

## THE PARISH OF GRANBOROUGH, BUCKS

## II. NOTES ON REFORMATION TIMES AND AFTER

The list of the Vicars of Granborough commences with William Bracey, who died in 1508.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps previously Granborough was attached to Winslow. The earliest name to appear in the registers is that of Richard Thorpe, "sometime Vicar of Granborowe was buried the — day of November 1546." William Twell presented to the living in 1548 and buried in 1589 seems to have held office, without disturbance, through the Reformation changes. The fact, however, that six years (1548—1553) are omitted from the parish register is rather suspicious. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the excision of half a page at the beginning of this period was due to a wish to delete the record of the name of Cornelius Holland, the regicide, who "from a scullion in the royal kitchen rose up to be a clerk of it: afterwards had a place in the Green Cloth; and from picking the Kings' purse, and a sop in the dripping pan, the devil entered into him and prompted him to betray and condemn his master."<sup>2</sup> Ffowlk Owen, instituted 1588, married 1600, was buried in 1624. His reply to the demand upon him (dated 26 Oct., 1590) to supply armour to provide against foreign invasion has been preserved, and runs as follows:—<sup>3</sup> " I, Ffulke Owen, Vicar of Greneboroughe, have provided toward my chardge an arming sworde, dagger and gyrdle, the rest I will provide as soon as I am able, God willing. Per me Fulconem Owen."

The effective penmanship of another vicar is preserved in the following letter of John Croft to the Archdeacon of St. Albans (dated Nov. 16, 1711):<sup>4</sup> " Pray be so kind, so just, as to summon Thorp of Grandborough, whom we presented at our last visita'on held at Winslow, last Wednesd., in Easter week, for refusing to pay his levy to the Ch. Warden's rate;

<sup>1</sup> Lipscomb I., 250. <sup>2</sup> Cole MSS. <sup>3</sup> A. J. Clear, " The King's Village in Demesne," p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

from this long forbearance the Raskall bragg of impunity and y't now he has conquered the whole town and Court, and, indeed, if he pass off thus, others for good husbandry may follow his example, and so we may feare a generall dispute in the whole parish whom, he twitters, are eager to have him punisht as yet; pray therefore let it be done, and that speedily, for the Rogue, fearing the worst, is leaving Grenb—next Lady Day. By a particular messenger you may send . . . . . a process for Thorp, which may convince the rest of the inhabitants that the power of the Court is not enervated, nor our resentments so tame but yt our Church can teach a contumacious Villaine manners."

In modern times Granborough has had a noted vicar (1871—1884) in C. W. Stubbs (subsequently Dean of Ely and Bishop of Truro), Christian Socialist, reformer and poet. His work in starting a co-operative store and allotments in days when such things were innovations is still remembered by old inhabitants. He has himself recorded the beginning of the story in a characteristic passage in "The Land and the Labourers" : "Some 8 or 9 pounds for the present was in fact all that we could command by way of capital. What was to be done? That would not buy even one co-op, cow. A brilliant thought, however, struck one of the men . . . . 'Spell it with a S, sir'—spell it with an S! ' and so we did. For Co-op. 'Cows' we wrote Co-op 'Sows.' On the 7th June the Granborough Co-operative Association fairly opened business as the proprietors of two fine brood sow pigs; and, to cut a long story short, here was I in October its proud President, just returned home from my holiday, greeted almost as I entered the village with the stirring news, 'Please, sir, the Co-op. sows have got 18 little pigs! ' . . . . O wonderful dispensation of nature! O beneficent principle of increase! O glorious virtues of co-operation."

*Church Furniture.* The following inventory of goods belonging to the parish of Granborough is dated 23 July, 1552:-<sup>5</sup> "Inprimis 1 chales 3 great belles 1

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<sup>3</sup> Edwardian Inventories for Bucks, 1908, p. 2.

Sanctus bell 1 crosse copper & gylte 2 candelstickes of laten 2 vestments 1 blewe damaske the other of litell value 1 coope 3 frutes of peynted lynnin 3 lynnin aultar clothes 2 corporaces (= corporals) 2 towells (probably = purificators) 1 surplus and 1 rochet " (probably for parish clerk). The only survivor of these is the pre-Reformation tenor bell.<sup>6</sup> Amongst the Church plate there remains a silver chalice of 1569, probably one of the so-called " Five, pound cups" given by Queen Elizabeth to replace the vessels despoiled by her father. Amongst other early post-Reformation furniture that has survived is an old wooden font, said to be of Puritan origin.

