

THE BLACK BOOK OF SWAFFHAM

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THE book itself was the work of Dr. John Botright, rector of Swaffham, 1435-74.

It is not much to look at, for it measures but $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and contains only thirty-two paper pages, time-worn and stained, yet of unique ecclesiastical value for the intimate information it gives us of Swaffham church some 500 years ago. In its long history this small and insignificant volume has met with many adventures. Obviously it derives its familiar name from an original cover of black leather or parchment. The first mention under the name Black Book is to be found in a closely written paper preserved in the church chest dated 1590, relating to a dispute that was then going on about the state of the church stock. Certain parishioners state that "they did open the chest and took out divers evidences to show their counsell, but *the blacke booke they see not*," and for the better safety of the records they "have sett five locks on the chest." A century later, in 1685, in a list of articles which are to be handed on year by year, it is described as "an auncient book called the Blacke booke," and it was then said to be in the hands of a Mr. John Sparrow, who does not seem to have been one of the churchwardens.

Early in the eighteenth century it became more widely known outside Swaffham, and it attracted the attention of Tom Martin of Palgrave and other leading antiquaries. In 1729 Martin transcribed the whole of the book, and notes in his copy that on 18 June 1730 it was "shewn to the Antiquarian Society at London" (i.e. the Society of Antiquaries). Soon afterwards the book was lent to Blomefield, and also to Mr. Robert Masters¹, a fellow of Corpus Christi College, Botright's own college at Cambridge.

By this time the Black Book had become incorporated in the Swaffham church library (Press Mark R.10) and the Book Plate of the Library, dated 1737 is pasted on the inside of the front cover. In 1760 the vicar, Rev. G. Bouchery, transcribed from Martin's copy a leaf which had become loose and was eventually missing.

In 1756 the book was rebound in a black leather cover, and during the nineteenth century it became a showpiece at Swaffham church, and suffered considerably from over-handling. The edges of many of the leaves became frayed and dog's-eared and attempts had been made to repair them with sticky paper. Fortunately in 1962 it became possible to have the book beautifully repaired by the hands of one of England's leading bookbinding experts, Mr. Roger Powell, of Froxfield, Hants., and the book, quite unchanged in outward appearance, is now in excellent condition.

Though many extracts from the Black Book have from time to time been printed, it has never been properly published in full. Blomefield (*History of*

¹He published *The History of Corpus Christi* in 1753.

Norfolk, VI, 217-222) deals with a considerable amount of it and other writers have done the same, and occasional references are to be found in *Norfolk Archaeology* and other topographical books.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BOOK

The book dates back to the middle of the fifteenth century and, as already mentioned, was the work of Dr. John Botright who was rector of Swaffham from 1435 to 1474. He is said to have been born at Swaffham in 1400, and his close association with the parish seems to have been continuous until his death in 1474. He was a man of considerable academic distinction and highly regarded at Cambridge. He matriculated at Corpus Christi College; graduated M.A. and took the degree of S.T.P. He held various important appointments at the University and became Master of Corpus in 1443. In 1447 he was appointed chaplain to King Henry VI.

The rectory of Swaffham being a *sine cure* did not require Botright's continual residence in the parish. The conduct of the church services and the management of the church matters in general were delegated to a vicar. Botright's immediate predecessor had been John Bury, who had held the rectory since 1414, and under him as vicar was William Cross. But in 1434 both Bury and Cross died and their benefices became vacant. In the following year, on the presentation of the Duke of Bedford, Botright was instituted as rector, and he himself appointed as his vicar John Moresburgh, who had been vicar of Shipdham since 1429.

It was in 1454, when Botright had already been rector for nineteen years, that the Black Book was drawn up. It seems to have been his own idea entirely. In a quaint and interesting introduction he playfully indicates the reasons which led him to compile the book for the benefit of his parishioners. From what he says it appears likely that since the early years of the fifteenth century the church affairs at Swaffham had not been particularly happy. One cannot help wondering whether this constant change—*four vicars in three years*—may not have resulted in disturbance, and led to mismanagement and friction later on. When Botright wrote in 1454 it seems plain that for some years past the finances of the church had been badly mismanaged. Valuable goods had been stolen or lost, legacies had been withheld or misappropriated, debts had been incurred and had been allowed to run on for a number of years, and the accounts were in disorder. It seems likely that it was to remedy this state of affairs that Botright with his trained and orderly mind determined to do his best to get things into order again.

