

## **'Village History Notes'**

*by George S. Jackson*  
1977

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George Jackson was born in Plumstead in 1906 and taught in Cambridge, moving to West Wickham in 1962, where he became Churchwarden and organist at St. Mary's and wrote a number of local history articles. This series of Village History Notes was first published in the village newsletter *The Venture*. The Notes were published in booklet form in 2006 by his children Jennifer Middleton and Peter Jackson.

## INTRODUCTION

Village History Notes were written by our late father George S Jackson in 1977. They were published as individual articles in the Church magazine The Venture. George also gave a number of talks on the Church and the Village to the Local History Society.

George was born in 1906 at Plumpstead and attended Asks School at Eltham before joining the staff of the Great Western Railway at Paddington. He married our mother Janet Willers in 1933. George joined the Royal Navy at the start of the Second World War in 1939. He served in a number of Royal Navy Establishments and was stationed in Malta from 1943 - 5. He was demobilised with the rank of Lt Cdr.

He trained as a school - teacher immediately after the war. He initially taught Maths and Commercial Studies at Sawston Village College. He was later appointed Senior Maths Master at Netherhall Boys' School and retired from there in 1971.

The family moved to Trinity House, West Wickham in 1962 and soon became involved with Church affairs. During this time George served as an Organist, Secretary of the Parochial Church Council and briefly as a Churchwarden of St Mary's. George had a life - long interest in music and played the piano, organ, violin, viola, oboe and latterly bagpipes.

George had a great interest in local history as his articles show. Whilst living at Babraham he wrote an account of the Bush and Bennett Charity which was responsible for the old school and almshouses there. He began researching the history of West Wickham shortly after moving to the village. He spent many hours pouring over old documents and looking through the church registers. He learned medieval Latin to enable him to read ancient parchments which he studied at the University Library, the Shire Hall and Ely.

The articles are not all in an exact historical order. They present a unique account of West Wickham and some of the people who lived there over the last 1000 years or so. The articles also contain some details of events and life in Horseheath. They refer to people living in the village in the 1970s and whom some current residents will still remember.

We decided to reprint the articles in booklet form as a tribute to our father who died in 1990 and his abiding interest in local history.

Jennifer Middleton & Peter Jackson

West Wickham 2006

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## VILLAGE HISTORY NOTES - 2

### The Manors of West Wickham and Horseheath

In addition to his manor of Wickham, Count Alan owned 70 other estates in Cambridgeshire, as well as hundreds of others, extending as far north as Durham. This vast holding was administered from the mighty castle of Richmond in Yorkshire. Alan was created Earl of Richmond and his lands became known as the Barony or Honour of Richmond. Alan died unmarried in 1089 and was buried at Bury St Edmunds, but the Honour was kept intact and later was in the gift of the sovereign, the revenues providing for the maintenance of the Queen or a son, rather like the present day link between the Duchy of Cornwall and the Prince of Wales.

The Honour Court for this part of Cambridgeshire was for a time at Linton, but by 1276 it was established at Babraham. Here, as at the other courts of Honour at Cherry Hinton and Bassingbourn, would be the gallows, for such great baronies had the power of high and low justice and could therefore hang felons within their liberty without the presence of the King's Coroner.

Alan had a manor at Horseheath as well as at Wickham. At the Conquest both had been held by Eddeva. In other villages she is sometimes referred to as 'Eddeva pulchra' or 'Aeditha bella' (i.e. Edith the fair). It rather appears that Edith's lands in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere were taken over en bloc by Count Alan. Of her 79 manors in the county, 71 had certainly passed to Alan and some of the remaining 8 were doubtful, apart from the very valuable estate at Exning kept by the King himself.

But who was Edith the Fair? We don't know for certain, but she must have been an important and wealthy woman. Some people think she might have been the beautiful Edith called Swan's Neck who searched for Harold's body on the battlefield of Hastings, but she was only his mistress. It is more likely that Eddeva was the wife of Edward the Confessor, daughter of the powerful Earl Godwin and sister of Harold. She was renowned for her beauty and was very wealthy. The income from her lands was estimated at almost a quarter of that of the King, and 'gifts' to Edward for favours usually included one to Queen Edith. We do know that one aspiring bishop 'slipped' one of his episcopal estates to her once he had got the job! When her husband died in 1066, she retired from all public life to her dower estate at Winchester until, her death in 1075. Incidentally, there is a very ancient tradition that Park Meadow in Borough Green is the site of Queen Edith's 'palace'. Domesday Book records that she owned the entire village.

At Horseheath a second manor was held by Aubrey de Vere from the King. In addition, Aubrey also held Count Alan's manors in both Wickham and Horseheath from the Honour of Richmond. The de Veres

later became Earls of Oxford, and because they remained very influential in the district until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we shall deal with their story in a later article.

By 1236 the Earl of Oxford had divided Wickham manor which he held for the Honour in two parts and granted these to two of his knights – Sir William Russell and Sir Stephen de la Haye. One half would have been managed from the existing manor house behind Manor farm, while the manorial buildings for the other half were almost certainly on a site just east of the present Hill Farm owned by Mr Fairhead. The de la Hayes kept their manor for about 150 years and I think this must have been the Hill Farm Manor because the Subsidy Roll for 1327 refers to a tenant as ‘Thomas de Lay’ (dropping an ‘h’ was a common habit even in those days!). No doubt Ley Wood, which adjoins the manor site, took its name from the de la Hayes.

In a deed of 1295 to which Sir William de la Haye was a party, his seal clearly shows the coat – of – arms of the family - a fess dividing three cinquefoils, two and one, i.e. a horizontal bar with two five – pointed flowers above and one below. When I was in the parlour of the Red Lion Inn near Whittlesford Station some time ago, what should I see but this coat – of – arms carved on an old beam! The de la Hayes never owned land in that neighbourhood. The Red Lion was not built until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, long after the family had disappeared from the Cambridgeshire scene. This is the kind of tantalising mystery we sometimes come across in local history, so just by way of a change we will turn ourselves into detectives in the next article and see if we can come up with a solution!

## VILLAGE HISTORY NOTES - 7

### The Domesday Book 1086

In this article I begin my promised enquiry into the variations in the population of our two villages over the centuries and the natural starting point is the Domesday Book. As I mentioned in the first article in this series, Domesday Book embodies the results of a survey ordered by William the Conqueror into the ownership and value of all lands in his newly acquired kingdom.

William probably had two main objectives in mind when he sent his commissioners round the countryside. Firstly he wanted to have a record of every manor for taxation purposes. We all remember from our schooldays the story of Ethelred 'the Unready' buying off the Danish invaders with Danegold. The levying of 'geld' (or tax) for other purposes became the established practice of later kings and when William took possession of England he found it a satisfactory and ready-made system of raising revenue.

Secondly he wanted to have a reliable record of the ownership of every manor throughout his kingdom. We must remember that for a long time the Normans were in the position of an army of occupation in a hostile Country where 'might was right.' Williams intention was to reward his supporters by granting them the lands of those who had fought against him but not to expropriate all the English holders of land. William was a devout man and his invasion of England had the blessing of the Pope. William did not want to interfere unduly with the extensive estates of the Church. In addition there were others who were not supporters of the late King Harald. There were plenty of swash-buckling Norman knights who were ready to 'jump the gun' and grab any manor they could lay their hands on without asking questions and hope to hang on to it. In the 20 years between the Norman landing and the compilation of the Domesday Book, most of the disputes about the ownership of land had been settled, so we have a fairly reliable record of who were the owners of the land in most of England and Wales (but not Scotland) in 1086. Although we are fortunate to have such a detailed record of so long ago, the picture is not complete and the estimates based on it are necessarily approximate.

