatfield (Cur.) .....	00	01	395
R. Brightwell .....	Robt. Townsend (Cur.) .....	00	09	234
V. Choulsey .....	Wm. Wootton...	01	05	405
V. Streatley .....	Joseph Janeway	07	03	283
V. No. Morton.....	Devereux Bellin- ger .....	00	00	108
R. So. Morton .....	Zacheus Breedon	01	03	154
R. Wallingford—				
„ St. Peter .....	} Dan Bevan .....	09	69	628
„ St. Mary .....				
„ St. Leonard.....				

We may remark, in conclusion, that in looking through the lists of names recorded in the registers and other documents belonging

to the various Nonconformist denominations in the seventeenth century it is surprising to find how few of their direct descendants alienated from the Church of England. Though this is not surprising when we consider that the original causes for which men took such a serious step as making a schism in the ranks of the Church have been all practically given up. The objections to the use of the surplice, the ring in marriage, kneeling at the Lord's Supper, ornate and beautiful churches, the use of Liturgical forms, observance of festivals, the need of an episcopacy—have been, or are being, abandoned one by one, yet these things were once fiercely denounced as doctrines of devils, and rags of popery. May we not hope that mutual good feeling will in the future accomplish the return of the descendants of all those who formerly felt conscientiously compelled to go out from amongst us. The causes of separation have proved inadequate ; why should the separation continue ?

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## Alfred the Great's Jewel.

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**T**HE Ashmolean Museum at Oxford contains the celebrated Alfred Jewel which is of priceless value as a historic relic, as well as a fine specimen of artistic metal work of the Saxon period. Its chief interest, however, to most Englishmen will be the fact of its having belonged to one of the earliest and greatest makers of England, and that its identity is absolutely authentic.

The following account of the relic is taken from Garham's *History of St. Neot's*, and gives what is known of its history and preservation :—

“ This Jewel was found, 1693, at Newton Park, some distance north of Athelney Abbey, in Somersetshire, near the junction of the Parrot and the Thone . . . it is now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.