The greater part of the book seems to be in his own handwriting. Most of it (except for the Bede Roll) is in Latin, though occasional passages in English are inserted in places. After more than 500 years of wear and tear, it is sometimes difficult to make out all that the book has to tell. Alterations, later additions and erasures, together with the fading of ink in places, from time to time, make the work of interpreting the meaning somewhat complicated; but on the whole there is very little that cannot clearly be made out.

THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

In dealing with the contents of the book we take the different sections in Botright's order. The make-up is as follows:—

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| Folios 1 to 3. | Preface, and Terrier of church lands. |
| „ 4 to 7. | Inventory of church goods.
All the above is in Latin and is mostly in Botright's handwriting. |
| „ 8 to 18. | State of the church finances.
Except for actual quotations from the accounts (between 1449 and 1462), all is in English. |
| „ 22 to 32. | The Bede Roll. In more formal handwriting, and (except for introductory passages) in English throughout. |
| „ 31. | List of Papal Indulgences. In Latin. |

In order to make the book as intelligible as possible, in dealing with the *Latin* passages I have tried to give a free rather than an exact and literal translation, and in the English parts of the book to modernise as far as possible the passages quoted. After more than 500 years of wear and tear it is difficult sometimes to make out all that the book has to tell us. Most of it is written in Latin, with occasional insertions in English. The Latin is heavily abbreviated throughout. Alterations, erasures and careless handwriting, together with the fading of ink in many places make the work of interpreting the meaning from time to time rather a complicated problem.

PREFACE

The book opens with a short preface, in which Botright quite clearly sets before the parishioners the reasons which have led him to compile it.

This book, he begins, may by the Grace of God be called "the right good ship" (*navicula recta*) of St. Peter's church of Swaffham Market. He likens himself to the patriarch and says, that as *Noah's Ark* was built in three stories (*tristega*) in each of which there was a separate compartment, or cabin (*mansiuuncula*), so his book has three divisions.

The first "cabin" deals with the real estate of Swaffham church, and lists the various pieces of land which from time to time have been added to the church property.

The second contains a complete and detailed Inventory of all the existing Church Goods, with the names of their donors, and gives their then (1454) reputed value.

The third deals with the Church accounts and with various attempts to amend past financial muddles.

There is a further section consisting of a complete Bede Roll of Benefactors, arranged for reading in church, and in English. Obviously much of this must have been compiled and added at various dates subsequent to 1454.

The concluding paragraph states that all this was done by the hand of Mr. John Botright, S.T.P. Rector of the said church, Chaplain to King Henry VI,

and Master of the College of Corpus Christi and the Blessed Mary at Cambridge, Anno Domini 1454, in the 54th year of the said Mr. John, and in the 19th year of his Induction to Swaffham.

SECTION I

A Terrier of the church lands, made on Holy Cross day, 1454.

- i. Land pertaining to the Light of S. Mary.
This amounts in all to 4 acres, 3 roods. There is a further $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres, but this is said to belong to S. Mary's Gild.
- ii. The Church Land, amounting to 6 acres.
It is noted that there are a further 3 acres in the Southfield "for maintaining perpetual lights before the great Crucifix at Christmas, Epiphany and Easter, to the value of 3 lbs. of the best wax." Also further land, unspecified, for the upkeep of a perpetual light in a chapel called "le gesyn."² This is crossed out and "our Lady chapel" inter-lineated.
- iii. The Lampelond, for maintaining the lamp in the choir, consisting in all of 8 acres 2 roods.
- iv. Land of St. Nicholas.
Half an acre near Mekylfelde Busch.

SECTION II

This is an Inventory of Church Goods drawn up in 1454. It is a compilation written for the most part in Botright's hand, based on earlier lists, and then by later additions and alterations brought up to date. It contains 121 separate entries, but as in a number of cases two or more articles are included in one item, altogether some 200 articles are listed in the inventory altogether. In almost every case the estimated value of each article is given, and when possible the name of the donor is added.

By comparing the various entries in this Inventory with the well-known list of church requirements ordered for the Province of Canterbury by Archbishop Winchelsey in 1305, it will be seen that Swaffham church in the middle of the fifteenth century was well equipped with all things which were considered necessary for public worship at any well-ordered church in the middle ages.