In order to give some idea of the way in which I have gone about the task, let us take a close look at the entry in the Domesday Book about the principal manor in West Wickham - that of Count Alan. I mentioned in my first article that most medieval records are in Latin and are heavily abbreviated - they are really a kind of shorthand with various 'squiggles' to denote the omission of syllables in words. To make things more difficult, there is no uniformity in the 'squiggles' and they often varied

among different scribes and in different periods. Ideally it would be much nicer to be able to reproduce the entry about Count Alan photographically, but since this is out of the question with the limited resources of a parish magazine we must make do!

I have expanded the shorthand version of the Latin entry for West Wickham as follows:

“In Wicheham tenet Alanus Comes ij hidas. Terra est v carrucis. In domino j hida et dimidia et ibi ij carrucae et iiij villani et iiij bordarii cum iij carrucis. Ibi iiij servi et pratum ij carrucis. Silva c porcis. Inter totem valet et valuit x libras. Tempore Regis Edwardi viij libras. Hanc terram tenuit Eddeva et ij sochemanni homines eius j averam et j ineuardum invenerunt. Ibidem j sochmannus tenet sub comite iiijtam partem unius virgatae. Valet xij denarios.’

We can now translate this as follows:

‘In Wickham Count Alan holds 2 hides. There is land for 5 ploughs. In demesne there are 1.5 hides and here are 2 ploughs and 4 villeins and 4 bordars with 3 ploughs. There are 4 serfs, meadow for 2 ploughs and wood for 100 pigs. Altogether it is and was worth £10. In the time of King Edward (it was worth) £8. This land was held by Eddeva and 2 socmen, her men, (held it for her) and provided one carrying service and one man for watch and ward. In the same place one socman holds the fourth part of the virgate under the Count, worth 12 pence.’

It would need several of these articles to describe the set – up of an English manor of this period to give readers a clear understanding of the above entry. However our job is to estimate population. It may help to give the table 1 hide = 4 virgates = 120 acres but these are not modern acres. The total hidage of the 5 West Wickham manors was 5 hides, i.e. 600 acres but the area of our parish is just under 3,000 acres. This does not mean that in 1086 only 600 acres were in use as arable and meadow and the rest was waste land. The Domesday acres were ‘value for tax purposes’ acres and not our acres of today. In those days the ‘waste’ of the manor was a useful and valuable adjunct, since it provided rough pasture for the plough teams, each of 8 oxen, for the cattle, sheep, pigs and goats, as well as turves for burning, firewood etc.

Count Alan’s manor had 1 socman, 4 villeins, 4 bordars and 4 serfs. These names need some explanation. Before the Conquest, socmen were both numerous and influential and often held fairly large estates that could be transferred. They decreased rapidly in number and importance in the first 20 years of Norman occupation and Domesday Book shows that at West Wickham there were only two each with a small

holding. You can see from the above entry that in 1066 two socmen held the whole of this manor under Queen Edith.

Villeins and bordars are harder to classify because their holdings varied considerably. There are instances in the Domesday Book of villeins holding a whole hide while others had none. Bordars probably held 5 – 10 acres. Both classes were really 'tied' tenants who could not leave their land, and would be liable to work a certain number of 'boon' days on their lord's demesne. Finally serfs were really slaves, with no land and few rights.

Before tabulating the tenants of the various classes mentioned specifically in the Domesday Book, we might have a look at who were the 'landlords' who held their estates in chief (i.e. direct from the King in both villages:

<b>WEST WICKHAM</b>	Hides	Virgates
Count Alan	2	-
1 Socman under Count Alan	-	0.25
Abbot of Ely	1	2
William de Warenne	1	-
Richard son of Count Gilbert	-	0.75
Hardwin de Scalars	-	1
<b>Total</b>	5	-

<b>HORSEHEATH</b>	Hides	Virgates
Count Alan	2	2.5
Alwin under Count Alan	-	1.
Aubrey de Vere	1	2
Richard son of Count Gilbert		0.5
Hardwin de Scalars		2
<b>Total</b>	5	-

Now we can analyse the tenants of the above estates:

<b>WEST WICKHAM</b>	Socmen	Villeins	Bordars	Serfs	Total
Count Alan	1	4	4	4	13
Abbot of Ely		6	2	2	10
Wm de Warenne			10	3	13
Richard Gilbert	1				1
Hardwin			3		3
<b>Total</b>	2	10	19	9	40

<b>HORSEHEATH</b>	Socmen	Villeins	Bordars	Serfs	Total
Count Alan		8	5		13
Alwin under Ct. Alan			2		2
Aubrey de Vere		2.5*	3	3	8.5*
Richard Gilbert	1				1
Hardwin		5			5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15.5*</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>29.5*</b>

\* Don't worry about the 'half villein' – the other half was looking after a small - holding of Aubrey de Vere in Shudy Camps!

Apart from the serfs, it is fairly safe to assume that these tenants were householders with a wife and family to help work their holdings, but there were other people who were not mentioned in the Domesday Book. For instance all the five owners of the West Wickham estates were non – resident and at least three of the holdings would require a resident bailiff or reeve. Some tenants might have a grown up son or two to help farm their land and there must have been skilled tradesmen such as millers, blacksmiths, carpenters etc as well as the priest (who of course was unmarried).

I think therefore that at West Wickham we had at least 40 families and perhaps as many as 45. At Horseheath the number might have been between 30 and 35.

Bearing in mind the lack of medical knowledge and diet deficiencies, the expectation of life must have been low compared with modern times (remember that 40 years ago in India it was only just over 30 years). Consequently it would require an average family of between 5 and 6 to maintain the population and perhaps permit a slow increase.

Using the minimum figures – 40 families and an average of 5 for West Wickham we get a population of 200. Using the maximum figures we arrive at a population of 270. Taking the mean of these two results we have a final answer of 275. For Horseheath the minimum is 150, the maximum 210 giving a mean of 180.

It has been estimated that in 1086 the population of England and Wales was just over 1 million. At the first census in 1801 it had increased to slightly less than 9 million and by 1951 it was almost 44 million – 40 times the Domesday population. If that increase had been spread evenly throughout the country our two villages would each have between 8,000 and 10,000 inhabitants. What a horrible thought!

## VILLAGE HISTORY NOTES – 9

### Taxation

In the seventh article of this series I endeavoured to obtain an estimate of the population of our villages at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century by analysis of the Cambridgeshire section of the Domesday Book. We now move on nearly 200 years to the beginning of the reign of King Edward III and try to get another estimate of ;population by examining a document in the Public Record Office – the Subsidy Roll of 1327 which sets out the individual assessments made in respect of a 'subsidy' or special tax granted to the King by Parliament I that year. Firstly however I think I should fill in the background of the circumstances under which the subsidy was levied.

Nowadays the Government relieves us all of over 50% of the nation's income – or the Gross National Product as it is called. Income Tax is one of the principal methods and the more obvious one by which they take our money. It was introduced in 1798 as a temporary measure to help meet the cost of the war against Napoleon. In 1842 Sir Robert Peel re – introduced it and since then it has been a permanent fixture in the Chancellor's Budget. Customs & Excise imposts go back further in time. In medieval times the position was very different. Then the King 'ran the country' and had to find the money to do it by one means or another.

