

DUNTON TITHE PROCEDURE

NOR a great deal is known about the precise manner of collection of tithes in kind in the past; and local customs and procedure probably differed considerably. The details of the Dunton tithe procedure as recorded in an entry in the Dunton Parish Register, are therefore of considerable interest. Mr. A. V. Woodman has transcribed this, and adds the note that the Church has always been appurtenant to the manor which was held by the Hampdens from about the middle of the fifteenth century until 1731, James Wrexham was curate in 1672; Thomas Willis being then rector. The material is printed by the courtesy of the Rev. H. J. Sillitoe, Rector of Dunton.

The customs of the Parish of Dunton, concerning the ministers dues as they were drawn by the Inhabitants & Parishioners themselves & given up to Mrs. Hampden.

Copied out May 6 1672 by Ja Wrexham

1. Imprimis we ar to pay Tithe Lamb on St. Marks day & the Parson is then to have them away. They ar tithed in this manner. First the owner takes two then the Parson or his Deputy standing without the penn must appoint and touch with his stick one & then we take seven to make yt Tithe even & then we take 9 more & the Parson the 10th until we have don & if we have 7 we pay a Tithe Lamb & have 1d ob.¹ & for as many as wee have under wee pay the Parson for every one an ob.
2. We begin to pay our Tithe milk 10 days after St. Marks day² and continu untill Martlemas³ & the Parson ought to fetch his milk when we milk in the Town upon the Green & when we milk in the field at the place where the Herdsman doth gather his Beasts together & not to have it brought to any place.
3. We pay the 10th calf if we have 10 within the year, if not, if we wean them or kill them in our houses we pay for every calf an ob if we sell them we pay the 10th penny & if we have but 7 he is to have one & allow us 2d ob and it must be fetched away at a month old.
4. We must make even at Easter & not let Tithe remain any longer.
5. We must make even for our offerings at Easter but it groweth du quarterly that is every housekeeper an ob every quarter & every of our children & servants yt ar Communicants as much i.e. 2d for every one in the year.
6. We pay a garden penny for the profit of our garden every year.
7. We tithe wooll by the fleece & if we have 7 od fleeces the Parson hath a fleece & gives 1d ob & if we have but 6 od fleeces we give him 3d & ther must be an indifferent body for both in the tithing.
8. If we winter sheep in the Parish and sell them before shearing time we pay for every sheep an ob.

9. If we buy sheep after Candlemas⁴ we pay likewise for every sheep an ob & no wooll.
10. If we bring sheep into the Parish but a day before Candlemas & continu here untill shearing day, we ar to pay the whole tithe wooll.
11. And if we sell those sheep we have tithed for before Candlemas, ther is no more du of tithe, but if we buy sheep and sell them before we have tithed for them then we pay 4d a month for every hundred & no more.
12. If our sheep dy after Candlemas we pay the 10th fell if wee have not 7 we pay an ob a fell: if we have but 7 we pay a tithe & the Parson payeth back 1d ob.
13. We pay our tithe hay in grass cock & our barly in the cock & our beans in the cock or sheaf & our wheat in the sheaf likewise & becaus of the cocking of our hay and barly & beans the Parson is to giv us towards our charges yearly 2 bushels of wheat and 2 bushels of malt, otherwise we may leav it on the swath.
14. We pay for every colt we have 1d.
15. We pay tithe apples & hemp when tha ar tithable & eggs the Wednesday before Easterday Tithe gees at Lammas⁵: piggs when tha be meatable, tithe hony & wax.
16. The Parson nor his deputy ought not to tithe our corn or hay except the owner or his deputy be present & if he or his deputy be in sight we ought to call them to the tithing & if not we have used to tithe them our selves or our deputies. And if the Parson can find any fault in the tithing he is to have his remedy against us.
17. The Parson ought not to carry his tithes before the barly & beans be raked, if the owner rake them before he carry them himself; otherwise he doth the corn yt is to be raked wth his going upon it much harm both wth hors & otherwise.
18. The Parson is to keep the field after Lammas day and if the inhabitants have any harm in their corn after yt day & yt he or his deputy hath not brought the cattel yt did the harm to the pound & given knowledg to the owner of the corn so destroyed by cattell he must make it good of his own tithes.
19. Also the Parson is to have no raking of any wheat yt is reaped but if it be mowed he is to have the 10th part of the raking & so likewise of the leasing or raking of beans wth the tithecock.
20. If any of the Parishioners have 2 sows & each of them hath 6 pigs & neither of them 7 the Parson is to have but an ob for every pig.
21. And so likewise for gees, for every goos when tha ar tithable at Lammasday a qr⁶.

¹ i.e. obolus. The *obolus* was a small Greek coin; the word, contracted to *ob* was used in England for one halfpenny.

² 25th April: so 5th May.

³ Probably intended for MARTINMAS, 11th November.

⁴ 2nd February (the Purification of the B.V.M.).

⁵ 1st of August. One of the cross quarter days or half-quarter days in England. In early times it was the custom to make offerings of the friar priests of the harvest on this day (SS. Peter ad Vineula). The name comes from a corruption of "Loaf-Mass".

⁶ qr = quarter, namely $\frac{1}{4}$ d.