BOOKS

The Inventory comprises:—

The SERVICE BOOKS. Some forty of these are listed, most of which are in use, though some are recorded as having been lost, stolen, worn out (*vastata*), or borrowed and not returned. The following are named:—

1. Breviary, or *Portuos*. Three copies are listed. The best of them seems to have been "the selken Portuos, because of its red silk tassels." Another called "the Halle Portos," valued at 30s. 0d. was possibly the gift of John Hall (rector 1414): and there was a third which lay in the vicar's stall, but it is noted that it was old and torn.

²Gesyn=Fr. *gesine*, childbirth. Referring to our Lord's Nativity.

2. Lessons Book. The purchase of two new Legends (*temporale et sanctorum*) at a cost of £6 13s. 4d., is recorded. They were evidently to take the place of an earlier legend book, which is described as shabby (*debilis*) and only worth 3s. 4d.
3. Martyrology. An old Martiloge (2s. 6d.).
4. Psalters. Two copies, both with musical notes. Also another larger psalter, with notes and glosses in English, valued at 53s. 4d.
5. Missals. Four are listed. They were the Principal Missal, the gift of Mr. John Bury "sometime parson here," obviously a very fine book, valued at £13 6s. 8d.
A Missal with silver clasps, but one of them is missing (53s. 4d.);
A Missal newly corrected, but one *Burdon*³ is missing (40s. 0d.);
A Missal with clasps of coppergilt.
6. Gradual. Two new Grayles lately bought from the executors of Sir John Candelar, vicar of All Saints, South Lynn, together priced at £9 6s. 8d. There are also three other grayles "not so good" (*pejora*), one of them being in use at St. Guthlac's chapel.
7. The Sequences or *Troper*. A copy of this was lately at Stowe, but it had been stolen.
8. Manual. Two—an old Manual: and a good and new manual valued at 26s. 8d.
9. Antiphoner. Four copies. Two of these had long been at the church, and were appraised together at 26s. 8d. The other two companion volumes must have been large and elaborate books, for they were valued at £20.
10. Processional. Three occur—one good and large, and two other smaller ones.
11. Ordinal. Two—a new ordinal in the keeping of the vicar: and a shabby ordinal covered with white leather (3s. 4d.).
12. Invitatory, the gift of Thomas Styward.

CHURCH PLATE

Chalices. Five are listed in the Inventory.

A great chalice, wholly gilt and of great weight—valued at £6 13s. 4d.

Also two other smaller chalices, wholly gilt and another partly gilt, and another of plain silver; but, a note adds that these four were stolen and lost in 1457 on Easter night.

Censers &c. Two silver censers (*tribularia*), and two of latten, with a latten vessel for an incense ship. Also two new silver incense ships for frankincense.

Chrimatories. Two, one of silver (7s. 4d.), and the other of latten (1s. 8d.).

Crewets. Two pewter crewets—but one is lost and the other is valued at 6d. There were also crewets for the altars of St. Nicholas and St. Mary.

Crosses. A cross of copper gilt, with foot and staff and a red banner with the arms of Corpus Christi (i.e. for use both on the altar and in procession) valued at £5. There is another cross of latten plate and also two wooden crosses one with the crucifixion, and one without, for Lent.

³Burdon—a metal boss on the cover.

Holywater stoup. A silver vessel with a sprinkler for Holy water, valued at £5 6s. 8d.

Pax. Six. Two of them of wood and gilt for the high altar. There is also a shabby one of wood (4d.), and another of glass (*de vitro*) which is noted as being damaged or destroyed (*vastata*). And there are two others.

Pyx. Two. A silver pyx with a lock (40s.), and also a pyx of latten with Corpus Christi hanging at the high altar (20d.).

Candlesticks. Two candlesticks of silver, for the altar, and four smaller ones of latten to carry candles in procession.

Among miscellaneous possession are:—

Bells. There were 4 bells in the early tower, not mentioned in the Inventory: but a sanctus bell named "Thomas" is mentioned. A handbell (*tintinabulum*) to be rung at the communion of the sick was purchased by the church for 1s. 0d., and there was a bell (*campana*) in the choir known as the priest's bell.

Lantern. For light in the chancel (6d.).

A number of other church goods which are not mentioned in the Inventory, are to be found in the Bede Roll. The information to be derived from the Inventory and the Bede Roll together emphasises the wealth of the people of Swaffham in the fifteenth century, and also for their great liberality towards the repair and upkeep of their church.