The main sources of income for the King's Exchequer in those days were:

- (a) Rents etc for 'ancient desmesne' i.e. lands held by the Crown in its own right
- (b) Feudal dues such as Scutage (payments in lieu of knight service), 'reliefs' paid before heirs could succeed to property or before widows could remarry etc.
- (c) The administration of justice. The rolls of the itinerant justices show that apart from dealing with prosecutions and lawsuits, the judges were very much engaged in a tax – raising exercise on behalf of the King by imposing fines on the slightest irregularity or omission on the part of anyone, however remotely connected with a case under consideration or however trivial the offence.
- (d) Certain customs duties, such as the 'prise of wines' which gave the King the right to buy two tuns of wine at one third of the market price from any ship bringing wine into any port.

The receipts from these sources were rarely enough even in ordinary times, so Parliament often had to help the King balance his books by a

The receipts from these sources were rarely enough even in ordinary times, so Parliament often had to help the King balance his books by a subsidy – a practice that continued into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These subsidies were usually levied on everybody's goods, sometimes on their lands. They were calculated as a certain fraction of the assessed value of such goods or lands. In order to get some idea of the incidence and extent of subsidies, let us look at a Writ ordering the collection of such a tax in 1336. Edward III was making preparations for his campaign in support of his claim to the throne of France which marked the beginning of what became known as the Hundred years War.

It is addressed to:

'The assessors and taxers of the fifteenth, granted to our lord the King in his Parliament holden at Westminster on the Monday next after Sunday in mid – lent past, in the tenth year of his reign, by the earls, barons, freemen and the commonalities of all the counties of the realm, and also of the tenth there granted to our lord the said King in all the cities, boroughs and the ancient demesnes of the King, of the same realm, from all their goods which they had on the day of the said grant...'

We see straight away that the tax differentiates between town and country. The towns with their wealthy merchants and traders had to contribute a tenth of their wealth while the counties got away with a fifteenth. This was perhaps because they provided not only the country's food but also the knights, men – at – arms and bowmen of the King's army. The counties also received preferential treatment as the goods which were excepted from the tax as we shall see later.

The assessing and collecting of the tax had to be done by men chosen locally, who had to swear on the Holy Gospels that they would 'lawfully and fully enquire what each man had on the said day within house and without, wheresoever they be, without any favour, upon heavy forfeiture, and will lawfully tax all those goods according to the true value save things excepted.' Two copies of the list of assessments had to be made, one retained to collect the tax, and the other to be 'at the Exchequer at the Feast of St Peter (St Peter ad Vincula – 1<sup>st</sup> August) next coming, on which day they shall make their first payment. Altogether it must have been a pretty thankless task for the assessors and collectors with little time for them to do the job.

As I indicated earlier, certain goods were exempt from the levy:

'And be it known that in this taxation of the goods of the commonality of all the counties there shall be excepted armour, mounts, jewels and robes for knights and gentlemen and their wives, and their vessels of gold and silver and brass, and in the cities and boroughs shall be excepted a robe for the man and for his wife and a bed for both, a ring

and a buckle of gold or silver, and a girdle of silk, which they use every day, and also a bowl of silver or of mazer from which they drink.'

It may surprise modern readers to find the writ should contain a special reference to lepers, but at this time leprosy in the whole of Western Europe was fairly widespread and lepers had to wear a distinctive dress And carry a bell or clappers to warn of their presence:

'And the goods of lepers, where they are governed by a superior who is a leper, shall not be taxed or taken, and if the lepers be governed by a sound master, their goods shall be taxed like those of others.'

Finally, the writ contains a special exemption clause for those people of of limited means:

' And be it remembered that from people of counties out of cities, boroughs and the King's demesnes whose goods in all exceed not the value of 10s, nothing shall be demanded or levied.'

We can now look into the details of the 1327 Subsidy Roll which have fortunately survived. The roll containing particulars about our two villages is endorsed ' Rotulum Taxationis Vicesimae Regi Edwardo tertio ... factae in Com Caterbr. Per Johannes de Sauston et Johannem de De Chishull' so we know that this levy was one twentieth of the value of Goods, compared with the fifteenth in the 1336 Subsidy.

This roll contains the names of 49 persons in West Wickham and 26 in Horseheath together with the amounts levied against them. Names are in latinised form and abbreviated and, as we noticed when dealing with the Domesday survey, such abbreviations are indicated by various 'squiggles' that we cannot reproduce on the typewriter. Here is a typical entry:

' De Thom Molendinar xijd. Ob. Qu' – from Thomas the Miller 12 3/4d)

Such an entry will give you a clue that surnames were not very common at that time. Up 'till about 1300 surnames were limited to fairly well – to – do persons, and there are of course examples of these in the two villages. The remainder of the names can be grouped into three categories. First we have names indicating a persons abode. At West Wickham we have Basil ad crucem (at the cross) which meant he lived at the main road junction or near the cross – in either case probably near the old Post Office. In Horseheath there lived 'Rico ate Hyl' (Richard at the Hill) – quite possibly where Mr Chris Dockerill lives. There is also a 'John' of Limberry ' – and here is a possible link with Limberhurst Farm. A lady 'Alice of Linacre' occurs. There are numerous references to Linacre in medieval records. Does any reader know of a present – day place name that can be identified with this?

There is a small group of patronymics; for instance 'Galfro fil Wlti' (Geoffrey son of Walter), but by far the largest group consists of persons whose names indicate status or occupation.

Here are some examples:

Gervas pposito (preposito – the Reeve)

Simon Cissor (Tailor)

Stepho le Cok (Cook)

Rico Coopator (Richard the thatcher)

Willo Carector (William the carter)

Johe Rotar (John the wheelwright)

Robto Cler (Robert the parson)

Johe le Chandeler (shopkeeper)

Galfro Pellipar (Geoffrey the skinner or tanner)

Edmund ffabr (blacksmith)

By the end of that century most people would have acquired surnames, many derived from their occupation or the places where they lived. Most of the ordinary people's taxes came to between sixpence and a shilling. It doesn't sound much nowadays but it needed finding in those days! In West Wickham the largest amount came from 'Dna John. De Butturt' who paid 9s. The 'Dna' (domina) shows that she was a woman – Lady Joanna de Butturt. She was probably the widow of Sir John, whose name appears as party to a deed of 1305 and who had taken over Manor Farm from the Russells (see my second article) and the de la Hayes still had Hill Farm manor, for which they paid tax of 7s. The same amount was paid by 'Dyonisia' (Denise) de la Riviere, the heiress of the Peverells of Bourn for her manor of Streetly Hall. John Sewale paid 4s 6d for Yenhall but I am puzzled over a similar sum paid by 'Sarrah Sororeeci' (Sarah the Nun). Whatever was she doing at West Wickham? St Bartholomew's Hospital, Smithfield (to which the nuns were attached) acquired an interest in Streetly, but this was not until over 50 years later. Perhaps Sarah was of noble birth and retained a joint interest in Yenhall. At present it must remain a mystery.

At Horseheath the largest tax of 7s 1d was paid by Sir Jacob de Audley, father of the man commemorated by the brass in the church. Several other people paid substantial tax, which seems to suggest that the two

manors of the Earl of Oxford, one held direct from the King and the other from the Honour of Richmond, had been divided up.

