

PROCEEDINGS
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PAPERS, ETC.

Historical Notes of the Church of
Castle Cary.

BY THE REV. CANON MEADE.

THE following notes on the history of Castle Cary Church are designed to supplement the paper read in 1856 before the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, and printed in the Society's report of 1857.

That paper described the manorial history, and that of the proprietors of the manors, but did not include any notice of the church. The few particulars I now can give for the first time are but scanty, and are chiefly taken from the Registry of the Bishops at Wells, from old churchwarden's accounts, and the parish register.

Previous to the Conquest the manor of Cary, with the advowson, belonged to the Abbot of Glastonbury, having been given to him by Kentwine, a king of the West Saxons. It was taken from the monastery by the Conqueror, who appears to have allotted it first to Walter de Douai, or Dowai—his name appears as proprietor of Castle Cary in the Domesday Book.* In a short time subsequent to the Conquest all the rights of the manor, excepting the patronage of the church, are found in possession of the family of Perceval. Robert de Perceval, Lord of Breherval, Yvery, Montinny, and Vasse, in Normandy, came over with the Duke, on his successful expedition to England in A.D. 1066, and received a grant of the manor of Cary. Returning, however, to his own country he devoted himself to a religious life, and was succeeded in his English estates by his son Ascelin.† It will be remembered that this family afford a curious instance of the capricious origin of surnames, and that William Gouel de Perceval being called “Lupellus” or the young wolf, after Ascelin his father, who from his warlike qualities had been called “Lupus” the wolf, the word *Lupellus* anglicized became *Lupel* and *Lovel*, and was transmitted as the name of two noble families‡ in the ancient peerage of Great Britain.

It appears that the patronage and rectory of Cary was given, by the wife of Walter de Douai,§ to the Benedictine Priory at Bath, founded by King Edgar about 970; and remained in possession of the Monastery until the dissolu-

* Vol. I, page 95a.

† Anderson's Genealogical History of the House of Yvery.

‡ Lovell of Castle Cary, and Lovell of Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, and Titchmarsh, Norts.

§ Temp John de Villulâ, A.D. 1090. This medical bishop re-built the Monastery at Bath, and appointed a prior over them, they having had abbots before for 100 years. He also translated the See from Wells to Bath, and called himself “Bishop of Bath” only.

tion. In 1548 King Edward VI granted the rectory and advowson to the Bishop of Bath and Wells, in exchange for some lands which belonged to the See. The ecclesiastical estate remained in possession of the bishops until the year 1810, when the rectorial estate was sold in fee to Sir Richard Colt Hoare, Bart., who had previously held it under a lease for lives from the Bishop ; but the patronage of the vicarage continued in the Bishops of Bath and Wells. The church is dedicated to All Saints, and consists of a nave with two aisles, a chancel, and tower at the west end, with a vestry attached to the north wall of the chancel.*

No vicar having been resident in the parish for more than one hundred years, before 1845, the church had fallen into decay, and was disfigured by most unseemly contrivances for room—supplying not more than forty free seats for a population of about two thousand. No tradition exists as to where the vicarage house formerly stood, although it is recorded in the Terrier at Wells that there was a vicarage house, with a cottage, barn, and orchard ; these had all passed away from remembrance. In 1845 about seven acres of rectorial glebe were obtained by exchange from Sir Hugh R. Hoare, Bart., then the Lord of the Manor, and proprietor of the rectorial glebe,† and upon that, annexed to a few lugs of garden ground, called the

* There are no documents remaining which show at what period the church was built, but the architecture indicates that it was in the reign of Hen. VI. The nave has a clerestory, which was probably raised some time subsequently to the building of the church and the tower. The latter was in a ruinous state previous to the restoration of the church, and was the oldest portion of the structure. The principal features of the church are of the Early Perpendicular period. The pulpit, and portions of the rood screen, which now enclose the organ chamber, are beautifully carved, and have been well restored.

