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QUAKERISM IN CAMBRIDGE BEFORE THE ACT OF TOLERATION
(1653–1689)

LAUREL PHILLIPSON

INTRODUCTION
In historical terms, the formation of a new religious movement depends upon the combination of a popular enthusiasm, generally fuelled by social discontent, combined with a charismatic leadership able to give a definite form and purpose to the movement. Consolidation of that which had been revolutionary and prophetic into a new orthodoxy is a subsequent stage, generally undertaken by a young leadership grown older and more conservative or by a new generation. These strands may be seen clearly in the history of Quakerism in seventeenth-century Cambridge, sometimes picked out as separate elements contributing to the life of the Society of Friends in the area, sometimes twisted into a single skein. The absence until late in the century of a formal system of church government and the deliberate and continued absence of any clerical hierarchy or professional theology permitted the movement to reflect and respond to its intimate connection with the popular struggle for economic and political, as well as for spiritual and intellectual, emancipation.

THE BACKGROUND
And surely, when I set before me the condition of these times, in which learning hath made her third visitation . . . as the excellency and vivacity of the wits of this age: the noble helps and lights which we have by the travails of ancient writers; the art of printing, which communicateth books to men of all fortunes; the openness of the world by navigation, which hath disclosed multitudes of experiments, and a mass of natural history; the leisure wherewith these times abound, . . . the present disposition of these times at this instant to peace; . . . I cannot but be raised to the persuasion, that this third period of time will far surpass that of the Graecian and Roman learning . . . [Bacon, 357–8].

As Sir Francis Bacon suggests, writing in 1605, the sixteenth century had been one of intellectual ferment and heroic optimism. During that century a new and radical idea first gained wide currency in England: that individuals could through observation and experiment learn truths which were not previously known. It is hard now to realize just how radical this idea was, though it was sufficient when spread about the country and taken in all its ramifications to destroy much of the authoritarian basis of traditional society. That century saw the first published English bibles, the dissolution of monasteries, and the spread to intellectuals and to the rising middle class of ideas once advocated by a few heretics. Here is not the place to trace the way the general climate of intellectual emancipation spread from the better educated to the general public, from London to the seaports and county towns, against the opposition of the traditional authorities: priests, magistrates and scholars. Nor can we do more than mention the way in which aspects of the Protestant Reformation, the ‘new learning’ in mathematics and applied sciences in contradistinction to the literary traditions of the universities, the translation of classical writings into English, and the wide publication of almanacs and textbooks were all closely interwoven and all contributed to the intellectual excitement and cultural instability which reached its peak at about the time of the Civil War.

By simply translating Bacon’s celebration
of vivacity of wit, knowledge communicated to men of all fortunes, openness to new experiences and multitudes of experiments to a religious sphere, we might almost have a synopsis of the message of the early Quakers, so closely did seventeenth-century Quakerism reflect and give expression to the spirit of its time. It was a radical and youthful spirit; and we need not be surprised that many of its earliest advocates, including George Whitehead and James Parnell, who was active in Cambridge until shortly before his martyrdom in Colchester at the age of nineteen, were themselves young men and women. It is not a long step from the writing of Francis Bacon cited above to the countryman and weaver, George Fox's father, who, in 1654, thwacked his cane upon the ground, and said, 'I see, he that will but stand to the truth, it will carry him out' (Fox 1694, 190). Everywhere truth was becoming recognized as something separate and distinct from traditional authority, valued for its own sake regardless of its source. A single spirit was at work in the science, the politics and the religion of the time. The early Friends saw this spirit in religious terms and they insisted that God's inspiration, not formal rules and academically trained priests, should govern their lives.

Not everyone was able to appreciate the restless, striving and opinionated climate in which they lived. Many were confused by the widespread rejection of traditional values and some at all levels of the social scale resorted to personal initiatives and mob actions which led them into Ranters, anarchy or mindless violence. It was also during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that many of the modern English principles of justice were hammered out and refined by bitter experience. While Quakers nationally bore a large share in helping to shape the country's legal system – William Penn's famous defence of the rights of the jurymen at his own trial is only one such example – this is a theme which will appear mainly by implication when we look more closely at developments in Cambridge.

In 1675 some of the collected works of James Parnell were published, prefaced by several testimonies written by prominent Friends. In one of these Stephen Crisp of Colchester refers to the situation in Essex twenty years earlier as something already of the past which all might not then recall. His comments might equally have applied to Cambridgeshire.

For very many there was in that County, who were both weary and heavy laden with their Sins, and were as weary with running to and fro, to seek a Way out of them; and having travailed all Mountains, and all Hills and High Things, that could be travailed and tryed, and found no Deliverance; and some sate down concluding, If there was a Way God would manifest it; others concluded, There was no Way, but we must Dye in the Wilderness, and never see the Bread of Life; some others set their Wits on work, to find out and invent New Ways and Manners of Worshipping, but all was in vain; and great was the Darkness and Sorrow of those Days . . . [Parnell 1675, prelims 4].

In such times, all who spoke with an almost electric conviction, as did many of the early Friends, were bound to attract an alert audience; and their persistence in the face of real hardship could not but win them many converts. When George Fox died in 1691, Friends, of whom there were an estimated fifty- to sixty-thousand, were the largest group of nonconforming Christians in England and Wales and comprised an estimated one per cent of the total population (Rowntree 1904, 34).

Those who represented the established orthodoxy of Church and State, whatever the orthodoxy of the moment might be, recognized Quakers as advocating an independence which they could not control and which threatened their own positions in the existing social order. Staunchest of all defenders of traditional values were the universities, whose members, protected by the prevailing government, studied classical authorities in a traditional manner to prepare themselves to rule and administer the sacraments of the established church. Consequently, much of the earliest history of Quakerism in Cambridge is taken up with conflicts - not always verbal - between Friends and members of the University community. Enthusiastic Friends sometimes felt inspired, as we shall see, to denounce members of the University to their faces, while students and scholars could be extreme in their responses to what they regarded as the impudence of Friends. In
these early disputes some Cambridge aldermen and other town officials were to be found on either side, a few actively supporting Friends and others apparently remaining aloof. Townspeople and countryfolk who joined with Friends were of the same classes as generally supported the 'new learning' in all its branches. In Cambridge we know of James Allen, a barber/surgeon; William Brazier, a shoemaker; the aldermen James Blackley and Thomas Nicholson and their families; and merchants, day labourers, landowners and farmers, as well as townspeople who for a while flocked to the Quaker Meetings whether or not they actually identified themselves with the Friends.

Perhaps the earliest local popular movement with which we need be concerned was the opposition to the fen drainage schemes advanced in the second quarter of the seventeenth century by the Earl of Bedford who, together with thirteen associates, proposed to finance the drainage in exchange for a grant of 95,000 acres of the newly drained land. Had the scheme, which had royal support, been successful it would have deprived all who had no legal title to the land, but whose ancestors had inhabited and used it for more generations than anyone could remember. Not only were cottagers and fenmen threatened, but also the farmers and yeomen of the neighbouring uplands who pastured their cattle on the lush fen commons during the drier months and the townspeople who feared that drainage schemes would destroy their water-based trade. All used the fens by custom rather than by deed; and all saw their lives and livelihoods threatened.

From the late 1630s, and especially after his election to Parliament in 1640, Oliver Cromwell, who was himself a farmer renting land near St. Ives in 1633 and dependent upon fen grazing for his cattle, assisted the fenlanders in their protests against the drainage scheme, and especially against its disregard of local needs and of the rights of the poor. Probably it was largely on the strength of his position as a champion of local rights that Cromwell was able in the years 1642-44 to raise from Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and the Isle of Ely a determined body of men who opposed the king for political and economic reasons. Many of these men, the nucleus of the New Model Army, followed a local leader in a national cause for local reasons.

During the Civil War, fenlanders took the opportunity to destroy dikes and ditches and to re-occupy land from which they had been evicted, but in 1649 the drainage project on the Bedford Level was revived, Oliver Cromwell giving military protection to the engineers and prisoners of war engaged in the work and himself receiving a grant of 200 acres of the new land. The fenlanders then had reason to feel betrayed by their leader in the cause for which they thought they had fought. On a national level, too, many were learning that the new political order was for them no better than the old; and many within and without the army turned to the Levellers in their campaign for economic and social justice; and, as that movement was suppressed or outmanoeuvred, to the Quakers and their religious inspiration.

Many of the issues supported first by the New Model Army, then by the Levellers and the Quakers were identical: respect for the equal worth of every man, a desire that legal justice should apply to the poor and rich alike, mistrust of unearned wealth, opposition to tithes and to appropriations of common lands, the right to assemble at will and to have local and national grievances recognized by whatever government was in power. It is thus not surprising that some of the particular expressions given to these aims—such as a refusal to remove one's hat before so-called social superiors—were identical. Whether expressed in religious or in political terms, much of the theoretical justification of these movements was biblically inspired; and in many instances the same individuals were involved, changing from one political/religious allegiance to another, depending upon which was able to give the most effective voice to these popular concerns. John Lilburne, the staunch and radical Leveller, is perhaps the best known individual to have subscribed to each of these movements in turn, but he was one of many (Hill 1975, 379).

It happened, perhaps because their economic and social ideals were based on strong religious convictions, that the Quakers endured the longest; and to them were attracted some of Cambridge's most radical thinkers and protesters, men and women who had a passionate conviction in the divine rightness of their faith.

Evidence on the development of Quakerism in seventeenth-century Cam-
bridge is various. For the 1650s and 60s there are published accounts of the first visits of Friends travelling in the ministry: Mary Fisher, George Fox, James Parnell, George Whitehead and others. There are pamphlets of debate and controversy and some lists of the names of Friends who were sentenced by magistrates and jailed on a number of charges. From about 1670 onwards there are Quarterly and Monthly Meeting minute books (now housed in the Cambridgeshire County Records Office) whose generally terse entries record the changing circumstances of the meetings held in Cambridge and in the surrounding countryside. These make it clear that for most of the past three hundred and thirty years, the main local witness to Quaker beliefs has been made by Friends living on farms and in the villages of Cambridgeshire. Only during the seventeenth century and again since the resumption of Quaker worship in Cambridge in 1884 have Friends living in Cambridge itself been particularly active. Other valuable sources of information are the collection of Ely diocesan records and the well-catalogued manuscript and early pamphlet collections in the library at Friends House, in London. Among the Ely records, which are housed in the Cambridge University Library, are many dated instances of named individuals accused of not attending church, paying church rates and tithes, or having their children baptized, but only rarely can we be sure that the accused were Quakers, since a number of these testimonies were also held by members of other dissenting groups. The value of each of these collections is much enhanced by the knowledge and helpfulness of its custodians.

For readers wishing for more background information, the most important early exposition of Quaker theology is An Apology for the True Christian Divinity by Robert Barclay, first published in Latin in 1676 and in English two years later. More recent summations are included in, inter alia, Geoffrey Hubbard's Quaker by Convincement and Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends. The latter is published with periodic revisions by the London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, as is its companion volume, Church Government. Braithwaite's The Beginnings of Quakerism is the standard modern history of early Friends. The Journal of George Fox, Sewel's The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the People Called Quakers and Besse's A Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers, which was compiled at the behest of Friends nationally, are among the more useful older histories.

CONTENDING SPIRITS, 1653–1659

The Lord hath brought us to see the Education and fitting of the hireling Priests to their Ministry at Oxford and Cambridge, to be set up in the Apostacy, where there was a degenerating from the state of the True Church of Saints . . . these Priests have told us that Revelation and Inspirations from Heaven are long since ceased, contrary to Christ and his Apostles Doctrine, and therefore it is against our Consciences to sit under their Ministry, which they never received (nor had Commission for) from God [Whitehead 1661, 7–8].

The earliest event involving Friends in Cambridge, as recorded in Besse's great Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers was the visit of Elizabeth Williams and Mary Fisher in December 1653, when they discoursed with some scholars of Sidney Sussex College in what seems to have been much more a slanging match than a reasoned debate.

Whereupon the Scholars began to mock and deride them: The Women, observing the Froth and Levity of their behaviour, told them they were Antichrists, and that their College was a Cage of unclean Birds, and the Synagogue of Satan. Such severe Reprehensions are usually most offensive to those who most deserve them: Complaint was forthwith made to William Pickering, then Mayor, that two women were preaching: He sent a Constable for them, and examined them. . . . The Mayor grew angry, called them Whores, and issued his Warrant to the Constable to whip them at the Market-Cross till the Blood ran down their bodies; and ordered three of his sergeants to see that Sentence, equally cruel and lawless, severely executed [Besse: 84–5].

A short anonymous pamphlet published in
the following year makes it clear who was responsible for this dramatic reception: 'These are to give notice to all men, that none of the justices of the Town had any hand in this barbarous and unlawful act, saving Mr William Pickering Mayor . . . .' Subsequently, an increasing number of travelling Friends felt called to testify in Cambridge where they were received apparently with a sort of hostile curiosity. For although Friends may previously have been little known in Cambridge, many were aware of their preaching and activities in other parts of the country.

The next that we know to arrive on the scene was James Parnell, who in July 1654 posted in the market place two papers denouncing in general terms the corruptions of magistrates and priests. For these he was imprisoned for about six months before being tried by an assize court for publishing seditious and scandalous papers. The jury found that the papers bearing his name, and which he identified as such in court, were indeed his, but did not allow the charge against him. He was released by the court, but given a pass which identified him as a 'Rogue and Vagabond' and escorted from the town. According to one account, he stopped about three miles out of town, where he was visited the next day by a friendly magistrate and where he affected many conversions (Smith 1906, 40). Parnell remained in and near Cambridgeshire, preaching and holding meetings wherever he could gather an audience: in Fenstanton, Littleport, Ely (where he established a regular Meeting of about sixty Friends) and Soham, where he was arrested on a first day, the 18th of the 3rd Month (May) 1655. Alderman Blackley sent a warrant for his release the following day; and that is our first named reference to any Cambridge resident who had joined or was about to join with the visiting Friends in forming a local Quaker community.

Most conspicuous of Parnell's opponents in debate were not members of the established church, but the Baptists who were also busily seeking converts in and around Cambridge. He published an account of one of these debates, held in early 1655 at the instigation of Mr. Hind, a Cambridge tanner.

Several times when I have come to the Town of Cambridge, I have heard a Rumour of a Boasting and Daring that sprung from the People called Baptists . . . concerning a Dispute with me . . . therefore I being in the Town, sent them Word . . . to let me know their Minds in writing, if they intended such a Thing. . . . And so it was concluded to be of the Twentieth Day, called Friday, of the Second Month, called April: So when the Hour came which was appointed, we were disappointed of the Meeting-Place which the Baptists had provided . . . So then they would have had us to have met in the Yard, but there could be no Order for Multitude of Rude People and Brutish Schollars . . . so I passed to a Friend's House hard by, and there continued declaring the Truth, as I was moved, to the People, and there the idle Drones followed . . . with their Turbulent, Vain Contending Spirits, Opposing and Gainsaying the Truth . . . So then word came, that the Baptists were in the Shire-House, in the Castle-Yard, and had sent for me: and so I went up thither . . . So then I passed into the Castle-Yard, then the wild and brutish Schollars, who had plotted together (as I was after informed) to abuse me, and they flocked together about me like Wild Beasts of the Forest, and there I was tossed as amongst the Raging Waves of the Sea to & fro, and at last was hurried into a House, where I got shut of those Caterpillars, which the Nation swarms with . . . Oh Cambridge: Is this the Fruit of thy Ministry which thou hast so long professed . . . And are these thy Professors of Divinity? [Parnell 1675, 196–207].

Also present at the time of this debate were two other Friends travelling in the ministry: Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill. These two remained at Alderman Blackley's house while Parnell went on to Castle Hill. That same evening a meeting of Friends and some others was held in a private house and, the following day, two meetings 'in a yard, at which many persons were convinced' (Blackhouse 1828, 49). As near as it can be pinned down, that evening meeting in April 1655 may represent the start of regular Friends Meetings in Cambridge. That we read of meetings being held in a private house, probably that of James Blackley, in the Shire House and in an open yard (probably in Littleport, see Burrough and Howgill 1654) implies that Friends were not yet numerous enough or long enough established to require
Plate 1. Part of Loggan's plan of Cambridge in 1693, showing buildings with a courtyard on the north side of Jesus Lane, adjacent to the King's Ditch, site of the present Jesus Lane meeting church. (Cambridgeshire Council Library.)
QUAKERISM IN CAMBRIDGE BEFORE THE ACT OF TOLERATION (1653–1689)

[Some other text]

their own meeting places. Four years later they had a hired house near Sidney Sussex College, close to Alderman Blackley's (Plate 1). Not quite fifty years later, the site of the present Jesus Lane Meeting House, opposite Sidney Sussex College, belonged to Ann Docwra and was given by her to Friends.

Among other nationally significant Friends appearing in Cambridge in 1654 and 1655, and mostly ending up in prison, were: Thomas Ayrey, Richard Hubberthorne, William Caton, Ann Wilson, Ann Blakling (who, despite contemporary variations in the spelling of both names, was unrelated to James Blackley), Margaret Killam, Myles Halhead, James Lancaster and George Whitehead. Clearly, Cambridge was receiving much attention from travelling Friends; and they preached with considerable success. 'Here is a pritty people in Cambridge, whom ye Lord is making his power known in' (Hubberthorne 1655). It has been estimated that in the decade from 1654 to 1664 Quakers constituted about 1.6 per cent of the Cambridgeshire population, approximately twice the national average (Reay 1985, 29); future research may show that this is an underestimate. Writing to George Fox from London on the 25th of the 7th month (September) 1654, Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill said:

Writing from Balby a month later, Joan Killam described the reception which Halhead and Lancaster received upon their first arrival in Cambridge:

they came into Cambridge within an hour after Friends were putt forth of the towne, and the towne cryed out; they had putt forth some and there was more comed in . . . so the Mayor made a false warrant, to have sent them away, but there was a Friend who is a justice in the towne, was made to go after them three miles, and call in the warrant, and they left Friends three miles off from Cambridge; and most of the town where they lay that night were convinced. There is a great convincement through Cambridge. . . . [Brown & Peckover 1888, 1–2].

It is not clear whether Joan Killam was writing from her own observation or was relaying information that had been passed on to her; however, her sister, Margaret, was in Cambridge in the autumn of 1654 and was stoned by students after she had walked through several of the colleges denouncing them one Saturday midday (Braithwaite 1912, 295).

Richard Hubberthorne's letter to Margaret Fell dated 6th month (August) 1654, may indicate the date and circumstances of a somewhat unusual confession by a fellow of Trinity College, quoted below.

I was moved to go from London to Cambridge, James Parnell, & Ann Blackline is there in prison, I stayed there 11 days . . . many are convinced there of ye truth and some are brought under ye power, And into obedience, & there are several scalars convinced . . . and doe confesse it, but stumbles at the cross . . . . We had five meetings while I was there, And many came to ye Meetings . . . but ye rage & malice is great in that Town.

One of the university scholars who, according to Hubberthorne, stumbled at the cross – that is, failed to renounce his university connections and adopt all aspects of Quaker testimony – could have been James Jollie. In an undated manuscript he wrote:

I declared in Trinitie Colledge in Cambridge, that we in this place called Universitie were onlie keepers of the Letter of the Scriptures and might be void of the Spirit, that the scriptures bore witness of the great mysterie, Christ in us the Hope of Glorie, & that now Christ was born in those people called Quakers, where upon I cut my name out of the Butteries, which signifies a leaving of the colledge, and after a Day it came into my Mind to put it in again and to give in the following paper

1 [some other].
to them of Trinity Colledge in Cambridge. . . . I deny to receive the profits of this place as formerly, namely for this end, to bring up Youth to be Ministers of the Gospell. . . . and for my necessaries I will not be idle, but as I have already declared in the Town, be ready to help any Poor Man that want necessaries with my Strength, & with my Knowledge in the Tongues or otherwise further the propagation of the everlasting Gospell revealed in the Quakers unto the whole world

'James Jollie'

I do profess my selfe to continue in the said Colledge as a keeper of the Letter of the Scripture that it may not be corrupted . . . . till such time as the Light and Life shall find that there is no need of an outward witness . . . . I am likewise ready to own any other art or science that is not curious, but necessary for the common good. . . . that which was set down in the former paper was declared to Oliver Cromwell, with a narration of my proceedings in the colledge and their dealings with me thereupon.

Also in the late summer of 1654, 'after the harvest', George Whitehead arrived in Cambridge, having walked there from Lincoln in less than three days. He was then about eighteen years old; and on this occasion seems to have stayed only a short while before going on to Norwich.

At Cambridge I was received kindly by Alderman Blakeling2 and his wife, and by those few Friends there. James Parnel met me before I went thence, and we were comforted together, among those Friends when we met . . . [Whitehead 1725, 22].

As a young man, Whitehead was particularly active preaching, disputing and establishing Friends Meetings in the Eastern Counties. He returned to Cambridge for a longer stay in 1659. Despite the many contentions in which he was involved, his writings have a less excited quality than do some others of the period, which seems to make him a particularly trustworthy witness.

Most of the individuals mentioned so far were travelling Friends, or 'publishers of the Truth', whose preaching and examples were intended to stir up the consciences of their auditors and assist in the establishing of separated or particular meetings of locally resident Friends. These travelling missionaries were supported by local contributions and hospitality and, when necessary, by Friends nationally. An item in the 1655 accounts sent to Margaret Fell at Swarthmore Hall by the administrators of funds used 'in the service of Truth', was ten shillings paid to Ann Wilson in Cambridge Castle, most likely for the purchase of her food and bedding while she was imprisoned there (J.F.H.S. 1909b).

Prominent among the first Cambridge Friends was the alderman James Blackley, mayor of Cambridge in 1649. He was born at Ramsey, Huntingdonshire in about 1586, was a Cambridge town treasurer in 1629 and high constable in 1642. He was active in serving the Parliamentary cause and his scouts prevented arms being smuggled into some of the colleges for use by the Royalists, though he was unable to intercept the plate which was sent from them to help finance the King. In 1647 he was a Commissioner for Taxes and in 1650 served on the enquiry into 'scandalous and insufficient' ministers. According to Gray's Biographical Notes on the Mayors of Cambridge he became a Quaker in 1659 and was soon imprisoned in Cambridge Castle. He was still there when the Commissioners for the Reformation of the Corporation came to Cambridge in 1662 and was one of the eight aldermen then removed from office (Cooper 1845: III, 503). He died in 1666.

Other local Friends included James and Ann Docwra. He was a member of an old landed family, owning two manor estates in Fulbourn and properties elsewhere in the county. His wife, born Ann Waldegrave, belonged to another of the principal East Anglian families.

James Docwra was born 1617 and joined Friends when he was a young man. In March 1655 he leased for 500 years to his brother Thomas and to Edward Peach, acting as trustees, a modest estate of pasture and arable land in Fulbourn and in Histon. The land was to be held in trust to James's wife, Ann Docwra; and out of the rents and profits from it were to be paid yearly 'to the poor people

2 [James Blackley].
called Quakers residing in the 'Town of Clare in the County of Suffolk' forty shillings. An additional three pounds were to be paid annually towards the cost of 'Travelling Preachers' Horses at Cambridge' (Stevens 1966, 27-9).

Probably sometime after James's death in 1672, Ann moved into Cambridge. In 1700 she gave the Jesus Lane Meeting House Yard estate to the Society of Friends on a 1000 year lease. In her will and a codicil dated 4th and 6th May 1710, she left bequests to several Friends, confirmed her husband's previous charities and added twenty pounds towards providing a burying place for Friends. The residue of her estate was to be distributed 'For charitable uses among the people called Quakers dwelling and residing within the Town of Cambridge and no where else' (ibid: 30). Trustees were directed to make half-yearly reports to the Monthly Meeting of the monies received and disbursed.

The Fulbourn lands comprised about 60 acres, subsequently consolidated by the Enclosure Acts to a farm known as 'Quakers Charity', located adjacent to the Cherry Hinton parish boundary and south of the Cherry Hinton/Fulbourn road. The charity was maintained until 1949, when it was sold by the Charity Commissioners and bought by the owner of the neighbouring farm.

Neither James nor Ann Docwra's names occur on any of the extant lists of Cambridgeshire Friends arrested for practising their faith in the turbulent years of the 17th century. Neither do we know that they suffered distraint of goods or any other form of persecution. However, they were active in assisting and supporting other Friends; and Ann published a number of pamphlets in defence of religious liberty. In one of these she gives a rare visual description of George Fox as a great-boned man, grown stiff with age, eating a small piece of cold salt beef and drinking bitter beer (1689, 43).

Friends such as these would have formed part of the nucleus of a local Quaker community which was already in existence by the time George Fox first visited Ely and Cambridgeshire in the autumn of 1655. At Sutton, in the Isle of Ely, he held a large Meeting which is said to have been attended by the wife of the Mayor of Cambridge. In Cambridge he and his travelling companion, Amor Stoddard, were given a rough reception by the university students who jostled them in the street and managed to unseat Stoddard from his horse.

And within night an alderman who was a Friend came to the inn to us, the people thronging up into the very chamber door in the inn. And after a while, I passed through all the multitude to his house, And as I walked through all the streets all the town was up, but they did not know me, it was darkish. But they were in a rage not only against me, but with him also, so that he was almost afraid to walk the streets with me for the tumult. So when I came into his house we sent for all the friendly people, and had a sweet heavenly meeting in the power of God amongst them and there I stayed all night [Fox 1694, 219].

While this account gives a good description of the general situation in Cambridge, it does present some difficulties, which are best explained by the fact that large portions of Fox's Journal were written or dictated by him some years after the events they describe. There are, furthermore, several seventeenth-century versions of the Journal, which differ from one another in some important respects. One version says that Fox stayed with the Mayor, not an alderman, of Cambridge on this visit.

In the autumn of 1655, the mayor was Samuel Spalding, who was reappointed in 1662 by the same commission which removed James Blackley and Thomas Nicholson from their aldermanships. While it may have been that Spalding was showing sympathy and hospitality to Friends in 1655 and his wife attended a Meeting in Sutton, there is no other evidence for such an interest. It is more likely that George Fox was entertained by the former mayor, James Blackley. It might also be conjectured that the account represents a conflation of two separate visits, the second of which could have been in 1658 or 1659 while Thomas Nicholson was mayor. Nicholson, who had been one of the town treasurers in 1633, acted on several occasions to protect Friends and their meetings. His wife became a Friend – it may have been she who attended the meeting in Sutton – and although he did not do so himself, he, like Blackley, was deprived of his aldermanship in 1662 on account of his religious views. Nickalls lists
the years of Fox's visits to Ely and Cambridgeshire as 1655, 1659, 1663 and 1670 (Fox 1694, 773). Independent evidence of a possible visit to the Town by George Fox while Thomas Nicholson was the mayor is provided by the claim of Thomas Smith, the University Librarian, to have debated with him in August 1659. However, George Whitehead, who was a chief participant in that debate, has recorded that it was another man, George Fox the younger, who was present.

The students' rowdiness mentioned in the above and other accounts sounds very like the 'town and gown' riots which were then not infrequent and which have broken out from time to time on any flimsy pretext until quite recently. On some occasions Friends were, it may be suspected, little more than the excuse for a riot which would have found some other object had they not been so conspicuously present, holding their public meetings very near the colleges, and already the target of quasi-legal abuse. On other occasions, as we have seen, some of the more enthusiastic Friends appear to have gone out of their way to challenge a response from members of the university community, whose training for a hired ministry they denounced in no uncertain terms. Many of the Quakers jailed at this early period were among those who travelled in the ministry and were not in fact local residents. In July 1656, Hezekia Haynes, the Major-General for Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire, wrote to John Thurloe, M.P. for Ely and member of the State Council in charge of intelligence, concerning Quakers in Cambridge, who

have considerable meetings. . . . This gaol is soe full, that the towne is every day full of them, that come to visite the prisoners, and make great disturbance. It's earnestly desired by the magistrates of the place, that they might be sett at liberty, as judging it would conduce to more publique peace. [Haynes 1656, 147].

In this, as in several other references, we may note the general desire of magistrates and other local officers to see that peace, common sense and good order prevailed over partisan rivalries, a situation which must have benefitted all sections of the community and which allowed a regular Friends' meeting to become established in Cambridge in spite of the opposition it encountered. Without belittling the real hardships suffered by many early Quakers in Cambridge, it should be remembered that much of the students' behaviour was not so much a deliberate attack on the Quakers as an example of the extreme boisterousness typical of the years before the Restoration. For example, in November 1657 Doctor Worthington, the newly elected University Vice-Chancellor, had a squib or cracker thrown at his study window. He records in his diary that this broke the glass, entered the room and set fire to several papers lying on the floor, but he, who must have known the students well, does not take this as directed personally against himself (Heywood & Wright 1854, 582). At Sidney Sussex, the college closest to the Friends' meeting place, discipline was notoriously poor during the mastership of Richard Minshull from 1643 to 1686. According to the College's historian, drunkenness and keeping late hours were common offences amongst the students and there were more serious incidents including hurling brickbats at College windows and an attempted burglary of the Master's Lodge (Scott-Giles 1951, 64).

During these same years that Friends were holding considerable meetings in Cambridge, a national pattern of organization was developing to which local Quakers made a substantial contribution. In 1657 a country-wide collection 'for the service of Truth' — presumably the same fund as had paid ten shillings to Ann Wilson two years previously raised £443 3s Sd. Friends from Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridge and Huntingdon together contributed £136 8s id, one-third of the total sum collected.

The years 1658 and 1659 were a time of high prices, low wages and much popular excitement and unrest. There is evidence that Friends in Cambridge were particularly numerous and lively during these years; for it was not until the Restoration in 1660 and the various acts against seditious coventicles and popish recusants that what had been sporadic clashes between various groups and individuals in the town became legally sanctioned persecution of the entire Quaker community.

In July 1659 Margaret Pryor of Longstanton brought charges against two Quakers, William Allen and Widow Morlin, whom she accused of bewitching her about two years previously, in November 1657. This was a
serious affair as a Cambridge woman had been hung as recently as 1645 on a witchcraft charge (Keynes 1956: 4). At the Cambridge assizes trial she dropped her charge against William Allen, but maintained that Widow Morlin took her out of bed from her husband in the night, and that she put a bridle into her mouth, and transformed herself into a bay Mare and rode upon her to Maddenly House, where she said they hung her on the latch of the door, and they went in to the Feast. . . . [Penny 1903, 67]

It seems likely that she was encouraged by John Bunyan to bring this charge against the Quakers. He published a now-lost paper or pamphlet relating her accusations (Tindall 1934 218-22). Another, anonymous, pamphlet The Strange & Terrible News from Cambridge. . . was published in London in 1659, repeating this witchcraft accusation, but giving the supposed victim's name incorrectly. Either both pamphlets were published before the final verdict was given on the 8th August 1659, or their authors omitted to mention that the jury took only fifteen minutes to acquit the Friends, Judge Windham noting that the case was nothing more than a dream or a fantasy.

In reply to these two pamphlets and as part of the general ammunition in the rivalry for converts which had been going on with the Baptists for several years, James Blackley together with John Smith, George Whitehead and John Harwood published, also in 1659, A Lying Wonder Discovered, and the Strange and Terrible News from Cambridge proved false . . . (Plate 2). In this pamphlet Blackley says that Margaret Pryor had attended Quaker meetings for a time, but subsequently returned to the established church; and that ‘In all this story she was plainly discovered to be an impudent Liar to say that they had Lamb at that time of the year, in November, or that she being a Mare (as she said) could distinguish the meats’.

Prior or Pryor was a not uncommon name and it is possible that there was a confusion of identities between this Margaret Pryor and Widow Prior, who was a staunchly active Friend. Widow Prior signed the petition of Quaker women opposing tithes which was presented to Parliament on the 20th of July, 1659. Besse records her death in 1661:

Of Over, an aged and religious Widow, appearing at Sessions on a Summons for absenting herself from the publick Worship, was committed to Prison, where she fell sick and died, and was buried in Cambridge Castle Yard on the 5th of the Tenth Month this year [p. 91].

Concerning Widow Morlin, there seems to be no further mention in Quaker records. George Whitehead was in Cambridge in the middle of 1659, helping to prepare the above-mentioned pamphlet, organizing meetings, preaching and debating. He wrote two accounts of his work, a letter addressed to the elder George Fox dated the 11th of the 5th month (July) 1659 and a briefer account in his autobiographical journal.

It was upon me to acquaint thee with some proceedings relating to Truth, chiefly about Cambridge. . . . The first meeting I had there was very serviceable . . . where there were pretty many sober people, and several were reached. But towards the latter end of the first meeting, there came in many rude scholars . . . after we went out of the room they would scarce go out, but had a desire to make disorder. Whereupon presently the mayor of the town came into our meeting room, like a lion among wolfish scholars . . . he chased out the scholars, and threatened them with imprisonment for their rudeness; and then the mayor went into the college, which is right over against our meeting place, and he complained of the scholars to the master or proctors of the college . . . Whereupon the scholars and the masters are much troubled, that the mayor should offer to protect our meetings; and then the mayor went into the college, which is right over against our meeting place, and he complained of the scholars to the master or proctors of the college. . . . Whereupon the scholars and the masters are much troubled, that the mayor should offer to protect our meetings; and many of them have a great spite against him. . . . Yesterday . . . we had, I think, a more serviceable meeting in Cambridge, than any we have had there yet; though towards the latter end, some of the scholars were rude, and made noises, and would have pulled me down. . . . Here is much to thunder down in this Cambridge. . . . There was John Crook in Cambridge last week, whose being there was of service: the
scholars and priests are exceedingly tormented and quashed, when any such Friends come to minister against their deceits, as they look upon to be learned. . . . William Allen was with me in Cambridge yesterday; he had only leave of the gaoler at Colchester, to come a little time into Cambridgeshire and thereaway. There is great stirrings after the Truth in many places thereaways and other places. . . . [J. Barclay 1841, 229–30].