After such a lengthy introduction, you may well be thinking that it is time I got to the object of the article – an estimate of population. As I mentioned earlier, the subsidy was levied on 49 persons in West Wickham and 26 in Horseheath. Presumably in almost every case this represents households and you will remember when dealing with the Domesday survey we postulated five persons to a family. However, in the case of the subsidy there must have been a fair number the value of whose goods came within the exemption limits and therefore paid no tax. So I think we are safe in assuming another 20% on those who did pay tax. On this bases we obtain estimates of 295 for West Wickham and 156 for Horseheath, compared with our Domesday survey of 235 and 180 respectively. The increase in West Wickham seems reasonably in accordance with the rest of England. The Horseheath figure is rather surprising, though it does fit in with estimates at later dates as you will see in a subsequent article when you will also find that West Wickham Drops dramatically. Perhaps the Black Death came to West Wickham while Horseheath escaped.

## VILLAGE HISTORY NOTES - 11

### Plundering of the Villages

Life was hard in the Middle Ages. The Welfare State and indeed any general system of relief for the poor, the ill and the aged was centuries away in the distant future. Some help was available but it was on local basis. The main sources of such assistance were:

- (a) **The Monasteries** – these sometimes provided food and some elementary medical attention to local people in distress and to wayfarers. There is no doubt however that by the 15<sup>th</sup> century many of these institutions had become very worldly and the luxurious life of the inmates left little for charity.
- (b) **The Parish Priest** – his main and often only income came from tithe, but a large proportion of parish churches had been appropriated by monasteries in England and even abroad. This meant that most of the parish income was collected by the monastery which had appropriated the benefice. This left the parish to be served by a priest living on a pittance and perhaps even depending on gifts from the local inhabitants or lord of the manor.
- (c) **The guilds** – it is in these institutions that I want to deal in this article. They fall into two groups - the Craft Guilds and what I call the Social Guilds.

**The Craft Guilds** were basically combinations of craftsmen or traders in a particular commodity such as skimmers, woolcombers, dyers, weavers, saddlers etc. They were generally incorporated under Letters Patent from the King which enabled them to exercise a monopoly in that craft or trade in their particular district. The Guilds issued ordinances regulating the conduct of their members in such matters as maintaining a proper standard of work, the admission of new members and apprentices etc. They invariably had a religious connection and usually provision was made for help to be given to members who had fallen on hard times.

Thus the White Tawyers of London (later known as the Skinners Company) – a well – known City Livery Company - emphasise the religious aspect at the start of their ordinances made in 1346 with the opening words : ‘ In honour of God, of Our Lady, and of all Saints, for the nurture of tranquillity and peace among the good folks the Megucers, called ‘Whittawyers’ and immediately lay the obligation on their members to maintain a lighted wax candle to burn before Our Lady

in the church of All Hallows near London Wall. The Gild rules make provision for helping unfortunate members as follows:

'Also, if by chance any one of the said trade shall fall into poverty, whether through old age, or because he cannot labour or work, and have nothing with which to help himself, he shall have every week from the said box 7d for his support if he be a man of good repute. And after his decease, if he have a wife, a woman of good repute, she shall have weekly for her support 7d from the said box, so long as she shall behave herself well and keep single.'

There was also provision for a decent burial:

'And if any one of the said trade shall depart this life, and have not wherewithal to be buried, he shall be buried at the expense of their common box: and when any of the said trade shall die, all those of the said trade shall go to the Vigil, and make offering on the morrow.'

These Craft Gilds operated mostly in towns and large villages and therefore concerned a fairly narrow section of the population.

**The Social Gilds** were quite different. Essentially they were religious foundations with objects such as repairing the parish church, building a chapel to the church in special honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary or some saint. Or perhaps providing for the upkeep of a chaplain to say special masses in such a chapel or paying for a perpetual light on the altar. Often the rules laid an obligation on members of the gild to provide help to less fortunate brethren or sisters of the gild as in the case of the Skinners Gild mentioned above. Often these gilds arranged for masses for the souls of deceased members and also other obits – i.e. masses on the anniversary of the death of a member. The Social Gilds became very numerous and most villages had at least one. Some of them, especially in towns and the larger villages became very wealthy.

You may remember that in an earlier article I wrote about the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, the result of widespread unrest in the country – especially in Kent and East Anglia. Trouble simmered for some years afterwards and because the Government suspected that the gilds might be an innocent – looking cover for seditious activities, they issued an order in 1388 to Sheriffs of all counties to make a return of gilds. No mention is made of West Wickham or Horseheath but there is no certainty that the return was complete. It is interesting to note that a small village like Swaffham Bulbeck had as many as four, in honour of the Nativity, St Margaret, Holy cross and All Saints. During the next 150 years there is evidence of a vast increase in the number of gilds and many were able to build their own meeting place or gildhall. This happened at West Wickham and Horseheath though there is no evidence of their exact location as they were pulled down 400 years ago. Some of these gildhalls have survived as at Ashdon and Whittlesford.

We all know about the dissolution of the monasteries from our schooldays. This was effected by Acts of Parliament in 1536 and 1539 which resulted in an orgy of legalised looting by which the monastic lands found their way into the hands of the new aristocracy. Tens of thousands of the monasteries' servants and labourers were thrown out of work. The next step against the 'superstitions and errors' of the old religion was taken in 1547 when an Act was passed transferring to the King's use the property of 'all fraternities, brotherhoods and gilds' and also of churches except such as was necessary for celebrations of the new simplified services. The laudable intention of this Act was 'to convert to good and godly uses' the lands, jewels and other property of churches and gilds.' The 'good and godly uses' being 'in erecting grammar schools to the education of youth in virtue and godliness, the further augmenting of universities and better provision for the poor and needy'. Needless to say, very little of the proceeds were used in this way!

Under this 1547 Act, Two Commissioners were appointed for each county. They were quickly off the mark in West Wickham because in that same year they sold the Gildhall to two land jobbers called Hill and Don. I have been unable to ascertain the dedication of the gild concerned. At Horseheath there was certainly one gild – to the Blessed Virgin Mary – because there are references to it in three wills. In 1512 John Pettit left a cow in his will 'to the keeping of light in the chappyl of our blessed lady in Horseheath Church for evermore.' (Gilds often owned livestock which were let out to villagers, the income providing for the replacement of the animal in due course as well as a surplus for the use of the gild). In 1518 William Sloo left a legacy 'to the keeping of a light before the image of the Blessed Mary to begin that light at Michaelmas AD 1520' The will of Robert Koke, who died in 1527, also left money to the Gild of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sir Giles Alington of Horseheath Park, in the high – handed way such an influential person could pursue in those days, had the Horseheath Gildhall pulled down. The materials were apparently carried away for his own use and the site was sold to the same pair who bought West Wickham Gildhall. There were obviously no rich pickings for the Commissioners in our two villages but elsewhere rich hauls were made. For instance in Hadleigh in Suffolk the Churchwarden's accounts record:

#### **Money received of the Gylde**

Of Trinity Gylde	£27	17	8
Of Corpus Christi Gylde	£56	18	4
Of St John's Gylde	£35	1	0
Of Jesus Gylde	£38	17	4
Of our Ladies; Gylde	£10	8	4

A total of £169. 2s. 8d – a very considerable sum in those days when eggs were a penny a score!

