

Churchwardens' Accounts, Chapel-en-le-Frith.

Communicated by HENRY KIRKE, M.A., B.C.L.

1734.	June 24, Spent at Rushbearing according to Agreement	... ..	0 15 0
	Aug. 4, King George II's Coronation spent		0 5 0
1731.	New Communion table	... ..	1 1 0
	Wine for 7 Sundays Sacrament	... ..	2 13 7
1729.	Pd for hedgehogs and ravens	... ..	0 13 10
1732.	Pd Wm. Ludlam in exchange betwixt y ^e olde weathercock and y ^e new one	... ..	2 12 0
	Gave 8 men who had been took prisoners by y ^e Turks	... ..	0 1 0
	Ravens heads	... ..	0 5 0
	Badgers	... ..	0 2 0
	Fox heads and hedgehogs	... ..	0 11 4
	Pd for new candlesticks	... ..	15 0 0
1738.	Pd for ravens hedgehogs and badgers	... ..	0 18 0
1742.	Gave ringers and spent on joyfull news of Adm ^l Vernon takes Carthagen	... ..	0 6 0
1743.	Pd for new Prayer book	... ..	0 18 0
	Pd ringers when the great news came y ^t we had gotten the Battle of Dettingen	... ..	0 5 0
1745.	Spent consulting about Arnold Kirke	... ..	0 2 6
	Pd Sarah Holdgate about green-garland	... ..	0 1 0
	Pd ringers when news came y ^t the Duke had beaten y ^e rebels at Carlisle	... ..	0 10 0
1747.	Spent with Mr. Bardsley and Mr. Slack when bargaining with him to varnish y ^e Pictors in Church	... ..	0 3 0

	P ^d Mr. Slack his bill for varnishing pictors in y ^e Church Moses and Eron ¹ ...	1	10	0
	P ^d Peter Kennions bill for varnishing y ^e Kings Arms in Church	0	4	6
1749.	Sep. 10, Spent upon those that assisted us to disperse y ^e nutters from nutting on Sunday	0	1	6
1750.	Henry Kennion for varnishing and gilding y ^e altar frames and for printing ye case under Moses and Aaron	1	10	0
1753.	May 1, P ^d for repairing bassoon	0	8	0
	Spent upon Readied up y ^e chest	0	1	6
1754.	Spent on pulling down partition between Church and Chancell ²	0	1	0
1754.	P ^d to Rob ^t Holdgate for keeping boys out of the Churchyard	0	5	0
1755.	Oct. 2, P ^d Geo. Bramwell for wiping doggs and walking in Church on Sundays ...	0	10	0
	” ” 5, P ^d for Bible and Common Prayer book	3	6	0
1756.	Charges for getting a plan for a canopy pulpit and desk	0	4	6
	Leaf gold for gilding canopy	0	3	8
	Fixing up canopy	0	3	0
	Sept. 22, P ^d bill for canopy	6	3	3
1757.	March 10, 7 lime trees planted ith Church- yard	0	7	0
	Four more at ³	0	3	0
	April 22, P ^d bill for pulpit and desks ...	8	17	1
	July 9, For blew paint for candlesticks and canopy rods	0	5	6
1759.	P ^d for fixing up the table of legacies ...	0	0	6
	P ^d for a crane for the bassoon for singers ...	0	2	6

¹ What became of "Moses and Aaron" I know not. No record of them exists. Up to the time of the rebuilding of the chancel there was over the altar a large oil painting representing the Last Supper, which for design and execution was about as bad as it could be. A former vicar told me that it was a copy of a picture once at Alton Towers.

² For many years the chancel of the church was used as a school.

³ This is interesting as shewing the age of the lime trees in the Churchyard, viz., 153 years.

1760.	Feb. 6.	Gave y ^e singers a treat	o	6	o
1761.	July.	Expenses at dressing of the Rush Cart ¹	1	18	6
1765.	July 15.	P ^d for thanksgiving prayer for the Queen's safe delivery and Birth of a son ²	o	2	o
1767.	Ap. 19.	Two bassoon reeds for singers ...	o	2	o
	Dec. 15.	P ^d for bassoon and hautboy reeds	o	2	6
	Jan. 17.	For getting snow out of Church ...	o	2	o
	March 5.	P ^d for an umbrella ³	o	10	6
	Ap.	P ^d for napkin for the altar	o	2	10
		P ^d for Hearse harness and two setts of Bobs and other things thereto	12	8	o
1770.	March 9.	Spent at proving the Bass viol For a skin of red leather for the Buffett at y ^e Altar	o	4	o
1772.	Nov.	P ^d for a bass violin string	o	1	4

¹ It appears to have been the custom in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and possibly earlier, to strew the aisles of the country churches with rushes, as a sort of matting. Once a year, in the month of July, this function was celebrated as a festival. A hay-wagon was fitted up with hurdles and decorated with ribbons and flowers, in which the fresh-cut rushes were conveyed to the church with music and dancing; and the fête ended with much drinking and horse-play. By the end of the year the rushes must have become filthy and malodorous, and it is to be presumed that they were renewed more frequently, and that the festival called the "Rushbearing" was only a sort of "Wake," when the renewal of the rushes was made the centre piece of a day of pleasure.

In the register of Padiham Church may be found the following entry:—
"June 5th, 1652. It was thought fitt and agreed by the inhabitants of the parish Church of Padiham that whosoever receiveth the sum of 6^s yearly for sweepinge the alleys of the Church and that shall receive 2^s yearly for cleansing y^e Church of old Rushes and sweepinge against New Rushes come in shall doe it duely viz.: the alleys weekly and alsoe the gutters of the church and pypes of lead to be cleansed as often as neede shall require."

By this it appears that the aisles were swept out weekly and the rushes renewed when required. On the other hand, in the register of Leek parish church we find this entry:—

"1662, July. Getting and leading rushes for Chuch against ye Bishopp came, 6^s."

The advent of the bishop seems to have led to a general cleansing, as the next entry is:—

"Washing y^e surplices against y^e Bishopp came 1s. 2d."

In the accounts before us the charge for rushbearing only occurs once a year.

² Afterwards William IV.

³ Heavy leather umbrellas were kept to protect the bare-headed clergy at funerals. Umbrellas, however, were not commonly used in London before 1778, except by females. The first person of the male sex who had the courage generally to carry an umbrella was Jonas Hanway, who died in 1786.

1774.	P ^d for 2 washpots for Church use	...	...	0	0	4
1775.	Jly 10. P ^d for two books of leaf gold and silver	...	...	...	0	1 0
	2 bass viol strings	...	...	...	0	1 0
	Nov. 10. Silver string for bass viol	...	...	0	1	8
	Book of office for the Church	...	...	0	2	6
	Isaac Watts for bassoon ordered 2 y ^{rs} since	...	...	0	18	6
	John Frith for hautboy reeds and case	...	...	0	5	0
1778.	Collection for purchasing organ	...	...	263	0	0
	Paid for organ	...	...	260	0	0
1781.	Organist allowance	...	...	2	5	0
1804.	Feb. P ^d for killing a fox	...	...	0	11	0
1805.	Jly. Allowed W. Smith for catching a fox	...	...	0	11	0