*Parish Registers.* The earliest entries in these most ancient and well-preserved registers refer to the year 1538. Under the date 1636 occurs the probably unique Christian name " God will provide," a beggar's child who was " baptized the 17th of July and buried the 29th of July." A search has failed to find mention of the name of the before-mentioned Cornelius Holland; also of the eminent playwright, the late Henry Arthur Jones, who local tradition asserts was born in Granborough.<sup>7</sup> The Constable's Book for the years 1787 to 1834 is still in existence, and contains the following entries:—" 16 Oct., 1789: Paid for Little Dash beating his wife and expence keep him in hold £1 5/6. " " 18 May 1800 Pd for carring the waits and scails to Waddesdon 3/6." " 1809 Paid for 2 quarts of beer that was not putt in the accounts last year 1/4. " " 29 June 1816 Paid expences going to Deadman's Gate to shoot the trawlers dogs 2/-." "12 May 1823. Guarding the Irishman out of this parish 1/- ." " 18 Aug. 1832 Paid John Bradbury for being guard over F. Higgins wile in stocks 1/6."

*Eighteenth Century Life,* A glimpse of this is obtained from an old diary kept in 1789 by Paul

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<sup>6</sup> Cocks's *Church Bells of Bucks* p.p 54 and 392, where it is ascribed to Roger Landen, of Wokingham, and assigned to the mid 15th century.

<sup>7</sup> This may be explained by the fact that his parents were Dissenters.

Parkins, of Winslow, who records that on Sunday, July 1, he went to Wingrave Feast, on July 8th to Winslow Church in the morning and to Grandborough Feast in the afternoon and " saw Moses Gates and J. Cox fight." On Sunday, Nov. 11, he writes—" I did not go to church because I was airing my new bed."<sup>8</sup> The state of the local roads may be guessed from the fact that at the Buckingham Assizes on July 16, 1787, the inhabitants of Granborough were indicted for a nuisance: "a certain part of the common Kings' Highway called Bowden Lane ..... was and yet is in a very ruinous, mirey, deep, broken condition, and in great decay for want of due reparation and amend-ment of the same, so that liege subjects of our said Lord the King ..... could not, nor yet can, go, re-turn, pass, ride, and labour ..... without great danger of their lives, and the loss of their goods." The decision of the Court was that the liability to repair the road lay with the inhabitants of the village.<sup>9</sup>

*The spelling of the name Granborough* .A list of 16 different spellings is given in Mawer & Stenton's "The Place-names of Buckinghamshire," the earliest being " Grenebeorge." c. 1060. The form in the earliest parish register on the first pages is " Granborowe." The insertion of a "d" (Grandborough), which has been frequent in modern times, is traceable in the parish registers back to the year 1653. The usual omission of the " d " at the present day was due to the efforts of the late Vicar, Rev. O. J. Jones. Mawer & Stenton give the meaning of the name as green hill.

*Inclosure Award.* The Act, on which the Award is based, was passed in 1796. Some of the Commissioners' duties were to assign land to the Vicar of Granborough as an equivalent " for the glebe, lands and rights of common belonging to the said vicarage"; to allot land to Baroness Fermanagh (niece of the second Earl Verney) as an equivalent for her impropriate tithes out of a certain farm in Grandborough " ; to make an allotment to W. Selby, Esq.

<sup>8</sup> A. J. Clear : *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>9</sup> A. Clear : *Annals of a Quiet Parish : Grandborough*, p. 12.

(son of R. Lowndes, Esq., Sheriff in 1738) as "Lord of the Manor of Grandborough" "in lieu of his right to the soil of the waste lands " ; to fix yearly rents in lieu of the tithes payable to the Vicars of East Claydon and Granborough, and to allot the residue of the lands to " the several persons being owners and proprietors." An allotment was made in trust for the Poor " in lieu of their right of cutting furze on certain parts of Adam Leys Common and Roundhill Common." Also an allotment was made for the Church " in lieu of certain lands called Church Land."

The extent of the inclosure is seen from the fact that out of a total area of 1,555 acres, common lands had occupied 1,306 acres. From the attached schedule we find that 47 allotments are enumerated in the award, 13 of which are specified as Copyhold. The number of ancient inclosures (of 1 acre or more) amounted to 29, whilst the number of proprietors was 43 (compared with about 55 at the present time). Only one name (Clark) amongst the proprietors at the time of the Award occurs in the parish to-day. Many of the field and local names mentioned still survive.

CYRIL E MARTIN.