Five years later, in 1552, the Commissioners came round again to take an inventory of the church property. Here is their report:

### **WEST WYCHAM**

'This is a trewe and perfect Inuentorie Indented and made and taken The Vth day of August Anno R.R.E VI the Sexto (i.e. in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of King Edward VI) by us Richard Wylks, clerke, Henry Gooddrycke, John Hiddleston & Thomas Rudston, Esquyres, Commyssioners amongst others assigned for the Survays & View of all maners of goodes, plate, jewells, bells and orniments as yet be remayning forthcomings & Belongings to ye parochie church there, as hereafter followeth:

**PLATE** – ffyrst one Chalice of Silver xiiij ounces. Item one pyx of Ivery louted with silver.

**ORNAMTS** – Item one Cope with a vestment of whight sylke. Two blewe Vestments, one vestment of yelow & grene Silk. One Cope of grene Silke, one other cope of blewe worsted, one old blewe vestment with two Tunacles of ye same, one wight vestment of Buschian, one hearse cloth of blewe silk, ij pilowes, one Carecloth, one vayle cloth, one Shete for the Sepulcher, one holy water stoppe, one Surplusse iij Rochetts & iij Towells.

**BELLS** – Item in ye steple there are iij bells, one Sanctery bell, ij Hand bells.

All which parcells aboue wrytton be delyvered and commyted by us the saide Commissioners unto the salve keeping of Robert Algoode, Bartholemewe Mase, John fflacke & Wyllyam Troggell, parishioners there to be at all tymes forthcomings to be answered.

Except and reserved the said chalyce, one Cope of whyte silke and One blewe vestment with all their saide Table clothes, towells, Rochetts and Surplusse delyvered to Laurence fflacke & Richard Cokeswyth Churchwardens there for thonlie mayntenance of dyvyne servyce in the said parochie Churche'

The 'sepulker' referes to the Easter Sepulchre, a cavity usually in the north wall of the chancel containing a replica of our Lord's tomb during Lent. The 'vayle cloth' must be the Lenten veil which was hung to divide the chancel from the nave during the same period, hiding from the people the mystery and miracle of the Resurrection.

The Commissioners went on to Horseheath on the same day and the inventory which they completed is in the same form as that for West Wickham. There is no space to reproduce this inventory in its entirety

but it seems that Horseheath was a little better off. There was 'one Crosse of Tynne gilt, ij other crosses of copper, one pix of copper, one Schip of latten (a type of brass), iiij cruetts of leade, ij standynge Candelstykke, iiij lesser of latten, one lamp of copper, and one pair of latten sensers. There was a vast array of vestments, including 'one hoole suie of blue sylke ' and two silver chalices. Only one of the latter, together with three vestments was left in the hands of the Church – wardens John Bertlott and John Jurden.

This wholesale pillage of village property was strongly resented by parishioners (there was considerable opposition in Parliament too). It is small wonder that in many places every effort was made to conceal valuable local assets from the prying eyes of the Commissioners. Over the next thirty years at least ten Commissions came to Cambridgeshire to make further searches for hidden gild and church property. For instance in neighbouring Carlton many years elapsed before the Commissioners were able to discover a house and sixteen acres of land belonging to a gild!

It would be interesting to know what happened to the confiscated items at West Wickham and Horseheath, to whom they were sold and what they realised. The most likely source of such information would be the account books of the Churchwardens of the two parishes, but these have long since disappeared and so we shall probably never know.

One might assume that such a traumatic experience of Governmental plunder would have dried up the springs of charity, but it did not. An examination of subsequent charitable bequests in our two villages must, however, be left for a future article.

## VILLAGE HISTORY NOTES - 12

### Village Charities

In my last article I showed how the King and his Council, using as a convenient excuse, the alleged superstitious practices of the old religion, were able to lay their hands on the vast wealth and lands of the monasteries and gilds. Little of the proceeds was devoted to the promised 'good and godly uses' such as the provision of schools and the relief of the poor - most of it went on the strengthening of the State in various ways, not least in the formation of a new aristocracy. This was based on estates taken from the monasteries, which would support the King from self-interest against the powerful noble families that in the previous century had torn the country apart in the War of the Roses.

These new men were mostly ambitious and ruthless with little or no experience of land owning. The dissolution of the monasteries resulted in tens of thousands of their servants and labourers being put out of work, and the new men made things worse by enclosing areas of common land and thus depriving small farmers and peasants of grazing for their few cows and pigs. Rents were increased to the limit and they continued to collect and pocket tithes in their entirety. This was done without discharging the monastic obligations of helping the aged, the sick and the workless. To make matters worse, the new landed gentry turned over much of their ploughed land to pasture for sheep for the much more lucrative wool trade, thereby greatly reducing the number of farm labourers needed. At the same time the changeover from arable to pasture meant a fall in grain production. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that Britain was just entering a cold spell, one of the long-term climatic changes that lasted through the last half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century into the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The position became so serious that the Government had to control the movement and sale of grain.

The condition of the aged and workless was desperate. The previous sources of charity - the monasteries and gilds - were no longer available and there was no organisation for Poor Relief. So after tinkering with the problem through a large part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the authorities in 1598 appointed overseers in every parish who were responsible for the support of the aged and infirm and for providing work of some kind for the honest pauper. There was no feather - bedding of lay able-bodied vagabonds who roamed the countryside - they were whipped and sent back to where they came from! These provisions were embodied in the great Poor Law Act of 1601, which remained the basis for the treatment of paupers until 1834 when parishes were grouped together to form a Union with a

**1626** - £50 left by the Rev Thomas Wakefield a former Rector, 'for a town stock' with directions to the Churchwardens to lay it out in land as soon as possible, the poor to have relief therefrom at Christmas and Easter.

**1702** - Lady Dorothy Alington, widow of the former owner of Horseheath Park, left £20 for the poor and £ 60 to be invested in land for the provision of bread for poor people attending the church.

**1709** - £10 left by the Rev William Eedes, a former Rector, to be lent out at interest for the benefit of the poor of Horseheath.

**1718** - John Bromley, owner of Horseheath Park, left £50 to the poor of Horseheath.

**Date unknown** - c 1780. John Offord bequeathed £10 to be lent out at interest for the benefit of poor widows.

Concern about the wholesale loss of charity assets, either through negligence or downright disregard of the terms of the trust, led Parliament in 1818 to institute enquiries throughout the country into the position of every charity. Special Commissioners were sent to every parish, and the result of the survey led to the formation of the Charity Commission in 1853 to regulate the management of all charities. It must have been the visit of the Parliamentary Commission to Horseheath that led to the rector from 1825 - 1848, the Rev T.C. Percival, to have details of charities painted on a board and fixed in the church.

The Commissioners in their report stated that just under 5.5 acres of land at Balsham and 6.5 acres in Linton were held in trust for the benefit of Horseheath poor. The Balsham land was certainly bought with the Rev T. Wakefield's legacy. It is likely that the Linton property was purchased with Lady Alington's £60, perhaps with the help of Rev W. Eedes £10. At that time the Balsham and Linton lands were let on short term leases to Samuel Webb and Robert Chalk at rents of £6 and £5 respectively and doubtless these have since been increased.