The mayor mentioned in this letter was Thomas Nicholson and the college from which the students came must have been the particularly undisciplined Sidney Sussex. John Crook was a Bedfordshire Friend and a justice of the peace, at whose house several early yearly meetings were held. He was noted to be ‘eloquent, allegorical and mysterious’ in his ministry (Tomkins 1789: 260). This letter provides one of our earliest references to a public meeting house on or near the site of the present one in Jesus Lane.

Sixteen fifty-nine was a year of many arrests and fierce and repeated assaults against
Friends and their meetings; and especially against the preaching of William Allen, a native of Essex resident in Oakington who had become a convinced Friend as a result of attending meetings in Cambridge about five years earlier.

at length it was so ordered for the truths sake, that we suffer for, that we hired a House for a publique Meeting Place . . . and in the night time the Schollars threw stones and dirt against the Windows, and broke the Windows very much; and they shot Bullets into the Chambers at us, and flung great stones. . . . [The account continues with details of many assaults, some very violent and unpleasant.]

And when Alderman Nicholson went into the Colledge [Sidney Sussex], and told the Proctor of the Actions of the Schollars, and spoke to him to keep them quiet, he told him in plain words, he could not nor would not. . . . And Thomas Nicholson being a sober man, who was the former Mayor, understanding some thing of their filthy behaviour at our Meetings, and being sensible of their cruelty and wickedness, was Resolved the next day to come in Person, and so he did, and brought half a dozen constables with him, and so prevented their mischeivous Ends and Intentions: and the said Alderman Nicholson very boldly and valiantly stood upon a form to the view of all the people some hours, and hasrd the Truth, which was of good service to the Lord to stop the Violent [Sammon et al. 1659, 5-11].

The signatories to this account, Edward Sammon, Robert Letchworth, George Clark, Thomas Edmondson, Mary Godfrey, James Blackley, Mathew Blackley, Nicholas Frost, John Peace, Joseph Coarse, John Clark, and Alexander Parish, include some of the most active Cambridge Friends of that time.

Whitehead gives a second account of these events in his Christian Progress. This work was completed in 1711, and so may represent the mellowed memories of someone who had survived the much fiercer persecutions of subsequent years.

In the Town of Cambridge, I had (in those Days) divers good meetings, and effectual Service for the Truth, and the Meetings generally were peaceable, while I was concerned with them, the Scholars being more civil towards me than we could expect, for many of them would stand to hear the Truth quietly, with great Attention. . . . Tho' some time after I left them, I heard that Friends met with Disturbance, and some of them with hard Usage at their Meetings from some of the Scholars which I was sorry to hear, it being partly occasioned by some striving with them, not in the Wisdom of God. . . . Howbeit this I have observed, that when I and some other publick Bretheren have in a Meeting in that Place met with some opposition, if it was by any Person of Understanding or Learning, that would deport himself soberly, we could have some fair and quiet Discourse . . . and the Scholars present would demean themselves with Attention. . . . [Whitehead 1725, 167-8].

A public debate in which George Whitehead was involved is particularly interesting because of the importance accorded to it by the participants. At least five accounts of this dispute were published. Thomas Smith, B.D., the recently appointed Keeper of the University Library, specialist in Arabic, rector of Caldecote, and a lecturer in rhetoric at Christ's College, published A Gagg for the Quakers and The Quaker Disarmed or a True Relation of a Late Publick Dispute Held at Cambridge by three Eminent Quakers, Against one Scholar of Cambridge. Whitehead, then a young man of about twenty-three years, gave a lengthy account of the debate in his journal, Christian Progress, and also produced two pamphlets in answer to Thomas Smith's arguments: Truth defending the Quakers and The Key of Knowledge not found in the University Library of Cambridge. Part of Smith's account in The Quaker Disarmed is as follows.

Upon Aug. 25. 1659 the same S. having been all the Afternoon (from one a clock till four or five) in St. Johns Coll. Library turning over Arabick and other MSS. returning home wearied his nearest way, unexpectedly saw the same Whitehead preaching in the Quakers common meeting-house. So he went in, desired leave to speak: and (when Whitehead had done) confuted his Doctrine. Next day, con-
considering how apt silly women are to be led away captive by such deceivers, he sent this following Note to the Mayor of Cambridge, hoping in the conclusion to reclaim his Wife, who is a Quaker.

The mayor, Thomas Nicholson, was asked to sanction a public debate between Thomas Smith and George Whitehead. He at first tried to discourage this, but when he learned that the Quakers were willing to accept the challenge he replied that the aldermen did not wish it to take place in the Town Hall. It was finally arranged to be held in the Friends meeting house near the gate of Sidney Sussex College, on the 29th of August.

Thereupon he went and found G. Fox preaching. Esteeming it not lawful to hear him, he left the room, but entered again as soon as the sermon was done.

The debate was pursued in a crowded room to little apparent purpose and with much repetition.

Here W. Allen a Quaker interposed and made a speech to tell the people that he did not like this way of disputing and bid T.S. dispute plainly without Logick and Syllogisms and vain terms.

S. My argument is this, all Papists open a door to damnable heresies, you who wrote this book are a Papist, Therefore you who wrote this book open a door to damnable heresies.

Alderman Blackly. This S. doth nothing but say the same thing again and again.

W. I am no Papist.

S. You deny my minor: which I prove thus. He who refuseth to take the oath of abjuration is a Papist. He who writ this book refuseth to take the oath of abjuration. Therefore he who writ this book is a Papist.

W. I deny all Popery.

S. A Papist will say so too. I might charge you with many Popish Doctrines; but now I only ask whether you will take the oath of abjuration, or deny one of my propositions?

F. Here Fox who had interposed several times made a long discourse to prove that 'twas unlawful for a Christian to swear.

So it continued at length, Alderman Blackley eventually intervening to bring it to a close. George Whitehead's account of the same event in *Christian Progress* is similar to Smith's in most respects, but, significantly, he attributes the discourse against swearing to himself and says that the George Fox who was present was George Fox the younger, a convert and companion of Whitehead's not related to his more famous namesake. As with many of the published controversies of the 17th century, nobody seems to have convinced anybody of anything, although both sides claim to have won the debate.

Mention should be made of a University person who may have sympathized with Friends. This was William Dell, preacher to the New Model Army and radical Puritan master of Caius College from 1649 until the Restoration in May 1660. At least Friends were in sympathy with him; and it has not been recorded that this outspoken preacher ever opposed Cambridge Friends. Several Quaker printers continued printing editions of his sermons and writings well into the 18th century. Dell trained at Emmanuel College, became a Parliamentary chaplain in 1646 and championed the Independent party against the Presbyterians. He valued lay ministry; and it is reported that he neglected to administer the sacraments or to have psalms sung, though he frequently preached at the University Church and on occasion invited John Bunyan to do likewise. He found the abstract philosophy and school divinity of the University every bit as abhorrent as did the most ardent of the Quakers and so informed the University community repeatedly, calling degrees in divinity a 'mere invention of antichrist' (Venn 1901: 122–29). A recent biographer has concluded that, in view of the similarities of Dell's and George Fox's messages and their itineraries, the fact that they never met during a period of twenty years was no accident (Walker 1970: 187–8). That neither the Cambridge Friends nor William Dell appear to
have taken any public notice of the other must likewise have been no accident.

While the evident desire of the mayor and aldermen to maintain good order in Cambridge probably shielded local Friends from some attacks and persecutions to which they might otherwise have been subjected, it was by no means a complete protection against the actions of excited and unruly crowds, whether of students or others. Then, too, the fact that one of the most active local Friends, James Blackley, had been conspicuous in supporting the Parliamentary cause while the vehement Puritan and Parliamentarian William Dell preached something very like Quaker doctrine from the pulpit of Great Saint Mary's must have been sufficient to associate Cambridge Friends with the anti-royalist cause in many people's minds. It could well have been a factor contributing to tensions shortly before 1660 and certainly would not have been helpful to Friends after the Restoration.

As listed in Besse's great compilation, relatively few Cambridgeshire Friends were imprisoned or had goods distrained for non-payment of tithes before 1660, but in 1658 and 1659 relations with the University students were often difficult.

In their public Meetings the Scholars insulted them by breaking the Windows, throwing great Stones, and shooting Bullets in, to the Hazard of their Lives. When William Allen, who was frequently concerned to preach in those Meetings, was declaring, they would run through the Meeting-house like wild Horses, throwing down all before them, hallooeing, stamping, and making a Noise, as if several Drums had been beating, to Prevent his being heard. . . . In like manner did they abuse others of the Assembly, pulling off Womens Headclothes, and daubing their Faces with Filth and Excrements. . . . In these two Years, for Demands of 12L.9s.11d. for Tithes, were taken by Distress from sundry Persons, Goods worth 27L.4s.5d' [Besse 1753, 86-7].

It seems likely that these rather more serious incidents are some of the disturbance and hard usage to which George Whitehead refers as having taken place in the later part of 1659, after he had left the town. If so, they were precursor to the much harder times which were to follow.

FRIENDS MOST IN PRISON 1660–1689

Laws have been so multiplied against Dissenters from the Church of England that they clash one against another; some statutes are to compel people to come to Church, others are to Excommunicate them from it; there are Statutes also to make upon the same account, for Imprisoning them and spoiling them of their outward Estates, if they serve God publicly, in any other place but the National Church, although they be Excommunicated from her, and she her self professes in her Common Prayer, that the Service of God is perfect freedom. . . .

So wrote Ann Docwra in 1687. It is difficult to record the history of Friends in Cambridge, as elsewhere, in the quarter of a century from 1660 without degenerating into a mere catalogue of persecutions and imprisonments. Reasons for this lie in the well-known events of national history: the return of the monarchy seemed at first to give a free hand to royalist sympathizers to persecute whoever had previously opposed them; and just when it seemed that relief would be granted to peaceably inclined Independents, the insurrection of the Fifth Monarchy Men and subsequent events reinflamed old fears and hatreds. Between 1661 and 1665, and subsequently, acts of increasing severity were passed against those who refused to attend the national church, who met in groups of more than four to hold religious meetings, and those who refused to swear allegiance to the king. The various acts were nominally directed against 'Popish Recusants' and 'Seditious Covenicles', but were in fact executed largely against Quakers, who staunchly refused to follow the example of other Independents in only meeting privately and in secret places.

In these years both Church and State were attempting to reassert something like the old patterns of traditional authority. In a stable society, it was inconceivable that every common person be allowed to think and act for himself, although it might be permissible for some among the upper classes to do so. Quakers were largely drawn from the working and the new middle classes. Many were articulate preachers and prolific, if sometimes inelgant, writers; and they insisted on their God-given right and duty to obey their consciences rather than laws which would have
forced them to act in contrary ways. It was not law in general that Quakers opposed, but particular laws and customs: those which required them to abstain from their own form of worship and to attend and support the established church. They would not swear or subscribe to a judicial oath, as this was forbidden by Jesus (Mt 5:34); neither would they use the language and customs by which people generally acknowledged their social superiors.

As early as 1654, the possible danger of anarchy inherent in the common people taking up attitudes and actions which might be acceptable if confined to the upper classes had been recognized in the mandate by which Richard Hubberthorne was jailed in Norwich Castle. He relates that it included the charge that:

the people in a great number gathered together about me, which might have proved of evil consequence, they being the under-sort of people [Hubberthorne 1663, 37].

Less than ten years later, the fear of the under-sort of people’s self-assertion had become an important political factor. Almost any persecution could be justified if it might serve to save the country from the threat of anarchy. Friends’ resistance to both legal and illegal impositions during these difficult years preserved the integrity of the Quaker witness, but it did so at the cost of immense personal sacrifices.

The rulers’ and civil authority’s fear of the common people may help to explain why large numbers of poor and uninfluential Quakers were imprisoned both in Cambridge and nationally. Distraint of goods for non-payment of fines and tithes was also much suffered by Friends. In some parts of Cambridgeshire the collection of tithes had already become the prerogative of landlords and tithe renters who could be more exacting than the Church. When Friends refused to pay these and similar impositions, any of their possessions might be seized by the sheriff and sold, often at purely nominal values, to offset the tithes and any additional fines or charges which might be levied. We read frequently of cattle and goods worth several pounds being distrained to pay relatively small sums; and many Friends were impoverished by repeated such impositions.

Before considering the effects of the Restoration and the Coventicle Acts, it will be useful to look at the organization which supported Cambridge Friends at this time. In 1658 Alexander Parker wrote from London to Margaret Fell about ‘A Meeting at Cambridge for the Eastern Counties’ to be held on the 14th of July that year (Braithwaite 1912, 326). Even that may not have been the first general meeting in which Cambridge Friends were involved, as some organization must have existed for gathering contributions to the previous year’s collection for supporting Friends who travelled as preachers, as mentioned above. Another general meeting was held in Cambridge on the 2nd of July 1660. These would have been ad hoc meetings: the first regularly constituted body was the Quarterly Meeting for Cambridgeshire, the Isle of Ely and Huntingdonshire, first settled, or established, in 1667 (1668 by the modern calendar) and based in Earith. According to one account it comprised forty-five local or particular Friends meetings, these being the actual worshipping groups which met regularly in public meeting houses or in private homes (Brown & Peckover 1888). However, a ‘Memorial of Meetings in the Isle of Ely and Counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon as they were kept and Established in ye yeare 1668’ lists only twenty-one meetings for the whole area, including those at Over, Swavesey, Willingham, Oakington with Cottenham and Longstanton, Cambridge, Balsham, and Soham (J.F.H.S. 1909a). This corresponds with the meetings listed two years later in the oldest extant Quarterly Meeting minute book. In the Memorial, Thomas Edmuntson, Nicholas Frost, Thomas Lowther and William Brazier are cited as some of the leading Cambridge Friends.

Once established, the Quarterly Meeting met regularly to discuss Friends’ affairs and was attended by one or two delegated representatives from each of the Monthly Meetings. Representatives to the Quarterly Meeting are not named in the oldest minute book held in the Cambridgeshire County Archives, that covering the period 1670 to 1673. The first entry in the book, dated to the 7th of the first month (March) 1670, records the state of the constituent meetings thus:

Chatteris Meeting – things remain indifferent well
Haddenham – things all go pretty well  
Over – things as formerly  
Willingham – things sayd to be well there  
Hoggington, Long Stanton, Cottingham – things sayd to be well there  
Cambridge – Friends most in prison  

Much led up to this bald statement in the minute book. In April and May 1660, and again in July of the same year the regular Friends meetings in Jesus Lane were broken up by soldiers and students. Friends and the meeting house itself were both very seriously abused during these riots. James Blackley described an incident in May in a letter to Gerrart Roberts in London.

For yesterday, in our meeting-house when we had been together two hours, the soldiers came and set upon us with swords and great staves, and brake in upon us and gat smyth's hammers and brake the windows and doors in pieces, and with shivered boards and window-bars fell upon us and beat and wounded many Friends. . . . And when the house was emptied of Friends they brake down all the glass windows, the stairs, the forms, benches, chairs, etc., whatever could be broken in the house. The soldiers and scholars began and the rude people in the town made an end. Wm. Allen was much beaten and bruised.

A similar incident had also occurred a fortnight earlier, on the 13th of the third month (May) and is described in a statement in the First Publishers of Truth signed by twenty-six Cambridge Friends (Penny 1907, 13).

Twenty-nine Cambridge Friends wrote to Charles the Second to inform him of another breaking-up of the Meeting which took place in July 1660.

This is to let thee know how it is, and hath been with us, in Cambridgeshire and Town. They have been very cruel and violent towards all Friends, sparing none, neither Widows nor fatherless children, but haled all before them called Justices, and they sent all to Prison: Many Widows about sixty, some seventy Years old, and they left some of the Houses without Inhabitant, and some little Children in the Streets, without any to look after them for several Days. . . . They brought in one Day about sixteen Women, a great Part of them Widows, and most of them all very poor in the Outward, having but little but as they did earn it by Day-labour, and they put them into the Shire Hall, where they were kept all Night without any thing to lie upon, and these Women were kept about four
Days, and then the Gaoler came and thrust them out, not having any Order, and took from them the Bedding they had gotten in, and doth keep it for Fees. . . . [Besse 1753, 89].

The above was written on the 31st of the eleventh month 1660 (January 1661) by John Ainsloe, a prisoner in Cambridge Castle. It is a particularly interesting document as it reveals the extent to which Friends were able to keep in touch with and encourage one another even while in prison and also because we happen to have the list, preserved in Sir Thomas Sclater's notebooks, of the sixteen women and nine men imprisoned on that one day (Kenny 1923, 32). Included are the Alderman's wife, Thomason Blackley, and his son, Mathew Blackley, William and Helen Allen, Reuben Stevens, Robert Letchworth, Thomas Edmundson and some others whose names occur in several contexts as active among Cambridge Friends.

Since women's names do not usually appear on Friends documents and letters of this period it is difficult to assess how influential they may have been in local Friends' affairs. However, following hard on the events of the previous week were two further arrests mentioned in Thomas Sclater's notes for the 4th and the 7th of February:

Thomas Clark, Quaker, committed to the Tolbooth by Rule, the Constable, being taken with John Page, a tailor, and about twenty women at a coventicle at the Quakers' house over against Sidney.

. . .

Joseph Cole, Quaker, committed to the Tolbooth . . . for meeting that day in the coventicle over against Sidney, with 29 women, the women set free.

It would seem from these extracts that Quaker Meetings were held at least twice a week and were well attended by women Friends even when many or most of the men were unable to do so. Either these women were deliberately facing repeated arrests and brief imprisonments or there were very many who were willing to continue attending Friends' Meetings, knowing it to be very likely that they would be arrested for doing so.

It is interesting, even if it can only be very approximate, to speculate on the size of Meetings and the possible number of Friends in Cambridge at this time, when records and lists of Friends were not kept as it was unsafe to do so. It seems likely that the regular Meetings had an attendance of perhaps fifty or more Friends, since it would have been difficult for those who were so inclined to riot amongst a very much smaller gathering. As noted above, thirty were arrested at one Meeting; and at least twenty-two Friends were injured while attending another that year. We have three lists of Friends active in Cambridge in 1660: those who signed the letter to Charles the Second, those who signed the account in the First Publishers of Truth, and the list of Friends gaolled in January 1660 (1661).

Together they include the names of fifty-five men and sixteen women, with only eight names occurring on more than one of the lists. Two of the men are found on another list as well, of those who were included in the King's general pardon of May 1672 (Penny 1907, 342-7). If we make the very arbitrary and simplistic assumptions that about one half to one-quarter of all Cambridge men Friends are represented by these lists and that the number of men and women was about equal, this gives a figure of about two to four hundred active Friends, not all of whom would have lived in the town. For example, Reuben Stevens, who was imprisoned in 1660 for refusing to swear and died in prison for non-payment of tithes in 1672, was a resident of Over. The non-University population of seventeenth-century Cambridge was about 5500 (Clark & Gray 1921, 137).

Imprisonments, fines and distraints for tithes seem to have continued, though not at quite such a furious rate, for the remainder of the decade. Besse lists from five to thirty Cambridgeshire Friends who suffered on some account during each of these years, most frequently for not paying tithes and Church rates, for absenting themselves from public worship and for attending unlawful Meetings. One Friend was fined twice for opening a shop on holidays, a practice encouraged by Ann Blaykling, who had preached and been imprisoned in Cambridge Castle in 1654. She also advocated paying tithes to secular impropriators and caused some minor dissensions among Friends nationally. Four other Friends were fined for refusing to swear allegiance. It is not as serious a record of persecutions as was suffered by Friends in
some other parts of the country, perhaps because so many were already held in the gaols. A nation-wide list of Friends convicted as Popish Recusants, dated to about 1669, contains 808 names. Of all the counties listed, Cambridgeshire had the third largest number with 120, exceeded only by Westmorland with 200 names and Norfolk with 150 (Simpson 1914, 135-6). After 1660 there are no accounts of large meetings, debates or gatherings held by Friends in the Jesus Lane meeting house or anywhere else in the town or in the county. Clearly the suppression of Quakers was at least partly effective, although it was by no means total. In August 1661, the diarist Samuel Pepys rode into Cambridge in company with a Quaker hide-dealer (Whitley 1971). Outbreaks of plague in Cambridge in 1665 and again in 1666 closed the colleges and must have deterred most large public congregations for several years.

An important consequence of the wholesale imprisonments was the elimination of many of those who had been the earliest leaders and protectors of local Quakerism, so that when the structure of Monthly and Quarterly Meetings was established in 1668 several new names appear among the leading Friends, replacing those which had been familiar only a few years previously. Among those fined for holding meetings in their houses in Cambridge in 1670 we know of Nicholas Frost, William Brazier and Edward Cooke. Nicholas Frost was one of four who were kept in Cambridge Castle for six years from 1676 for refusing to pay three shillings and six pence apiece for repairs to their parish church. William Brazier, a shoemaker, was one of several against whom distress of goods was made in 1674, at which time his household goods, working tools, clothing, firewood, and even the sheets which covered the straw he used as a bed were taken from him. He was committed to prison in 1684 and released two years later; and remained an active Friend for many years, attending the first Meeting for Sufferings in London in 1676 and released two years later; and remained an active Friend for many years, attending the first Meeting for Sufferings in London in 1676 and Quarterly and Yearly Meetings until about 1711. Elizabeth Underwood of Chesterton was also fined for holding a meeting in Cambridge and Joseph Townsend, a wealthy trader at Stourbridge Fair, was fined and imprisoned on suspicion of holding a meeting at his mother's house in the town and for refusing to swear the oath of allegiance.

In the 1660s and early 1670s hundreds of Cambridge and Cambridgeshire Friends were testified against by a few informers, who hoped thereby to collect a share of the fines or distrains levied. One such informer was Stephen Perry, a tinker.

At the Quarter Sessions he used to give in the names of a hundred or more, to the Grand Quest at Quarter Sessions, to have them presented for not going to their Parish Church ... which is impossible for any one man to know, much more to swear that so many belonging to thirteen Parishes and all of them absent from their Parish Church upon one and the same day ... Perry did swear a meeting to be at the Castle in St. Andrews parish in Cambridge, to the number of a Hundred persons; and it was proved out of his own mouth that he was not there till the Meeting was done and the people dispersed, as the Constables of the parish upon Oath testified to the major [anon. 1675, 4-7].

It may be useful to remind ourselves that Quaker meetings during the seventeenth century encompassed rather more in the way of variety, frequency and length than those to which we are now accustomed. Until about 1660 Cambridge Friends conducted public debates and preaching, or 'threshing', sessions, which were regarded by some at least of their auditors, if not by the disputants and speakers, as a form of public entertainment. The audiences were sometimes quite volatile and could be large when well-known personalities were involved and when the dispute was arranged in advance, as that between George Whitehead and Thomas Smith detailed above. Impromptu debates and preaching sessions occurred whenever and wherever an inspired Friend felt that he or she might gain an audience: in the market place, at a college gate, on the street, or in a church after the sermon. Although Quakers were probably their most conspicuous practitioners, these activities were not unique to Friends. John Bunyan, for instance, preached in a barn in Toft. There were also the regular meetings for worship held on First Days and during the week in the meeting house near Sidney Sussex College, open to the public, but attended mainly by Friends and their sympathizers, and similar gatherings at Hadden-
ham, Cottenham, etc. Such meetings, which generally lasted for several hours, were frequently addressed by one or several inspired Friends and sometimes interrupted by public disorder. In addition to these were frequent smaller, private gatherings of Friends attended by the more active and dedicated Quakers as the chief means by which their ties to one another and their devotion to an arduous public life were reaffirmed. It would have been such private meetings which William Brazier, Elizabeth Underwood and the others held in their homes and not, almost certainly, the larger public meetings.

In these difficult times, Friends supported and encouraged one another by an extensive, but largely informal, system of intervisitation involving both well-known 'public' Friends and local individuals. In 1670 Edwin Cook, a Newnham miller, was apprehended and charged with attending a Meeting at the home of John Adams in Haddenham (Bester 1981, 150).

No Cambridge Friends attended the Quarterly Meetings held in Earith on the 6th of the 4th month (June) and the 5th of the 7th month (September) 1671, but by the tenth month of the same year it is recorded that affairs in Cambridge are 'pretty well' and things continued so in the following year. It was in May of 1672 that the King issued a national pardon of Friends imprisoned for refusing to take the oath of allegiance. Ten Cambridge or Cambridgeshire men were included in this pardon, which must have seemed a great respite to the Quaker community (Penny 1913). One name included on this list is that of Francis Holcroft, an important local Congregationalist Dissenter who had been imprisoned in 1663 for unlawful preaching. The others were Friends. Although pardoned with Friends, Holcroft was not in sympathy with them (Carter 1676a, 1676b).

Travelling to Earith over poor fen roads was a difficulty which kept Meetings from sending their delegates to the Quarterly Meetings held there, particularly during the winter and wet spring months. Consequently, in 1673 the large Cambridgeshire, Isle of Ely and Huntingdonshire Quarterly Meeting was split, with Cambridgeshire and the Isle constituting a Quarterly Meeting based at Haddenham which included the same Cambridgeshire Meetings as were listed in 1668. The new Quarterly Meeting met first on the 4th day of the first month (March). At this and subsequent meetings, the most usual entry for Cambridge is 'things well' or 'things pretty well', although on many occasions there continued to be the entry 'none heard' or no entry at all for Cambridge and for others of the local meetings, particularly in the winter quarter.

Occasionally some less terse entry found its way into the minute books. On the 1st day of the 2nd month (April) 1675 it was recorded that:

It is desired that women Friends may meet both at our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings according to ye order of Friends.

This would have had to do with the inclusion of women in the business affairs of Friends by establishing for them separate women's business meetings to consider in particular matters of domestic conduct and the practical relief of needy Friends and their children. It was a move strongly advocated by George Fox, but resisted by some Friends nationally who felt that women ought to have no part in the church's business and organizational concerns.

At many Quarterly Meetings during the last quarter of the seventeenth century special collections were brought in from the Monthly Meetings in aid of individual named Friends who had been distressed by fire, orphaned or were otherwise in need of assistance. From Cambridge there was usually a contribution of a few shillings to each such collection, a sum about average for all the Meetings contributing. On the 1st day of the 2nd month (April) 1676 it is recorded that Cambridgeshire Friends contributed six pounds, seventeen shillings and nine pence 'towards the relief of Friends that suffered by the late fire in Cottenham'. Two pounds, eleven shillings and six pence of this came from Cambridge itself. A separate collection was made at Wisbech and is recorded in their Sufferings Book;

the 3th of ye 7th mo 1676 collected at a meeting toward the relief of Friends that Suffered by a fire yt hapnd att Cottonham the sum of sixteen shillings five pence.

By 1677 a total of almost £104 had been disbursed to fifteen named Friends who had
suffered by this fire. Other collections made in subsequent years were 'for the service of Truth' and for the relief of poor Friends in Scotland. The readiness of Friends to look after and support one another, a particularly attractive feature of their early organization, is all the more remarkable when we recall the financial disabilities under which many of them laboured when not actually in prison.

In 1680 George Whitehead and sixteen other Friends presented to the 'King, Lords and Commons in Parliament' an account of money distrained from Friends and a list of those who had died under persecution between 1661 and 1670.

In the perusal of the following Accounts you may see what Destruction and Spoil hath been made upon our Estates within these two or three years last past, many poor Families being wholly ruined, and Tradesmen that helped to imploy and relieve others, are now so impoverished, that they are fain to shut up their shops, and to be helped themselves, and the industrious and laborious are become a prey to the rapine of dissolute and idle informers [Whitehead, Gibson et al. 1680].

It is recorded in this document that about £609 was distrained from Cambridgeshire, which was about average of all the counties listed.

During the later part of the 17th century, individual Friends remained active in upholding their religious testimonies against both church and secular charges. In 1678, Jasper Docwra, probably the father of James and father-in-law of Ann (there was in that family a Jasper Docwra born in 1607 and married at St. Edward's, Cambridge in 1632), was indicted at the Ely diocesan visitation to Bassingbourn for saying yt he is ye judge of ye whole word item yt he is ye father, yt he is ye son of man, (sometimes he says he is ye Shiloh, & yt all men shall fall downe on their knees before him, yt ye next March the payment of tythes shall be all at end.

Also in that year Thomas Farrowe junior and Maria Massor of Pampisford were indicted 'for pretending to bee Married but wee know not how, neither have they pd the feese to ye Minister'. In the following year, John Currant of St Edward's parish, Cambridge was presented 'for refusing to baptize their child And for not coming to church for 3 months last past they being reputed Quakers'.

From about 1680 Ann Docwra, who had then been widowed for a number of years, became an active leader among Cambridge Friends. Hers had been an unusual upbringing, of which she relates that when she was about fifteen her father pointed to the great Statuet book that lay upon the parlour window and bid her read that; saying it was as proper for a woman as for a man, to understand the laws, because women must live under them and obey them as well as men. . . . I have read several law books besides the Statuet book, which was very beneficial to myself and others, in the time of persecution [Backhouse et al. 1850, 63-4].

In 1680 she was one of thirteen local Friends who wrote a letter to Meeting for Sufferings to say that they had signed a statement in which they did 'Solomnly & Sincerely in ye presence of god profess, testifie & declare' their loyalty to the crown, but did not actually swear or take an oath, in exchange for a promise from Judge Montague of relief from the civil penalties which were otherwise imposed on them (Emerson et al. 1680). She began publishing her writings in 1682 when she became involved in controversies concerning the extent to which Friends should have settled forms of church government and national leadership, with an acknowledged membership and the disownment of erstwhile Friends who married non-Friends or who by their conduct brought disrepute to the Society.

Francis Bugg, clerk to the Sutton Monthly Meeting, had for some years had a grievance concerning the extent to which rural Friends were expected to meet the expenses of those who worked more-or-less full time for the Society as travelling preachers and as administrators. He seems to have been particularly jealous of Samuel Crisp, a Littleport carpenter and labourer who, according to Bugg, was enabled to travel as a preacher. In The Painted Harlot, published in 1663, Bugg relates the protests he had made at the Yearly Meeting in London in 1676 and, as further evidence of popish practices crept into Quakerism, instances the disownment of John Ansloe by Had-
denham Quarterly Meeting in 1678 for marrying a non-Friend. Bugg was himself disowned by Haddenham Quarterly Meeting in 1682 for causing dissension among Friends. Ann Docwra's first publications were in support of full liberty of conscience everywhere: 'therefore I desire in the love of God, that all may beware of those that of late Years have printed and published Books to vindicate their Formalities and Directories' (1683a, 1683b). In the same year, 1683, she went to London to look more closely into the disagreement, met George Fox and other prominent Friends, and perceived that 'the differences were too wide for me to compose' (Backhouse et al. 1850, 67).

Eventually Francis Bugg's and Ann Docwra's viewpoints diverged as the one became more extreme and the other more conservative. *An Apostate Conscience Exposed* is Ann's repudiation of Francis's writings.

In 1686 King James the Second issued a proclamation by which many Friends, including about twenty from Cambridgeshire, were released from prison. This effectively brought to a close the worst period of persecution of Cambridgeshire Quakers, a persecution which on the whole had been felt more heavily by Friends living in the villages than by those in town and which, except in the decade immediately after the Restoration, does not appear to have been as heavy in this county as it was in some others. It may have been that the University atmosphere was one in which irrational hatreds did not flourish to quite the extent they did elsewhere, despite the University's self-interested intolerance of dissent. In 1675 or 76, Dr. Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist and friend of Anne Conway, wrote to a correspondent that:

> The Quakers Principle is the most Safe and Seasonable here, to keep close to the Light within a Man. . . . [Green 1910, 8].

In later years, Dr. More wrote a number of pamphlets opposing Quakerism, but his opposition was purely intellectual and this more creditable attitude was perhaps characteristic of other leaders in the town as well.

Records of episcopal visitations made in 1676 and in 1685 help to give some idea of the extent of dissent within and outside the town, although the numbers of dissenters listed are most probably underestimates. Neither is generally clear whether the figures refer to all adult parishioners or to heads of households only. In later visitations, the numbers of families were counted. The visitation of 1676, recorded in Bishop Fleetwood's Book, is summarized as:

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Of the Cambridge parishes, only St. Clement's with 32 dissenters among 300 parishioners had many listed, the others had only a few each. Dissenters were, however, more numerous outside the town. There were 40 out of 141 at Barrington, 9 out of 103 in Barton, 43 out of 271 in Chatteris, 15 out of 160 in Chesterton, 37 out of 141 in Oakington, 42 out of 500 in Over, and 14 out of 560 in Cottenham. Besides Friends, dissenters would have included mainly Baptists and Congregationalists. Francis Holcroft owned land at and was particularly active in Oakington, where he had many followers. Among the rural parishes listed above, Friends meetings were by then established in Oakington, Over and Cottenham. In view of comments made in subsequent visitation records, and of the fifteen Friends or Friends' families who had been assisted after the fire in 1676, the number of dissenters in Cottenham seems particularly low.