† See supra.

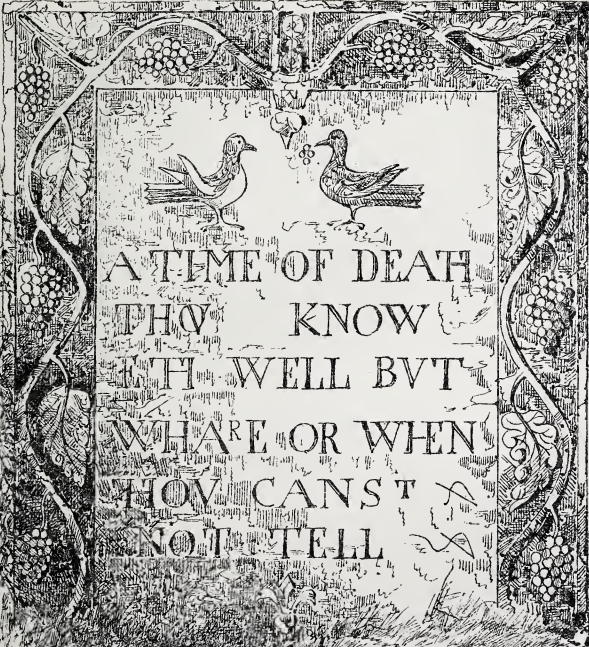
“Vicarage plot,” a new and convenient vicarage house was built under the “Gilbert Act,” chiefly with money borrowed by mortgaging the rent charge. In 1856 the church was also enlarged and restored.* It is now 110 feet long, and 42 feet wide; the spire is 139 feet high; and the church contains when quite full 730 persons; 363 of the sittings being free and unappropriated.

There is, in the churchyard of Castle Cary, an old tombstone which has somewhat unjustly cast a stigma upon the parishioners. The late Mr. Russ, when at Southampton, fell into conversation with a gentleman who told him that he, Mr. R., came from the most barbarous place in England, as being the only place, it was believed, existing where cock-fighting was thought to be a practice fitting to be recorded on a tombstone in a churchyard. Mr. Russ heard this statement with some surprise, and on returning to Castle Cary hastened to the churchyard, where, after some search, he found an old headstone, a good deal out of the perpendicular, but containing apparently a representation of two birds standing opposite, ready to peck at one another. Not satisfied, however, with appearances, Mr. Russ had the long coarse herbage cleared away from the opposite side of the tombstone, and there he was pleased to find an inscription, shewing that the stone was erected in memory of a respectable family of the name of Swallow, who are mentioned in Collinson’s History of Somerset, as having given some gates to the church. The birds, therefore, mistaken for cocks, were intended probably for swallows, forming a rebus upon the family name.†

It will be remembered that in September, 1651, King

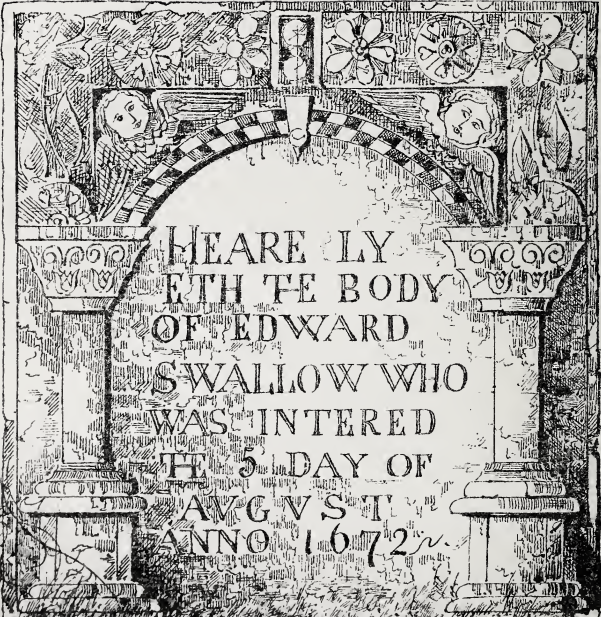
* On plans of Mr. Ferrey, the Diocesan Architect.