The Commissioners mention a payment of £5 per annum paid by Mr Stanley Batson for the use of Town Green incorporated in Horseheath Park, which they say if auctioned would yield £10 a year. There is a sad tale about the John Offord legacy. In 1828 William Sangster, a Churchwarden, absconded leaving a trail of debts behind him and taking the £10 Mr Offord had left for the poor widows. John Bromley's legacy of 1718 was, in the absence of any direction as to investment, was probably disbursed in small sums to

alleviate distress in the village as was the residue of the estate of the Rev W. Masterton, Rector from 1518 – 1556. I may mention that the present rector has drawn my attention to a booklet on Horseheath Church by the late Miss Parsons which confirms much of the above information. As I am not a Horseheath parishioner, I have thought it well to confine myself to documentary records only, leaving it to anyone concerned with the administration of the charities the opportunity of presenting an up – to – date picture of these ancient bequests.

On turning to West Wickham, we regretfully find that the charity cupboard is bare! In the northern corner of the chancel in the church is a floor tomb bearing the inscription:

'Here lyeth Philipp Richardson of Westwickham in the Countie of Cambridge, gent. Aged 60 years, died the 9<sup>th</sup> day of April 1634 an was buried the 11<sup>th</sup> day following. He gaue to the poore people of Westwickham Tenn pounds by his will for the purchase of lande.'

We have no record as to whether the legacy was ever paid by his executors. If it was then there is no doubt that the charity has been long since lost. There is an old tradition in West Wickham that two fields called 'No Man's Acre' and 'No Woman's Acre' were originally left for the benefit of the poor but again there is no evidence of the truth of the tradition. Another field bearing the quaint name of 'Madam's land' was similarly believed to have been left many years ago by a maiden lady for the benefit of the poor, but there seems to have been no foundation for the claim.

Up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century a Pest House existed in the field adjoining the Old Vicarage. This could be used as an elementary type of Isolation Hospital for victims of the recurrent outbreaks of highly infectious diseases such as smallpox and cholera. Farther up the road, in the triangular meadow opposite the road leading to Brickyard Cottages, formerly stood the 'Town Houses' which were really almshouses for the use of poor families and widows. Both have long since disappeared, but I mention them because originally they may have been charitable foundations. It is equally possible that they were provided by the Overseers of the Parish. Probably West Wickham's poor record of charities is largely due to the fact that, although for centuries its manors belonged to wealthy titled families, none was ever resident in the village. At Horseheath the opposite was true ever since the Alington family obtained the King's Licence to enclose a park in 1440.

Finally any readers who like me are interested in quaint aspects of English legal history, may have noticed that several of the charities mentioned above were founded by legacies of money for the purchase of land but none by the outright gift of land. This was no accident because

until 1888, land could not be left by will to a charity. This prohibition goes right back to the Statute of Mordain passed in Edward Ist's parliament of 1279. You may remember that in previous articles I mentioned that under the feudal system an overlord was entitled to certain dues from his tenant such as the best beast at the time of his death, a payment when the heir came into the land, the knighting of the overlord's son etc. Frequently pious people left land to the Church by will. The Church never died and once land passed into the 'dead hand' of the Church the overlord (who was often the King) lost his right to dues that would be payable when a tenant died. The Barons forced King John to include a clause in Magna Carta prohibiting gifts by will 'in mortmain' (dead hand), and in 1279 statute confirmed this, so that all such gifts were illegal except by licence from the King save a few institutions including our own University of Cambridge. Oddly enough, while the Church and, later other charities, were precluded from receiving direct legacies of land by statute of 1279, it did not stop them investing money legacies in land!

## VILLAGE HISTORY NOTES - 13

### Treatment of Village Poverty 1601 - 1834

We have seen in the last two articles how the voluntary system of relief for the poor and infirm provided by the monasteries, guilds and other institutions since medieval times had been swept away in about 1540. During the next 60 years several well – meaning but ineffective attempts had been made to fill the vacuum created by the wholesale plundering of the sources of charity that took place at the Reformation. Finally in the year 1601 an act was passed by Parliament which set up a system of relief that was to last for the next 233 years.

This Poor Law Act 1601 laid down the principle that it was the responsibility of each individual parish to provide for the relief of its own parishioners who were in need. To carry out this duty the Vestry (the ancestor of the present Parish Council) had to appoint two Overseers each year to deal with applications for assistance from villagers, and in order to provide the Overseers with the necessary funds the vestry was empowered to levy a Poor Rate on householders within the parish.

The two Overseers were selected at the Annual Vestry Meeting in March and held office for a year. The usual practice was for each to assume responsibility for half of the year, one serving from Lady day (March 25<sup>th</sup>) to Michaelmas (September 25<sup>th</sup>) and the other for the remaining six months. By the way, did you know that for centuries until the calendar was reformed in 1752 our year began, not on 1<sup>st</sup> January but on the 25<sup>th</sup> March? While the rest of the population Changed over to the 1<sup>st</sup> January in 1752, the Government kept to the old 25<sup>th</sup> March year. They had to 'jump' 11 days to 5<sup>th</sup> April because 11 days had to be omitted from the calendar to get in step with solar time. Your Income Tax forms show that the Government still keep to the old medieval year. Your Rate / Council tax demands indicate that Local Authorities (who are closely connected to the Government in financial matters) keep roughly to the old – style year also!

The 1601 Act laid down that the Overseers had to be 'substantial Householders' which, in the case of rural villages such as ours, meant it was almost invariably the farmers who had to take on the job. As they were the main contributors to the Poor Rate, they were naturally interested in seeing that malingers were not encouraged. By and large they appear to have carried out their difficult task with humanity and moderation. One can understand that there was little competition for the job of Overseer! Each week he had to assess the need of every individual applicant for relief and make sure that he always had enough ready money from the rate collection to meet demand. As a busy farmer, the work of overseer took up valuable time that he could

have spent on earning his own living and besides that it was an unpaid job! Probably one of the more burdensome and irritating aspects of the office of Overseer lay in the fact that at a time when few people could read and fewer still could write, he had to keep proper accounts. These had to be submitted to and approved by the Vestry and also certified by two Justices of the Peace.

The Overseers Accounts could obviously be a mine of useful information for the local historian regarding local conditions at the time. So far as Horseheath is concerned I have been unable to trace that any have survived. I have, however, had a little luck in respect of West Wickham, having discovered the accounts for the years 1830 to 1834 – the last five years before our village became part of the Linton Union for poor relief purposes. Most of the entries in the accounts are brief and not very informative. The Overseer *knew* all the facts behind each entry and if necessary he could explain things to any member of the Vestry when the accounts were being examined. He certainly gave no thought to a Mr George Jackson peering over his ghostly shoulder nearly 150 years later and speculating about the unwritten facts that he could so easily have inserted to satisfy the curiosity of posterity! I will deal in detail with the West Wickham accounts in my next article adding comments and explanatory notes. I think it will be as well if I first sketch in as a background some particulars of the ownership of the land in the parishes at that time.

I have mentioned earlier that the Alington family had obtained Royal Licence to enclose a park at Horseheath as long ago as 1440. After over two centuries the then Lord Alington embarked in 1665 on the building of a large and impressive family residence. After spending £70,000 he found that he had been too ambitious and was glad to sell the place to John Bromley for £42,000 with the surrounding park of 880 acres. The new owner spent another £30,000 on improving and enlarging the Hall. It cost in all over £100,000 – a vast sum in those days. It comes as no surprise to find from a contemporary print that it was a most imposing structure with 32 large windows in its façade and a fine flight of steps flanked with elaborate balustrades, leading to the main entrance door. John Bromley also acquired the West Wickham Estate. When he died in 1718 (you will remember that in my last article I mentioned that he had left in his will £50 to the poor of Horseheath), He was succeeded by his son Henry who was Member of Parliament for Cambridge from 1727 until 1741 when he was raised to the peerage as Baron Montford.