The visitation record of August and September 1685 is rather more useful to us in that it distinguishes between various sects of dissenters, although it does not attempt to record their numbers. Among Cambridge parishes, All-Hallows had 'Some Dissenters, Several Quakers, one Muggletonian'; Trinity Church had 'Many Dissenters'; Saint Andrew's 'Some, not many Dissenters'; Saint Giles 'Some Dissenters Anabaptists. Some Children Unchristned'; Great Saint Mary's '3 or 4 Dissenters Excommunicated very obstinate Holdcroft's disciples. 8 or 9 will not come to Church'. Outside the town, in Haddenham 'About 100 persons ought to Communicate. Not above 30 or 40 Actually do Communicate' and the parish of Chatteris 'abounds with Quakers'. Oakington draws an especially fierce comment.

A stranger comes every Lds Day soe that there can be noe Catechizing or Holy-days.
This ye most scandalous Parish and worst in ye Diocese for ye people are most vile. A Fanatick Schoolmaster Robt. Richardson. 3 or 4 Quakers and their Families. Severall Excommunicated.

Other parishes in which Quakers were noted were Sutton, Mepal, Downham, Kampton and Barton (Bradshaw 1875, 323-61).

Passage of the Toleration Act of May 1689 had wide political implications. Under its provisions dissenters, not including Papists and Unitarians, were allowed to practise their forms of worship, providing that their meeting places were registered in the Bishop's or Archdeacon's court and that they either took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy or subscribed to declarations promising faithful allegiance to King William and Queen Mary. Most Friends, who had steadfastly refused to swear any oaths, were willing to sign their assent to the declarations and were thus saved from the worst forms of persecution to which they had been subjected previously. An estimated 3500 to 4000 men and women living in the Isle of Ely, the northern part of the county of Cambridgeshire, signed such a declaration in 1723. This document, which is presently being transcribed, promises to yield much valuable demographic information. Under the provisions of the Toleration Act Friends were not relieved from paying tithes or from exhorbitant distraints made against their non-payment; and other disabilities connected with their refusals to take oaths and to participate in military service remained, as did their exclusion from universities.

Preceding the Act of Toleration and giving expression to the more liberal spirit which was gaining adherence both locally and nationally was another of Ann Docwra's pamphlets, A Looking-Glass for the Recorder and Justices of Peace, and Grand Juries for the Town and County of Cambridge, written in 1682.

And for forcing Conformity upon any there can be no service to god in that; for Force makes Hypocrites. . . . Men must not play the Devil for God's sake. . . . To be plain; there is no Law to compel people to Conform, if they can show a lawful or reasonable excuse; Religion being an Obligation; men bound to God, and not to mens Opinions.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank members of the Jesus Lane Friends Meeting in Cambridge, who first suggested that a history of Cambridge Friends be compiled and who have met a part of the cost involved. Grateful thanks are also due to staff at the County Records Office, the Cambridgeshire Collection, Friends House Library and especially to Dr. D. Hall, of the Cambridge University Library, for his encouragement and advice.

A NOTE ON SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DATES

Until 1757 the English year began on the 25th of March: December, for example, being the tenth month and February the twelfth of the year. In some parts of the country at least, there is evidence that Friends treated all of March as the first month of a new year. This seems to me to best fit the limited internal evidence available for Cambridge, and has been assumed when interpreting the quoted dates. Thus the first first day of the fifth month would be the first Sunday in July. The problem is more fully discussed in the booklet by Milligan and Thomas (1983).

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1687. Spiritual Community vindicated amongst people of different Perswasions in some things.


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Until recently the prehistoric Fens could, with some justification, be considered as a relative cultural backwater. Certainly the 'openness' of its topographically subtle post-drainage landscape has influenced archaeological interpretations and the prehistoric Fens have often been envisaged as a perpetually open frontier or as a cultural no-man's-land. In response to its relative archaeological invisibility there has been a tradition of interpreting Fenland prehistory in reference to pastoralism and seasonal migrations (mobile pastoralism). Yet the results of aerial photography and the Fenland field surveys over recent years (i.e. Hall 1981) have begun to fill out its buried landscape with a vast number of hitherto unknown domestic sites/scatters and monuments, which clearly challenges the status of the Fen as some manner of drowned steppe.

Recent environmental research in the Fens has shown that what was understood to be a single episode of marine flooding (Fen Clay) in the 'inland' peat Fens must now be considered as a series of marine transgressions. This extended transgression sequence and the later prehistoric dates for peat formation in the more marginal areas of the Southern Fen (i.e. c. 1000 B.C. near Earith) suggest that given areas of the Fen margin may have been drier in prehistory than has been previously thought. It is, therefore, gradually becoming apparent that the potential for flood-free grazing in the pre-1st millennium B.C. Fens was greater than has been postulated (Pryor and French 1985, 304). As a consequence of this relative retreat of the prehistoric wetland/dryland 'frontier', it seems appropriate to re-assess the concept of Fen-related lowland transhumance systems. Transhumant land-use models have been frequently employed in Fenland prehistory and in recent years have been suggested in explanations relating to such diverse phenomena as Neolithic causewayed enclosures (Pryor 1982), Bronze Age drove/field systems (Pryor 1976; 1980) and low-lying Iron Age forts (Clarke 1972). Yet Pryor recently has suggested a potential agricultural role in the causewayed enclosure at Etton (Pryor 1985a, 306), and previously he interpreted the nucleated Iron Age (Cat's Water) settlement at Fengate as being permanently occupied and supported by a mixed farming regime (Pryor 1984a, 210ff). These examples, and the discovery of ard-marks sealed beneath Middle Iron Age house floors at the Upper Delphs, Haddenham (Evans and Hodder 1986), could suggest that prehistoric Fenland pastoralism may have been over-emphasised at the expense of its arable component.

Prehistoric Fenland transhumance, moreover, has become something of an accepted truism in recent archaeological texts (i.e. Taylor 1977, 26), due, in no small part, to the romance of 'life on the hoof' and the manner in which nomadism serves to explain the archaeologically ephemeral. In a Fenland context this popular romanticism is particularly acute where (perhaps as a reaction to the dissection of its former watery landscape by recent agro-industry) a semi-mythical image of a rebellious and free-spirited, pre-drainage population has been celebrated (i.e. Swift 1830, 55-56; Barrett 1963, 171-185). In this regard, it is relevant that the 'lawless' Ancient Britons who inhabited the pre-Roman Fens have been envisaged as not unlike the latter-day 'Fen Tigers', who opposed and disrupted its modern drainage (Wells 1830, 55–56; Barrett 1963, 174–185). Certainly we must guard against reading directly back into prehistory the cultural landscape of the historic Fens. It is, after all, the surface deposits which have given the Fens its character which, until
recently, so thoroughly masked its prehistory, and the price that archaeology must pay for the privilege of investigating a *buried landscape* must, by definition, be a hiatus with the historic present. Out of sheer necessity, earlier researches into Fenland archaeology often projected back into prehistory the 'wet' character of its historically known pre-drainage environment. Given this research framework, it is therefore not surprising that the distinctive watery environment of the historic Fens was understood to be a predominant and constant factor in its regional development, and to have dictated a cultural and subsistence uniformity in prehistory (Fox 1923, 119). Yet as a growing body of environmental evidence begins to suggest that the prehistoric Fenland(s) varied both locally and temporally, then the presumption of a Fen-wide prehistoric 'unity' is not necessarily valid.

We are at a stage in Fenland prehistoric studies when its basic research framework (environmental sequence, site distribution and density) is being drastically reassessed. In this current state of research upheaval, it would certainly be rash and premature to propose definitive models of regional prehistoric land-use. It is, nevertheless, relevant to question aspects of our established interpretative framework, as it is this largely 'inherited' framework which will influence the course of future investigations and determine the questions we will ask of our data in forthcoming regional analyses.

In all fairness it should be stressed that the recent application of transhumant land-use models must be understood in the context of working hypotheses and that its exponents did not propose transhumance as a definitive answer to all the problems of Fenland prehistory. In fact, a number of archaeologists are now (c. post 1984) willing largely to abandon transhumance as a major factor in the region's prehistory and this reappraisal, if nothing else, is a sign of a healthy discipline. It is, however, precisely because this shift in interpretation marks such a major break in the 'tradition' of Fenland prehistory, and because the concept of transhumance has been so very influential, that it seems appropriate at this time to re-evaluate the concept of prehistoric seasonal Fenland-use and community migration. To this end, this paper will also address the more general issues of the role of migration-related explanations in the creation of a national and more latterly a regional prehistoric research framework, and the development of archaeological context.

**THE AGE OF ABRAHAM**

The quantity of prehistoric implements recovered from the Fen since its drainage and the distribution of barrows in the immediate uplands, have meant that it has generally been accepted that the pre-Roman Fens supported a population. Stukeley, for example, in his *Itinerarium Curiosum* (1724), remarked: 'We may be well assured that the whole country was well inhabited by the Ancient Britons both as affording abundant pasturage and in being so very secure from incursions and depredations of war and troublesome neighbours, by the different fens upon the edge of the high country.' In early researches into Fenland (pre-)history the attention given to the role of agriculture in pre-Roman times partially depended on the extent to which authors were familiar with classical sources and, alternatively, the degree to which they stressed its unique environmental conditions. The relative proximity of the Fens to the continent has suggested, to some scholars, a source of indirect cultural contact: 'On the seaward portion, the ancient Fenlanders were, like the other inhabitants of south-eastern Britain, in advance of the natives of the more inland and northern parts – practised, too, in a rude method of agriculture . . . these things belonged to the then civilization of the parts adjacent to the continent' (Miller and Skertchly 1878, 31). Yet, because of the backward projection of its historic environment into prehistoric times, relatively little attention has been given to the possibility of a major arable component in Fenland prehistory (cf. Lethbridge below), and instead, its potential for pasture, hunting, and fishing has frequently been emphasised. This was based on the assumption by some (pre-)historians that farming could only be practiced in the region if the Fens themselves were drained, which would have entailed a level of labour organisation ('civilisation') of which it was thought 'rude' Ancient Britons were incapable (Wells 18: 0, 51ff). It should, however, be emphasised that the recovery of large bog-oaks and animal skeletons from the peat in the
course of post-medieval drainage has meant that the region has been understood to have once supported a 'fruitful country', which was only later submerged by flooding (Miller and Skertchly 1878, 29). It was, therefore, the date and the extent to which the Fen basin was thought to have been inundated, which determined whether historians envisaged the pre-Roman Fenland as some manner of a drowned 'earthly paradise' abounding in natural resources or as a watery refuge and a wild morass (Wells 1830, 55).

1 Pre-20th century histories of the Fen must be approached with some caution as they tend to reflect directly their authors' attitudes towards the effects of contemporary drainage. Certainly Wells (1830) in writing the history of the Bedford Level Corporation was biased towards the civilised advantages brought about by drainage.

Alternatively, of course, we also have the Fenlanders' point of view: 'How the Great Level became a Fen is perhaps the most archaeologically relevant, though rather overly academic, 'tale from the Fens' (Marlowe 1926, 7-17). This legend tells of how the enslaved British escaped from their Roman oppressors and how their priests brought down a great flood upon the Roman settlements, thus creating the Fen. It was apparently the Iceni who repopulated this watery wilderness and subsequently changed their name to the Gyrvii or Abraham', and this Biblical metaphor was used to personify prehistoric pastoralists through the first half of the century (i.e. Lethbridge 1950; Curwen 1937). While in these various schema there was some debate as to the exact chronological relationship between the pastoral and agrarian stages (Childe 1926, 84), most practicing archaeologists understood pastoralism to mark an intermediate stage between hunting and agriculture. This was based on the assumption that sedentarism was understood to be a necessary prerequisite for the development of any form of civilised life.

2 Set against this evolutionary background, the influence and raison d'être of pastoral nomadism in the practice of British prehistory during this century has assumed many guises. While some of the evidence cited in its espousal was empirically (negatively) based, many lines of argument were born out of more convoluted cultural/historical concepts whose origins lay in the 19th century, but which nevertheless lingered on as part of the 'intellectual baggage' throughout the first half of this century. In this regard it is particularly relevant that 'Beaker folk' were directly interpreted as reflecting a marine incursion...
associated with Corded Ware/‘Battle-axe warriors’ (i.e. Clarke 1960, 63), and were indirectly related to the Aryans (Crawford 1922, 34), whose pastoral character was verified by the wide distribution of Indo-European languages: ‘... at the same time the wide distribution of Indo-European speech as well as the habits of some of its users implies at least a phase of nomadism, but not of the extreme type observed among the Mongols of Upper Asia. In my opinion the state of things observed among many of the cow-keeping tribes of the Sudan, and other parts of Africa approximates most closely to the primitive Aryan economy’ (Childe 1926, 84). By characterising Battle-axe cultures as pastoral/warrior nomads, their mobile economy served as a mechanism for the diffusion of language and the spread of only selected items of a cultural assemblage (barrows, axes, corded ware and beakers), as the rest of their apparently ephemeral or temporary material culture would not have survived: ‘On the other hand all might be the consequence of a fairly rapid spread of pastoral tribes armed with battle-axes, but otherwise with little equipment of durable valuables; for pastoralists, using largely leather and wood and dwelling in temporary huts or in tents, would leave few remains of their dwellings for the archaeologist to find’ (Childe 1950, 141 – who cited Myres 1941 concerning ‘nomadism’). Given this vexed and complex lineage, and their insubstantial domestic component (Clark 1938, 265), Beaker cultures were assumed to be pastoralist-based and, at the very least, semi-nomadic in character (i.e. Hawkes and Hawkes 1949, 53–59).

In the 1930’s the concept of a pastoral stage was revitalised due to the ‘new functionalism’ and its emphasis on the economic/subsistence-based archaeology of Crawford and Curwen (Evans n.d.). One of the main reasons for the popularity of pastoral explanations at this time relates to the sheer amount of excavation undertaken and the impact of aerial photography. For though Bronze Age field systems and settlements were earnestly sought to balance the prominence of barrows in the archaeological record, they simply could not be located and pastoralism served to explain this discrepancy (Curwen 1937, 66; 1946, 55–56; Clark 1940, 23, 29; Stone and Gray Hill 1938, 249). In this regard it should be empha-
sised that it was the invasion-introduced/non-indigenous origins of the distinct Beaker assemblage (lacking a robust settlement architecture), and its inexplicable spread, that ultimately lay behind the nomadic-related explanations in British prehistory at this time. Certainly, much of the archaeological literature produced during this period, 1930 to 1960, was largely populated with Neolithic pastoralists and Bronze Age nomads, and the ‘mapped’ prehistoric landscape was dotted with ambiguously-ascribed ‘camps’. Given the lingering influence of evolutionary logic at this time, and if accepting that the Early and Middle Bronze Age was a period of full nomadic pastoralism, then it was argued to have been impossible for an earlier period (the Neolithic) to have achieved a higher level of cultural development (sedentary farmers). De facto, therefore, the Neolithic must also have been a pastoral society. It is important to realise that while set further back (temporarily) in prehistory, the arguments employed at this time were really no different than those used by 19th and early 20th century scholars, who, citing Cesar’s reference that Belgae introduced agriculture into Britain, argued that the pre-Late Iron Age Britons must all have been pastoralists (Westropp 1872, 27).

Lethbridge was the main exponent of Fenland nomadism, and in his interpretative (imaginative) note concerning Leaf’s Mildenhall excavation he proposed the ‘seasonal migration of cannibal communities’ composed of Herdsmen and Hunters into the ‘Horse-Fen’ (Leaf 1935, 125–127). He was even more explicit in his description of these would-be Bronze Age nomads in his later interpretation of the Snailwell Barrows: ‘We may imagine a considerable seasonal migration up and down this route (Icknield Way) driving their flocks and herds from camp to camp. Family groups would separate off from the main body to go down to spend the dry summer on the Fen margins and sandy islands where the herds could find good grazing till the surface become more soggy in the autumn. Too much emphasis may easily be placed on the agriculture of this early Bronze Age in East Anglia ... little patches of cereals may have been cultivated by less nomadic groups, but the bulk of the people very likely wandered with an almost Abrahamic organisation from Wiltshire to the North Sea and back again’ (1950, 30–31).
It is important to recognise in this early stage of research that it was not transhumant systems which were proposed but rather full pastoral nomadism, and both nomadism and cannibalism were the major archaeological themes for which ethnographic analogy was extensively employed (Evans n.d.). Lethbridge, for example, in his interpretation of Snailwell Barrows was obviously familiar with the ethnography of Central Asian nomads (Lethbridge 1950, 36), which could have related to the fact that Mongolia was one of the areas from which it was thought that the shape of beakers may have originated (in Leaf 1935, 125-126). Lethbridge's nomadic interpretations and Central Asian analogies were clearly accepted by R. Rainbird Clarke, who, in his East Anglia volume (1960) in the Ancient Peoples and Places series, made references to Bell Beaker and Urn folk nomadic pastoralists residing in yurt-like tents (Clarke 1960, 62, 77).

Generally in the later 1960's and 1970's a number of archaeological interpretations based on full pastoral nomadism were superseded by those which employed a more limited transhumance; that is the seasonal migration of only a portion of a community from a permanent home base. The reasons for this change of interpretation are many and represent a major shift in the discipline itself. On the one hand, it reflects the impact of absolute dating techniques and the reappraisal of migration theories based on the direct equation of a material culture assemblage with a prehistoric people (e.g. Beaker folk). On the other hand, the greater intensity and quality of excavation has meant a change in the scale of interpretative analysis. Apart from a few pioneering efforts (i.e. Fox 1923), the framework of research/interpretation before the Second World War was on a national or a gross regional scale (highland/lowland zones). Since that time much of archaeology's efforts have been directed towards a much more local regional scale (landscape archaeology), which has meant that one need not address, nor necessarily explain nation-wide phenomena/problems (i.e. migration from the Wiltshire Downs to the Norfolk Coast) in the excavation of a single site. This change in interpretative emphasis also reflects the impact of ecological approaches in archaeology as was advocated by Clark (1952) and later by Higgs and the members of the Early History of Agriculture Project (Higgs 1972; Jarman et al. 1982), who emphasised the utilization of complementary environmental resources by single communities. This reappraisal of the resource base of individual societies has discouraged the division and categorisation of archaeological cultures on the basis of a single subsistence strategy. Rather, it has emphasised the complementary relationship between wild and domestic resources and arable/pastoral activities. Finally, we should also be aware of the development in the application of explanatory analogy, which has resulted in a greater emphasis on the context of analogical sources employed. At a regional level this has resulted in the application of land-use models frequently derived from local historical sources and studies in regional historic geography (i.e. Case 1963; Coles and Hibbert 1975; Fleming 1978; Pryor 1980), and in this regard Darby's (1940) and Ravensdale's (1974) studies have been very influential for archaeological research in the Fens.

This emphasis over the last twenty years on long-term regional continuities (i.e. Pryor 1984b) can, in part, be seen as a reaction to earlier theories of pan-European cultural diffusionism and the frequent inadequacy of the Three Ages chronology in a local/site context. Nevertheless, previous nomadic 'schools' of interpretation and more recent regional transhumant explanations can be considered as being inter-related inasmuch as both utilise migration, though admittedly operating at very different scales, as a mechanism to link distant material distributions/sites.

'HORN UNDER HORN'

Although most authors have not gone into detail concerning the mechanisms of prehistoric transhumance in the Fens, the summertime translocation of a substantial portion of the home base communities has been suggested or at least implied (Bradley 1978, 55; Pryor 1980, 185; 1984a, 206), though the actual range of these migrations was not defined. In these arguments historic analogy was made between proposed prehistoric pastoral systems and documented Medieval intercommoning practised both in the Fens (Pryor 1980, 183) and Somerset Levels (Coles and Hibbert 1975, 17; Coles 1978, 148).
Under these arrangements, Medieval villages held common rights to pasture which they claimed to be theirs by ancient custom (Neillson 1920, XLIX, LII; Darby 1940, 68). Various Fen-edge communities shared pasture that often lay quite some distance out in the Fen 'half-lands' (Summers 1976, 36; Darby 1940, fig. 13), where their cattle collectively grazed 'horn under horn'. While I cannot claim any expertise concerning these sources, in the Medieval documents there would seem to be only limited descriptions as to the actual mechanisms of these pasture systems—such as the social composition of the herding group. What descriptions are available, furthermore, would often seem not to suggest any manner of major community migration, as opposed to the occasional camping of semi-professional herdsmen. In fact, the relevant Somerset sources mention the 'turning-out' of animals onto the Summer 'hangings' (Coles and Hibbert 1975, 17ff) and similar references are to be found in the Fenland documents (Darby 1940, 70). Certainly these terms of reference would not suggest any manner of community migration. Conversely, the scale, for example, of some recorded cattle droves, involving substantial numbers of men, horses and boats (ibid 1940, 72–73), would almost seem similar to a major military expedition. The sheer size of these operations, and the very strict system of cash payments for pasture rights and their infringement (ibid, 67ff), should remind us that in the documentary evidence we are seeing a cash and market economy in operation which may not be at all representative of a prehistoric domestic economy.

One of the main problems in employing historic land-use models is the specific historic factors that lie behind their generation. This is the case with intercommoning which figures in later medieval texts largely because common rights were being restricted and formalised by the expansion of manorial and monastic powers. In the wet conditions of the post-Roman Fens, the relative location of extensive mires and undrained marshes could, moreover, have been partially responsible for the fact that common pasture often lay at a distance from Fen-edge communities. In this regard the lively debate which has arisen following Higgs' use of Medieval transhumant patterns to explain the distribution of prehistoric Megaliths in upland Spain should caution us against assuming a continuity of land-use patterns (Higgs 1976; Walker 1983). Certainly in a region so environmentally sensitive as the Fens, in which a landscape has been so radically transformed both by the inundation of water and by subsequent drainage, we must be wary against presuming a prehistoric/historical continuity of land usage.

A major factor, in attempting to come to terms with the arguments for and against a prehistoric Fenland transhumance, is that the general concept 'transhumance' exists as an ideal economic type or ecological adaption largely based on West Asian and upland European communities for which there is a substantial body of ethnographic research. Although lowland transhumant systems are historically known, there does not exist the same quantity of detailed studies as to their operation and as an economic or pastoral 'type' its criteria are not so clearly defined. Therefore, as it is employed by archaeologists, under the general umbrella of 'transhumance', distant pasture and extensive out-field systems may merge, and occasional overnight stays with herds are undifferentiated from limited community migrations. Whilst the underlying basis of arguments relating to prehistoric transhumance often follow an 'ideal' logic (i.e. if an environmental resource is available it will by necessity be exploited), the motives for adopting such a way of life and the actual organisation of transhumant cycles fall within the realm of the social—whose complex configurations often undermine the predictive logic of 'model populations'.

It is important to recognise that any Fenland transhumance cycle would have been a matter of social choice and/or economic

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3 Evans-Pritchard's detailed study of the Nilotic Nuer (1940) is, arguably, still the most widely-read and influential example of an operative lowland transhumant system. Yet the annual dispersion of the Nuer to their cattle camps is essentially determined by seasonal drought (ibid. 97) and cannot by any measure be considered as being directly analogous with life in the Northwest European lowlands, whose character and problems are rather related to a superabundance of resources.
strategy. In this regard it is unlike many pastoral situations in the Mediterranean and West Asia, where the rigours of extreme climatic conditions effectively dictate the seasonal movement of stock between complimentary environmental zones. There would not, however, have been climatic determinants forcing Fen-edge communities onto the Fen in the summer. It is simply a matter of a potential resource which could have been exploited only if communities chose to specialise in pastoral production. If such a specialised strategy was widespread then the resulting competition for pasture could result in regular seasonal migrations. But it must be emphasised that this would have been a matter of choice based on whether a potential pastoral resource was worth exploiting at the expense of splitting a community and the maintenance of two households (home base/house and summer-time camp/tent) during the course of an annual transhumant cycle.

It is difficult to imagine how Fen-edge communities would have lost access to their immediately adjacent Fen pastures and therefore whether a full transhumance, as opposed to extensive outfield pasture systems, would have been necessary. Of course, a limited number of herdsmen may have accompanied and possibly camped with grazing stock, but this is quite a different matter from the migration of communities. Those, however, whom one could (‘ideally’) envisage practising a limited transhumance would be those communities which occupied the hinterland immediately ‘behind’ or above the Fen-edge. In this capacity, river-valley systems could have functioned as migration corridors down into the Fen and this could relate to the frequency of burial and ceremonial monuments along their reaches, inasmuch as their usage by diverse groups could result in a greater need of territorial expression. Even given a hypothetical situation such as this, one would have to imagine a cut-off point where the distance needed to travel down to the Fen would out-weigh the advantages of any pastoral specialisation. One important aspect of the above argument is that it suggests that any would-be temporary pastoral stations found in the Fen might not actually relate to Fen-edge communities as such but rather to those of the Fen-hinterland.

The negative and often contradictory nature of archaeological evidence employed in demonstrating mobile pastoralism has been fully discussed by Bradley (1972, 1978, 55ff) and, given its ambiguous nature, migratory pastoralism is as difficult to dismiss as it is to prove. In this regard it is as relevant to remember that while we are fortunate to possess a wealth of Medieval documentary evidence relating to the seasonal utilisation of the Fen, recent Fenland surveys have found almost no Medieval sites/scatters on the peat Fens proper and certainly no direct archaeological evidence of intercommoning (Hall per. comm.). This indicates just how ephemeral the material traces of even historically known pastoral systems can be. It is, of course, the relative material invisibility of mobile pastoralism that is, perhaps, its most dominant trait and that makes it such a persuasive mode of archaeological interpretation.

Certainly there is a problem in the manner in which would-be Fen-edge ‘camp sites’ have been archaeologically defined. Bradley, for example, has used the scraper index on Leaf’s Mildenhall sites to suggest that they were pastoral butchery camps (Bradley 1978, 57), but such activities are not commonly characteristic of pastoral economies; it is against the self-interest of pastoralists to consume the basis of their production and their vested interests lie rather in guaranteeing the reproduction of their herds (Dahl and Hjort 1976). The relatively dense, almost ‘midden-like’ (Bamford 1982, 18), pottery spreads and flint scatters which identify these Fen-edge sites, by their respective fragility and weight (by number and by raw bulk) are not common material attributes of mobile economies. It is, for example, difficult to imagine the regular transportation of large collared urns over great distances, let alone ‘dried’ corpses as Lethbridge would have us believe (1950, 32).

From a more theoretical viewpoint one can, furthermore, argue that we really have very little idea of what constitutes a ‘typical’ Neolithic/Early Bronze Age domestic assemblage, or even whether such a concept is at all appropriate for these periods. Without such a predictive (‘home’) base-line it is certainly all the more difficult to determine what its seasonal or ‘camp’ component should consist of. While, without recourse to seasonal models, it is difficult to account for the lack of obvious structural features on these sites, this is not a problem restricted to the Fens alone but is a common characteristic of most apparently
domestic Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age sites (i.e. Simpson 1971, 130). In this regard it is relevant to note that Gibson, in his re-interpretation of Leaf's Chippenham Barrow 5 excavation, concluded that the proposed double-ring palisading of this barrow actually represents the traces of a large, pre-barrow, round building with associated hearths (Gibson 1980, 47-49). Similarly, the recent careful excavation of Fen margin sites at Tattershall Thorpe, Lincs., and West Row Fen, Mildenhall, have produces quite substantial Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement features (Chowne and Healy 1985; Martin 1984). The results of these recent excavations could lead us to speculate that the ephemeral settlement evidence of some earlier excavations partially reflects accidents of preservation and different excavation techniques. It should be emphasised that the frequently proposed seasonal occupation of Fen-edge sites largely derives from the environmental evidence from Clark’s excavations at Shippea Hill (Clark et al. 1935; Clark and Godwin 1962). Bamford, in her detailed analysis of the Hockwold-cum-Wilton Beaker sites was, however, also able to identify light structures, and the character of its occupation debris lead her to conclude that the site represented something other than short-lived camps. Extrapolating from the Shippea Hill environmental data, Bamford noted that while the Fen-edge location of the site would have suited pasture, hunting, fishing and fowling, the Hockwold faunal assemblages, with the possible exception of otter, did not reflect the utilisation of Fen-specific species (Bamford 1982, 18-20). In fact, the proportion of wild species from the Shippea Hill excavations was itself very minor (Clark 1933, 278; Clark et al 1935, 206). These interpretations do not, of course, exclude pastoralism as a major component in the region’s Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age economies. It does, however, suggest that either these populations were largely ignoring the advantages of living in a wet-landscape, or that as environmental evidence indicates, the Fen was relatively dry at this time (Godwin 1978). While there is certainly evidence to attest the importance of stock rearing during these periods, the environmental conditions of the Fens would not necessarily have dictated seasonal land-use on a scale that would require community migration and cannot, therefore, be used as an archaeological deus ex machina.

Among the more remarkable achievements of the recent Fenland surveys has been the discovery of extensive barrow fields distributed along the lowland reaches of main river systems in the Fen. There is a long tradition of associating barrows with various forms of pastoral nomadism and initially their upland distribution was understood to mark the routes of their trails and droveways (Curwen 1946, 79; Lethbridge 1950, 30). Recently, more detailed analyses into the location and population structure of barrow cemeteries have resulted in a variety of interpretations concerning their potential economic integration. Fleming, in his influential study of the Wessex cemeteries, suggested that the high density of barrows in given areas could indicate that their interred population must be representative of a broader distribution than that of a residential population. This, and the fact that they contained both male, female and infant burials, lead him to conclude that these nuclear barrow cemeteries were situated in areas of summer pasture (Fleming 1971). Conversely, Green, in his excavation of ring-ditch burials at Milton Keynes in the upper Great Ouse valley, postulated that the predominance of female and infant burials could indicate that they were representative of the home base population of a transhumant community whose males were buried in the summer pastures (Green 1974, 130). Pryor has employed a similar argument in his interpretation of the Fengate burials to suggest that this area also was the home base of a transhumant community (Pryor 1976), and

4 The reader is also referred to Green's (1976) interpretation of the Stacey Bushes site in the Upper Ouse valley, in which he considered the possible symbiotic interaction between Grooved Ware transhumant pastoralists with Grimston Ware potters and farmers. Green's interpretation is remarkable for how explicitly he describes the possible complementary relationship between these arable and pastoral communities. In the end, however, it is unconvincing inasmuch as it associates individual pottery traditions with a single subsistence basis and thereby evokes the earlier concept of a given material culture assemblage as being directly representative with a prehistoric 'people' (Ibid, 23).
Healy has argued that the lack of barrows in association with the south-eastern Fen-edge Beaker sites could suggest their seasonal occupation (Healy 1984, 116). Given the logic of these arguments, the discovery of barrow cemeteries extending along the lowland river valleys and out into the Fen, presents us with some problems if we continue to consider seasonal Fenland usage on a region-wide scale. For if the distribution of barrows is representative of home base communities (an argument which involves major presumptions concerning the sexual division of labour), then the ‘home base’ has shifted quite far out into the Fen from its former Fen-edge location. The interim results of the field surveys would suggest, furthermore, that the distribution of Fenland barrow fields and dense artifact scatters is largely mutually exclusive and this makes any direct association of barrows with domestic/home base activities unlikely (Hall n.d.). While taking the converse argument one can still state that the Fenward distribution of barrows might represent the location of summer pasture, but that seasonal migrations were actually of a greater distance than has been supposed if they originated from the (historic) Fen margin.

Of course, the reversed and opposing logic of these interpretations can simply make us sceptical as to the nature of archaeological evidence and particularly arguments relating to pastoralism, whose criteria seems to be so fluidly or weakly defined. Yet, one can argue that it is our concepts of grand, region-wide patterns of land-use and migration that are inappropriate and that their presumed scale is only representative of the coarseness of our data. What we might instead be seeing are much more localised land-use patterns which, while still utilising seasonally available pasture, also involved much greater permanent settlement in the ‘Fen’ than has been previously assumed. The relevance of this point should be obvious, for one of the reasons why lowland transhumance has become so widespread as an interpretative framework is the afore-mentioned notion of prehistoric wetlands as an open-zone in which social/cultural differentiation was suspended in the face of ecological determinants. Certainly in part, the recent basis of transhumant-related interpretations reflects the optimism of 1970’s Rescue archaeology and the anticipation that ‘Fengan-like’ field systems were to be found continuously around the Fen-edge, which naturally led to predictions of high locally concentrated population densities. Thus far, however these predictions have not proven to be justified and the Nene Valley/Fengate system still retains its unique status (Pryor and French 1985, 304). Recent excavation, furthermore, in the lowland reaches of both the Welland (ibid.) and Ouse Rivers system (Evans and Hodder n.d.) have suggested much local diversity, and rather than seeing each area as necessarily relating directly to the Fens, what must be investigated is the context of their local development and the extent to which they are reflective of the river systems of which they are a part. Similarly, more major divisions seem to be emerging in the Fenland survey data, with there being a relative higher concentration of ceremonials and funerary monuments in the river valleys of the western Fen margin as opposed to denser ‘domestic/open artifactual spreads’ along the south-eastern Fen-edge. Given the logic of earlier (pre-1960) research frameworks, one could interpret these varying distributions as being complimentary and as separate components in an overall Fen-wide system. What, however, these various distributions may denote is the sub-regional and temporal fragmentation of any pan-Fenland prehistoric ‘unity’ apart from shared factors of preservation due largely to late prehistoric/historic environmental conditions.