VESTMENTS

The list of these in the Inventory is very full, and can only be indicated very shortly here and reserved for further and adequate treatment later. It must be borne in mind that the word vestment was often used in the middle ages in a very wide meaning. A phrase as "a whole suit of vestments" may indicate the complete outfit of all that was necessary for use in the celebration of High Mass when there were priest, deacon and sub-deacon to be provided for, and occasionally it extends still further to include frontals, curtains, cushions, etc. and other dressings of the altar.

The list of textiles at Swaffham church as recorded in the Black Book is large and varied. It occupies sixty-three entries in the Inventory, which include quite 100 separate items which cannot be dealt with adequately here, but details may be seen in *Blomefield* (Vol. VI), and to a certain extent in *Rix* (*The Pride of Swaffham*, 9-12).

SECTION III

The third section of Botright's book is perhaps the most difficult of all to interpret intelligently. It appears to be an attempt by Swaffham's rector to smooth out many of the financial irregularities which for some years had been causing difficulties and friction. The whole section seems to be based on the proceedings at a meeting held in the year 1457, probably at the yearly audit. Botright himself presided, supported by twelve specially chosen parishioners, to enquire into what had been happening, and to urge the churchwardens to take action.

It begins with a statement of debts due to the church from as far back as 1443, and Walter Taylor and John Payn are asked to take steps to recover these debts, some of which, they are told, are "xiiij yers bi hynde." In 1444, or thereabouts, Walter Cely, "whom God pardon," gave for himself and for his wife a legacy of £5, part of which was then paid to the churchwardens; but it was still doubtful, thirteen years later, whether the full gift had ever been received or accounted for.

Other outstanding debts are enquired into. In 1455 John Bristoft left a legacy of ten marks, together with £5 at a later date, "so that the executors upon ther holidom oth schuld have payed it within the fyrst yer," but apparently they had not yet done so. In 1449 Thomas Baker, executor for the legacy and "wheteword" of Thomas Dey, is reported to have often said that he would pay off the 6s. 8d. by instalments of 20d.—but he had defaulted; and there are several more debts of this kind.

A curious case of misappropriation is hinted at in the Inventory: two coverlets which formerly hung before the images of St. Peter and St. Paul are reported to have been stolen, but the vicar stated that he had seen them lying on the bed of William Goodwyn. The said Goodwin was one of the churchreves in 1457!

Several more suggestions as to robbery and loss of church goods occur.

There was also some difficulty about money which had been collected for the repair of the steeple and the bells. Donations towards the expense of this had been invited towards this some little time before 1457, and in this third section of the Black Book there is a list of parishioners who had promised to subscribe. Fifty-two names are included, and in each case the amount "proffered" is given. The sums vary from the 6s. 8d. of Mr. Richard Styward down to the 2d. or 3d. of less affluent parishioners. The total amount is £2 4s. 11d.; but as these profers had not yet been collected, this sum was reckoned as a debt. "The profers to the stepill and bells are at this day clerly dewe to be yet gadered, by the old or els the newe cherkh Reves," and on St. Michael in Monte Tumba (16 Oct.) 1457, all these good prospective donors were accounted "debtors."

Various other financial irregularities are reported, and the churchwardens' accounts are freely quoted. In fact, the whole of the 1457 and 1458 accounts are given *in extenso*. (Otherwise the earliest accounts still existing at Swaffham start in 1505.) There is also some doubt as to the payment of 16s. 8d. for the refashioning of two chalices which had been carried out in London by "Amadasse the goldsmyth, at the Dove, in the Chepe."

Most of this section is in Botright's writing and in English, though the churchwardens' accounts for 1453 and 1454 are in Latin.

SECTION IV THE BEDE ROLL

The Black Book proper, as it was first planned by Botright, consisted of the three separate sections which we have been considering, dealing respectively with the real estate, the goods and chattels and the finances of Swaffham

church. But to this original volume there has been added later a *fourth* section, a copy of the Bede Roll, or list of Benefactors. Though a later addition, it is perhaps the most interesting and most frequently quoted part of the book. Blomefield (vi, 217 to 222) prints it almost entirely, and later W. B. Rix (*Pride of Swaffham*, 18 to 25), though less accurately, has done much the same. In it, of course, we have a copy of an earlier document, a gradual composition, to which from year to year additions have been made to bring it up to date for use in the church. Obviously it must have been added to the Black Book towards the end of the fifteenth century, for in it Dr. Botright is spoken of as lying buried before the image of St. Peter on the north side of the altar, where his effigy still remains, and he died in 1474.