Henry continued to take a prominent part in public and county affairs, and in addition to his Horseheath and West Wickham lands he also owned estates in other parts of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. When he died in 1755 his son, Thomas, became 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Montfort and the owner of a very considerable patrimony. However Thomas was an unstable character and developed a reputation for drinking, gambling

central 'Workhouse.' In the case of our villages this was at Linton until recent times.

The Government was aware of the valuable assistance to the relief of poverty and sickness given by the monasteries and gilds in earlier times and encouraged the founding of charities to supplement and soften the rather harsh provisions of the new Poor Law Act. The preamble to the 1601 Act indicates various ways in which charities could help:

'the reliefe of aged impotent and poor people, maintenance of sicke and maymed souldiers and marriners, schooles of learning, free schooles and schollers in universities , repair of bridges portes havens causwaies, churches seabanks and highwaies, education and prefermente of orphans, reliefe stocke or maintenance for howses of correction, marriages of poor maides, supportation ayude and helpe of younge tradesmen, handicraftesmen and persons decayed, reliefe or redemption of prisoners or captives, aide or ease of any poor inhabitants concerninge payments of fifteenes, setting out of souldiers and other taxes.'

The 'fifteenes' refers to the subsidies about which I wrote about in Article 9 and the 'setting out of souldiers' was the obligation of the Parish to fit out militiamen in time of national emergency.

We can summarise the above preamble by saying that 'charity' in its legal sense comprises four divisions. These are trusts for:

- a) the relief of poverty
- b) for the advancement of education
- c) for the advancement of religion
- d) for other purposes beneficial to the community.

This legal definition still stands after nearly 400 years. The effectiveness of charities coming under headings (a) and (b) has been greatly reduced by the introduction of State Education and the Welfare State. Inflation has especially affected older charities where monetary benefits, substantial when they were founded, are nowadays often derisory.

After this preliminary survey of the history of charities let us take a look first at the Horseheath charities. So far as I have been able to ascertain, there have been five pecuniary charitable bequests to Horseheath:

and loose morals. Horseheath Hall became well – known for its grand and lavish balls and also for a famous menagerie (perhaps in imitation of the Royal Menagerie housed in the Tower of London for many centuries). He kept a pretty mistress, Mrs Timbooth, by whom he had a son and this lady doubtless was able to act as hostess at the gay gatherings at Horseheath Hall as well as to help him spend his money in other ways.

The second Lord Montfort did not marry until 1772, seventeen years after succeeding to the estate. If he did so in the hope of retrieving his fortunes he failed utterly. It is possible to get some idea of his financial difficulties from an old deed dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 1774 that I came across some time ago. The document is between Lord Montfort and a Miss Isabella Clark of London. It provides that Miss Clark will advance £1,200 in cash to his Lordship in return for an annuity of £200 during his life. According to the deed, this advance was made on the security of 'All that Rectory Improprate of West Wickham together with all Tythes tenths and other appurtenances'. An Improprate Rectory is a living in respect of which all glebe land and the right to tithes passed into lay hands. That is why the incumbent of West Wickham is a Vicar and not a rector.

There were other signs of the desperate state of Lord Montfort's financial affairs. In the following year he offered the contents of his cellar for sale, then the Hall to let and when no tenant could be found it was put up for sale, together with other lands including the West Wickham Estate. The Horseheath Estate was acquired by the Batson family who proceeded to pull down the Hall and offer the materials for sale. Apparently there were difficulties over the legal title because the transfer had to be regularised by Act of Parliament obtained privately. The West Wickham Estate was purchased by Lord Harwicke of Wimpole Hall. Here again there were difficulties because the Rectory (which was included in the sale) had been charged by the deed of 1774 as security for payment of the annuity to Miss Clark. Provision for the satisfaction of this must have been made out of the purchase price paid by Lord Harwicke. At the time of his marriage in 1772 Lord Montfort had settled £600 a year on Baroness Montfort during widowhood, and probably need to secure this was one of the reasons necessitating a private Act of Parliament. Incidentally Lord Montfort lived on until 1799, so his arrangement with Miss Clark would have been a very bad bargain.

The West Wickham glebe lands which passed to Lord Hardwicke consisted of about 22 acres which included Camping Close and the other meadows between the church and Bottle Hall where Dr and Mrs Lyon live, as well as property on the other side of the church such as the Smithy, now the Post Office belonging to Mr and Mrs Pryor. The rentals of the glebe together with parish tithes were probably worth between £400 and £500 a year, so it was a great pity the Rectory got

per annum received by Lord Hardwicke from the whole of his property in Cambridgeshire. The West Wickham Estate remained in the ownership of the Hardwicke Family until 1912 when it was sold in lots. At the same time they made a gift of advowson of the church to the Bishop of Ely and left a bequest to endow the living.

The first name we shall meet when we examine the Overseers' Accounts is James Leonard. When you next go to church, take a look at his rather grand altar tomb near the south wall of the chancel and spare a thought for him and for the countless thousands whose voluntary and unpaid work has kept the machinery of English society functioning.

## VILLAGE HISTORY NOTES - 23

### Archdeacons and Terriers

Every three years an Archdeacon makes a 'Visitation' (or inspection) of each parish in his jurisdiction. Since some readers may be vague as to what an Archdeacon is and does I had better explain that he is next in authority to a Bishop and his main function is to see that the temporal side of the diocese is running smoothly. When a new priest comes to take charge of a parish he is 'instituted' by the Bishop to the 'cure of souls' within the parish. In this quaint and very old phrase the word 'cure' is not used in the sense that we now use for the work of doctors. Its other use - as in the case of the Curator of a museum of being in charge of something - is this connection with being in charge of the spiritual welfare of the parish.

During the same ceremony the new incumbent is 'inducted' by the Archdeacon into the material possession of the church by such token acts as admitting him into the church when he knocks on the door. He is led to the belfry where he rings one of the bells. Thereafter the new incumbent is the person in whom the freehold of the church and churchyard is vested and in the case of a rector of any glebe land.

On his triennial visitation, the Archdeacon will inspect the fabric and furniture to see that it is maintained in good condition. He will also look into other matters such as the finances, insurance, safety of the registers of baptism, marriages, burials etc. He will also ask to see the 'Terrier' - a document that lists the land and other material possessions of the church. Owing to the difficulty of fitting in a visitation among his numerous engagements, an Archdeacon will occasionally appoint a Rural Dean to act as his deputy as was done last week at Horseheath and West Wickham.

Archdeacons also carry out another kind of Visitation. Every year after Easter, Churchwardens are summoned to meet the Archdeacon at a church in the locality where they submit their report on their year in office and present any complaints. Afterwards in a ceremony they are 'admitted' into office for the forthcoming year. In the old days churchwardens were persons of considerable influence in the life of the parish. Since 1921 some of their powers and duties have been transferred to the Parochial Church Council. However some of their ancient powers remain. For instance, the freehold of the church and churchyard are vested in the incumbent and churchwardens jointly. However all the moveable furniture and ornaments of the church are in the legal ownership of the churchwardens. In addition churchwardens have extensive powers in respect of maintenance of order within the church and churchyard. They even have the legal power of arresting any person behaving in a riotous, violent or indecent manner in those places.