‘LOCAL KNOWLEDGE’ AND REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY

If the 2nd millennium B.C. field systems excavated at Fengate were related to a transhumant cycle (Pryor 1976; 1980), then their relative longevity of use would accord well with Bradley’s description of pastoral cycles as ‘rigidly liturgical movements’ (Bradley 1978). Yet, the almost Biblical stability suggested by this characterisation is perhaps more representative of the resolution of our data than any prehistoric pastoral organisation. Certainly, in anthropological studies mobile pastoralism has often been considered as a highly flexible social/economic adaption sensitive to the density of permanent settlement and the competition for pasture as is reflected in the very choice and range of migration.
If we accept that local seasonal variations in the Fens may not have been so extreme, then cognitive attitudes towards the environment and also the potential range of environmental strategies available are important factors in determining the character of seasonal land-use. For extended seasonal familiarity within an environment could generate new adaptive strategies as ‘local knowledge’ (Geertz 1983) is acquired and as the ‘geography of knowledge’ expands (Thrift 1985). In this context the processes of temporary migration and ‘primary’ colonisation are not unrelated, inasmuch as the scope and accuracy of the perceived and ‘decision’ environment (Hammond 1981, 225ff fig. 8, 10) are increased in relationship to the ‘real world’ through the agency of landscape familiarity and past experience therein. This acquisition of landscape knowledge can be considered as being ‘practical’ inasmuch as it is a learning of ‘the way of the world’ based on trial and error procedures in the face of a physical universe (Geertz 1983, 73ff). This is not to say, however, that such knowledge is empirically-based or universal in its applications for human locational strategies and environmental adaption are rarely governed solely by mechanistic critical-threshold factors. Rather, they are structured according to the extent of experience and local environmental knowledge, which will ultimately determine the potential range of subsistence flexibility and the locational alternatives available (extra-territorial familiarity in terms of a change of locale). We must, of course, recognise the potential for environmental catastrophe, but most instances of environmental change are gradual and usually operate on a time-scale greater than would have been obviously appreciable by a single generation (i.e. increase in rainfall and peat growth) and the human response to these situations would vary according to the manner in which a landscape was culturally perceived.

In this regard, the more dynamic model of wetland-use proposed for the Dutch Assendelft polders (Brandt et al. 1984, fig. 5), in which transhumance is considered as a stage between reconnaissance and seasonal foraging visits on one hand, and permanent settlement in previously summer pasture on the other, would seem to have greater interpretative scope. In fact, rather than envisaging Fenland transhumance as some form of stable or optimal economic strategy, it may be more appropriate to consider it both as a means of landscape/subsistence investigation and as a response to environmental and social stress. One could, therefore, imagine that transhumant systems might have arisen during the earlier Neolithic colonisation of the Fen basin, when its potential for supporting domesticated stock was first being explored. Alternatively, the deteriorating conditions of the earlier 1st millennium B.C. could also have given rise to Fen-edge transhumant systems as a response to greater competition for local pasture. Certainly, it can be argued that the deposition of rich metalwork hoards in the peatbog from this time (Fox 1923) denotes the status of the Fen as a distinct cultural/environmental entity. Similarly, the discovery of such a wetland-specific site as Flag Fen (Pryor 1985b) by its relatively isolated location out in the Fen proper, could suggest social and environmental instability. Yet, thus far, the Early Neolithic and Later Bronze Ages are the only periods in later Fenland prehistory for which transhumant land-use models have not been proposed.

At issue here is not so much the specific dynamics of any proposed transhumant systems as the manner in which archaeology envisages societies interacting with landscapes and how we model ‘concave’ (Coles 1978) or low-landscapes. The targetting of localities by site catchment analysis for example is to suggest a state of environmental/site stasis which effectively situates settlements solely in terms of environmental resources often with scant regard to social constraints and interaction. Certainly the blanket application of this form of landscape modelling to such a fluid or sensitive landscape as is the Fens is a questionable procedure (cf. Tilley 1979). At a higher level, moreover, the assumption of prehistoric and archaeological regionalisation based on historic landscape entities (‘Fenland archaeology’) is largely to pre-determine the outcome of what is, after all, a central issue of our investigations. For the ‘region’ is a temporally and socially situated ‘field’ of context (Barrett n.d.) which is generated and structured by societies interacting with their environments (Giddens 1985). If we accept beforehand (historic) regions as given prehistoric entities and unquestionably assume long-term continuities of social and subsistence practises in
these landscapes, then there would really seem to be very limited purpose in further archaeological research at this level, as we are destined only to justify that which we already know.

In this regard it is essential to recognise that 'regional archaeology' does not represent a separate field of research which is somehow removed from the more general issues of archaeological theory by its recourse to environmental factors and by the extent to which it deals in hard data. Surely it must be apparent that archaeology in the Fens has often been directly influenced by broader theoretical concepts (i.e. Stages of Civilisation, Invasion and Migration theory), whose interpretative influence has at times lingered on at a regional level after it has been abandoned as a general theoretical approach. What is unique to regional archaeology is its greater emphasis on and interaction with local landscapes and cultural histories, but this certainly does not divorce it from the central problems and themes of national/international archaeology.

It has not been the intention of this paper to deny that the prehistoric Fens may have been seasonally exploited for pasture, but rather to question our all-too-frequent and vague employment of the concept of lowland transhumance. Given the current state of flux in archaeological research in the Fens, it is essential to recognise what are the conceptual foundations and theoretical ramifications of our inherited land-use models. Yet, the issue of regional transhumance/migration relates not just to questions of prehistoric economy and social organisation, but also reflects upon the procedures of archaeological investigation itself. This is because migration is a mechanism which interrelates sites/phenomena over wide distances and its application, therefore, directly relates to scales and stages of archaeological research. Certainly, migration-related explanations fulfill an essential unifying role in sparsely investigated archaeological landscapes inasmuch as they bridge blank spaces in our distribution maps. But through time and cumulative research the central role of migration theories is often diminished as archaeological landscapes are eventually infilled with sites. In other words, the accredited mobility of prehistoric Fenland populations has often related more to the distances between our distribution dots at any given time than it has to questions of prehistoric environment and economy.

An underlying issue which the paper has attempted to address is the manner in which archaeology as a discipline 'colonises' its own landscapes – what are the routes by which archaeological context is either constructed or recognised. Presently we are at a stage in Fenland researches in which as our own 'local knowledge' increases it will largely fragment and undermine the pan-regional models we have constructed. Certainly it will be a long time before we will be able to discuss or model again such a thing as a 'Fenland archaeology' with any confidence. This procedure is not just an exercise in abstract reductionism, but can be taken as a measure of the establishment of archaeological knowledge not necessarily dependent on the pre-conceptions of the historic cultural landscape. Archaeology in association with environmental sciences must define its own landscape entities if we ever hope to understand prehistoric land-use and social organisation in a local and regional context.

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ERNEST GREENFIELD'S EXCAVATIONS AT EXNING
ROMAN VILLA

C. J. WEBSTER

The Roman villa at Exning was first discovered in 1904 during work in an orchard. The item which attracted attention was a mosaic pavement which was excavated and lifted under the direction of Prof. T. McKenny Hughes (Hughes 1906). The mosaic was removed to Cambridge where it was displayed for many years on the wall of the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. The best preserved portion of the semi-circular design from Room 2 has now been incorporated in the Museum's Romano-British display (1984).

In 1958 the orchard was to be dug up, the land deep ploughed, and turned over to agriculture. A trial excavation was arranged under the direction of Mr Ernest Greenfield for the Ministry of Works (now English Heritage). This was followed in 1959 by the complete excavation of the building which had contained the mosaic.

The following report is based on the plans, notes and photographs taken during the excavation together with some preparatory notes made for publication by the excavator which contain information not found in the site record.

The area around Exning (Fig. 1B) had long been noted for Roman remains; coins and a fibula being recorded in 1720 (VCH 1911). More coins were discovered during the construction of the racecourse in the eighteenth century. In 1832 several graves were discovered in Exning parish during gravel digging. Both inhumation and cremations in pots, one possibly Black-Burnished ware, were found together with various grave-goods including bronze and shale bracelets, glass bottles, a shale spindle whorl and part of a bone comb (VCH 1911, 304). In c.1870 a hoard of Roman pewter vessels was found in the bed of the former Exning-Landwade stream (Phillips 1970, 235).

In 1948 a well containing Roman pottery was partially excavated by a bomb disposal squad to the south-east of Exning. Another, 180m away was fully excavated in 1956-7 (Johnston 1959). The well was 16m deep and had been filled in one operation with what seems to represent domestic rubbish accumulated over a long period. No evidence for a building was found in the area.

THE SITE

The villa at Exning (TL 612676) lies on a gentle slope above the fenland. Although in Exning parish the villa is closer to the Cambridgeshire village of Landwade, 1km to the north-east. The site is referred to as 'Landwade' in several publications and this has led to confusion as to which county it lies in. The underlying geology is Middle Chalk which slopes to the north-west into a shallow channel, now drained.

THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1958 AND 1959

The site of the 1904 excavation was still visible in 1958 and a system of test holes was dug around and in the hollow. This led to the opening of two areas of larger trenches at the north-west and south-east of the building, where hypocausts were evident. Two features found, a line of wheel ruts and a ditch, were traced by means of test holes for 100m in either direction (Fig. 1C).

During the second season, in 1959 a large area between and including most of the 1958 trenches was cleared by machine and excavated down to the chalk, revealing a large stone building overlying an earlier timber phase.
Figure 1. The location of Exning Roman Villa and other Roman sites in the area.
STRATIGRAPHY (Fig. 2)

Several over-site layers were noted, mostly representing the destruction of the villa. Below these was a complex of features cut into the chalk.

The first over-site layer below the topsoil was a layer of rubble formed by the destruction of the villa. Below this in some places another layer of rubble and wall plaster was noted and is interpreted as debris from the rebuilding of the villa in stone. Below these rubble layers was a layer representing the original topsoil during the life of the villa. The backfill of the 1904 excavation was also visible. Some features were noted where they cut these layers but most were only apparent where they cut into the chalk and few of these were related stratigraphically.

Phase I. Pre-villa and undated features (Fig. 3)

The earliest occupation of the site was represented by a complex of ditches, post-holes and pits. There is no evidence that any of these pre-date the Roman period. Two worked flints were found, one of neolithic type, but both were residual in Roman features. Many of these features were not related stratigraphically and so their date is not certain, but it is likely that most pre-date the villa.

The five main ditches (10, 84, 43, 2, 259) certainly pre-date the villa and presumably represent boundaries. Three (43, 2, 259) leave the area of the excavation in two directions and 259 was traced for a considerable distance in both directions (Fig. 1C). Of the others, ditch 84 was recut on one occasion but serves no obvious function, ditch 10 leaves the site to the north-west and may have been filled with domestic rubbish as several broken but nearly complete pots were recovered (Fig. 10: 6, 7, 10–12, 14).

It is noticeable that the area to the north of ditch 10 contains very few features of early date and it is probable that the ditch represents the boundary of the site in this period. It is therefore likely that the focus of the early occupation lay to the south-west of the excavated area.

The features noticed in the excavated area form no very obvious pattern although Greenfield (1960) believed that the post-holes surrounding the complex (21, 24, 32, 41) of ovens and pits formed an ‘irregular timber hutment’. Another small building may be represented by post-holes 104–9 & 188. Most of the pits are irregular and serve no obvious function; four (5, 24, 32, 197) however are sub-rectangular and seem to have been refilled soon after being dug. There was no sign of silting and the fill of each was similar; the lower fill mostly chalk and the upper mixed chalk and earth. Two of these pits were later cut by ovens (21, 41) although these may belong to phase II. If however the ovens were used in phase I, the post-holes of the ‘hutment’ may represent wind shielding.

Few of the phase I features contained closely dateable material but much of the pottery is in an Iron Age tradition. Potter (1965) believes that this ‘East Anglian’ style was probably replaced by influence from the Nene Valley and Black-Burnished ware factories during the second century. Other first-century types are also present perhaps from Colchester (eg Fig.10:12). It is likely therefore that the phase I occupation dates to the first and early second centuries.

Phase II. The timber building (Fig. 4)

The second phase saw the construction and use of a large timber building. The main structural components of this are represented by two parallel rows of post-holes, 31m long and 6m apart. The posts supported in these post-holes averaged 0.5m in diameter and the holes were mostly over 1m deep. Aligned roughly parallel with these two rows and 3m to the south-west was a row of over thirty, often inter-cutting, small post-holes. This row did not run the full length of the other two, stopping c. 6m short of each end. To the south-east a large ditch I ran 2m from the end of the main rows following the line of the earlier ditch 259.

The building would at first sight appear to be a standard aisled building of a type well known in Roman Britain (Smith 1964, Hadman 1978, Morris 1979) but there are several problems with this interpretation. Although it is common for there to be little evidence of the aisle walls of such structures, at Exning the south-west aisle seems to be represented by a line of post-holes but not the north-east. The plan published by Greenfield (1960) gives the impression that the north-east aisle wall lay outside the excavated area but
Figure 2. Exning Roman Villa. Sections AA & BB (see figs 3-5 for location of sections).
Figure 3. Exning Roman Villa. Plan of Phase I and other early undated features.
Figure 4. Exning Roman Villa. Plan of Phase II features.
any such aisle would be nearly twice as wide as the southern one. The southern limit of beam-slots 74 & 75 may mark the position of the northern aisle. In this case the aisle would have been slightly narrower than that on the south-east. If it is assumed that there were aisles on both sides of the building then some explanation must be sought for the difference in constructional technique between them. In the southern aisle the large number of post-holes, often intercutting, probably represent free-standing posts unprotected by walling and therefore needing more frequent replacement. This may have provided the 'front' of the building with a colonnaded appearance. There is of course the possibility that the line of posts was not part of the phase II building but part of an earlier structure whose nature remains obscure. The alignment of the row would not be completely coincidental but relate to the ditch alignments of phase I. This would also provide an explanation for the slight deviation of the row of posts from the line of the main structural posts. The row was, however, centrally positioned relative to the main lines of posts, unrelated to other phase I features and, bearing in mind their replacement in stone during phase III, it is likely that it did form part of the phase II structure.

Turning to the main posts, some of these were evidently replaced at some time during phase II as is shown by the presence within the fill of the post-holes of 'early' wall plaster. Post-hole 3, for example, contained some of this which cannot have been deposited during the phase III rebuilding as this post was sawn off at ground level and the stone wall built over it. It is likely that the first posts were squared as square impressions could be seen on the base of the post-holes whilst the post pipes indicated that round posts were the last occupants. Several fragments of charcoal found in the post pipes were identified (below) as oak from large timbers and may be the remains of the posts.

Other features of this period are the two ovens 20 & 62, the beam-slots 74 & 75, and the recut I of ditch 259 which were open at the end of the phase when 'early' wall plaster was deposited in them. Full details of the decorative aspects of the wall plaster will be found below but it can be noted here that impressions on the back indicate wattle walls. The distribution of the wall plaster is also significant: in rooms 3 & 7, outside room 9 and to the south-east of rooms 2 and 4 (see Fig. 5 for room numbers). This last dump had been used to fill the top of the silted up ditch 1. This distribution would seem to indicate that the principle rooms were located at the south-east end as they were also later to be in phase III.

There is very little dating evidence for the construction of the timber building. Ditch 1, which had nearly silted up by the end of the phase contained pottery both in the East Anglian Style of phase I (eg. Fig. 11:26) and also Black-Burnished ware copies of probable second-century date. It is likely that the building was built in the first half of this century. The end of the phase is more securely dated as three coins (nos. 4, 7 & 8) were found under the layer of 'early' wall plaster indicating a date after A.D. 270 for the conversion of the building to stone.

Phase III. The stone building (Fig. 5)

In phase III the timber building of phase II was rebuilt with stone foundations but the work was carried out in stages and much of the timber building remained incorporated in the new structure.

Phase IIIa

The first masonry was built along the south-west wall and replaced the row of small post-holes. The wall (249 & 242) was built just outside the line of these post-holes in a construction trench dug into the chalk, in contrast to the later walls whose construction trenches did not penetrate the chalk. Two post-holes on either side of the doorway (146 & 147) are not paralleled at the north-east doorway and may indicate a porch.

At the north-west end of the building a suite of baths was built with construction trenches which penetrated the chalk and are thus likely to belong to this phase. The baths comprised a main room with hypocaust, a small rectangular foundation 219; probably a hot bath and a semicircular foundation 220; perhaps a cold bath. Ditch 16 is probably a drain serving the baths. Details of the baths are not certain because of extensive plough-damage at this end of the site.

It is not clear what happened to the northern end of the timber building when the baths were built. It seems obvious that the
Figure 5. Exning Roman Villa. Plan of Phase III and Phase IV features.
post represented by post-hole 202 (Fig. 4) could not have remained passing through the hypocaust although this could not be demonstrated stratigraphically because of disturbance. Post-hole 1 also went out of use as it was cut by the stokehole. The north-west wall of the baths could not have replaced them structurally as it did not run the full width of the building; both it and its construction trench stop 1.75m before the north-eastern row of main post-holes. It is probable therefore that the timber building was shortened and ended at post-holes 12 & 203 leaving the heated rooms and stoke-hole outside and the cold bath inside. Why the baths were not added to the end of the existing building is not clear but there must have been some constraint on increasing the length to the north-west.

Phase IIIb

Phase IIIb saw the major rebuilding of the villa in stone. The five south-easternmost pairs of posts were cut off at ground level and their places taken by smaller posts, averaging 0.25m diameter, embedded in masonry walls. At the north-west end posts 26, 27, 36 & 37 continued in use but were encased in masonry. There is no evidence for what happened to posts 12, 201, 203 & 204 but these probably remained without stone walling much as they had done in phase II (it is difficult to be certain as little survived ploughing in this area). The north aisle was also built on stone foundations at this time and both aisles were divided into a number of rooms. At the south-east end of the building a projecting room (room 2) was built containing a red tessellated floor and, semi-circular mosaic. It is likely that this room projected to gain more light as the aisles were not projected.

The construction trenches of this phase were dug down until chalk was encountered as can be seen where the walls cross the filled-in ditch 1, both the trench and the foundation follow the chalk down into the bottom of the ditch. The construction trenches could also be seen where they cut the layer of 'early' wall plaster 254 which had probably fallen during the dismantling of the timber building.

The walls of phase III were composed of flints and pieces of Totternhoe Stone; a hard band in the chalk upon which the villa was built. It is likely that the masonry did not reach the full height of the walls as some pieces of 'late' wall plaster have burnt daub adhering to them. This wall plaster replaced that of phase II and again the distribution is predominantly at the south-east end. A piece of quarter round moulding was also found, probably from a wall-to-floor junction of this phase.

Phase IIIc

The final addition to the building was a heated room (room 1) set slightly askew on the end of room 2. This was heated by a channelled hypocaust with a stoke-hole on the north-east side and a vent to the south. The floor may have consisted of large tiles but none were found in situ. The hypocaust appeared to have been little used with few signs of burning in the stoke-hole and little ash in the channels.

Several other features are certainly or probably related to phase III but cannot be assigned to any of the sub-phases. To the north of the baths lay a square, timber-lined pit (148); perhaps for water storage. The fill of this contained Hadham pottery of third or fourth-century date. This was later cut by a double (re-cut?) ditch 17 containing Hadham and Oxford pottery of fourth-century date. This ditch may have drained the baths which were remodelled at an unknown date within phase III. The principle change was the incorporation of the hot bath base 219 within the main hypocaust. Again details are not clear because of plough damage.

Within the building, in room 8, a large jar (Fig. 11:32) had been buried up to its neck in the floor and the base broken. This probably served as a latrine but a phosphate test on a soil sample proved negative. Room 3 also had a dish (Fig. 12:38) buried in a small pit 9 next to one wall. In the opposite corner of the same room lay a pit 42 which was open and slightly silted when the villa was destroyed. When the building burnt down, rubble filled the pit which contained burnt wall plaster and burnt tiles from the roof (tegulae and imbrices, together with the mortar which joined them). Some of the wall plaster had burnt daub attached to the back as mentioned above. Other evidence for the fire was found in post-holes 51 & 143 which had burnt pink edges. Layer 255 (Fig. 2) also contained much burnt material from the villa and represents the rubble from its destruction.
There is again little dateable evidence associated with phase III. As mentioned above three coins were found in and under the layer of 'early' wall plaster 254 (Fig. 2). It is likely that this layer is associated with the rebuilding in stone. The coins all date to A.D. 260-274 and the rebuilding probably took place at about this date. It is not clear to which of the sub-phases of phase III the deposition of the wall plaster relates but it is most likely, in view of its distribution, to have occurred during the main rebuilding of IIIb. The date of the destruction of the villa is far less certain. Greenfield (1960) believed that this took place 'before Constantinian coins were in circulation'. The pottery however, particularly the Oxford and Hadham wares, indicates activity in the fourth century. The paucity of shell grit ware from the site may indicate that the occupation ended before the middle of the century. At the late Roman religious site at Icklingham, 18km away, shell grit ware became much more common in the later fourth century accounting for over 10% of the sherds found (West & Plouviez 1976). A date towards the middle of the fourth century is perhaps the most likely for the destruction of Exning.

Phase IV

The latest features on the site are the two lines of wheel-ruts in the chalk crossing from south-west to north-east on either side of the baths. Although no dating evidence was found from these, they are likely to be medieval and to form the precursor of the present track past the site from Burwell to Landwade. There was a distinct hollow in the area of the wheel ruts and they are probably only the lowest traces of a broad trackway which divided over the bumpy remains of the baths. Much of the south-west end of the site was badly damaged by this trackway and later ploughing of the thinned topsoil in this area.

DISCUSSION

As related above the structural sequence at Exning follows closely that proposed by J.T. Smith (1964) for Roman aisled buildings. Indeed Exning was one of the sites used by Smith to advance his arguments. It is clear that, as proposed by Smith, the phase III building comprised two functional zones: The south-east end (the 'upper' in Smith's terminology) contained the principle rooms as indicated by the mosaic, heated room and the distribution of painted wall plaster. The north-west (lower) end received far less attention and probably remained as an open hall. It is not certain if this arrangement was also present in the wooden building but the distribution of 'early' wall plaster makes this likely. Both phases also show a difference between the two long sides of the building; the south-west clearly forming the 'front' of the building. In phase III this is seen by a possible porch at this door and the placing of the furnace stove-holes to the rear. In phase II the evidence is more ambiguous but if the row of small post-holes does represent a colonnade this clearly indicates the display side of the building. This side was also approached by a gravelled path. The extent of this path is uncertain as it was mostly observed in test-holes.

The southern side was also the first to be rebuilt in stone, perhaps continuing as a colonnade. It is not possible to say if the wall was carried to the full height of the building or acted as support for other forms of wailing. Certainly some of the walls in the later building were wattle as burnt daub was found adhering to wall plaster in pit 42.

The baths present problems in any reconstruction of the north-west end of the building but it is most likely that some external factor prevented them being attached to the existing building and forced the shortening of the main roof line, leaving the heated rooms and stove-hole beyond the new gable end. The addition of baths was the first sign of the improvements which were to continue until the building burnt down. These improvements seem intended to add luxury items to the building without incurring the large cost of complete rebuilding. Even the conversion to stone footings retained parts of the phase II building and probably also retained parts such as the roof for which there is no evidence.

The rebuilding in stone affected mainly the upper end of the house. A large room was constructed half into and half out of the nave. This position was presumably chosen to gain direct light for the room, which was clearly prestigious as it contained the mosaic. If more light was needed this argues against the presence of a clerestory in the main roof. Else-
where the upper end of the building was divided into rooms by stone footings. The lower end of the building remained substantially as it had in phase II; the two posts beyond the doorway were encased in stone and joined by walls but beyond them there are no internal changes from phase II.

The final addition to the building again reflects attention to the upper end of the building with the addition of a heated room. This has a wide doorway, providing a view of the mosaic in room 2 but the floor of the heated room itself seems to have been of plain red tiles. Again the impression is of a desire to add a luxury item to the building but without great cost.

Any consideration of the status of the building must first consider whether it formed the centre of a villa estate or was part of some larger complex. J.T. Smith has noted (1964) that many aisled buildings were associated with another building, often a winged corridor villa. More recently D.J. Smith (1978) pointed to a combination of aisled building and winged corridor villa, set at right-angles on two sides of an enclosure, which he noted was characteristic of Hampshire and also eastern England. He suggested that Exning and the very similar site at Denton, Lincs (Smith 1963) probably conformed to this pattern. At Denton however no signs of this presumed winged corridor villa were found although a detached bath-house was, and at Exning trial trenching failed to find any other buildings. Another building at Exning would explain the somewhat curious orientation of the known building which is built up the slope instead of across it looking over the fens. Any building up the slope would, however, have been separated from the aisled building by ditch 1 during phase II.

Whether the building did form a villa in its own right or was part of some larger estate, whose main house lay near the present site or at some distance, the function of the known building is relatively clear. The upper end provides accommodation of a high standard with most of the amenities of a larger villa although on a modest scale. The bath-house which might be expected here is positioned at the lower end and as J.T. Smith noted (1964) seems to be provided for use by estate workers as well as the occupants of the upper end. These workers may well have lived in the open hall of the lower end. It is unlikely that this area was used for stalling cattle as in the traditional ‘long house’ since there is no provision for drainage here or at comparable sites. Nor is there a wide door into the lower end suitable for unloading other farm produce. Thus Exning seems to provide a building combining all the human accommodation needs of a farm under one roof, equally suited to the small farmer or to the bailiff of a large estate.

Examination of the settlement pattern around Exning (Fig. 1B) shows that there is a dense concentration of Roman material in the area, including the winged corridor villa at Reach (Atkinson 1894) and another large building noted under Burwell Castle (RCHM, Burwell 126). This perhaps indicates an area of small estates on the fertile land overlooking the fens. Contrasting with the situation on the fens themselves where peasant labour seems to have been used on large, possibly imperial estates (Phillips 1970,12), associated with fen drainage schemes such as the lodes to the west of Exning. Exning was probably, therefore, a small private estate which grew gradually in prosperity, allowing small additions to be made to the villa. This small surplus which had not allowed major rebuilding of the villa would have precluded rebuilding after the final fire.

THE FINDS

Coins

Thirteen coins were recovered from the excavation but were subsequently lost. They were identified by Mr R.A.G. Carson.

(They have now (1986) been found by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin Denomination</th>
<th>AD</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domitian. rev. uncertain. (Dupondius)</td>
<td>81-6</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoninus Pius. rev. uncertain.</td>
<td>138-61</td>
<td>AD 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius. Soli Cons Aug I/A RIC 283</td>
<td>259-68</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorinus. Salus Aug. RIC 40.</td>
<td>268-70</td>
<td>U/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorinus. Pictas Aug. RIC 57</td>
<td>268-70</td>
<td>U/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetricus I. Pax Aug. RIC 106</td>
<td>270-74</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetricus I. Laetitia Augg. RIC 87AD 270-74</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>U/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetricus I. rev. uncertain</td>
<td>270-74</td>
<td>U/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiate imitation</td>
<td>A275+</td>
<td>U/S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ironwork (Fig. 6)
1. Iron bar with a loop at one end, angled slightly. Corrosion products indicate that a wooden bar passed through the loop. Perhaps part of a tool used in the hypocaust as it was found in the vent at the South corner of room 1.
3. Knife or sickle blade. A wooden handle (visible in corrosion products) was attached to the lower 10cm by two makeshift rivets of bent wire. These may represent repair of the object, perhaps on two occasions as one rivet is of copper alloy, the other of iron. Gully 149.
4. Small 'C' shaped piece. Perhaps used as a staple for joining planks etc. Drain 16.
5. Part of a ?Chisel. U/S.
6. Small hook originally attached to some other object by a rivet or nail. Perhaps the closure of a small box? Rubble 255, room 5.
7. Knife blade. The corrosion products indicate that the handle was probably bone, attached by one rivet. U/S.
8. Part of a T shaped box-flue tile clamp. U/S.

Copper Alloy Objects (Fig. 7)
1. A small shield-shaped stud, cast in one piece with a large boss and two integral rivets for fixing to a curved surface, probably of leather. Oven 21.
2. A rectangular piece of sheet with the corners cut off. One side shows a large number of randomly oriented but seemingly ruled scratches perhaps indicating use at some time as part of a cutting surface. U/S.
3. A small handle of bent wire perhaps from a small box? U/S.
5. A thin sheet with punched depressions. Probably part of a larger sheet, the depressions or probably the raised dots on the other side forming a decorative pattern. Top of wall plaster 254.
6. A cast handle from a jug or similar vessel. The lower end shows traces of solder on the inner face. The upper end has been attached using an iron rivet, probably to a strap around the neck of the vessel. Wall plaster 254.
7. A pair of small tweezers formed from bent strip, the tips sharpened with a chamfer. A very similar pair were found in the well excavated to the south of Exning (Johnston 1959; Fig. 1 No. 1). U/S.

Lead Object (not illustrated)
A small piece of bent sheet, possibly from the corner of a tank. Timber lined pit 148.

Shale Objects (Fig. 7)
9. Part of a bracelet 9cm diameter. U/S.
Both of Kimmeridge shale.

Bone Object (Fig. 7)

Environmental & Technological Samples
These samples were not taken in any systematic manner and the sample numbers are too small for any analysis.

Mammal bone: a few bones of the major domestic animals.

Bird bones: identified by Mr D. Bramwell. Domestic fowl, duck, woodcock and widgeon.


Charcoal: identified by Mr G.C. Morgan. Mainly fragments of mature oak with twigs of other woods. Most of the oak came from the main post-holes of phase II and may represent the structure of the building.

Coal & Slag: several pieces of coal, presumably from North-East England, and slag were found.

The Mosaic
The mosaic lifted from room 2 in 1904 was originally semi-circular but was badly damaged, probably by tree roots. Some repairs had, however, been carried out in the Roman period with patches of mortar. The pieces which remain in the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge are mostly areas of the plain red tessellated floor which surrounded the mosaic. Several of these tesserae had been made from box-flue tiles as the keying for mortar is plainly visible. Of the mosaic itself, only three bands of the border remain; the outer plain black, the next a guilloche in red, yellow and white on a black ground and the inner band composed of black triangles on a white ground. No trace of the central design.
Figure 6. Exning Roman Villa. Objects of Iron. Scale 1/2.
Figure 7. Exning Roman Villa. Objects of Copper Alloy (1–7), Shale (8, 9) and Bone (10).

Scale 1/1.
survives. The date of laying the mosaic is uncertain although it is likely that it was envisaged when room 2 was constructed during phase IIIb in the late third century.

Glass

A quantity of window glass was recovered from both phase II and III contexts. Two fragments of vessel glass were also found.

WALL PLASTER

by the late Joan Liversidge

The villa produced a large quantity of painted wall plaster which can be ascribed to two periods, the phase II house dating to the second and third centuries AD and the third and fourth century house; phase III. All the material was recovered in a very broken condition, none of it being found in situ.

The Early Period (Fig. 8)

The most interesting specimens were recovered from a dump 261 outside the south-east exterior wall of the stone building and from test-hole 41, nearby. They include much green and blue, occasionally enlivened with grey, red, and yellow, all painted on a dark purple ground. Probably this is an all-over design of leaves and flowers as comparatively little plain purple was recovered but the pieces are too small to give a clear idea as to its nature (Fig. 8: 2 & 3). Fragments of it were found scattered elsewhere on the site. In some cases the design is bordered by a fine yellow line 6mm wide (Fig. 8: 1) and in others the purple ground is divided from a green ground by black and white lines 8mm wide.

The designs painted on the black ground have also not survived well; traces of green and yellow appear faintly with two scraps showing a mauve beaded line and there is also a solitary piece with pale yellow leaf fronds (Fig. 8: 5). The yellow ground has fared rather better and shows a bold curvilinear pattern in dark red, brown and greenish yellow bordered by a framework of brown, black or white lines (Fig. 8: 6, 8, 9, 11-13). In some cases the yellow and black grounds adjoin, in others, the yellow is separated from a rust ground by black, rust or white lines (Fig. 8: 7, 10). Obviously the whole assemblage probably represents one or more schemes of decoration divided up into dado and panels by a multicoloured framework. Red and green grounds also occur, the latter with pale yellow lines. Sometimes the green is separated from a rust ground by lines of black and white (Fig. 8: 4).

Inside the house similar material was recovered from a layer of rubble 254 on the south-west side of room 3. It included more purple fragments, some plain, some peppered with small white spots. In one case a band of the latter 46mm wide occurred, bordering the corner of a white panel outlined with black and white lines 8mm wide, with red motif. Another white piece showed faint traces of a pattern in the same purple and green. A few pieces of pale pink ground stippled with bright red spots of varying sizes also came from this area and two more scraps of it were found in room 7. Rubble on the south-east exterior of room 3 produced mixed material including the purple, blue and green design, greens bands on a white ground and also a piece of purple stippled in white and edged with a white and possibly, a black line.