Assuming that benefactions were recorded on the Bede Roll as they were received, i.e. chronologically, and as there is a note (sometimes very detailed) as to the nature of each particular benefaction, a very good picture of the way in which Swaffham church was enlarged and equipped during the fifteenth century, is obtained. Altogether ninety-five benefactions are entered, in which 123 names occur.

There is an introductory preface in Latin to this effect—"It is to be remembered that on the day of Pentecost it is customary to say the Office of the Dead for the Benefactors of the Church of Swaffham, with the Mass of Requiem by note on the morrow after the High Mass of the day. After which Mass of Requiem there should be said three prayers, viz:

Deus Indulgentiarum. . . .

Deus cuius misericordia. . . .

Miserere Domine animabus. . . .

It should be noted that when these prayers are said for the soul of 'thy priest,' it means for the soul of Mr. John Botright, doctor of divinity and rector of this church, who lies buried before the image of St. Peter. Then at the said Mass are said three other customary prayers at anniversaries, in memory of benefactors of this church."

After this preface comes the Bede Roll in English, and arranged for reading in church. I give the first two entries in full.

"We shall prey specially for ye souls of Sir John ye *first* [crossed out] viker of this church, which gaf j mas bok, j chalice, j vestment, and a gret chist.

Also for the soule of Syr John Candeler, sumtyme viker of this church, which geve ij new greylis, j crosse of copir gylt with staf and baner to to ye same, j Processionari, and j tabil gylt upon ye hye auter."

The entries following are all in the same form.

A close study of the Bede Roll will give us a good idea of the way in which one of our important Norfolk churches, originating from earlier times, was being developed and enlarged during the course of the fifteenth century.

Of the *original* Swaffham church nothing is known definitely. There is no mention of a church being there in the Domesday Survey 1087, but it is inconceivable that Swaffham, which even then was the focal point of a Hundred and soon to become a flourishing market town, can have been at that time churchless.

At that time quite a number of small churches had sprung up in the immediate neighbourhood, some of which to this day still retain parts of their original structures, and we can but conjecture that in the same way a similar church may have been in existence at Swaffham. Standing on its present site it may have been just a simple two-compartment building, nave and chancel only, like Houghton-on-the-Hill, Langford, or Shingham, with possibly a round tower attached, as at Beachamwell, Bexwell or Gayton Thorpe. On the other hand it may have been built from the first on a larger and more pretentious scale—a cruciform church with a central tower, as at Great Dunham or Newton-next-Castleacre. We can only conjecture, but a church of some sort must have been at Swaffham in 1087.

However small it may have been at first, enlargement soon came about. In the thirteenth century much skilled building was taking place in the immediate neighbourhood—for example at Cockley Cley, Gooderstone, Sporle and Little Dunham. In all these four churches traces of beautiful thirteenth-century chancels can still be seen. At the same time similar work was going on at Swaffham, as evidenced by the five easternmost bays of the nave which still remain to this day.

The growth and enlargement of the church steadily continued, and during the fifteenth century, by taking the information derived from the Bede Roll in the chronological order in which it is given, we may get a rough idea of the way it was all done.

In the early part of that century, Swaffham church may be conjectured as a large building consisting of a chancel flanked by north and south chapels, a wide aisled nave of five bays, with a porch on the north side, and a western tower (not the present one) containing four bells. This would have been the kind of church which Botright inherited when he became rector in 1435.

About the middle of the century, the church as it then stood seems to have been showing signs of wear and tear, and John Baxter and his wife gave two nobles (£1 6s. 8d.) to "the repair of the old church," while about the same time Richard Crosse and his wife gave 50 marks (£33 6s. 8d.) "to repair the old stepil, and ye vestry that is now." Evidently the idea of remodelling the existing church and steeple had by this time began to take shape. And still more definitely when John Chapman and Cateryne his wife bequeathed £120 for making of the new steeple; while 20 marks (£13 6s. 8d.), together with 20 tons of freestone was a benefaction given by John Payn for the same purpose.

After this, to the end of the Bede Roll, there are recorded some two dozen substantial gifts, varying in value from £40 downwards, all donated "for the making of the new church and steeple." Money was coming in, and already some of the work was in hand.

Here are the names of some of the benefactors recorded in the Roll, who contributed so generously towards this rebuilding scheme. Unfortunately the gifts cannot each be dated precisely, but they are given here in the order in which they occur in the list, and they can all be assigned within the period c. 1420 to the end of the century.