Earlier in the article I mentioned that the Archdeacon on his visitation would want to see the terrier for the parish. I have been browsing through some old terriers for Horseheath dated 1574, 1615, 1638, 1662 and 1692. I have chosen to deal with these since, as I explained in my last article, Horseheath is a rectory with extensive glebe. For this reason I might find in the terriers some reference to tithe customs. With the exception of the 1638 document, these terriers appear to have been the work of the incumbent at the time and are not easily legible. In sharp contrast, the 1638 terrier appears to be the work of a professional scribe engaged at unwelcome expense by the rector and we can guess at the reason behind it.

In that year a new Bishop of Ely had been appointed. He was Matthew Wren, a fervent disciple of Archbishop Laud and his High - Church party. It is quite obvious that the new Bishop soon showed himself highly dissatisfied with the conditions in his diocese. Within a few months of the Bishop's appointment his Apparitor (or official messenger) appeared in Horseheath with an intimidating document entitled "Articles of Inquiry within the Diocese of Ely" and consisting of a vast number of searching questions arranged in 146 paragraphs. Reading through this lengthy document, one soon realises that the Bishop made no secret of his suspicions that things were not as they should be, Let us take as an example some paragraphs from the section dealing with the church and its possessions:

(9) .Is your church - yard enclosed and well fenced? Hath any used any chiding, brawling or quarrelling words or strucken any person? Is there any passage through the church or any common walking therein or carrying of burdens or playing of children? Or are there Playes, Feasts, Banquets, Suppers, Church - Ales, ...Exercise of Dancing, Stooke - ball, Football or the like or any Fairs, markets, Booths or Stalls...putting of cattel... or making of water therein Especially against the church wals?

(11) Are your Churchwardens careful that no dogges be suffered to come into the church... and do any of the inhabitants bring hawkes into the church or suffer their dogges to come?

(22) Have you any terrier of all the Glebe - lands, meadowes, gardens, Orchards, Stockes, Implements, Tenements? If you have no such to make diligent inquiry and to make the said Terrier.'

One can well imagine the mixture of apprehension and anger generated in setting out detailed answers to hundreds of questions, especially when we remember that when the document was completed the rector and churchwardens had to present it in person to the Chancellor of the Diocese sitting in Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge. They might have had to hang about for a day or two before their turn to appear before the Chancellor to be closely interrogated about their answers to the Bishop's

questions. They might have a fine levied on them for failure in performing their duties! In the event the Rector, Rev Thomas Wakefield escaped lightly, being admonished only for small sins such as failure to wear a surplice.

When one comes to the terrier one is surprised that they contain no less than 60 parcels of land scattered about all over the parish, so that the Rector would have had quite a job in keeping his eye on his extensive glebe. Doubtless he would have used some for his own purposes, but the remainder would presumably be let to tenants

The terriers usually start with the parson's house:

' Imprimis the parsonage house and the yeards gardens and the orcheyards containing by estimation three roodes beside the feeds of the churchyard containing about three roodes.'

The 'feeds of the churchyard' meant that the rector reserved for himself the right to pasture his own pigs or sheep on the succulent grass of the churchyard! Nowadays people going to the churchyard expect the churchwardens or public – spirited members of the congregation to keep the grass cut! All the pieces of land listed in the terrier are described with meticulous care and often refer to local names that have long since been forgotten by inhabitants.

Here are some examples:

' Halfe a rode (rood i.e. 20 perches or 0.125 acres) being a little headland piece lying in Stonefield betwene the land of many men on the east and other land of John Webb on the west, the north heade abutteth on the mannour of Shardlowes and the south heads on Walden Upper Way.'

No less than 29 parcels of land containing 18.5 acres were scattered about in the common fields of the parish. In article 21 I described the common fields of West Wickham parish which were enclosed under an Act of 1812. Most of the Cambridgeshire enclosures took place between 1790 and 1820, but Horseheath seems to have lagged behind. I have been unable to trace an Act relating to Horseheath but the tithe award for the parish shows that even as late as the 1840s over half the area was unenclosed and worked on the open field system – i.e. divided into strips under individual cultivation.

The 1692 terrier contains a few notes on the subject of tithe customs:

'There is a custom of Taking ye tithe of the Rakings of Barley and of paying ninne days cheese for the Tithe of the dairies for ye months of May, June, July.

A pension of one pounds two shillings is payed yearly for ye Tithe of of the Olde Parke and five closes by Horseheath Hall at Easter.

The windmill payeth yearly three shillings and four pence. Claydons a close in Shude Camps containing eight Acres payeth yearly one Shilling.

Calmans, a close in Shude camps containing three acres payeth Yearly sixe pence.'

W. Eades

Rector

Wm Hammond  
Thos Wakefield

Churchwardens

Attached to the 1692 terrier is an inventory of the contents of Horseheath Church. This makes an interesting comparison with the articles left by the Commissioners who looted the church of most of its valuables when they came round in 1552 (see article 11) but this must await another occasion.

into lay hands! Of course when the parish was enclosed in 1812 the acreage was considerably increased. We must remember, however, that ownership of the Rectory carried with it the legal liability for the maintenance and repair of the chancel of the village church.

The fortunes of the new owner had been founded by Philip Yorke, a prominent 18<sup>th</sup> century lawyer, who after making a fine and lucrative career as an advocate was raised to the bench. He then became Lord Chief Justice and finally Lord Chancellor with an earldom. It was chiefly through his efforts that the Marriage Act of 1754 became law and thus made it harder for indigent young men to lay their hands on the fortunes of under – age heiresses through runaway marriages. By the combination of care and cunning, the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Hardwicke amassed a very large fortune, part of which he spent on the building of the massive mansion at Wimpole and the laying – out of the large park with its 2.5 mile long avenue of trees. To make this he shifted a whole village to another site. By the way he assumed his title not from Hardwick in Cambridgeshire but in Hardwicke in Gloucestershire.

The West Wickham Estate acquired by Lord Hardwicke consisted of the major portion of the village, though the three great areas of common land shared rights of pasture with the owners of the ancient enclosures. The latter included three Cambridge colleges – Queens' owned land behind Mr Kimble's house 'Cobwebs' in the High Street. Pembroke had a holding between Hare Wood and Streetly Road. St John's had the field adjoining that in which the 'Town Houses' were situated near the turning to Brickyard Cottages. By 1830 when the surviving Overseers' Accounts commence. The common fields had been enclosed and divided up between Lord Hardwicke and the owners of the ancient enclosures in proportion to their previous holdings. His Lordship of course received substantial allotments in respect of his manorial rights over the common lands. This was as well as the glebe lands and his rights to tithe as owner of the Improprate Rectory. All his West Wickham lands were let on fairly long – term leases of either 21 or 25 years from 1815. I have set out below the names of the lessees and the rents paid by them. You will see when I deal with the accounts that these same names appear as Overseers:

<b>Lessee</b>	<b>Yearly Rent</b>
John Hailes	£500
Jonas S Clark	£380
James Leonard	£700
Samuel Traylen	£40
Edward Turpin	£460
Samuell Webb	£770

With the letting of the various cottages, the total rent of the West Wickham Estate came to just over £2,880 a year out of a total of £14,055