Much the same patterns recurred in the small collection of plaster from room 6 in rubble 254, but with the addition of one small fragment with traces of a delicate white design on white and yellow, another of the tantalising fragments which occur here suggesting that the most interesting designs for the period have perished. Room 5, next door, produced little but white, red or purple, and also much plain yellow sometimes separated by a white line 6mm wide from a dark red (?) stripe, also painted over yellow. More of this plain yellow was found in room 5, in a small shallow depression 70 sealed by the wall in the north corner. It occurs again in rubble (261) on the south-west exterior of room 9. There it is sometimes bordered by deeper yellow and/or white lines, and occasionally a black line divides it from green. Other pieces show the dark and light yellow separated by black and pale blue lines, each 6-8mm wide, from the purple peppered with white spots already noted in room 3. In two cases these blue and black lines divided the stippled purple from a white ground with traces of a mauve pattern, probably the same as the panel corner also found in room 3 (Fig. 8: 14). With the same collection of material found outside room 9 were several pieces of a green and white
Figure 8. Exning Roman Villa. Wall Plaster of the Early Period. For key to colours see Fig. 9.
Scale 1/4.
The Later Period (Fig. 9)

The collection of later material includes hints of interesting schemes of decoration, all very incomplete. A few fragments from room 2 suggest that purple, red, white and yellow were the prevailing colours, above a dado of grey flecked with red, yellow, and white spots, sometimes with light purple or black veining. Above this may have come a purple band and white panelling. Two fragments suggest that a band of yellow and a delicate yellow foliate design painted on a white ground may have outlined the panels, or else divided one panel from the next as part of a framework.

The white panels in room 2 were probably ornamented with some form of curvilinear and floral designs which only survive on a few tantalising pieces. Lines of two shades of yellow appear and also yellow leaves or red and yellow flowers (Fig. 9: 15). Parts of a similar flower also occurred on an unstratified fragment and more was found in the 1904 excavation (Fig. 9: 16). Another piece shows the red and yellow motif with traces of a green leaf near a black line. Another design from room 2 painted on a white ground consists of part of a curve shaded in dark and light red with a white highlight. This encircles a purple motif which may have included the edge of a flower petal (Fig. 9: 17).

Disturbed (1904 excavation) soil in room 2 produced a fragment of a purple design described below (Fig. 9: 20) and also traces of a black pattern on a white band 38mm wide between traces of a red one on one side, and purple with darker purple and white lines, on the other. There was also a scrap of a red, yellow and white curvilinear design which occurs frequently among the 1904 material but in a faded state. It seems to consist of a (?)band of yellow, a band of white with traces of yellow lines, perhaps bordering one side of a purple stripe or panel. Above it come white semicircles with yellow centres placed 18mm apart on a dark red ground (Fig. 9: 18, 19).

From room 4 next door, (rubble 255), came some black, red and white stippling on a pink ground and much brick red or purple, plain or with white lines. Room 3 on the opposite side of the house contained a pit (42) with painted fragments buried there during the destruction of the house. They include purple and yellow stripes, probably the same scheme of decoration as that found in room 2, and one fragment with wavy purple lines painted on a pink or white ground which might indicate drapery.

A fresh design not found previously and also painted on a white ground consists of red and purple, sometimes used for adjacent stripes, with finer parallel or diagonal lines in blue black and white. Deep guide lines sometimes appear, usually painted blue. Another motif in more reddish purple edged with pink and painted on a blue ground, may also belong to this scheme of decoration and so may a single piece found outside the south-west wall of the room. Much plain white also came out of pit 42, some of it showing guide lines and faint traces of patterns. Two scraps may belong to the floral design of room 2 while others suggest a blue leaf design on white edged with a dark red stripe (Fig. 9: 21). Apart from the pit, stippling on pink and grey grounds, and plain white plaster with pink, dark red and blue borders were found in the north-west part of room 3 (rubble 255) with one piece showing part of a curved line on a white ground edged with red.

The few pieces of painted plaster found in room 5 (rubble 255), included some burnt fragments of plain pink and maroon, and a little pink or yellow edged with red stripes. One piece had a grey or white ground edged with a dark red line 6mm wide, and a bright red ground with traces of green. Another fragment, an isolated example, showed part of a flower with red and orange petals and green stalks or foliage on a white ground edged with a dark red border (Fig. 9: 22). Stippling with red and black splashes on a pink ground bordered by red lines, was found outside the exterior wall of this room and also in a post-hole (30) in an interior wall, and may have come from a dado.

In addition to the red and white, room 6 (rubble 255) produced two pieces from a purple foliate and curvilinear design painted on a white ground (Fig. 9: 24). The piece mentioned above (Fig. 9: 23), found in room 2 may also have belonged to this scheme of decoration and more of the curvilinear design
Figure 9. Exning Roman Villa. Wall Plaster of the Later Period. Scale ¼
survives in the 1904 material. Another piece found in 1904 and painted purple on white, may come from the edge of a panel decorated in this way.

The fragmentary nature of the wall-paintings from this house make it impossible to hazard any suggestions regarding possible schemes of decoration although individual motifs such as Nos 5, 15 or 21 are familiar enough, and the early design of leaves and flowers on a purple ground is of unusual interest. In both periods the walls were presumably divided into panels, outlined by a framework of multicoloured stripes and lines, above a dado probably ornamented with painted imitation marbles. Most of the rooms produced evidence of decoration so this must have been a colourful house in both phases. Much of the most interesting material from the late period was found in room 2 which was further enlivened by the geometric mosaic floor.

POTTERY

Just over 600 sherds were recovered from the excavation but it is evident that many plain wall sherds were discarded as they are very under-represented except from small features in which little else was found.

The fabric of each coarse-ware sherd was examined under a x20 binocular microscope and assigned to a fabric group on the basis of visible inclusions. The groups fall into two categories; those which contain a completely uniform fabric and those which contain many related fabrics. In the account which follows the former will be referred to as 'fabrics', the latter as 'fabric groups'. The large majority of the sherds are included in the fabric groups. Burning of some sherds introduced uncertainties in some cases. The heterogeneity of the fabric groups limits their usefulness as does the fact that most of the pottery was unstratified or from the over-site rubble layers which contain much residual material.

In common with the other finds each sherd was given an individual number (running from 1 to 1199) by the excavator, prefixed by the site code ‘LW’.

Samian Ware

The Samian ware was identified by Mr B.R. Hartley after the excavation and although the sherds are now lost, he believes there would be few changes to his report if they were found. None of the Samian merits individual publication and only the stratified sherds are listed below.

LW 473 Form 31. C. Gaul. Late Antonine. Ditch 11.
LW 1170 Form uncertain. Early second century. Post-hole 34.
LW 1180 Form uncertain. Early second century. Post-hole 203.

Two sherds of samian were found whilst sorting the coarse wares:


Mortaria by Mrs K.F. Hartley (Fig. 10)

1. Hard, greyish cream fabric with buff slip; two pieces of ironstone grit survive. Similar mortaria were being made at Stibbington in the Nene Valley in the late third and early fourth century, though the form may have continued in use until late in the fourth century. Two other fragments, probably from the same vessel, give part of the side and the base. A hole 6mm in diameter has been neatly drilled in the base (diameter 98mm), 31mm from the edge. There has been wear around the lower end of the hole but none around the upper and only nominal wear of the tituration grit. A patch of the interior surface is discoloured by burning which has penetrated the fabric. It seems likely that that the broken mortarium had been used as a lamp-holder, hung on a chain of some sort. LW 479+480. 1904 Excavation.
Figure 10. Exning Roman Villa. Pottery. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$. 
2. Hard, fine textured, cream fabric with thick red core; a few brown and grey flint grits survive. Probably made at Colchester c. AD 135–175. LW 402 Ditch 1.


4. Fine, creamy buff fabric with pink core; two fragments of flint grit survive. The form is highly unusual but the fabric and grit point to production in Colchester or, perhaps, some other part of East Anglia. (see Hull 1963: Fig. 89 Nos 17–20) LW 554. Rubble 261 in top of ditch 1.

5. Cream fabric with pale buff core and ironstone tituration grit. This is a typical product of the lower Nene Valley potteries. Late third or fourth century. LW 799. Ditch 17.

Coarse-ware Fabrics and Fabric Groups

Fabric A: Hard, white, off-white or occasionally pink fabric, with many red and black ironstone inclusions, also quartz and occasionally white grog. Colour coated; mid brown to very dark brown. Decoration; rouletting, barbotine, white paint. Nene Valley. Mostly phase III.

Fabric group B: Similar to fabric A. Details of fabric not so consistent. Colour varies from grey to pink. Colour-coat rougher, colours include dark grey, brown and red. Decoration includes barbotine, white paint and rouletting. Probably includes Nene Valley and Suffolk kiln material e.g. Pakenham (Smedley & Owles 1960, 1961). Mostly phase III.

Fabric C: Red fabric. Mica, quartz and ironstone inclusions. Soft dark red colour-coat. The one vessel known (Fig. 12: 45) has traces of white paint. Oxfordshire. Phase III.


Fabric E: Fine white fabric. Dark grey colour-coat. Grog roughcasting. Identified by Mrs Anderson as Cologne Ware. Phase III.

Fabric F: see Samian report.

Fabric G: Pale orange fabric. Ironstone quartzite and grog inclusions. The only form represented is a ring-necked flagon.


fragments. Of those whose form can be seen, several (eg Fig. 10: 6, 8; Fig. 11: 26) are in a late Iron Age tradition, known from Colchester and from other Fenland sites. These wares have been termed East Anglian by Potter (1965) when discussing sites further north. He points to the presence of these forms in the immediately pre-Roman Iron Age, together with imported Roman forms, and suggests trade and influence from Colchester. The Fens, undrained at this date, would provide an effective barrier to East Midlands influence. On the basis of evidence from sites in the Wisbech/March area it seems that the East Anglian style stopped being made during the second century as the draining and settlement of the Fens allowed penetration by Nene Valley wares and as Black-Burnished ware influenced local production.

Twenty-four sherds of Black-Burnished ware were recovered from the excavation, fourteen of them being BB1. Most of the forms are bowls. This is also true of the local grey-ware copies. Many of these copies are well made, for example Fig. 11: 22 which has a typical Black-Burnished ware lattice on the inside of the bowl.

There is also a number of sherds (and one rim, Fig. 11: 25) showing random bands of combing. This decoration is known from several kilns near Cambridge eg War Ditches (Hartley 1960, fig. 1 nos 2, 3) and Horningsea (Walker 1914, Fig. 53). No sherds of the typical Horningsea Jar (Walker 1914, Fig. 50) were found although it is common on other sites in the area (Hartley 1960, 27. RCHM 1972) and probably dates to the second and early third centuries (Hartley 1960, 28).

Fabric AT is however, probably pre-Roman and Fabric AX is represented by a twisted rod handle from a green glazed medieval jug.

Discussion

The relative paucity of the pottery, coupled with the limited stratigraphy on the site makes it difficult to draw many conclusions. The majority of the sherds were from long-lived grey-ware forms and closely datable forms were rare. It is clear, however, that the pottery ranges in date across the whole Roman period. Many of the earliest forms were either produced in Colchester or derived from forms common there. This influence was replaced in the second century by influence and pots from the Nene Valley and Black-Burnished ware kilns.

In the latest phases on the site, wares from the Hadham kilns are represented. Several of these are in the ‘Romano-Saxon’ tradition of the fourth century. Only one piece of Oxford ware was found and little shell grit ware, common on other sites in the region (West & Plouviez 1976, 90). This seems to indicate that the site did not continue in use for long into the second half of the fourth century.

CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED VESSELS

Phase I. First & second centuries (Fig. 10, Nos. 6–19)

10: 7 Medium-mouthed jar in sandy orange-buff fabric. Exterior surface dark grey and inexactly burnished. A series of boles has been bored in the base to form a colander. LW 464, ditch 10.
10:11 Lid in hard, grey, sandy fabric with occasional large (3–4mm) flint inclusions. LW 468, ditch 10.
10:18 Wide-mouthed jar in hard, dark grey, sandy fabric, probably rilled on neck. LW 1012, ditch 43.

Phase II. Second and earlier third centuries. (Fig. 10: 20 and Fig. 11: 21–31)

Figure 11. Exning Roman Villa. Pottery. Scale ¼ except 25 & 32 ⅛.
11:25 Large storage jar in dark grey sandy fabric. Combed decoration on body. This type of decoration is known from local kilns eg War Ditches (Hartley 1960) and Horningsea (Walker 1914). LW 862, ditch 1.

Phase III Later third and earlier fourth century (Fig. 11: 32–Fig. 12: 52)

11:32 Large storage jar in red fabric W. The body is combed horizontally all over and there is a slight carination ½ up from the base. Probably used as a latrine. LW 478, pit 28.
11:33 Flagon or jug in fabric L (Hadham). Similar to a vessel in the same fabric from Caister-on-Sea illustrated by Higgins (1972, No. 51) and dated there to the later fourth century. LW 756, rubble 254.
11:38 Dish in soft, deep red micaceous fabric. Dark grey burnished surface. LW 277, complete pot buried in pit 9.
12:40 Jar with overhanging rim in hard, sandy, grey fabric. LW 1003, ditch 16.
12:49 Dish or bowl in hard, sandy orange fabric with grey core. Dark grey burnished surfaces. The burnishing on the exterior is very crude. LW 570, rubble 255.
12:50 Bowl in parchment ware, decorated with red/brown paint. The form is similar to Oxford type P24 (Young 1977) but the fabric suggests Nene Valley, where similar forms are known eg from Duston (Woods 1977, No. 268). Probably third century. LW 634, rubble 255.

Occupation layer 253 (probably pre-phase III) (Fig. 12: 53–4)

12:53 Jar in grey sandy fabric (burnt). Dark grey burnished surface. LW 364A.

Unstratified (Fig. 12: 55–65)

12:57 Jar in brown fabric with thick grey core, occasional large (2–3mm) flint inclusions. Horizontal
Figure 12. Exning Roman Villa. Pottery. Scale ¼ except 65 ½.
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DENNY ABBEY: THE NUNS’ REFEKTORY

JEM POSTER and DAVID SHERLOCK

Of the two surviving buildings at Denny one is the large farmhouse with remains of the three earlier religious houses incorporated in it, namely those of the Benedictine monks, the Knights Templar and the Franciscan nuns (Poor Clares); while the other, which lies thirty-five metres to the north of it, was the nuns’ refectory, turned into a barn after the Dissolution. Both these buildings and the surrounding ground were, as an ancient monument, placed in the guardianship of the then Ministry of Works by Pembroke College, the owners, in 1947. Unfortunately, while much time and effort were spent on the elucidation and conservation of the house, the refectory was largely neglected (Christie and Coad 1980). By the time the house and grounds were opened to visitors in 1977 the barn was a roofless ruin, its wall-tops gathering vegetation and its south wall leaning dangerously. With the object of arresting further decay and particularly to protect some remains of painted wall-plaster and the soft clunch window tracery, it was decided in 1979 to re-roof the building. Excavations were to be undertaken within to see what else remained, with the presumption that the re-roofed and re-glazed refectory might serve as a museum for the history of Denny and the display of the interesting finds made elsewhere on the site. As it turned out, the excavation uncovered much of the original flooring and evidence for the dais and seating, thus rendering alternative uses for the building very difficult if these features were to remain exposed. The new roof, of asbestos to match the adjacent farmyard buildings, while protecting the excavated remains, came on too late to save any of the internal wall-plaster except for a few small patches which are now without their painting. What follows is a record of the excavation and its results preceded by a description of the building and its history.

HISTORY

The history of the nuns at Denny and their buildings is to be found in the official handbook to the Abbey (Coad 1984) and therefore need only be summarised here. The Poor Clares’ nunnery was founded in the years 1339–49 as an act of piety by Mary de Valence, widow of the earl of Pembroke, mainly by her transferring nuns from Waterbeach and closing down that nunnery, which had been founded a few years earlier on a site that proved unsuitable (Cra’ster 1966). At Denny the buildings which the Templars had abandoned were adapted once more to suit the needs not only of the nuns but also of the Countess of Pembroke who seems to have converted some of the 12th-century church for her own use (see Fig. 1). The nuns’ dormitory was built to the north of this with night stairs leading via the old north transept into a large new church to the east. To the north of this was an open courtyard with the nuns’ cloister and refectory to the north again (see Fig. 1). In 1947 and 1955 trial trenching by Mr Denys Spittle, a member of Pembroke College and subsequently of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments Cambridge office, allowed the extent of the church and the layout of the nuns’ cloister to be conjectured (Spittle 1967, 233 and personal communication). From 1968 to 1975 Mrs P.M. Christie excavated the features to the north of the earlier church (Christie and Coad 1980, fig. 8). A chapter-house range located along the east side of the cloister walk is possible but the ground has never been investigated.

In 1379 there were forty-one nuns at Denny but the average number seems to have been about twenty-five. The abbey continued to receive new endowments until c. 1400 but in 1459 the abbess wrote to a friend that the sisters had no money to pay bishops’ fees, that
Figure 1. Denny Abbey, plan of the Franciscan nuns' buildings.
their buildings ('places') were derelict and their jewels all pawned (Bourdillon 1926, 30). Otherwise there is almost nothing to indicate the financial fortunes of the abbey or its occupants and no reference to actual building works. The only surviving household accounts are summarised in an appendix to this report.

The abbey was dissolved in 1538 or 1539, the King's commissioners having reported only six nuns there when they inspected in 1536. After the Dissolution the nuns' quire was pulled down but the earlier church was converted into the farmhouse that survives today. Part of the dormitory is shown on James Essex's drawing of 1773 (reproduced in Coad 1984, 16). The refectory had, by then, been converted to agricultural use. Dame Elizabeth Throgmorton, the last abbess, retired to her family home at Coughton Court, Warwickshire, with a memento in the form of the carved wooden dole-gate which must have once been near the kitchen (Barnard 1927).

By historical accident Denny was acquired by Pembroke College (which the Countess had also founded) in 1928 (VCH forthcoming).

EARLIER RESEARCH AND DESCRIPTION

The earliest surviving description of the refectory was made by James Essex who visited in June 1773 and wrote:

This was a large handsome room, 93 ft 6 ins long and 22 ft 6 ins wide. On the north side there were six handsome windows which made it very light and cheerful. At the east end was a large window between two smaller and above it a quatrefoil. At the west end was another window but less than the opposite. On the south side there were windows next the cloister but not like the opposite; but as the wall on this side has been partly rebuilt only one of them remains now. Between the 4th and 5th windows on the N. side is a square projecting building with a small door inwards. In the middle of the W. end was a recess for the laver; and in the angle a small door leading to some apartment at that end. There was likewise a door leading to some apartment at the east end. The walls of the refectory were wainscoted part of their height and the rest was plastered and painted in imitation of a tracery much used in the time of Edward 3 [Br. Library, Add. MS 15977, f. 44v].

The refectory actually measures internally 28.20 m by 6.88 m (92 ft 6 ins by 22 ft 6 ins). The walls are mainly of clunch and rough stone, still partly rendered on the north side in a shelly plaster. Barnack stone was used for the offset plinth, buttresses, heads and sills of windows and the lower parts of the jambs. Clunch was used for window tracery and for most of the inside walls. One of the original north windows was destroyed when barn doorways were inserted, at about the time when the projecting building on the north side was demolished and its openings into the refectory carefully blocked up with salvaged materials (Plate 1). This projection is clearly shown on the Bucks' engraving of 1730 (reproduced in Coad 1984, 22), Relhan's watercolour of c. 1800 (Plate 2) and an engraving of 1828 (reproduced in Coad 1984, 23). It had windows on two levels suggesting a first floor. The other windows in the north wall were originally of two trefoiled ogee lights beneath a quatrefoil in a two-centred segmental head. They were later blocked and part-shuttered for farm use. The original north buttresses are each of two stages on a chamfered plinth which was continued all along the wall. The east windows which Essex described can just be seen in the Bucks' engraving but only the central sill and lower splays now remain. The exterior shows signs of the lean-to shed which is shown on the 1828 engraving. A barn door was later inserted in the central window (Plate 3). The only window on the south side is a blocked 16th-century one of three lights with four-centred heads under a common square head; the mullions and inner heads have gone except for the springing of the outer lights. The insertion of this window appears to be the only major alteration to the refectory carried out in its lifetime as a refectory. Outside and just east of this window there is a projecting jamb for a doorway leading into a room at the east end of the east range of the cloister. The small blocked doorway at the east end of the same wall would have also led here. West of the blocked window is a corbel that may have once supported the cloister walk roof. West of the barn doorway the south wall has been rebuilt but the lowest jambs of the original west doorway from the cloister are just visible.
Plate 1. The refectory from the north, July 1951. Copyright H.B.M.C.

Plate 2. The refectory from the north, c. 1800, watercolour from the Relhan Collection. Copyright Cambridge Antiquarian Society.
Plate 3. The interior of the refectory looking east, May 1957. Copyright H.B.M.C.

Plate 4. The interior of the refectory, looking north-west, July 1951. Copyright H.B.M.C.
from both outside and within. The thickness of the original Franciscan wall remains as an irregular offset at ground level outside, as indicated in Fig. 4. Part of the rebuilt wall which was leaning outwards dangerously was shored in 1955 and jacked upright again in 1983. The west wall (Plate 4) was entirely rebuilt in brickwork of c. 1800 but founded on the earlier wall (see below, excavation report) so there is now no trace of what Essex called the 'recess for the laver' which could conceivably have been a partially blocked serving hatch (as for example at Horsham St. Faith Priory, Norfolk), or perhaps a niche to house an image, because 'lavers' or wash basins were invariably built outside refectories in the cloister. Indeed, the Poor Clares’ Rule stated that they should wash their hands before they entered the refectory (Seton 1914, 102). Nor is there any sign of a west doorway leading into the kitchen.

The refectory may have been originally roofed with tiles like some of the Templars' buildings (see Christie and Coad 1980, pl. IX B) but it has been thatched since the 18th century as the early engravings show; the documents suggest the church also was thatched (see Appendix below). The roof frame which is shown in Plates 3 and 4 is probably of the 18th century, incorporating some re-used timbers. In June 1957 'the temporary tarpaulin sheets were removed; the roof was stripped of thatching; and roof timbers were removed and stacked ready for inspection and further instructions' (Department of the Environment file AM 46317/04 part 1).

The 14th-century wall painting mentioned by Essex survived into the early 1970s in patches of plaster on the east wall and adjacent parts of the north and south walls. The suggested reconstruction of a portion of the

Figure 2. Suggested reconstruction by T.W. Ball of lost wall painting in refectory.
lost painting shown in Fig. 2 is based on official photographs taken in 1958 and a sketch by Denys Spittle since deposited with R.C.H.M. It consisted of a pattern of ogee lozenges in Decorated style, each lozenge delineated by double red lines and filled with 'birds and ivy leaves in black(?) or red also'. Possibly this black was decomposed vermillion. The scheme may be contrasted with the 13th-century preference for a pattern of imitation masonry, often also with double red lines, filled with rosettes, as for example at Bushmead Priory, Beds. (Park 1986, 72).

The wooden panelling which Essex also mentions has not survived but there is evidence for its fixing on the original wall face, chiefly in short lengths of chasing either side of the windows which cut through the plaster and into the soft clunch. The chasings measure about 50 mm wide and up to 25 mm deep and have holes at intervals presumably for fixing batons onto which the panelling was nailed. On the east wall there were two rows of chasings which can be seen in Plate 3, the lower one on a level with the window sill (and continuing at roughly this level in the north and south walls) and the upper one about 0.85 m above it, showing that the panelling was higher at this the 'high' end of the refectory.

EXCAVATIONS IN 1984 AND 1985

Excavations were carried out over the period May 1984 to September 1985, primarily to establish the original floor level within the refectory. Apart from the re-excavation of a relatively modern trench against the exterior of the refectory's west wall, excavations were confined to the interior and were, moreover, deliberately limited to the removal of post-Dissolution levels and features: this is not therefore an account of a comprehensive investigation, but an assessment of the significance of such evidence as became available in the course of this small-scale programme of works.

The refectory is known to have been used for many years as a farm building, and much of the material overlying or disturbing its original floor level related to this usage. Close to its west end were found the remains of a substantial brick-built structure: the presence of sizeable lumps of coal in the immediate vicinity, together with evidence of heat damage to some of the bricks, suggested that the remains represented the basis of a hearth or kiln, while the absence of any of the kinds of debris one might expect to see in an industrial context lent strength to a strictly agricultural interpretation: a corn-drying kiln seems the most likely possibility. To the east of this kiln and extending across the width of the building from north to south and eastward to a point approximately halfway along its length, a series of stone sleeper walls was revealed (Plate 5): these were crudely constructed, mainly of rough stone, though a number of dressed or moulded stones, almost certainly from the abbey fabric, were also used. On the evidence available, it would appear that these walls were used to support timber flooring, again in association with the agricultural use of the building.

What is beyond doubt is the relationship of both the kiln and the stone sleepers to the original floor level; for that level exists largely intact, in the unequivocal form of neatly-laid tiles, over a large proportion of the area of the building. The kiln (which clearly disturbed these tiles) and the sleeper walls which lay directly on them are unmistakably defined as post-Dissolution features, as is the general overburden of rubbly soil cut by their construction.

After planning, the post-Dissolution structures and levels (for levels see Fig. 3) were removed to reveal the disposition of features relating to the original usage of the refectory. Most striking of these was the floor itself, constructed of glazed tiles and arranged in the pattern shown on the plan (Fig. 4). Similarly significant is the evidence, provided by footings still in situ, of the refectory's seating and tabling arrangements. The seating is represented by footings offset from the main wall on both the north and south sides of the building, while structures running parallel to these at a distance of approximately 0.50 m from them seem to represent all that survives of a narrow platform, or foot-pace: boards resting on this structure and extending back to the base of the benching would have created a feature similar to that upon which the nuns' feet rest in the illustration of the Poor Clares at table (Plate 7). What is not entirely clear, from the evidence available at Denny, is the relationship of the table to this structure. Plate 7 shows what is almost certainly a free-standing system of tabling ranged against
Plate 5. Remains of sleeper walling for a granary floor overlying the original tiled floor, as half excavated, July 1984. The west end wall is of brick of c. 1800. The square stone block in the south wall is just in front of the east jamb of the former doorway into the cloister. Underlying the granary footings and running parallel with the north and south walls are the footings for the foot-pace; the footings offset from the main wall and representing the benching are also clearly visible. Two-metre scale. Copyright H.B.M.C.

the foot-pace; but the distance involved at Denny would seem to necessitate an abnormally (though not impossibly) wide surface to the table in order to bring its edge within easy reach of those sitting on the fixed benching. It therefore seems possible that the tabling here was set or socketed into the stone foundation for the foot-pace: although there is no evidence for this in the stonework itself, it is apparent that the structure originally stood at least one course higher than it does at present, and the evidence might well have been lost in the process of demolition.

At the east end of the building, surviving footings suggest the original presence of a dais. Raised approximately 0.30 m above the level of the main floor and served by the adjacent doorway, this clearly represents the basis for a ‘high table’. A few tiles remaining on the threshold of this doorway imply that the surface of the dais was itself tiled. Although post-Dissolution disturbance has destroyed most of the tiling at this end of the building, one should also note the vestigial presence of a few edge-tiles neatly defining the inner boundary of the dais as indeed they define the boundary of the foot-pace throughout much of the remainder of the building.

Several interesting minor details also emerged from examination of the interior of the refectory. The clear-cut cessation of the footings and corresponding extension of the flooring into the area of the doorway at the west end of the south wall make it clear that this doorway constituted part of the original layout of the building. A change in the character of the flooring immediately within
Plate 6. East end of north wall of refectory showing doorway into misericord and blocked pulpit above. Metre Scale.

Plate 7. Poor Clares at table. The nun reading from the pulpit above is Beata Umilta and therefore shown haloed. From the Sarum Breviary, French, c. 1424-35, Paris, Bib. Nat. MS Lat. 17294, f. 497r.

SECTION A A
SOUTH WALL

a Modern tarred surface
b Small limestone/mortar rubble
c Blue-grey clay
d Gritty, mortary buff clay
e Dark, slightly loamy soil
f Tile surface
g Mortar bedding
h Unexcavated

CLOISTER

FLOOR TILES
FOOT PACE
BENCHING

NORTH WALL

BUTTRESS

Figure 3. Section north-south near centre of refectory, during 1985 excavation.
the doorway – the tiles giving place to a small area of brick – probably represents patching of an area inevitably subjected to particularly heavy wear. It should be added that in the vicinity of the doorway on the north side of the building there is no equivalent cessation of the foot-pace foundations (though there is a break, probably original, in the bench footings) nor any suggestion of tiling leading up to the doorway; one might reasonably postulate a break in the tiling at this point, but it would seem that provision for passage to the pulpit and/or the misericord (see discussion below) was more rudimentary than for passage through the main south doorway.

Running north–south across the width of the refectory, and passing through the footings on either side, was a narrow drainage channel, stone-sided and stone-based, with a flat stone capping. This was picked up only because of heavy disturbance along its line; where such disturbance has not taken place, the drain is overlain by the floor-tiles. It therefore clearly pre-dates the laying of those tiles, though whether it was built in conjunction with the refectory, or is an earlier feature accommodated by the refectory's footings, remains a matter for conjecture.

The excavation against the exterior face of the west wall was intended to demonstrate conclusively that the present west wall – a relatively late rebuild, of brick construction – was actually founded on the original footings. This proved to be the case; but the incidental emergence of a number of other significant details entails further comment.

The footings themselves were faced with a rendering of yellow mortar, this in turn having been coated with a thin skim of white plaster. Of the remaining fragments of this facing, some were found as low as the bottom course of the footings, a circumstance which suggests that the materials were applied while the construction trench was still open, though it is difficult to establish any convincing reason for such a procedure. The quality of this facing suggested the possibility that this was an interior, rather than an exterior, wall-surface; and this was confirmed by the discovery of two lines of footings, keyed into the refectory footings and running at right-angles to them, forming a continuation of the line of the refectory's north and south walls. Both lines of footings were truncated by a modern pipe-trench, and the stones at the northern edge of the northern one had been robbed out, leaving only a line of mortar to show their original position; sufficient stonework remained, however, to make it clear that these were indeed wall-footings, and not merely – as the dimensions of the southern line had first suggested – footings for buttresses. It seems highly likely that they indicate the position of the kitchen which served the refectory, though further excavation would be necessary to confirm this hypothesis.

It is worth pointing out in this connection that the Bucks' engraving of 1730 (reproduced in Coad 1984, 22) actually shows a wall continuing westward from the west end of the refectory; ruinous but substantial, and pierced by an arched doorway and a square-headed window, this almost certainly relates to one or other of the two lines of footings revealed by these excavations. There are also details to be seen on Relhan's painting (Plate 2) and the 1828 engraving (Coad 1984, 23). Since the original west wall is represented only by subterranean footings, there is no surviving archaeological evidence either for or against a doorway connecting this building with the refectory. There were no footings for either benching or foot-pace along the west wall of the refectory.

FINDS

(a) Floor Tiles

The floor of the refectory was composed of tiles set in a chequer pattern of dark green or black and yellow glazes, set diagonally to the walls and divided by three long, parallel rows of single tiles. The diagonal pattern continued up to the west cloister doorway. The dais and dais doorway were also tiled. The tiles are about 10.5 cm square and 1.6 cm thick. Many have shallow diagonal or cross-shaped incisions which allowed them to be broken into halves or quarters if required. Their fabric is an orangey-red clay with small stone inclusions. In size and fabric they may be identified as a product of the tile-kiln at Bawsey near King's Lynn more noted for its decorated designs which may be seen today in Castle Rising Castle or Castle Acre Priory. All the Denny refectory tiles are now extremely worn but they appear to have been
Figure 4. Denny Abbey refectory, plan following excavations 1984–85.
plain except for two randomly placed specimens which are decorated with Bawsey designs (Eames 1955, pls. 24 and 26, nos. v and xxiv). These designs were also amongst the sixteen Bawsey designs found in the small area of paving excavated at the west end of the Franciscan building inside the church (Christie and Coad 1980, 216–219). The refectory tiles, like those in the church, presumably date from the foundation of the abbey shortly before the middle of the 14th century.

About two metres from the centre of the west wall is a solitary tile 140 mm square with line-impressed decoration like those found in earlier excavations at Denny (Christie and Coad 1980, fig. 26, no. 3). This is normally dated rather earlier than the Bawsey tiles. It is presumably a crude repair.

A full report on the floor-tiles will appear in Drury and Norton, forthcoming.

(c) Other Finds
These were all unstratified and merit only brief mention. The sleeper walls for the granary floor were made up of re-used monastic stone including both clunch and oolite 14th-century mouldings for window jambs and sills. There were numerous small fragments of late or post medieval pottery, stoneware and floor tiles, all unstratified.

All the finds from these and earlier excavations at Denny are now stored at Castle Acre Priory, except for the architectural stone which is on site and the precious objects which are stored in the Ancient Monuments laboratory in Fortress House, London, where the excavation archive is also kept.

DISCUSSION
The arrangements of Denny refectory were very similar to those of any other monastic refectory or indeed a medieval dining hall like that of Pembroke College, Cambridge, which the Countess also founded. At the ringing of the bell for meals the sisters assembled in the cloister and filed into the refectory via the west door having washed their hands in a lavatorium which was normally just outside in a recess beside this door. At Denny this portion of the refectory wall is of post-Dissolution date so we cannot say if there was

(b) Fragment of Marble Panel (Fig. 5)
This is a small fragment of marble (presumably from the Mediterranean area) with an incised design of two curved strips between stylised leaves. Its maximum width is 50 mm and it is of an even 5 mm thickness. It is presumably part of a decorative panel, perhaps a reredos. It was found immediately above the tiled floor, where it must have lain since the Dissolution, near the centre of the room on the north side.

Figure 5. Fragment of carved marble panel, found 1984. Scale 1:1.
DENNY ABBEY: THE NUNS' REFECTOR Y

We also mention that a lavatorium there but the drain found beneath the floor may have served one (see above, p. 76). The south side of the refectory probably had a lean-to roof supported by corbels in the wall, some of which still survive.