Thos. Blake. Did make divers pathings in ye *old church*.

Thos. Styward and *Cecily* his wife. Seated "ye north syde of the *old chirch* to ye crosse aley betwyn ye old doris. Did glase ij wyndowes in ye quire and other ij in ye olde chirch on the southe syde."

Mr. John Bury. "Sumtym here parsun. Did make ye stallis in ye Quer, and celid ye chancel."

Katherine Robyn. Glazed a window in ye south syde of the *old chirch*.

John Chapman and *Catherine* his wife. "Made the north yle, with glasyng, stolyng (seating) and pathyng (paving) of the same wyth Marbyll, and gave £120 in money to the makyng of the *New Stepyll*."

Wm. Coe and *Anne* his wife. Did make the Roffe of the porche.

Robt. Payn. Paved the mid ally of the old church with marble, and made a part of the church, with all charges from ye nether cross ally to the steeple. Also the rood altar and the chapel of the Trinity. He also gave 20 tons of free-stone for the steeple.

Raffe Hamonde. Seated the Trinity chapel.

John Plumere and *Margt* his wife. Spent £60 in making the old Chapel of the Trinity: with its rood loft, to the glory of God.

John Walsingham. Glazed the great window in the Lady chapel.

Sir John Augure,⁴ parson of Southacre. Glazed a window on the south side of the *new church*.

Walter Taylor and *Isabel* his wife. Made the new roof of the church from the chancel to the cross alley.

John Langman and *Agnes* his wife. Made all the great seats on both sides of the middle aisle.

Thos. Brystow. Made the "gabyll" between the church and the chancel, i.e. for the sanctus bell.

John Payn and *Cath.* his wife. Made the little chapel of Corpus Christi and the feretory in the same chapel.

Thos. Cocke. Made certain seats in the south aisle.

Symond Blake. "Gentyلمان and *Jane* his wife, which ded exspendyn in pathyng with marbyll of ye crosse aley before the chaunsell dore, in reparation of ye Organs brokyn with the fallyng of ye chirche, glasyng of a wyndow in ye clarestoyre, and in fyndyng of a free mason to the makyng of ye Chirche by the space of a yere, and in money geven to the makyng of the newe stepyll, xlii. (£40.)"

This brings us to about the end of the fifteenth century, for Simon Blake's chantry was founded in 1489. By this time with the help of so many generous donors, the work of extending the church must have been nearing completion. Money was coming in freely, and it should be noted that those seventeen benefactors already quoted had, in addition to their specified gifts, also provided in money, something like £300 for "the new Stepyll."

And the Bede Roll is not yet finished, and benefactors still come along to donate material and money for the work to go on. The Roll comes to an end, and twenty-five more well wishers brought in smaller sums (£21 12s. 8d.) to swell the fund.

⁴John Aungier was rector of Southacre 1452—1486.

Among these later benefactions the following generous gifts are recorded:—
Thos. Styward and *Agnes* his wife. Gave a Crosse of Sylver and gylte, a peyr of Sylver candelstykkys, ij sylver basons, a monstre⁵ for the sacrament, and a peyr of gret orgouns.

John Sergeaunt. ij sylver sensurs, ij shypps, a haly water stoppe, and a strengkle (sprinkler) of sylver.

John Oxburgh and *Alys* his wife. A holywater stoup of latten.

John Newell. A Crismatory of silver.

Robt. Wyngyff (?). Two paxes of silver and gylte.

John Sparke. 2 Corporas Cases.

Thos. Morell. "Gaf an iron panne for to fetch yn colys for the servyce of God."

Nich. Wryght. "Gaff unto ye Chyrche a Lyme Kille with 5 roods of land."

All this evidence has been derived from the pages of the Black Book. It was not however until the sixteenth century had dawned that the work was completed. The final triumph came when, in the early years of King Henry VIII reign, the present glorious western tower was finished and added to the newly enlarged church. Full and intimate details as to its building are to be found in the earliest existing Churchwardens' Account Book which begins in 1505.

At the last folio but one of the book there are entered details of a list of papal indulgences granted for certain acts of piety. They were issued during the reigns of popes Urban IV, Martin V and Eugenius IV (not VI).

After eleven more entries in the Bede Roll and a few odd names and dates, the Black Book of Swaffham ends.

⁵Monstrance.