According to the Poor Clares' rule a lengthy grace was said or sung before and after every meal, during which the nuns knelt and 'sche whoche hath blessid the tabel schal turne here to the ymage if any be in the freytoure . . . ' (Seton 1914, 111). If there was such an image at Denny it could have been on the north or south wall or in the 'recess' in the west wall (see above, p. 69) because the windows the east wall and the high panelling below them would have left little room for such a focus of special attention, although refectories with un-windowed east walls often had important religious wall paintings here (see, for example, Horsham St. Faith Priory, Park 1986, 75). The small marble fragment that was found in 1984 (Fig. 5) might conceivably have been part of such an image.

The dais at the 'high' end of the refectory was intended for the seating of the abbess, senior nuns and honoured guests such as the foundress herself who could have entered or retired to her private apartments via the small south-east doorway (now blocked). The rest of the nuns, their personal servants which the rule allowed them to retain (Seton 1914, 101) and any other permitted visitors sat on the stone benches with their backs to the north and south walls. Although the wall benches were continuous there must have been breaks in the tabling, as in college halls today, to allow for reasonably dignified access. A suggested reconstruction of the original appearance of the seating and tabling is shown in Fig. 6. The fixed tabling is modelled on what survives in the great hall of Winchester College (Eames 1977, pls. 70A and B). Wall seating was standard monastic planning and evidence for it can still be seen in many other surviving refectories, as for example at Thetford Cluniac Priory where, however, the dais was a good deal higher, or at Durham Cathedral where remains of the bench footings and tiled floor, together with the evidence for the basis of the foot-pace (in this case a wooden sleeper beam), were also revealed by excavation (Gee 1966). Bushmead Augustinian Priory, Beds., and Durham also have evidence for a central open hearth, which is absent at Denny and was doubtless a luxury inappropriate to the tenets of the Poor Clares. Seating around the walls at Denny left a large empty space in the body of the room, much in excess of what was required for the serving of food to those seated.

There were generally two meals a day, 'mete' and 'soper', which were eaten in silence. The use of 'signis religious and honestis' (Seton 1914, 88) were permitted while one of the sisters read to the gathering from a pulpit such as is also represented in Plate 7. Refectory pulpits were normally located in a north or south wall near the east end and constructed by thickening the wall at this point to allow access up a narrow staircase to the reader's pulpit. At Denny the blocking above the small north doorway (Plate 6) is probably where the pulpit was but the annex on the north side of the refectory shown on the early engravings but now totally gone (see above and Plate 2) is too large to have been solely for a pulpit as Gilyard-Beer suggested (1977, 18) and its windows suggest it contained a first floor.

The north annex to Denny refectory may well have served as the misericord, a special room where meat was permitted to be eaten. The small doorway in the refectory which necessitated a break in the seating and probably the tabling too (although the footings for the latter pass across this point) may therefore have led into a ground-floor misericord in which there was also access up to the main refectory pulpit. While the stairs and first floor remain conjectural the ground plan of this small refectory annex may be compared with a very similar arrangement of the mid 14th-century in Birkenhead Benedictine Priory, Cheshire, which has also been identified as a former misericord (Brakspear 1925, 121). Both rooms at Birkenhead were on undercrofts and there is no sign of the pulpit. At Jervaulx Abbey, Yorkshire, where the refectory lay north–south in the Cistercian manner, a small misericord with a fireplace was added on to the south end in the 15th century when the Rule was relaxed and meat was allowed three times a week except during fasting. A meat kitchen was built which could also serve the nearby infirmary (Hope and Brakspear 1911, 334). Another Cistercian misericord, about the size of Denny's, has recently been excavated at St. Mary Grace, London.
The Poor Clare sisters were permitted to drink wine and to eat fish and milk products, but according to chapter 39 of the Rule of St. Benedict only the aged and sick were allowed to eat the flesh of a quadruped (Seton 1914, passim). Such sisters were normally cared for in an infirmary set apart from the claustral buildings, just as the misericord was normally a free-standing building away from the main refectory. Unfortunately we have no documentary evidence for either at Denny (see Appendix below) and the identification of the annex as a misericord must be regarded as tentative. It would have been an inconvenient arrangement in that meat from the kitchen would have had to be taken through the refectory (to the torment of the other nuns!). A storeroom for linen or for books for the pulpit above are simpler alternative uses.

The refectory at Denny was large and spaciously planned for only about fifty persons at most, but the scale of the building befitted the scale on which the foundress endowed this and her other foundations. In the summer of 1773 it seemed to James Essex to be a 'light and cheerful building' (above p. 69) and thus the foundress no doubt intended it to be. But in winter, with the wind from the Fens against the large north windows and with no heating, the panelling and painted walls must have seemed small consolation for the sisters sitting in silence immediately beneath those windows, eating their frugal meals and listening to lengthy readings.

DOCUMENTARY APPENDIX

While the main historical facts relating to the foundation and dissolution of the nuns' abbey are known, there are very few contemporary written references to its daily life and even fewer to the actual buildings. A 15th-century book of devotions which belonged to the last abbess is now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Hatton MS 18). We learn a little about economic and social life at Denny from the survival of a fragmentary notebook of 1366 that belonged to the Cambridge Franciscans (Moorman 1952, 356) and from other contemporary references published by Bourdillon (1926, passim) and Gibbons...
DENNY ABBEY: THE NUNS' REFECTORY

(1891, 153, 145, 433). Only three actual accounts survive and as these have never been published their contents are here summarised. The buildings they refer to were mainly in the outer court or farm. They mention a gatehouse, dovehouse, bakehouse, buttery, kitchen, guest-house and in particular a chapel in the chancel of the church. The receipts and expenses relate mainly to rents, the repairs of farm buildings and the purchase of food. The considerable amount of meat in the form of pork, beef or mutton was presumably mainly for consumption in the guest-house and to a much lesser extent in the suggested misericord or infirmary.

I. A.D. 1324–1325
Extracts relating to buildings from the accounts of John of Mesdone, warden of the manor of Denny, for 21 September 18 Edward II to the day after Michaelmas 19 Edward II (PRO 5C61766112).

Clearing a blocked gutter on the roof of the new chamber 16d.
Repair of certain sections of broken wall next to the stable and barn 4d.
Repair of ruined and fallen lean-to (perjet) of hay barn 13s and repair of broken cart shed; roofing, raising and plastering a certain wall between the outer gate and the cart shed; certain piece of wall between the said gate and porch roofed and rebuilt; cart shed roofed and raised on every side; old hall raised and all southern side of the same roofed; 2 walls on each side of the door towards the bakehouse roofed and built; 1 wall at head of bakery, 1 wall between garderobe, lord's chamber and dairy roofed and built; bakery completely built and all north side of dom' pressor roofed and rebuilt, and in unblocking a gutter on the small barn, inclusively 13s.

Accounts on the dorsel also mention the bringing of herba into the manor for re-roofing of outbuildings and walls, and cleaning the gutter on the new chamber.

II. A.D. 1325–1326
Extracts from same account as last from day after Michaelmas 1325 to the same day 1326 (PRO SC6/766/13).

Amongst the expenses of the manor:
60 bundles of thatch on the roof of the lord's solar, the garderobe of the same and the granary where damaged by great winds, 8d.
For repairing all defects in the roof of the great barn everywhere, roofing the porch and gutter of the said barn and in rebuilding the same barn and both covered porches of the said barn, roofing the porches on every side, rebuilding and raising, roofing and building a certain wall between the cowshed and hay barn, roofing the said barn totally on the west side and making good all roofing defects in the said barn, rebuilding and reroofing the west side of the great stable and making good all other roofing defects, roofing and rebuilding a certain wall between the said stable and the main church, rebuilding the granary, plastering all walls and overhangs between the gate of the court and the main (capud) church towards the west; together with all defects of roofing in the kitchen and repairing (ariund); in total 13s 4d.
Payment for roofing the lord's solar, garderobe and pentice of the said solar on the side of (vers') the church, and the granary which were unroofed by great winds, and repairing other defects in hall, kitchen and gutter.

III. A.D. 1412–1413
Extracts from the accounts of Richard Fleming, 14 October, 14 Henry IV to 8 December, 1 Henry V (PRO SC6/1257/2).

Receipts.
20s from John Day, cowman of Denny, for part payment for his rent for the year preceding.
6s 2d received for a tanner for hide sold to him.
57s 2d received from John Culling, cowman, for ox and bullock leather required in the guest-house.
Allowances to tenants for the repairs of the manor wherever the lord of the manor deemed necessary: for the repair of the roofs and walls of the manor 3s 4d; for the repair of the stone windows of the chancel of the church 10s; for the thatching of the barn there 5s; for straw bought for it 3s and for reed bought for it 4d; for oil bought for
the lamp in the chancel 16d; and for straw for thatching the church in various places 12d.

£12 15s 4d received from the lady abbess of the convent.

Total receipts: £68 18s 6d ob.

Expenses.

Carriage of corn from Wisbech to Denny for sowing 20d.
Paid to John Holm for threshing in the barn 12d.
1 gown of russet bought for Thomas the boy 20ld.
1 bronze bowl bought for the kitchen 4s 8d.
2 tankards bought for the buttery 7d.
Making of 1 gown and one tunic for the boy in the kitchen 5d.
Paid to master John Caple for 1 saddle 3s 4d.
Eggs bought at various times 16s 10d.
1 horse of grey colour bought 30s 4d.
Young pigs bought 18s 11d.
1 pike bought 17d.
Corn bought £5 10s 4d.
3 oxen bought £1 14s 4d.
Paid to Agnes Bury at the feast of the Nativity 20s.
Paid to Agnes Bury at other festivals 63s 11d.
For the repair of the door of the laundry 4d.
Expenses of the steward of the guest-house in going to Cambridge for hiring a carpenter for the repair of the tenement in Cambridge 10d.
For timber for the repair of the said tenement 20s.
Cows bought for the guest-house £1 3s.
Dried fish bought at Midsummer Fair, at Kings Lynn and elsewhere £2 17s.
Eels bought 15d.
Salted fish bought at Stourbridge for the guest-house £8 12s 2d.
Paid to the Abbess 40d.
Paid to the lady Agnes Bury 40d.
Paid to the bailiff in the autumn 20s.
1 key bought for the gate of the abbey 2d.
For stray beasts 2d.
34 sheep bought for the guest-house £2 7s 10d.
3 cows bought for the guest-house £1 3s.
2lb. of pepper 2s 10d.
2 lb. of coton [quinces?] 2s 6d.
For ginger 20s.
For half a pound of saffron 5s 2d.

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EXCAVATION AT RIVERSIDE, THOMPSONS LANE, CAMBRIDGE

PAUL FIRMAN and JOYCE PULLINGER

During the summer of 1982 an area on the south-eastern bank of the River Cam, some 100m downstream from the Great Bridge, became available for archaeological investigation (TL 44805906). The site was being redeveloped by the Master and Fellows of St John's College, to whom thanks are due for permission to excavate and for financial help.

It was hoped to throw light on three problems: the location of the footings of the Roman bridge; the existence of a Saxo-Danish settlement; and the line of the medieval waterfront.

Test trenches were made by mechanical digger in various parts of the site, which is bounded by Thompsons Lane, the river, and the two outfalls of the King's Ditch (filled in many years ago), shown on Hammond's map of 1592. It is now apparent that this area was either under water or wet and marshy until the end of the medieval period, and that the earliest signs of activity relate to the first half of the seventeenth century.

An electrical power station and Neville House occupied the site prior to their demolition for redevelopment. An area where there appeared to have been less modern disturbance was chosen for more detailed excavation; this was divided into two portions, (Areas A and B (Fig. 1B)). A layer, half a metre at the south-east end to one metre at the north-west, was removed mechanically, before continuing the excavation by hand.

AREA A (Figs. 2 & 3)

For the location of the Roman river crossing and the later Saxo-Danish settlement no evidence was found. Some Roman pottery was present, but the sherds were distributed throughout many layers and features, and should therefore be considered residual, if not extraneous.

Up to the sixteenth century, the whole area seems to have been covered by alluvial mud-flats, much disturbed by later activities (layers 2 & 20 feature F.1). Frequent flooding could be demonstrated by the recovery of some fitting medieval potsherds, found close together in the upper levels, but abraded at their break surfaces. The make-up of these layers also suggested a water-borne deposit from the very even distribution of individual grains of sand throughout its dark clay structure and the presence of considerable quantities of small snail-shell, again evenly distributed though with very slight signs of horizontal layering.

From the eleventh to the fifteenth/early sixteenth centuries, the only evidence of human activity was a well-defined layer of Saxon-Norman and medieval potsherds (Fig. 6), animal bones and some building materials within the top 10cm of layer 2, apparently the result of rubbish-dumping on the mud-flats. Beneath this it was artefactually sterile, although it could not be pursued to any great depth. A continuation of the same deposit (layer 20) further from the river was trenched down another 0.75m with the same sterile result.

A thin layer of coarse gravel exposed within layer 2 (sec. E–F) about the same level as the present river-bed, extending some 3.5m further into the modern bank, could be interpreted as the remains of the river-bed at some considerably earlier period. It seems that some degree of control of the river had been established by the late sixteenth century, as Hammond's 1592 map shows the river bank lined with trees, though there are no buildings.

The eastern end of Area A provided evidence for the earliest occupation. It consisted of a length of foundation trench 0.5m wide on an east-west axis with gravel and chalk floors butting up against both sides but at slightly
Figure 1. Thompsons Lane, Cambridge, 1982
EXCAVATION AT RIVERSIDE, THOMPSONS LANE, CAMBRIDGE

different levels, continuing beyond the eastern boundary of the excavation (F.II). The limited area available prevented any real interpretation but, assuming that the trench had not been much enlarged by robbing, its size suggested a fairly substantial wall. In the absence of any associated artefacts, any dating could only be assessed stratigraphically: it was earlier than the floors above it, which were in turn cut by pits (F.IVb & F.IIc) of mid-seventeenth-century date.

Probably of similar date as this trench was the end of a deep trench near the river (F.IIa); here again dating was difficult as only three potsherds were recovered, from the upper levels of its fill (layer 5a), the most recent being late medieval/early post-medieval. Only the lower levels of this feature remained, for it had been re-cut at a later date and filled with layer 5. It had been dug into the alluvial layer and continued beyond the excavation towards the river; whether it was connected to the river could obviously not be proved, but this would seem likely. Its north bank was markedly under-cut, but how far this continued or what was the profile of its bottom was impossible to determine, because of the water table here.

After the structure associated with the foundation trench (F.II) had gone out of use, it was robbed out and filled in, and a new floor laid over it and its butting floors. This was part of a complex of floors (layers 4a, 15–17) of which an estimated 20 square metres could have existed within Area A alone, for they continued into both the eastern and southern boundaries and a recent brick and tile-lined cellar (F.XI) had destroyed part of them. Much had also been destroyed by other later features; however, sufficient remained to show that two separate steps down, in a different part of Area A (layers 16 & 17, section J–K), were on a similar alignment and of almost identical construction, compact chalk lumps in a soft mortar, except for layer 17 which was of small rounded pebbles. This strongly suggested a direct relationship, even though they were all at slightly different levels. A protective structure may have existed over these floors for it was noticeable that, while these floors were exposed during excavation, quite considerable surface weathering occurred. Again, in the absence of associated artefacts, any positive dating was impossible but they must have been later than this foundation trench (F.II) and earlier than the mid-seventeenth-century pit (F.IIc).

Some time after the above floors had been constructed, a rectangular pit (F.IIe layer 20a) was cut through into the alluvial layer (20) beneath. It was 1.6m wide by 0.7m deep with vertical sides, continuing beyond the southern excavation boundary, lined all over with a layer of burnt wood, filled with a sandy soil containing building rubble and animal bone together with Roman, medieval and sixteenth-century potsherds. This pit was cut and sealed by a later larger one (F.IVb layers 4 & 14), which was used for the storage of grey clay (layer 14), cleaned by puddling in a clay-lined hollow (F.IV) near the river, considered to be contemporary with this pit. The final fill (layer 4) contained many well-preserved clay smoking pipes of late-seventeenth-century date; these were possibly being manufactured on site. Considerable quantities of cattle horn-cores were also present, probably waste from a horn-using industry near by. This last feature continued into Area B.

The latest features were a brick and tile-lined cellar (F.XI) 2.5m square, in the centre of Area A, and a gravel floor at the eastern end (layer 6) of nineteenth-century date.

P.E.F. (Cambridge Archaeology Field Group)

AREA B (Figs. 2 & 4)

The riverine silts contained Roman and medieval pottery, as well as china and stoneware from more recent times. These silts were cut by five features. The earliest in Area B was a rectangular pit 1m by 2m, containing refined off-white clay, probably used for making pipes. A number of broken clay pipes c. 1670 were found in Areas A and B. This pit was sealed by the kiln (see below).

Two large vertical-sided rectangular pits cut into the riverine silts contained blue-grey clay. These pits were over 7m long to the point where they were cut by the foundation trench of an eighteenth-century clunch wall, but there was no sign of them beyond it. One was 80cm deep; the other 6.54m wide, underlay part of the kiln. But its depth could not be established because most of the area was under water, (when the water level rose following storms). This one was used as a
Figure 2. Plan, Areas A and B.
dump for cattle horn-cores and rubble after these pits ceased to be used as clay-pits. A layer of ash, sand and charcoal cut the pit vertically, level with the kiln opening; in places it was fibrous, suggesting burnt vegetation. Below it was a black layer of ash and charcoal, dipping eastwards under the pit.

In the north-east corner of Area B, a segment of a curving feature cut through the pit and the riverine silts. It had a timber lining; tops of three posts were found, linked by traces of timber boarding. Round the edge was a chalk marl packing 10 cm wide and inside the feature the space outside the timbers was filled with blue-grey clay with some stones. The fill within the timbers was very dark silty clay with humus and some brick fragments; an early-eighteenth-century glazed sherd and a fragment of a shale vessel were found in it. Full excavation of this feature was impossible as it lay below the present river level and storm water flooded this part of the trench for the remainder of the excavation.

Both the clay pit and the timber-lined feature were cut by the rubble make-up packed inside the river-front boarding.

An eighteenth-century clunch wall formed
the north-east side of Area B. This wall and its foundation trench cut through the side of the kiln and all three earlier pits, and was laid directly on the silts. The maximum remaining height of the wall was 47 cm; the side away from the excavation was vertical, but that in Area B was offset, being 60cm wide for the lower two courses of clunch blocks and only 50cm above.

A single layer of deep red bricks was seen in the south-east section towards Thompsons Lane – a yard or possibly the edge of a wall foundation. It overlay loam with charcoal flecks, containing fragments of fourteenth/fifteenth-century pottery, and was covered by a layer of loam with fragments of kiln bricks and decayed bricks from the collapsed kiln chimney-stack.

In the extension of Area B next to Thompsons Lane were wall-footings of yellow Cambridge brick and floor-tiles from a nineteenth-century building.

THE KILN (Fig. 5)

An early eighteenth-century kiln was constructed over the pits and riverine silts. It was used for firing pinkish yellow peg-tiles and flower-pots of the same fabric. The flower-pots were made in a variety of shapes and sizes.

The kiln was 5m overall in length, 4.5m internally, and was pear-shaped. The probable overall width was 3.65m (part of one side wall was cut by a later clunch wall footing) and the internal width was 2.7m. Although the floor of the kiln had collapsed, the whole of the pedestal down the centre, the complete furnace floor, and most of the sides remained intact.

The kiln was constructed of red bricks from Suffolk, although a very few yellow Cambridge ones were incorporated, possibly in repair work. A soft mortar bonded the bricks together. The bricks used differed in size as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 x 10.5 x 5.5cm</td>
<td>21 x 10 x 5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 x 11 x 6cm</td>
<td>22 x 10.5 x 6.25cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.5 x 10.5 x 6cm</td>
<td>22.5 x 11 x 7cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 x 11 x 5cm</td>
<td>23 x 10.5 x 5.5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 x 12 x 4cm</td>
<td>23.5 x 10.5 x 4.5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 x 10 x 6cm</td>
<td>chimney stack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.5 x 10 x 7cm</td>
<td>pedestal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were many broken tiles in the kiln, some of which were wasters – distorted or with holes punched awry. Flower-pots, fired in the kiln, were made of the same fabric as the tiles, and varied in size and shape (Fig. 9). They appear to have been hand thrown. Peat may have been used for firing the kiln. One of the earliest patents in this country was in 1630 and was granted to the person who 'found out how to reduce “peate and turife” into “coale” for burning among other things “brick, tyle and lyme”'.

The furnace floor, blackened in places, consisted of square yellow tiles 24 x 24 x 4cm, cut at the edges to fit the shape of the kiln. This floor was laid directly on a 2-4cm layer of sand which had been put over the riverine silts and the earlier pits. One or two broken peg-tiles from an earlier kiln were under the floor.

The entrance to the kiln furnace was still plugged with unmortared bricks packed end on and sealed by a bank of sand. At the opposite end of the kiln a heap of bricks, which were blackened and burnt on one end, indicated roughly the position of the chimney. A tall chimney would have been needed for sufficient draught to produce the high temperatures necessary for firing a kiln of this size.

It appeared that the kiln draught was unsatisfactory, and the bulbous shape was modified internally by the addition of extra bricks at the sides to form a straighter edge, thus reducing the area of the furnace floor. At the same time the floor tiles were trimmed back to fit the new sides.

Many bricks forming the pedestal were vitrified, an indication of the high temperatures reached during firing. A few pieces of charcoal and some ash were found.

Some fragments of the clay tile floor were found. These floor tiles were more than 34 cm long (total length unknown) and were 5.5 cm thick. The underside of these fragments were smoke blackened.

The furnace area was filled with broken peg-tiles and wasters, flower-pot fragments and wasters, and broken kiln floor tiles. Whole peg-tiles measured 26.75 x 16.5 x 1.25 cm (10½ x 6½ x ½in.).

DISCUSSION

The post-Roman silts, deposited on the gravel which formed the river bed, show that the
Figure 5. The eighteenth-century kiln: plan.
EXCAVATION AT RIVERSIDE, THOMPSONS LANE, CAMBRIDGE

River must have been very much wider than it is at present, until the end of the medieval period. It is probable that the first dry land in medieval times was the top of the gravel terrace under the houses on the east side of Thompcons Lane. St Clement's church, built in the early part of the thirteenth century, was perhaps the nearest building to the river. Excavations in 1973 at Skeel's bicycle shop, Bridge Street, also showed a considerable depth of riverine silts containing medieval sherds. The consulting engineers for the Thompcons Lane site found in one of their boreholes (No. 3), to the ENE of Area B, old decaying timber ('possibly piles'). Could this timber be the remnant of the river front in the medieval period? Lying on the silts around the SE end of the kiln, and partly below it, was a layer of thirteenth/fourteenth-century pottery. It looked as if it had been tipped into water as one load, and settled in and around a slight hollow in the silt (Fig. 4).

Line's 1574 map of Cambridge shows this site as pasture – possibly flood meadows. Hammond's map of 1592 only shows pasture. The 1798 map by Custance shows the site divided into large plots but without buildings, as does the 1830 map by Baker. The OS map of 1886 shows the site divided into more plots with a few buildings.

A pit (F.111) containing white refined clay was possibly connected with the making of clay pipes c. 1670. A number of pipes of this date were found in both Areas A and B and very few appear to have been used. The black layer of ash and charcoal below the later pits (F.IVa and V) might be rake-out from kilns used for firing clay pipes. The two large blue-grey clay pits may have been contemporaneous with the pipe clay pit; it is evident that peg-tiles were made on this site prior to the kiln found. In 1619 a Privy Council Order was made stating that there should be no thatching on buildings in the town, and those already thatched be changed as quickly as possible (Cooper's Annals of Cambridge). A small piece of coal found just outside the kiln was Newcastle coal. This could easily have been brought from King's Lynn by barge.

Three early-eighteenth-century buildings may have been supplied with tiles from the kiln: one at Peterhouse, one at Emmanuel College and the house 'Little Trinity' in Jesus Lane. The latter has tiles on the roof similar to those from the kiln. St Clement's vicarage was re-roofed at this time, and the back appears to have tiles from the kiln.

The owner of the kiln must have been a man of some substance to import bricks overland from Suffolk (nearest known source Horseheath), or else he must have had a certain market to recoup his outlay. It is probable that there were several kilns on the site but later developments have demolished them. The engineers' trial pit 1, some metres to the south of the kiln, showed a layer of black ash, 15cm thick at a depth of 65 cm from the surface of cement screed which was at approximate street level. This ash lay on the riverine silt.

Although St John's College has owned the land since the mid sixteenth century (it is part of their Dovcet estate), there are no records as to how the land was used in the early eighteenth century.

An Act was passed in 1703 'for improving the Cam from Queen's Mill by Magdalen Bridge (or Great Bridge) to Clayhithe for barges, boats, lighters etc. and dues listed therein include for deal boards, timber, bricks, tiles, sedge, stones or pebbles, clay or sand, iron or lead, pitch tar etc.' The present river-front boarding, now rendered with concrete, may well be that put in for improvement as the result of the 1703 Act.

J.P. (C.A.S. Archaeological Research Group)

The finds, full report and site paper-work will be placed in the keeping of the County Archaeologist.

POTTERY: AREA A

Fig. 6

1. Shell-tempered pot, dark grey with red-brown internal surface, copious shell inclusions, smooth surface texture; St Neots type ware; Saxo-Norman, layer 2.
2. Shell-tempered pot, fabric similar to 1 but of a rougher surface texture; early medieval, layer 2.
3. Dark grey pot, red-brown surfaces, fine quartz inclusions, sooting on rim, finger impressions around rim; Saxo-Norman, layer 2.
4. Dark grey pot, fabric similar to 3, finger impressions around rim; Saxo-Norman, layer 2.
5. Dark grey pot, light brown outer layers, fine quartz inclusions, surfaces dark grey, medieval, layer 2.
Fig. 7

7. Buff bowl, yellow green glaze, c. 1600, F.IVb.
8. Buff bowl, pale orange glaze internally and rim only, internal trailing white pipe clay decoration showing yellow through glaze, early 17th century, F.IVb.
9. Buff jar, yellow-brown salt glaze lower half internally and round rim, 17th century or later, F.XI.

Fig. 8

1. Buff jar, grey core, flat rim.
2. Buff jar, grey core, everted rim.

POTTERY: AREA B

4. Buff jar, grey core.
5. Shell-tempered buff jar, everted rim.
7. Buff jug with spout, uneven partial glazing (orange).
10. Buff jug, grey core, part of handle.
11. Grey mug with part of handle; 16th century.
12. Patterned green glazed (externally) fragment of Lyveden ware jug.
13. Buff handle of jug with partial green glazing, grey core.
15. Grey jar.
16. Buff jar, grey core.
17. Buff jar.
18. Red-buff fragment, green glaze, combed pattern.
Figure 7. Medieval and later pottery, Area A. Scale 1:4.
Figure 9. Eighteenth-century flower-pots from the kiln. Scale ¼.
MUSIC AT JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, c. 1557–1679

IAN PAYNE

Although Jesus College never at any time during this period boasted a professional choir of stipendiary lay clerks, boy choristers and a master of the choristers, it started to employ a College organist from the 1630s, under the powerful influence of the Laudian movement, and this practice was continued after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In this respect it is unlike King's and Trinity, both of which made full statutory provision for professional singers shortly after their respective foundation-dates of 1441 and 1546; but it is broadly similar to Peterhouse in that it owed its musical tradition largely to the high-church movement, though Peterhouse differed from Jesus in its maintenance in the 1630s of an apparently highly-skilled, semi-professional choir.1 The purpose of this paper, which is based on a thorough examination of the College archives, is to trace the history of music (which mainly concerns the Chapel) as it appears however vaguely from these sources.

Jesus, like other medieval university colleges, was from the first an academic chantry, and its founder, John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, intended it to train acolytes and choristers, the chantry aspect being confirmed by the College's first statutes.2 These were given in 1514/15 by James Stanley, Bishop of Ely, and made modest provision for Chapel music: they provided for four boys (pueri), sufficiently trained in singing and under 14 years of age, to be maintained by the College and to attend its grammar school for four years.3 In addition, the Chapel services were to be sustained by four juvenes, who were youths skilled in singing and apt for divine services, and one of their number was to act as organist.4 These statutes, however, were soon superseded by a set originally produced by another Bishop of Ely, Nicholas West, at some time during his episcopate (1515–35) and which, in a version radically altered by royal commissioners in 1549, and modified by one additional clause in 1559, remained in force until 1841.5 They also made some musical provisions; but these fell far short of even a semi-professional establishment. Stanley's four pueri and four juvenes were replaced by eight discipuli, and both these and the fellows were to have been adequately instructed in singing (in cantu competenter instructos) prior to their admission.6 No provision was made for an organist; but West ordained that all the fellows, scholars, students, and boys of the College and its grammar school who were present in Cambridge (pueris Collegis in villa presentibus) should attend in the Chapel on Sundays and feast days to participate in divine services.7 Clearly, so small a body of singers, without the aid of either a professional choirmaster or highly skilled lay singers, was going to be musically very limited. Nevertheless, the Bursar's account for 1557/8 contains, in addi-

1 The Peterhouse choir in the 1630s comprised 'poor scholars', musical undergraduates and, from 1638, four Fellows of the Parke Foundation. The latter, while ordinary Fellows, were expected to be sufficiently skilled musicians and singers for them to be able to take an active part in the Chapel music. See also note 42, below.
3 Ibid., p. 30.
4 Ibid., p. 31.
5 Ibid., p. 33.
6 John Lamb, Documents relating to the University and Colleges of Cambridge, iii (London, 1852), pp. 98, 104.
7 Ibid., p. 111.
tion to references to service books, the only entry in the College records describing the organisation of part-music prior to 1665/6:

Item: [paid] to the stationer for binding booke of prickesong.

Apart from the master, seven fellows and about five male College officers or servants, and a female ‘laundresse’, there were between seven and sixteen discipuli on the foundation this year, almost all of whom, being over 13 or 11 years old, would have had broken voices. The unspecified grammar school boys were, therefore, probably called upon to sing the top part(s) of what was almost certainly simple music. The College officers included a ‘ScoleMaster’ and an Usher, but no musical personnel. This is the only reference to polyphonic part-music at Jesus during the whole of the period covered by this article. The supply of such youngsters would have been stemmed by the abolition, in 1567/8, of the College’s grammar school. 12

THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

The sudden, striking transition from ‘the magnificence of the ritual’ in the College Chapel at the close of Mary’s reign to its descent ‘at one plunge into the chillest of Puritanism’ at the outset of Elizabeth’s has been fully documented elsewhere. This climate certainly explains an apparent lack of musical activity in the Chapel prior to the 1630s. The following is a complete list of Elizabethan service books purchased for use there:

1562/3 Item: [paid] for a booke of common prayer 8d

1563/4 Item: [paid] for 5 psalteres in quarto 10s

1566/7 Item: [paid] to John Cutbart for 4 psalter with the hole Geneva psalms in meter 16s

1568/9 Item: [paid] to Mr Toye for 4 psalter with Geneva psalms in meter, and the bringinge of them from London 16s 4d

1571/2 Item: [paid] to Mr Toye for fuyve Psalter with the Geneva Psalms, & the bringinge of them from London, [including] 6d for the cariage 20s 6d

1573/4 Item: [paid] for the newe bindinge of three of the great psalter booke in the Chapell 2s

Item: [paid] for the mending of the three other psalter 8d

1575/6 Item: [paid] to Peter Sheres stationer for fowre psalter with Geneva psalms in meter 16s

1579/80 Item: [paid for] 4 new psalters 13s 4d

Item: [paid for] the byndinge of 2 ould psalter and the claspinge of 4 others 3s

1592/3 Item: [paid] to Burwell for a new COMMunion booke bound in bordes & bosses 75 6d

There is no evidence that these psalters contained psalms ‘with the note’ in four-part harmony, such as were specifically purchased for cathedral choirs, though it is not impossible: John Day’s Whole Booke of Psalmes with monophonic tunes was first published in 1562, to be followed in the next year by his Whole Psalms in Foure Parties and in 1565 by his Certaine Notes. The new tunes, some of them from Germany, became immensely popular, and ‘from 1562 until 1586 at least, varied little from one edition to another’. In view of the College’s limited musical resources at this time, however, it is unlikely that any music more adventurous than the singing of monophonic metrical psalms was ever attempted.

Although Jesus, as Gray and Brittain have pointed out, ‘was spared the fanatical displays however, was not paid even for this quarter, though his name appears in the list, suggesting that the school was being allowed to run down.

Item: [paid] for the newe bindinge of three of the great psalter booke in the Chapell 2s

These entries are taken from the Sacellum (or Templum) sub-sections of the Soluciones sections of the Bursar’s account for each of the years stated, all of which are contained in JCA A/C 1.1.

11 Ibid., In Mensa Discipulorum

12 JCA, A/C 1.2, Bursar’s A/c. 1567/8. The school-master was paid only for the first quarter (i.e., Michaelsmas–Christmas) 1567, after which date his name disappears from the staff-lists. The usher, 15 Nichols, Temperley, The Music of the English Parish Church, i (Cambridge, 1979) p. 53.

16 Ibid., p. 57.

8 See Gray and Brittain, op. cit., p. 45 for a fuller list of these.

9 Jesus College Archives (JCA), A/C 1.1, Reparationes ... cum expensis necessariorum. (Not in the Sacellum sub-section of the Soluciones section as implied by Gray and Brittain, loc. cit.) All accounts quoted in the course of this paper with old-style dates begin and end at Michaelmas.

10 JCA, A/C 1.1, Bursar’s A/c. 1557/8, Stipendia Magistri et Sociorum and Stipendia Officialia.

11 Ibid., In Mensa Discipulorum

12 JCA, A/C 1.2, Bursar’s A/c. 1567/8. The school-master was paid only for the first quarter (i.e., Michaelsmas–Christmas) 1567, after which date his name disappears from the staff-lists. The usher,
MUSIC AT JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, c. 1557-1679

of Puritan zeal', such as the rejection of the surplice in the chapels of Trinity and St John's during the 1560s, the 'highly Protestant pattern' of its Chapel services which it had enjoyed since 1558 survived into the early seventeenth century. In the light both of this attitude, and of the general opposition to the use of organs at this time, it is hardly surprising that the only specifically musical reference during the whole of Elizabeth's reign is to the dismantling of the Chapel organ, which was apparently sold for scrap:

1582/3 Item: received of Mr Ball for 3 pypes weing [i.e. weighing] fyve pounde 2s 6d
[Item]: receyved of Mr Lansdalle for the case of the Orgaines 6s 8d

1583/4 Item: [received] of Robert Lawrence for the rest of the organ pipes weying 28l [pounds] after [i.e. at] 5d

No other musical instruments are recorded as having been used in the College, either in Chapel or for domestic music-making, though the town waits were regularly (since 1563) paid an annual fee of 6s 8d for their services. This payment was usually made at Candlemas or Christmas; but an unusually full entry in the account for 1597/8, of 6s 8d 'to the Musitions for ther whole yeares wages', may imply that their visits to the College were spread over the year rather than concentrated on one feast-day.

COLLEGE MUSIC AND THE LAUDIAN MOVEMENT

In 1632 Dr William Beale was appointed to the Mastership, and the purchase in 1632/3 of '9 Latin service books' at a cost of £1 10s 10d, together with the total sum of £5 13s 6d paid 'For the hanginges & making [them]', is the first sign of the influence of Laudian high-church practices on the Chapel ritual. This service-book – Walter Haddon's Liber Precum Publicarum (1560), a Latin translation of the Book of Common Prayer – had originally been condemned by some Cambridge dons as 'the Pope's dregs'; but the fact that Archbishop Laud had recently introduced it at Oxford suggests that his influence was also largely responsible for its introduction to Cambridge.

But it was the Mastership of Beale's successor, Richard Sterne (1634-44), that witnessed the greatest increase in musical activity, notably in the provision of a new organ and of an organist. On 18 October 1634 the College agreed to pay the Westminster builder, Robert Dallam, £200 'touching the Organs for the Chappell', and on 27 July 1635 a further £12 was paid to him 'pro Peds' (presumably pedals for the organ, though this case has never been proved).

The agreement of 18 October 1634 was sealed two days later. On 28 November 1634 the following decree was made regarding the funding of an organist's post, for the first time in the College's history:

...decretum est ut in stipendium Organistae singuli quorum nomina in albo fuerint (exceptis Sizatoribus) pendant singulis Tnmestribus, 12d. Sizatonibus autem singulis suis vicibus ad inflandum Organum peram impendant hebdomadatim.

And on 13 June 1635 [George] Loosemore was elected 'Organista'. George was probably the younger brother of Henry, organist of King's from 1627 to 1670. Born at Barnstaple, Devon, in September 1619 George would

18 Temperley, op. cit., pp. 42, 44.
19 JCA A/C 1.2, Recepta Forinseca.
20 Ibid., Recepta Forinseca.
21 Ibid., Expense Necessarie. Usually such payments were made to the chief wait: in 1589/90, for example, one 'Byrd' was their receiver; while that for 1591/2 was made 'to Gibbons for his wages at Candlemas'. (Ibid., Expense Necessarie.)
22 Morgan, op. cit., p. 178.
23 JCA A/C 1.3, In Capella. Similar purchases were made at Peterhouse at roughly the same time.
25 Gray and Brittain, op. cit., p. 76.
26 These references, and many other interesting extracts from the JCAs relating to the Chapel, are in Robert Willis and John Willis Clark, The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge, ii (Cambridge, 1886), pp. 141-5 (p. 142, notes 4 and 5). For comment on the second reference, see Nicholas Thistlethwaite, The Organs of Cambridge (Oxford, 1983), p. 46.
27 JCA COL.I.1., sub 20 October 1634.
28 Ibid., sub 28 November 1634.
29 Ibid., sub 13 June 1635.
30 Ex Info Mr W.R. Loosemore. See also note 62 below.
have been about 16 years old at the time of his appointment. This was probably the average age of first-year undergraduates in the 1630s. In March 1640 he was admitted a Pensioner, and on 13 July a Scholar, though there is no evidence that he ever either matriculated or took the B.A. degree. He became organist of Trinity in 1660, and took the Mus.D. in 1665. He had vacated his scholarship by 6 July 1641 and disappears from the Steward's accounts (he appears for the first time in 1638) at the same time.

On 31 July 1641, therefore, one 'Henricus Davell' was elected organist in his stead. Davell, who was never admitted as an undergraduate, probably remained organist up until 1642/3, when the organ was taken down:

[Paid] for taking down the organs 15s

While no details of the organist's duties have come down to us, they are most unlikely to have been as time-consuming as those of the organists of King's, Trinity and Peterhouse; indeed, the post may even have been treated to some extent as an informal condition of a student's admission, as set out in West's statutes. Certainly the organ saw some use at this time, as the following entries make clear:

1638/9 [Paid] to Mr Dallam for tuneing the organ, May 15 1638 5s
1639/40 Item: [paid for] wire for the clock and organ, June 20 1640 1s10d

There is no record in the Bursar's accounts for this period of the organist's tax actually being deducted, which suggests that it was paid as a voluntary subscription by the individuals concerned after their stipends had been paid, rather than deducted at source by the College. But in the absence of a substantial endowment such as Peterhouse employed to provide the mainstay of its choir, it is most unlikely that Jesus maintained at this time even a semi-professional choir – a view that is supported by the complete lack of archival evidence either that any such singers were ever paid by the College, or that choir part-books of any description were purchased for use in Chapel during the 1630s.

POST-RESTORATION MUSICAL PROVISION AT JESUS

The first post-Restoration reference to music in the College records concerns the singing of the Litany (probably alternatim, and in plainsong) by either the B.A. scholars or the fellowship below the orders of priest:

[17 September 1663] . . . decretum est per Magistrum et majorem partem omnium sociorum quod Letania diebus festis in quibus Cantari solet, Cantabitur a Scholari . . .

Office, D&C Deposit, DCN 10/1/78, Expensae Extraordinar indifferent in some undergraduates only from July 1668 onwards. A survey of all such ages between 1668 and 1679 reveals that, although they ranged from 13 to 24, the average was 15 to 16.

See Arthur Gray's MS List of Members, compiled from the College archives, and shelved in the College Muniments Rooms.


JCA COL. 1.1., sub 6 July 1641.

JCA A/C 7.1.

JCA COL. 1.1., sub 31 July 1641. Davell is probably identifiable as the ex-Norwich Cathedral chorister who received a gift of 20s from the Dean and Chapter in 1638 (Norwich, Norfolk Record Office, D&C Deposit, DCN 10/1/78, Expensae Extraordinariae). 37

JCA A/C 1.3, Expense Necessarie.

See above, p. 97, and note 4.

JCA A/C 1.3, Expense Necessarie.

Ibid., In Capella.

Ibid., In Capella.

Although the Peterhouse choir is recorded to have used musically-trained 'poor scholars' and undergraduates during the mid-1630s, in 1638 the Parke Foundation provided for four fellows and four scholars all of whom were 'to the best of their endeavors, [to] acquire to themselves so much knowledge and readines in song as that therby they may be able to performe their parts with [the] others that sing divine service in the Chappell' (Peterhouse Archives, 'Registrum Coll. Div. Pet.' (i.e. College Register), p. 507).
bus Baccalaureis, aut, si pauciores sint, ab omnibus Sociis; exceptis is qui in ordinem Presbyterorum cooptati sunt.43

On 3 February the following year, the College acknowledged a gift of £22 by Thomas Bucke, Esquire Bedell, 'ad conficiendum organa pneumatica, et ad exornandum sacellum Collegii';44 this gift, however, would have fallen far short of the amount required to make a whole new instrument. In fact, a College receipt, dated 20 May 1665, suggests that this figure may have been augmented to a total of £60 from other sources in order to finance repairs to Dallam's instrument:

Received of Dr Boldero, Master of Jesus College, the summe of 60li being [payment] in full for making up the Organ for the same College
I say received by me [signed] Tho. Thamer.45

On 25 April, less than a month before, apparently for the first time since the Restoration and in anticipation of the new organ, an organist was appointed according to an amplified version of the original decree of 1634 (see above, p. 99), with the altered proviso that each member's contribution should vary according to his College standing. The sizars were still required to take it in turns to blow the organ, however:

. . . decretum est ut ad Stipendium Organistae Magister Collegii singulis trimestribus solvat quatuor solidos, singuli societ commensales majores quorum nomina sunt in albo duos solidos, pensionarii unum solidum, sizatores autem singuli ei qui Inflat 'Organum sex denarios singulis trimestribus solvent.

Eodem die Franciscus Crispe electus est Organista.46

Crispe, like Davell before him, was never registered as an undergraduate,47 and consequently nothing is known of his career at Jesus. His successor, Thomas Wren, was elected organist on 7 April 1671;48 a native of Canterbury, he had matriculated in 1670, become a scholar and a B.A. in 1673, and an M.A. in 1676.49 He had certainly ceased to be a scholar (and also organist?) by 17 March 1676, however, on which date his replacement was admitted 'scholaris discipulus in locum Magistri Wren'.50

On 7 July 1676 Benjamin Young took over the post.51 He, like Loosemore, served as organist before being admitted to a scholarship, though unlike the latter Young had been an undergraduate 'without title' for nearly four years previously. After becoming both a scholar and a B.A. in 1677, he was ordained a priest at Norwich two years later.52

Alexander Norfolk succeeded Young on 27 September 1678 'unanimi consensu Magistri et Sociorum': this entry is common form and does not necessarily imply that earlier occupants of the post did not meet with unanimous approval. Like Davell and Crispe, Norfolk was never an undergraduate53 and nothing further is known about him. (Perhaps these youths had been placed under a private tutor in the College at a very early age, and they may even have acted unofficially as choristers for they had certainly had some musical training to enable them to play the organ; this...
is pure speculation, but the possibility is further discussed below.)

By 1 December 1679, the sequence of appointments had come full circle. Loosemore was reappointed, his stipend to be paid by the Steward, on condition that either he or a deputy instruct the scholars and discipuli in the art of choral singing:

Decretum est per Magistrum & majorem partem Sociorum ut futuris temporibus solvatur a Seneschallo Collegii singulis anni quart[eri]s Magistro Loosemore aliive Musices Magister summa unius solidi pro quolibet Pensionario & sex denario rum pro quolibet zizatores quorum nomina sunt in tabellis Promi, Ea conditione, ut Mr Loosemore vel alius Musicae Magister scholares & discipulos hujus Collegii quotcunque ad illum confluxerint, ad cantandum in choro idoneos instruere teneatur54

What, exactly, would have been his duties? The average age of a Jesus undergraduate at his admission was, as we have seen above (p. 100), 15 or 16. Few boys aged 14 or over would have possessed unbroken voices, and by choristers (if indeed any of these were trained by Loosemore) must therefore have been chosen from boys of grammar-school age, who may have been connected with the College through a private tutor. Such youngsters certainly existed at Peterhouse, though there is no evidence that they sang in the chapel choir;55 and some of the Trinity choristers of whom there is no mention in the College records may also have fitted this category.56 Although such a supply is likely to have been most irregular, one wonders whether these young private pupils might have been the seventeenth-century equivalent of Bishop West’s pueri Collegii in villa presentibus mentioned above (p. 97), after the grammar school had long since disappeared.

In any event, the organist was responsible for their musical training, such as it was. A more helpful clue to the nature of his duties may be a somewhat later minute, in the records of Pembroke College, Cambridge, recording the provisions made for the appointment of a stipendiary organist, for the first time in that College’s history, on 2 December 1701:

Also [it was ordered] that it be referred to the Master... to consider of waies to ascertain a revenue of twenty pounds a year to the Organist, upon condition that he undertakes to instruct the Scholars in singing so far as to enable them to chant the Psalms in tune to the Organ, & perform with decency all the other parts of the service to be chanted; & also the Conducts or others whose duty it shall be to read prayers, in a tunable way of chanting them according to the capacity of their voices, when that by the statutes or custom of the College is required of them57

An isolated payment was made ‘Pro [le] Organ Player’ as early as 1470; but no other references to organs or organists are found in the Pembroke archives until 1567, when the organ was sold for 33s 4d.58 And although an organ had been built by Thamar of Peterborough in the newly consecrated chapel in 1675,59 no stipendiary organist was appointed before 1706, when Thomas Tudway was chosen under the terms of the above act. Pembroke, like Jesus, had no professional choir; but in contrast to those of the newer foundation, the Pembroke statutes make no mention of choristers and there is nowhere any record that either ‘pricksong’ books or metrical psalters were acquired by the College at any time during the period under discussion.60 The references to chanting are of interest, since both the methods and the music used differed but little between the 1630s and the early 1700s. One

54 JCA COL. 1.1., sub 1 December 1679.
57 Pembroke College Archives (PCA) B.B.4, p. 285.
58 PCA B., p. 184.
59 Thistlethwaite, op. cit., p. 57.
possibility, therefore, is that Loosemore, like Tudway, was required to provide just enough musical training to enable the scholars to chant simple music for the psalms, accompanied by the organ, and the chaplains to intone correctly, or at least to the best of their abilities. But a unique reference to part-music at Jesus, for the first time since 1557, suggests that the College may have mustered two choirs of soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices (one Decani, the other CANTORIS) for the execution of the following music, provided by Loosemore before his formal appointment to the post of organist in 1679:

1665/6 Paid [to] Mr Leusmore for pricking the Organbooke, & the 8 bookes [for the choir] 13s 6d

The archives of Trinity College, where he was stipendiary organist and master of the choristers from 1660 until his death in 1682, contain no specific mention of a book of organ accompaniments to anthems copied as one complete set,62 but it is unlikely that the hitherto unidentified Jesus College organ book is identical with the so-called ‘George Loosemore Organ Book’,63 partly because of the presence in the latter manuscript of music by John Cutts, a Trinity lay clerk. However, the very existence of the Jesus set certainly proves a measure of musical variety and attainment, however limited, in Chapel music which is only hinted at by the other archival entries.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Masters, Fellows and Archivists of Jesus College, Pembroke College and Peterhouse for permission to publish extracts from their archives. Special thanks are due to Mr E. Mills, Jesus College Archivist, for much kindness and hospitality on countless occasions, and to Mr Vivian Fisher and Dr Roger Bowers, Fellows of the College, for reading the typescript and for making many helpful suggestions.

61 JCA CH.2.1, ‘An Account of the offerings from Mich. 1665 to Mich. 1666’. To judge from the dates of surrounding entries, this music was paid for (out of the Chapel collections) probably on 5 October 1665.

62 For comparable entries in the Trinity archives, see Ian Payne, ‘George Loosemore at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1660–82’ (forthcoming). The only reference to an organ book at Trinity occurs in the Trinity College Conclusion Book (1646–1811), p. 162, where it is recorded that George’s widow was paid £5 ‘for the Through Base Organ Book made & pricked by her husband’, in 1682.

63 B.L. Add. MS 34203.
ROYAL MANDATES FOR DEGREES IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II (1660–85): AN ASPECT OF THE CROWN’S INFLUENCE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

JOHN TWIGG

The price which the universities of Oxford and Cambridge paid for their growing importance in English national life (as educators of the clergy and the sons of the governing classes) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a higher level of royal interference in their internal affairs. In particular, the crown intervened in many elections to masterships and fellowships; but this essay is concerned with royal mandates for degrees, which, although not so significant as those other forms of royal interference, do illustrate one aspect of the relationship between the crown and the university in the early modern period, and are of interest in the context of university history as a whole. The reign of Charles II, in which an exceptionally large number of such mandates was issued, is rich in evidence, and a particularly interesting period in which to study them.

A royal mandate (from the Latin *mandare*: to order) was a command from the crown to do its bidding in a specified way. Many mandates were issued to colleges in the Elizabethan and Stuart periods, commanding them to elect named individuals to masterships and fellowships; degree mandates were directed to the university, ordering it to confer degrees upon particular nominees. They were often intended to assist those who, although suitably qualified academically, were unable for some reason to fulfill all of the statutory requirements for taking degrees, the mandates dispensing with these requirements on their behalf. They were also almost invariably responsive: that is to say, they were only issued upon receipt of petitions from individuals seeking degrees, or of requests from persons of influence who had been secured to speak for them. This was an established practice before Charles II’s reign, and continued after his death. The right to issue such mandates was unquestionably an integral part of the crown’s prerogative powers.

Charles returned to England from exile in May 1660 and the following months witnessed a large number of mandates for degrees at Cambridge. The political upheaval of the previous two decades – the Civil War and the English Revolution – had not left the university untouched, and so there was a great need to assist those who had been unable to take their higher degrees at the proper time because of the troubles. Charles also wished to reward university dons and graduates who had served the royalist cause during the years of revolution. The bulk of the degree mandates issued during the reign were in the first few years after the Restoration; subsequently, both the number of mandates and the frequency of Newtonian Natural Philosophy and Latitudinarian Theology within Cambridge from the Restoration to the Accession of George III’ (University of Cambridge Ph.D., 1980), chapter 1; and J.D. Twigg, ‘The University of Cambridge and the English Revolution, 1625–1688’ (University of Cambridge Ph.D., 1983), chapter VIII.

quency of their issue underwent a marked decline, which can be seen in the accompanying table.2

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total 208 25 59 33 9 4 56 2 396

Mandates for degrees in the University of Cambridge, 1660–84.

The first mandates were issued on 20 June 1660, when the vice-chancellor, William Dillingham of Emmanuel, was instructed to confer the degree of doctor of divinity upon six men said to have been unable to take their degrees in the normal way and at the specified times. The six were obliged to demonstrate their academic worth by performing the requisite university acts and exercises for their doctorates, but because ‘through the long interruption, which they have suffered from the late unhappy times, they may want some things required by Statute, to that Degree ... we hereby dispense with all irregularities whatsoever which may be objected against this their proceeding’.3 The wording used here followed a standard formula, and the mandate omitted to explain that for five of the six men the ‘long interruption’ was due to their expulsion from their college fellowships in the parliamentary purge of the university in 1644–5.4 All six were to receive further rewards from the crown in the form of sponsored promotion within the university, the church, or both.5 In all, 30 victims of the 1644–5 purge received degrees by mandate in 1660, and another 16 in the years 1661–70; nine of them were to become heads of houses in the university.6 Seven more who had been ejected in the Rump Parliament’s purge of 1650 for refusing to take the ‘Engagement’ (an oath of loyalty to the new republican constitution) also received degrees in this way.7

Degrees were awarded to former royalists in batches during the remainder of 1660. Because they were usually written in standard forms, mandates tended to be unspecific about any services which the intended recipients of the degrees had rendered to the crown; thus twelve men who had been

2 The table has been compiled from information contained in several sources: almost all of the mandates are recorded in Cambridge University Archives Lett 13; and Cambridge University Library Baker MSS, xxv.283–330. A very small number of extra mandates have been discovered in Calendar of State Papers (Domestic Series) (hereafter CSPD), ed. M.A.E. Green et al. (London, 1860–) (1660–1), 164, 307; (1661–2), 116, 170, 194; (1670), 336, 511; (1671), 462; and in J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses (Cambridge, 1860–) (1860–7), 4 (1860–1), 164, 307; (1661–2), 116, 170, 194; (1670), 336, 511; (1671), 462; and in J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni, and The Dictionary of National Biography (hereafter DNB).

3 Their careers may be traced in J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni, and The Dictionary of National Biography (hereafter DNB).

4 Hale was the exception. For the purge of 1644–5, see J.D. Twigg, ‘The Parliamentary Visitations of the University of Cambridge, 1644–5’, The English Historical Review xcix, 1983, 513–28.

5 Their careers may be traced in J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni, and The Dictionary of National Biography (hereafter DNB).

6 The nine heads were Joseph Beaumont (Jesus, 1662; Peterhouse, 1663–95); Edmund Boldero (Jesus, 1663–79); Mark Frank (Pembroke, 1662–4); Peter Gunning (Corpus Christi, 1661; St John’s, 1661–9); Bernard Hale (Peterhouse, 1660–3); John Howarth (Magdalene, 1664–8); Robert Mapleton (Pembroke, 1664–7); Anthony Sparrow (Queens’, 1662–7); William Wells (Queens’, 1667–75).

7 Only two of them received their degrees in 1660; the rest were in 1661–9. Only one (William Sancroft, Emmanuel, 1662–5) became a head of house. For the 1650 purge, see Twigg, ‘University of Cambridge’, 138–147.
sequestered or ejected from their parish liv-
ings for their loyalty to the Church of England
in the 1640s and 1650s received no mention of
this in their mandates. Understatements were
also common. However, a sufficiently large
number of mandates were explicit enough to
demonstrate the qualifications of loyalty and
service which might be rewarded with a degree.

Apart from those who had been ejected
from their fellowships, many of whom were
said merely to have been ‘hindered by the late
distractions’ from taking their degrees in the
normal way, there were a further 17 men
formally recognised as having suffered for the
cause. Six, perhaps seven, had been ejected
from parish livings in the 1640s; a further five,
whilst having given no overt demonstrations
of royalism before 1660, enjoyed royal favour
thereafter in the form of these mandate
degrees and subsequent promotions. The
others included Lionel Gatford, a former
fellow of Jesus and royalist pamphleteer who
had been arrested in Cambridge and
imprisoned in 1643 by order of the House of
Commons, and, apparently, the historian
Thomas Fuller, a royal chaplain.8 Two of the
seventeen are not known royalists – they are
virtually anonymous, in fact – and the final
name on the list, that of Ralph Widdrington,
was a surprising inclusion.9

Thomas Widdrington had been a notable
parliamentarian in the 1640s and served on
the Council of State during the republican
1650s. Ralph Widdrington’s mandate must, in
the absence of a better explanation, be put
down simply to his enhanced capacity for
self-advancement.9

Some further insight into the reasons
behind awards of degrees by royal mandate is
offered by the surviving petitions of those who
sought them.10 Like the letters mandate,
these tended to employ standard forms of
wording, and several are rich in under-
statement. Most petitioners referred to their
having been obstructed by the troubles of the
revolutionary years from taking their degrees
at the proper time, or prevented from doing so
by their loyalty, or feeling unable to take
degrees with a clear conscience during the
usurpation; this last form was commonly used
by those who had been ejected from fel-
lowships in 1644. Thomas Ansell, who had
been put out of his fellowship at Jesus, did
think it necessary to draw attention to this
fact, but did not think it necessary to mention
that he had been ejected from a parish living
also; he had already received his B.D. degree
by royal mandate under Charles I.11 Four
other victims of the 1644 purge referred to
their ejection and sequestration in their
petitions, and three petitioners claimed to
have fought for Charles I in the Civil War, but
a letter of recommendation written on behalf
of Anthony Marshall, who had been ejected
from Trinity in 1644, claimed merely that he
had been prevented by illness from taking his
degree at the right time.12 Another ejected
fellow of Trinity, Nathaniel Willis, did draw
attention to his expulsion in his petition for a
doctorate in divinity, but placed just as much
emphasis on the fact that, having been
restored to Trinity in 1660, he now found that
many of his juniors among the fellowship –
those elected during his exile – already had
that degree: such affirmations of status and
seniority were important in college and uni-
versity life.13

8 For Gatford, see ibid., 66-7; for Fuller, DNB.
Their mandates are in Lett 13, 8, 11; Baker MS
xxv.284-5.
9 For his career, see DNB; M.H. Nicolson, ‘Christ’s
College and the Latitude Men’, Modern Philology,
1929-30, 35-53. His mandate was issued on 20 July,
Lett 13, 8.
10 There are 38 surviving petitions for degrees which
were awarded in 1660, CSPD (1660-1), 148, 162-5,
251-2; (1661-2), 89, 631.
11 ibid. (1660-1), 188; J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni.
12 CSPD (1660-1), 179.
13 ibid. (1661-2), 631.
It is difficult to explain why the two surviving petitions from 1660 which failed to secure mandates were not better received. Thomas Cookeson claimed to have been ejected from Sidney Sussex for his royalism; there is no evidence of this, but he had been a student at that time, and the surviving sources concentrate almost exclusively on ejected fellows.14 He claimed also to have served in the royalist army. This adds up to an impressive case on paper, and Cookeson had influential backers; he may have failed, therefore, because his claims were exaggerated.15 The same may be suspected of the petition of Thomas Cock, who professed to be a student of medicine who had fought for the royalist cause until the battle of Worcester in 1651, after which, he claimed, he had been taken prisoner on suspicion of being the king.16

We do not know how claims were assessed, but petitioners usually sought testimonials from men of standing or influence to help their efforts. These testimonials generally attested to the petitioner’s learning and personal qualities, or to his loyalty, or to the accuracy of the claims in his petition. Former royalist masters of colleges, who had lost their places in the Civil War, were prominent sponsors, for their voices carried considerable authority in this context, although they were not the only influential backers in evidence.

Because of the vast scale of the political disturbances during nearly two decades, within the university as elsewhere, the large number of degrees awarded by royal mandate during 1660 was to be expected: mandates were a genuinely valuable method of assisting those who were prevented from taking their degree according to the regulations. The need for dispensations was shown most emphatically at the king’s return, but was equally apparent throughout the period. Royal mandates were issued on behalf of those who had been sick at the proper time for taking their degree, or abroad, or driven away from Cambridge by outbreaks of disease, or in the service of important dignitaries, or unable to afford the university’s fees.17 Physicians were often rewarded in this way: many of them had learnt their art from experience and practice rather than formal academic training. William Sermon received his M.D. in 1669 for having restored the first Duke of Albemarle to health after a dangerous illness; another physician was rewarded for ‘makeing and composeing several physicall Medicines, for the singular knowledge he had acquired in that science’; another received his degree for work in London during the great plague outbreak there in 1665, when he had given free treatment to many hundreds of ‘the meaner sort’.18

Others received degrees to help them in their careers. A prebend of Worcester was felt to want encouragement in his future studies and service to the church; a preacher to the Turkey Company at Smyrna was encouraged likewise; a newly appointed headmaster needed an M.A. to take up his post; two newly elected heads of houses in Cambridge wanted doctors in divinity for their new offices; in 1675 two men were released from the performance of academic exercises because they had speech defects.19

Awards in such cases were evidently desirable, but at an early stage, amidst the euphoria surrounding the Restoration, there was concern at the number and frequency of the mandates. In a letter of August 1660 the master of Corpus Christi, Richard Love, voiced his dissatisfaction at the high number of doctorates that had been awarded, although this did not prevent him from recommending another three men for degrees by mandate; and in December 1661 the vice-chancellor, Henry Ferne, a zealous royalist, was said to be opposed to many of the degrees being awarded, although, like Love, he was prepared to make recommendations of his own.20 In 1663 Edward Rainbow, the master of Magdalene, observed that mandates were ‘very ill resented by many in this university’.21 The university had expressed its displeasure in the past about awards given to the unworthy,

14 Only one student is known to have been expelled in 1644–5, Twigg, ‘Parliamentary Visitation’, 522.
15 CSPD (1660–1), 164.
16 ibid.
17 ibid. (1663–4), 54, 182, 230; (1667–8), 430; (1670), 732–3; Lett 13, 59, 70, 74, 117, 124, 131.
18 CSPD (1666–7), 413; (1668–9), 224, 441; (1670), 78–9, 117; Lett 13, 128, 136, 139; Baker MS xxv.
19 CSPD (1668–9), 630; (1671), 330; (1671–2), 48; Lett 13, 137, 158, 159, 171, 174; Baker MS xxv. 293, 295, 309–310, 313, 327.
20 CSPD (1660–1), 188; (1661–2), 199. For Ferne, see DNB.
21 Bodleian Library Tanner MSS, 157, f.13.
or given without due respect to the proper forms. In 1623 Joseph Mede, a fellow of Christ's, recorded that 'Mr Lucy, but newly admitted bachelor in divinity was this week created doctor, as filius nobilis, with such distaste of the regents that they hummed when he came in'.

In March 1632 there was a considerable outcry over the alleged purchase of mandates, and so great was the ill-feeling generated by the affair that it seems to have led shortly afterwards to the suicide of the vice-chancellor, Henry Butts of Corpus Christi.

In such situations the vice-chancellor had to bear pressure from both the crown, which might easily take offence if its will were not done, and the body of the university, hostile to infringements of its academic freedoms; it was this which worried Henry Ferne in 1661.

It was important to the university that the requisite academic exercises were performed and that fees were paid. Insistence on the former meant that intellectual standards were upheld, and the fees were an important source of revenue. Of the 141 degrees awarded by mandate in 1660, we know of 24 for which academic acts and exercises were waived, and only six where specific cautions were given for their performance, but it is likely that the remainder had to perform the exercises. In August 1663 the university's Chancellor, the earl of Manchester, insisted that if the king granted the petition of John Butcher, formerly of King's, for an M.B. by royal mandate, it should be with the proviso that exercises were performed and fees paid, and the provision duly appeared in the mandate.

The university's main concern was with mandates for doctorates or bachelor's degrees in specialist subjects, like John Butcher's, for these were professional qualifications. The degree of master of arts, on the other hand, was frequently given as a purely honorary award, and often granted in large numbers when important dignitaries visited the university, both to the dignitaries themselves and to members of their retinues.

The first grand visit of this kind during the reign was by the king's illegitimate son, the fourteen-year-old Duke of Monmouth, in March 1663. In view of the university's wish to receive Monmouth 'with particular ceremonie and respect', a wish which must have been expressed on cue from prompters at court, Charles authorised it to confer M.A. degrees upon his son and 'such other persons as he shall desire to recommend'.

The young duke arrived in Cambridge on 16 March, when he and 34 other gentlemen received degrees.

The event was a great success; Pepys noted that the university had shown Monmouth 'all the honour possible – with a comedy at Trinity College and banquet – and made him Maister in arts there. All which they say the King took very well'.

The next such visit was by the prince of Tuscany in 1669. This was a private visit, and a particularly lavish reception would have been inappropriate, but Charles insisted on the prince being given all the respect due to his rank, and the university was ordered to hold a public degree ceremony at which all in his train who wished to receive honorary degrees might do so; the vice-chancellor was also permitted to nominate others.

In fact, the prince was received almost like an English monarch, so eager was the university to oblige the king, and a handful of his retinue received doctorates in law; thirty M.A. degrees were then conferred upon fellow-commoners of the university.

A similar procedure was observed the following year, when the prince of Orange was entertained at Cambridge. The king had written to the university reminding it that he wished the prince to be received with all the appropriate honours, including a public creation of degrees upon members of his entou-

22 J. Heywood & T. Wright (eds.), Cambridge University Transactions during the Puritan Controversies of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (London, 1854), ii.315.
23 W.G. Searle, The History of the Queens' College of St Margaret and St Bernard in the University of Cambridge. 1446–1662 (Cambridge, 1867–71), 469.
24 CSPD (1661–2), 199; his continued concern was shown in a letter to the chancellor of York in January 1662, ibid., 248.
26 Lett 13, 219; Baker MS xxv.289.
27 Cambridge University Archives, Grace Book H, 293.
29. CSPD (1668–9), 296, 304.
rage, and upon as many others as the vice-chancellor and the heads of houses wished to allow; a large number of degrees of different kinds were awarded at this occasion. When Charles himself visited the university in September 1681 some sixty degrees were awarded to those nominated by him, and to others approved by the vice-chancellor. But the royal order preparing the university for the visit of the Moroccan ambassador in March 1682, whilst granting the vice-chancellor his customary liberty to approve men for degrees in order that the ambassador could 'see the Solemnities usual in that Our University', insisted that the degrees awarded on this occasion 'be honorary only, and not conferred upon persons that may make advantage of them to the prejudice of those who by their industry and studies there do or may arrive to such Degrees in order to be qualified by them'. The clause must have been included in response to university disquiet.

The other principal occasion when degrees could be similarly awarded in large numbers was the admission of a new chancellor of the university. Curiously, there is no indication of any such award after the Duke of Buckingham's election in 1671, but his two successors, the dukes of Monmouth (1674–82) and Albemarle (1682–9) took full advantage of the opportunity, for mandate degrees were, as the crown had discovered, both easy and cheap to give as rewards. The king's instructions regarding Monmouth's admission to his office, like those for his visit eleven years earlier, revealed the duke's high standing in Charles' eyes, calling for the admission to be 'attended with more respect and ceremony than hath been usually shewn to other persons on alike occasion'. Thirty-nine M.A. degrees were awarded shortly after the new chancellor's installation, and another 52 a few days later.

But by the time of the Duke of Albemarle's installation in 1682, the university was showing resistance even to awards such as these. Albemarle was elected on 6 April, but he did not write to the university about degrees until 26 June, when he noted that he had 'for the University's satisfaction bin as sparing, as possibly the merits of the persons who made their applications to me, would bear, rejecting even to my own Chaplains, and reserving only such, as I am persuaded, I could not well refuse, or they doe prejudice to the Faculty they receive'. He was as good as his word, for only 15 degrees were conferred as a result of his letter, and he further promised to protect the university from so many degree creations in future.

When the university did object to the awarding of degrees by mandate, as in these examples, the objections were prompted by anxiety about the damage which the crown's large-scale generosity might do to the reputation of the university's degrees in general. Awards to deserving individuals were more acceptable, but there were few safeguards against the issuing of mandates for the undeserving. The crown was swayed by the recommendations of influential sponsors, or would recommend somebody for a degree without knowing the full details of the case. Even in the case of mandates for elections to fellowships, the crown often failed to do its homework; usually, there were no objections or difficulties, but if any did arise, it was for the college or university authorities to complain, and the crown would then reconsider in the light of the new information it received. Such a rough and ready mode of proceeding was bound at times to lead to confusion and put strain on the crown's relationship with the colleges.

In the case of mandates for degrees, the individuals involved were rarely so devoid of merit that the university was forced to take a stand, and the question was not so critical as it was with college fellowships, but on one occasion in 1668 it had little choice: the crown recommended Robert Tatnall for the degree of doctor of divinity, apparently on the recommendation of the Earl of Manchester, without realising that Tatnall was a nonconformist minister and therefore barred from the universities under legislation introduced earlier in Charles' reign. The university reacted degrees at the recent visits of the king and the Moroccan ambassador.

31 Grace Book @, 47–9; Lett 13, 221; Baker MS xxv. 302; CSPD (1670), 544–5.
32 Grace Book @, 215–6; Lett 13, 223.
33 Lett 13, 224.
34 Lett 13, 222; Grace Book @, 101–2.
35 Lett 13, 254; Baker MS xxx. 350; Grace Book $$?B, 217. The university had conferred a large number of
swiftly, and in a letter on 15 July 1668 the crown responded not only by withdrawing its support for Tatnall, but also by recognising and attempting to soothe the university's more general displeasure against profligate granting of mandates without adequate safeguards.

At the beginning of the reign, the royal letter observed, ‘there were many persons of eminency as well for their learning and standing in our University . . . as their sufferings for us and with us in the common calamities of the time’, whom the crown ‘thought fit as a special mark of our royal favour to confer degrees upon . . . without obliging them to those exercises which the statutes of our said university do require’. Henceforth, though, it conceded that any possessor of a royal mandate for a degree was to swear his allegiance to the Church of England, as was required of all candidates for degrees usually do, and also perform such acts and exercises as by the statutes of . . . our university are enjoined, or else put in real and sufficient caution for the same . . . any command, authority or dispensation hereafter granted to the contrary notwithstanding. 38

It was, on paper, a gracious concession, an illustration of the crown's care for university rights and privileges, and it was accompanied by another letter, from Sir William Morice, secretary of state, which noted the king's pleasure that the university had demonstrated its loyalty to the church in opposing Tatnall's degree, and echoed the royal promise to be more sparing with mandate awards in future. 39 Yet, as the table shows, a larger number of mandates than usual was issued between 1668 and 1670, and in March 1669 a mandate for Thomas Williams, a royal physician, exempted him from the payment of fees and the performance of academic exercises, stating specifically that the letter of July 1668 was to be overlooked on this occasion. 40

The crown clearly attached little weight to the July 1668 concessions, and this led to some friction later in its relationship with the university, which took the concessions very seriously. In 1675 Edmund Boldero, master of Jesus, himself a recipient of a degree by royal mandate in 1660, referred in a letter to the king's anger that the university had recently refused some mandates, but defended the university's position on the grounds that it had 'a gracious liberty to refuse whatever letters should pretend to dispense with exercises or cautions, and they refused the longer lest this might be an ill example hereafter'. 41

In October 1679 the crown was annoyed that 'several disputes have . . . arisen in . . . our university about conferring honorary degrees without time or exercise upon baronets and knights who were members of our said university', and insisted on its right to confer these degrees on such persons of quality where no 'just exceptions' could be made to the individuals concerned. The university was ordered to 'cause these our letters to be registered upon your register as our pleasure in this particular'. 42 The university's opposition to any large-scale awarding of degrees at the Duke of Albemarle's election as chancellor in 1682 also gave offence to the crown. 43

But as Gilbert Burnet noted, 'the king's letters were scarce ever refused in conferring degrees . . . the Morocco ambassador's secretary, who was a mahometan, had that degree given him'. 44 In most cases a compromise was possible and an accommodation arrived at. The differences between the crown and the university were slight; the usefulness of the mandates, and the purposes for which they were employed, were never called into question. Under Charles' successor, his brother James II, the degree mandate was to be employed for more sinister ends as part of a campaign to allow Roman Catholics into the university, and as such it was to be fiercely resisted, but then there were more fundamental principles at stake. 45

38 Lett 13, 237; Baker MS xxv.297; printed in Statuta Academiae Cantabrigiensi (Cambridge, 1785), 295; and in Cooper, Annals, iii.529-30.
39 Lett 13, 255; Baker MS xxv.297; CSPD (1670), 731.
40 Lett 13, 128; CSPD (1668-9), 224.
41 CSPD (1675-6), 351.
42 There was statutory provision for this. Lett 13, 240; Baker MS xxv.315; Statuta Academiae Cantabri-
It is commonly believed that the technique of building with earth which is called clay bat in Cambridgeshire, clay lump in Norfolk, is an ancient vernacular tradition in the eastern counties of England, and some eminent writers have gone on record as saying that it has been used in Norfolk for at least three hundred years.1 Recent research has questioned this belief, and has shown that the evidence for its antiquity in Britain is much less convincing than has been accepted. Early twentieth-century writers such as C.F. Innocent, Clough Williams-Ellis and Claude Messent found ageing cottages and farm buildings of this material in East Anglia, and encountered a verbal tradition among the older inhabitants of rural areas of how they had been built; and in the climate of opinion of the time, they assumed this was the lingering remnant of an ancient folk tradition.2 It now seems that the buildings they observed were no more than a century old at the time, and that this building technique was first used in England at the extreme end of the eighteenth century.3 Messent named and sketched some farmhouses in Norfolk which he said were built of clay lump in the seventeenth century or earlier; some were reported to display dates. Later writers have quoted the same examples with remarkable unanimity;4 but it is something of a mystery that no more clay lump buildings of equivalent antiquity have been found since. The study of vernacular architecture has blossomed in that time, and large numbers of clay lump buildings have been recorded, and they continue to turn up, but they are usually ascribed to the early nineteenth century, or the late eighteenth century; even this dating is usually more a matter of subjective judgement than hard evidence. Dirk Bouwens has re-examined the buildings Messent quoted, and has found that the clay lump occurs only as a late addition to much earlier structures of timber framing.5 At this date no standing buildings structurally composed of clay lump are known in Britain earlier than the nineteenth century. Why have no earlier buildings of this process survived? If the earlier examples have all disappeared by natural decay, why should they be so much more short-lived than the earth buildings of the West Country, or other parts of England? No satisfactory answer is apparent.

The earlier documentary evidence which is claimed to refer to this technique in East Anglia is distinctly unconvincing. M.W. Barley found references to 'unburnt bricks' in early probate inventories, which he interpreted as meaning clay lump.6 It was a normal part of the process of brick manufacture to stack 'green' bricks to dry for many weeks before firing. If the brickmaker died prematurely large quantities of unfired bricks would be found in his yard, and these would be listed among his assets in the probate inventory, just as the unharvested crops of a farmer were listed. All this item indicates is unfinished production. George Ewart Evans quoted

2 Alec Clifton-Taylor, The Pattern of English Building (Faber 1972), 292.
5 C.J.W. Messent, The Old Cottages and Farmhouses of Norfolk (Norwich 1928), 71.
7 Messent, op. cit. in Note 2, 72, 76, 79, 93, 95, 107. Barley and Mercer, as Note 1.
8 R.J. Brown, English Farmhouses (Robert Hale 1982), 195.
10 As Note 1.
from an eighteenth-century account book a payment of £1 – 10 – 0 for 'Lump', connected with a farm at Bacton, Suffolk, and interpreted it as referring to clay lump. Other payments for 'Lump' occur in the same book, but are greatly outnumbered by others for more familiar building materials and work – bricks and bricklaying, daubing, thatching, nails, etc. At the same period William Marshall published a glossary of Norfolk 'provincialisms' in which 'Lumps' were defined as 'barn-floor bricks'; and we have other descriptions of these 'lumps' – thick fired paving tiles made of fine white clay, used for the threshing floors of barns. That is about the sum of all the evidence published which professes to show that the clay lump process is earlier than the 1790s. Some archaeological evidence has been claimed for the use of clay lumps in Norwich in the sixteenth century or earlier, but this too begins to look very unconvincing when subjected to critical examination.

The earliest firm evidence of the clay lump or clay bat process in Britain goes back only to 1792 in eastern Scotland, and 1791 in England. We have a number of published accounts of the process, from then until the 1840s, all of which describe it in the same terms one would use of a recent innovation, a cheap substitute for bricks (which were taxed from 1784), still sounding rather experimental. These early accounts come from Perthshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Sussex; Norfolk is not mentioned in them until 1838. It now begins to look as if Norfolk builders adopted in the early nineteenth century a building technique which had been developed elsewhere; although in the special economic conditions of an agricultural boom in an area deficient in other building materials it was used on a greater scale there than in any other part of Britain. Now that the search is on for earlier standing buildings of clay lump, or earlier documentary evidence, we may have to revise our ideas again; but all the information available at present indicates that the earliest cottage built of clay bats anywhere in England was at Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire. It has been demolished, but much is known about it and its builder, Joseph Austin.

In March 1801 the Reverend James Plumptree of Hinxton wrote a detailed account of how this cottage had been built, which was published in a Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor in that year. The Society was a paternalistic voluntary body, entirely funded by the contributions of its members, and its main concern was a public campaign to persuade rural landowners to allow farm labourers allotments of cultivable land sufficient to support them, without recourse to parish relief, when other employment failed. Most of its Reports were devoted to this end, but it also offered labourers advice on how to conduct their lives with sobriety and piety, and occasionally, more practical advice on gardening, cooking, and other aspects of domestic economy. Plumptree's article was a notable exception, and is worth quoting at some length:

A little beyond the 51st mile-stone, on the road from London to Cambridge by Epping, where the road from Great Shelford to Cherry-hinton crosses it at right angles, and on the left hand side, stands a COTTAGE, which has always attracted my notice, in my walks between Hinxton and Cambridge. It is erected on what is called Lord's Waste; the whole occupying about 20 poles of ground [605 sq m]. The house is built of clay, two stories high; with a very flat tiled roof, and projecting a good way over the walls, somewhat in the Swiss style. A chimney rises from the centre, with open work towards the top, from bricks being left out; and a smaller part is attached to the north end of the building, with another chimney at the end. The garden is surrounded with willows and poplars. Part of it

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7 The Pattern under the Plough (Faber 1966), 45–6.
8 The Rural Economy of Norfolk (London 1787), I, 86–92; II, 383.
10 Sir John Sinclair (ed), The Statistical Report on Scotland (Edinburgh 1792), IV, 490, quoted at length in McCann, op. cit. in Note 3.
11 The Labourers' Friend (London 1838), IV, 163.

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is inclosed by a dead fence upon a bank, part by a mud wall, and with paling in front.

The singularity of its construction, and the neatness of its appearance, declare the architect to be no uncommon genius. I had seen it rising by degrees to its present magnitude, and increasing in the beauty of its appearance: and I had once or twice made enquiries about the house and the owner, but without success. At length, on the 27th of January last, passing by to Cambridge, I observed the owner and his son at work at it, drawing it over with a thin coat of clay. I was determined not to lose the opportunity; and immediately accosted the man, who answered me in a very civil manner, and seemed pleased at having his house so noticed. Conversation increased confidence, and he soon gave me the history of himself and his house, to the following effect.

His name is JOSEPH AUSTIN; and he is, by trade, a bricklayer. He has a brother and two half brothers, at Little Shelford; all of whom follow the same trade. Before he built his house, having 4 children, he lived with his brother; and, as he says, 'often used to come and look at this spot, and thought what a nice place it would be for building a house; - and, as soon as he got to sleep of a night, he always used to begin building'. At length he applied to the Manor-court and got a verbal leave for that purpose. Two of his neighbours, however, 'moved by envy', said, that if he began they would either pull, or burn it, down; upon which he again applied to the Court the following year, and obtained a legal permission, with the assent of all the copyholders; paying for the entry of his name on the Court Rolls, together with sixpence a year quit-rent.

In the mean time, he had been preparing what he calls his bats, during his leisure hours at home. They are made of a white clay and straw beat together, in the form of large bricks, and not burnt, but dried in the sun; they are 18 inches long, 12 wide, and 4 deep [0.46 x 0.30 x 0.10 m]. He had however, when he began building, only 14 shillings in pocket; and he had a wife and 4 children to maintain. This was but an indifferent property, wherewith to begin building a house. One of his masters, however, with whom he usually worked at harvest work, sold him an old cottage for 9 guineas; the amount of which he was to work out, and which he accordingly did in about 3 years. With the old materials, and with his bats, he set to work; and, on the 5th of June, 1791, being then about 42 years of age, he laid the first brick of his intended house. It was to consist of two rooms. The foundation, or what is called the underpinning and the chimneys are of brick, which he had from the old cottage. The underpinning is two feet high [0.61 m], in order to raise the clay bats a sufficient height from the ground; for were they once to get wet, they would soon be undermined, and give way. On this account it is, that the roof is made to project so much; to prevent the wet from falling, or splashing against the walls. Upon this foundation he set the bats, flat and length ways; cementing them with clay, and making a wall one foot thick. When he had raised his walls one story high, he was informed by the carpenter, that, upon farther examination, the timber from the old cottage would not serve for so large a place.

Not overcome by this disheartening difficulty, he determined to relinquish that part of his plan for the present; and immediately set about constructing a smaller place, in the same manner, at the end of it, for the reception of his wife and family; which he finished against Michaelmas; so as for them to get in on the 3rd of October. He used to work at this, when his day's work was over; and has often, as he told me, gone on by moonlight, and heard the clock strike twelve before he gave over; and was up again at four the next morning; having to go to Cambridge, nearly five miles, to work, and return in the evening. His brother occasionally assisted him. The other part of the building was then merely covered over with a few loads of haum, against a more favourable time. Five years after this he raised the walls another story, still covering it with haum; and, after the harvest, 1799, he had it tiled in with pantiles; but he does not consider that the outside was completely finished, till he had coated it on January the 30th, 1801.

Austin let one room to raise money for materials, and occupied the remainder. He had a quantity of bats left over, with which he proposed to build an outhouse; but at this stage he had still to buy casements and wood.
for flooring part of the main house. He reckoned he had spent about £50 in all, not including his own labour and that of his family. He told Plumptree that it was cheaper to tile the roof, at a low pitch, than to use thatch, which would have required a steep pitch and therefore more timber.

Another great saving would have been, if he had from the first discovered, that clay was to be had near the spot. All his first materials were brought from a distance, at a considerable expense of labour and carriage. — The building cottages with clay bats, instead of lath and plaster with a coating of clay, produces a great saving of wood (as neither posts or studs are required, the beams resting solely upon the walls), and gives a greater thickness and strength to the walls, and makes the house warmer.

Plumptree described Austin's well-stocked garden, and followed with a typical homily on the benefits of hard work and good management, and then returned to the practical theme:

It is true that he possessed one advantage in his trade, which few others in comparison can enjoy; but I see no reason why any clever man, of whatever trade, may not erect a cottage upon similar principles. He might begin with a little, and get on by degrees, improving in his work; till his mansion, if not in size, at least in workmanship and appearance, might rival this. There are few spots which cannot furnish some kind of clay for the purpose, either near or within a short distance.

Several points emerge from this account. Italics were used for bats, implying that they were unfamiliar, but normal type was used for the mud wall on the boundary, indicating that Plumptree found this unremarkable. There is abundant evidence that mud has been used as a building material from the earliest times of which we have records, but this was usually what R.W. Brunskill has called 'slow process' construction.13 Sub-soil containing clay was dug, sometimes left out for one winter to weather, and then was thoroughly trodden with water and straw; sometimes oxen or horses were used, but often the treading was done by men. When sufficiently worked it was laid, a small forkful at a time, on a raised plinth of rough stone or rubble, and pressed into position with the foot. This continued until a layer had been built up, as high as it would stand without slumping. In some areas this might be as much as 3–4 feet (0.91–1.22 m), but more commonly work stopped at a height of only 12 inches (0.30 m), and it was left to dry for a week or two while work continued elsewhere. When it was dry enough to be set firm, another course was laid on in the same way, and left to dry. The sides were pared down with a special tool, like a baker's peel but made of iron, or with any sharp tool.

In the West Country this building material is called 'cob', in Buckinghamshire it is called 'wichert', and other local names are recorded, but in most parts of the country it was simply described as mud or clay. The technique is by no means as simple as it sounds, for all clay soils expand when moistened and shrink as they dry. If badly executed the walls could develop deep cracks, allowing the weather to penetrate, and structural failure would follow. Well executed, walls of this material can give good service for hundreds of years, as surviving medieval houses of cob in Devon confirm.14 All clay sub-soils contain a substantial volume of other materials — silt, sand and gravel — exceeding the volume of pure clay. J. R. Harrison has shown that to avoid troublesome shrinkage the walling material should contain aggregates to about four times the volume of clay, and these aggregates should be evenly graded in particle size from silt to fine gravel. Effectively the clay becomes a 'binder', consolidating the inert aggregates much as cement does in concrete, although clay offers much less adhesion.15 In some fortunate districts the natural sub-soil already

contains aggregates in the desired proportions and particle sizes. For instance, Ernest Gimson wrote of a cob house he built in 1911 at Budleigh Salterton, Devon: 'The cob was made of stiff sand found on the site; this was mixed with water and a great quantity of long wheat straw trodden into it.' Elsewhere it was necessary to find suitable aggregates from local sources and to mix them with the natural sub-soil in the correct proportions. For instance, Richard Elsam wrote in 1816: 'Mud walls made in the common manner, with clay well tempered and mixed with sharp grit sand, will last for many years.' The Reverend Copinger Hill described the same operation in Suffolk in 1843: 'Clay for building should be a clay-marl. If the clay is not good, chalk and road-grit should be mixed with it. The proportions of clay and chalk may depend on the goodness of the clay, and the facility of procuring chalk. With moderate clay, say seven-tenths clay, two-tenths chalk, and one-tenth road-grit.' The selection of appropriate aggregates and their addition in the right quantities is a traditional skill, dependent upon an intimate knowledge of the performance of local materials as learned and handed down by earlier generations.

Forming the material into blocks and allowing them to complete the shrinkage before they were incorporated in the building was therefore an important technical advance. If dried unevenly the blocks tended to distort, so there was a certain amount of technique even in the drying. The clay and straw mixture was formed in a wooden mould, open at top and bottom, as used for bricks but much larger. The mould was lifted off, leaving the blocks standing on hard ground, as close together as the mould would allow; they were left for a few days until firm enough to be moved, and were then tipped on one side. Modern experience shows that they are vulnerable to rain for perhaps four weeks. They were then stacked in an open pattern under cover to complete the drying, what a brickmaker would call a 'hack'. The mortar used for building with them was of similar material, but sieved to exclude stones, and with the straw cut into short lengths. One writer advocated adding lime to the mortar to assist setting, but this was not essential.

It is significant that Austin at first transported his materials from a distance, and only later found that he could obtain clay nearer the site, for this implies unfamiliarity with the process, and a period of experimentation. Later it became standard practice to dig the clay for a cottage in its own plot, leaving the pit to become a pond for water supply. It is matter of observation that such a pond is nearly always found within a very short distance. Indeed, it was one of the main economic merits of this form of construction that it virtually eliminated transport costs. Unlike 'slow process' walling, the quality of sub-soil was not critical, so long as it contained some clay, and it was unnecessary to find and transport additional aggregates from another source. J.M. Proctor has analysed samples of clay lump from widely separated villages in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, and has shown that they varied 'from nearly pure chalk to quite a sandy material — and show how very wide a range of subsoil was used; hardly any one of them approaches a material suitable for making baked bricks.' Clay bats of later construction, made of the clay available on site, may be seen in a long boundary wall at no. 16 High Green, Great Shelford, 700 metres to the north. The material is distinctly yellow, whereas Plumptree described Austin's as white, confirming that he went to some trouble to transport chalky clay from elsewhere. It appears that he did not know at that time that any glacial clay sub-soil was suitable.

Plumptree's report was picked up in Norfolk by Edmund Bartell, a medical practitioner of Holt, who was an enthusiast for the Picturesque movement of landscape design...
pioneered by Sir Uvedale Price. In 1804 Bartell published *Hints for Picturesque Improvements in Cottages and their Scenery*; the caption of one design for an ornamental cottage included the suggestion 'Clay formed into bats mixed with cut straw, built upon a brick under-pinning, would be a good method of construction'. He specifically acknowledged the report no. 83 of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, and though he had been in practice in Norfolk for over twenty years, and said that it took him daily into 'the habitations of the poor', he seemed not to know of this form of construction at first hand. At present there is no evidence that his suggestion was taken up in Norfolk until much later.

A report published in Edinburgh in 1792 records that the villagers of Errol, Perthshire, where all the older cottages were of 'slow process' clay construction, had lately adopted 'a plan of building, much more agreeable to the eye and certainly no less useful for accommodation, moulding the mortar into bricks and with these forming their dwellings'. The writer, William Herdman, assistant to the Minister of the parish, surmised that 'the people have now in some measure lost the art of preparing the materials, and compacting them together, so to give the clay-houses the solidity they had in past times'. His report on the agriculture of Errol showed that it had 'undergone an entire revolution within these 40 years', owing to the draining of the Carse of Gowrie. Major agricultural change, accompanied by movement of population and destruction of older ways of living, was also the context in which clay lump construction was to be adopted in Norfolk and Suffolk in the nineteenth century. One cannot exclude the possibility that Austin discussed clay bat construction with an Errol mason whom he encountered in Cambridge; then as always, there were plenty of Scots seeking occupational advancement in England. Ultimately the idea probably derived from contact with the Mediterranean adobe tradition, and was adopted in Britain as a response to economic conditions. These were, essentially, a new tax from 1784 amounting to something like 15 per cent on the cost of common bricks, and a steep rise in the price of all building materials (Austin said the cost of his bought-in materials rose by 25 per cent even while he was saving for them). When once an important idea for reducing building costs had been tested and found to be practicable, the benevolent intentions of the Reverend Plumptree and his like would soon spread the word to others.

In *The Quarterly Review* of April 1816 Robert Southey introduced Plumptree's account of Austin's cottage to a wider readership, and again he used the word 'bats' in italics. The degree of technical detail supplied was sufficient to catch the eye of benevolent landlords, but perhaps not quite enough to enable a newcomer to start building satisfactorily with the process. One suspects that Austin and his sons were the means by which the practical techniques of forming, drying and using the bats were transmitted; anyone wanting to adopt the process had only to employ them. By 1821 the process had been taken up on a substantial scale in Cambridgeshire, for the social campaigner John Denson wrote in *The Cambridge Chronicle*:

'It may not be altogether uninteresting to you, and the friends of the cottage system in general, to inform you that where clay is readily procured, most excellent cottages are built principally with clay lumps'. This is the first appearance of the word 'lumps' in this connection, and the size advocated had increased to a depth of 6 inches (0.15 m). Bricks were being used more sparingly than in Austin's cottage - 'a few layers of bricks . . . to prevent the lumps contracting a damp from the earth' - and for the lining of the fireplace, but not the chimney itself. He added: 'Cow-houses, sheds, garden walls and partition fences, are formed in the same materials; but in all cases the tops are covered with straw, which the thatchers perform in a very neat manner'. Denson repeated this account in *The Labourer's Friend and Handicraft's Chronicle* two months later and in *A Peasant's Voice to Landowners* in 1830. From there it was picked up by J.C. Loudon and quoted in full in his *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture* of 1833, subsequently re-issued many times. He headed Denson's account 'Mode of building the Mud Walls of Cottages in Cambridgeshire', implying that at this date

23 As Note 10.
24 As Note 3.
25 14 September 1821.
26 November 1821. (Cambridge 1830), 28-9, being reprinted by the Society.
this form of construction was not familiar elsewhere. Denson lived at Waterbeach, 14km from Great Shelford. A.J. Green, a Sudbury bricklayer writing in 1847, described a barn of unfired clay blocks he had worked on 'upwards of thirty years ago', but he did not say where it was. By his own account he was employed by 'a very eccentric character' to finish building the barn, which other bricklayers had refused to work on any longer, owing to 'the hardness of the work'. The blocks provided were 2 feet long, one foot wide, and 9 inches deep (0.61 \times 0.30 \times 0.23 m); these would have had a dry weight of 150 lbs (68 kg), which clarifies the difficulty. He wrote as if the process had been still in the experimental stage, and made suggestions on how it could be improved.

The earliest report we have at present which records clay lump building in Norfolk was published in the Sussex Express in 1838, headed 'Home-made bricks' and unsigned: 'The following is a process of making the bricks which are much used in Norfolk for building cottages, walls and farm buildings, on account of their cheapness'. How long they had been used in Norfolk the writer did not say, but the tone of his report is more to do with news than history. He described how they were made and used, adopting a size almost as large as those reported by Green, and said that they were taxed at one shilling per hundred, irrespective of size. No doubt this was the reason for the large size, but it is somewhat surprising, for later reports written in Kent in 1846 and Suffolk in 1849 state that they were untaxed. Whether there were inconsistencies in how the tax was applied, or whether the gradual phasing out of the Brick Tax exempted unfired bricks before fired bricks, is not clear, but one can see that it would have been difficult to apply excise duty to such a transitory operation without massive evasion.

The formation of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1838 acted as a catalyst to encourage all new developments connected with farming, and reports of the clay lump process occur more frequently in the 1840s. There is no doubt that by this time it was being used on a major scale in the heavy clay districts of Norfolk and Suffolk for cottages, farmhouses and farm buildings. There were special problems; enclosure of commons and the conversion of pasture to arable had destroyed the local sources of wood fuel for burning bricks and lime, large numbers of new buildings were required in connection with the changing needs of agriculture, and in the watershed area between the west-flowing and east-flowing rivers the only way of transporting heavy materials was with horse-drawn wagons on unsurfaced roads. In these conditions the clay lump process was adopted with alacrity. This is the reason why there is a heavy concentration of clay lump buildings to the south and south-west of Norwich, extending over the county border into Suffolk; on the coast, and where navigable rivers were at hand, most of the new buildings of the period were of brickwork or flint rubble. It is this concentration, in an area which later changed very little, which has generated the myth that clay lump is an indigenous building material in East Anglia. When one looks for firm evidence of the date of construction of these buildings it is difficult to find any which can be ascribed even to the early decades of the nineteenth century; no reliable reports have been published which take them back to the eighteenth century. Until other evidence can be produced, it certainly seems that Joseph Austin was the innovator of this building revolution.

His contribution was not to invent clay bats, for almost certainly he had encountered them before, but to realise that they could be used to build a cottage. A footnote to Plumptree's description of Austin's clay bats states 'This is the manner in which the inside of dovecotes is generally made, and the outside walls frequently constructed'; it may have been added by the editor. James Deane, a Colchester builder who lived from 1699 to 1765, compiled a notebook in which he kept designs, specifications and costs of typical buildings he was able to undertake. One was for an octagonal dovecote: 'A design for a Pigeon House with an Estimation of the Charge of Building in brick with Clay lockers on the inside . . . the Inside of the House Done with Clay Lockers by reason that the pigeons like Clay better

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27 (Loudon 1833), p. 77.
29 As Note 11.
31 As Note 20, 283-4. Letter in The Builder, 14 August 1847, 388.
than they do Brick Lockers'.

Dovecotes using clay bats survive in the vicinity of Little Shelford, where Austin lived from 1777. At Home Farm, Newton (TL 436494) immediately to the south-west, there is a round dovecote originally composed of clay and straw blocks 18 inches long × 7 × inches wide × 5 inches high (0.61 × 0.19 × 0.14 m). The nesting boxes are constructed separately in three different forms: (1) in blocks of the same size but set on edge, with alighting ledges of tile supported by clay daub; the floors are made of laths and clay daub (2) of thinner bats of more chalky clay, 3 inches (0.09 m) deep, forming the walls and floors and projecting to form the alighting ledges (3) of bats moulded to shape, each front wall having an entrance hole shaped like an inverted U. The base is of brickwork to a height of about 4 feet (1.22 m). None of these phases are datable, but there is plenty of evidence of experimentation, at least in the various ways of forming the nesting holes. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Joseph Austin worked on this dovecote at some stage, and it is very likely that he knew it – but whether it pre-dates his cottage is not ascertainable.

At The Manor, Toft (TL 364563), 10 km to the north-west, there is a square dovecote, structurally a timber-framed building, now weatherboarded but originally plastered, in which the nesting boxes are moulded of chalky clay in pre-formed sections about 5 feet (1.52 m) long on a lower base wall. At Blois Farm, Steeple Bumpstead, Essex (TL 686415), 25 km to the south-east, there is another timber-framed square dovecote in which the nesting boxes and alighting ledges are made of thin slabs of chalky clay, even thinner than those at Newton. There are dovecotes at Great and Little Shelford, but they have been converted to other purposes, and the nesting boxes have not survived. None of these are firmly dated, but we have James Deane’s evidence that clay nesting boxes in dovecotes of other materials were in established use much earlier, and the footnote of 1801 that dovecotes with external walls of clay bats were already familiar by that date.

On present information it would seem that Joseph Austin – whom Plumptree described as ‘no uncommon genius’ – was familiar through his trade with clay bats in dovecotes, and that he conceived the idea of building a cottage with them. His motive was simply that he could not afford to use conventional materials, but clearly he had energy and initiative, and he did not count the cost of his own labour. The generation of the idea can be taken back at least to June 1790, for by his own account it was then that he first applied to the manor court for permission to build on the waste. Difficulties with the insecurity of his title, and the opposition of his neighbours, prevented him from building until a year later, but by that time his bats were already prepared. The basic details of his existence are on record, both in Plumptree’s account and other sources. Joseph and Ann ‘Oston’ are first recorded in the parish register of Little Shelford in 1777, when their daughter Ann was baptised. This is the only occasion on which the surname was so spelled, implying that they were newcomers to the parish. The register records the baptism of William in 1779 (who died a year later), John in 1784 (who was the son who was helping his father with the rendering coat when Plumptree accosted them), James in 1787, and Tabitha in 1790 (who was buried at Great Shelford in 1793). For no apparent reason another son, Joseph, was baptised in 1782 at Great Shelford.

The burial of Tabitha, and the baptisms of two more children at Great Shelford (a daughter in 1794 and a son in 1797), confirm the move into the cottage in October 1791. This is not exactly the family as described by Plumptree, but he was not the local vicar, and he may have misreported the details given to him verbally by Austin; at any rate, they agree that there were eight children in all, of whom some died young. Joseph Austin’s death at the age of 82 was recorded in 1830, a year after his wife’s death at the age of 76; both were buried at Little Shelford. The burial of a William Austin, described as a bricklayer, at Little Shelford in 1808, probably indicates the brother with whom Joseph lived earlier, and who helped him to build the cottage. That this family was very active in the building industry becomes extremely obvious in the period 1813 to 1830, when at least eight Austins, all


THE FIRST COTTAGE OF CLAY BATS?

The first cottage of clay bats? described in the register as bricklayers, of whom three could be Joseph's sons, appear with bewildering frequency as the baptisms of their children are recorded. The permission to build on the waste is not recorded in the court rolls, but they are extremely brief at this period; Joseph Austin is mentioned in a quitrent of c. 1820. Plumptree identified the site of the cottage precisely. An enclosure map of 1835 shows a rectangular plot to the south of the junction of London Road and Woollard's Lane, on the narrow strip of waste between the highway and enclosed land to the rear (Figure 1). It appears to be more like 30 poles than 20, but the scale is extremely small, and the roadside boundary projects slightly, as if Austin had encroached a little. On this plot is shown a large cottage and two freestanding outhouses. The next evidence of the plot is the first edition 1/2500 Ordnance map surveyed in 1885, which shows an entirely different range of buildings, and nothing on the site of the former cottage. Photographs dated 1915 and 1952 show a substantial Victorian house on the plot. It was demolished before 1960, and the site is now a public garden.

It is very unlikely that Austin's cottage suffered any major structural failure, for the foundations were higher and the walls were thicker than those of others which have survived to this day; a common wall thickness is 9 inches (0.23 m). Many clay lump cottages developed cracks in the render because it was applied too soon, before the blocks had finished drying and settling in situ; but Austin anticipated this difficulty and allowed sixteen months to pass after completing the roof, before rendering the walls. That he and his wife were buried in Little Shelford perhaps implies that they had already moved away from it. In 1801 Plumptree had expressed the hope that the cottage 'would continue his, and his son's, and his son's son's . . . for many generations', and that it would be 'a monument at his death - nay, during his life, to all passers-by - of the extraordinary powers of a good character, of industry, and ingenuity - which may vie with the sculptured marbles of statesmen and warriors'. It was probably swept away by the economic changes which followed the building of the railway in 1842. His more enduring monument is the heritage of clay-bat cottages in Cambridgeshire, and their later counterparts in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, which derived from his innovation. The bicentenary of his beginning construction at Great Shelford will occur on 5th June 1991, and might be appropriately observed by the erection on site of a modest reminder of Joseph Austin's contribution to building technology and social progress.

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