† See the lithograph taken from a rubbing of the stone and inscription.



A TIME OF DEATH
THOU KNOW
NOT WELL BUT
WE HARE OR WHEN
THOU CANST
NOT TELL

ALFRED. A. CLARKE. WELLS A.D. 1871.



HEARE LY
ETH TE BODY
OF EDWARD
SWALLOW WHO
WAS INTERED
TE 5 DAY OF
AUGVST
ANNO 1672

Alfred Hill. Engr. Wm. M.

Charles II, on his escape after the battle of Worcester, slept at Castle Cary, in the house of Mr. Edward Kirton, or Kyrton. This Mr. Kyrton is said to have been resident agent of the Duke of Somerset at Castle Cary, or, as is supposed by Mr. Batten, in his able and interesting paper on Somersetshire Sequestrations, was lessee of the parks under the Marquis of Hertford;* and lessee also under the Bishop of the rectory and rectorial glebe. That he (Mr. Kyrton) was a man of some eminence is clear from his being a Member of Parliament in 1623 for Ludgershall, and in 1628 for Great Bedwyn. In the Parliament of 1640 it appears also that he sat for Milborne Port.

In the account of Somersetshire Sequestrations, by Mr. Edward Curle, it is recorded that Mr. Edward Kyrton was one of those proceeded against as a "royalist delinquent," and made a composition for his estates, at a reduced fine, in consideration of his settling £50 a year out of the rectory for the augmentation of the maintenance of the minister of Castle Cary. I am sorry to say that no trace of this augmentation now exists.

In the old churchwardens' accounts for the years 1633

* A MS. note of the late Right Hon. Henry Hobhouse, of Hadspen, formerly "Keeper of the State Papers," informs us that "The manors of Castle Cary and Almesforth (Ansford) were settled 24 Car. 1, 1649, on the marriage of Henry Lord Beauchamp, eldest son of Willm. Marquis of Hertford, with Mary, eldest daughter of Arthur Lord Capell, in trust to pay £1600 per annum to the said Mary for her jointure. On the death of John Duke of Somerset, in 1675, without issue, these manors descended to his niece, Lady Elizabeth Seymour (only surviving issue of the said Lord and Lady Beauchamp), who married, A.D. 1676, Thomas Lord Bruce, eldest son of Robert Earl of Ailesbury, and were conveyed in the same year to t'tees, in trust to sell or pay off the jointure of the said Lady Beauchamp, then Marchioness of Worcester; and also certain annuities charged by the will of Duke John. In 1684 they were sold to Ettrick, Player, and others. Player made partition in 1703." [Cart. orig. H. H.]

and 1634 we find an item among payments for church rates in these years :

Edward Kirton vii^s 6^d

Another entry is as follows :

Ite' laide forth for taking downe the	}	ix ^s 6 ^d
vicarage barne 		

This account is signed by

JOHN COSENS and	} Church-
STEPHEN RUSSE	

The family of Russ have held an estate at Clanville, in this parish, for a long period of years.

John Tompson who, as will be seen in the list of vicars which I give below, seems to have been Vicar of Castle Cary for 33 years, signs the vestry book in 1628 and 1651. After the latter date his name does not appear for ten years ; but after the restoration he signs again, A.D. 1661.

The following entries occur in the parish accounts in 1662 :—

Ite' laid out for a gallon of muscadine	}	viii ^s 2 ^d
and 2d bread for Easter Day ..		
For a quart of sack for Mr. Tompson ..		i ^s 8 ^d
Ite' laide out for three quarts and a pint	}	vii ^s 8 ^d
and a half of muscadine, and 2d bread		
the Sunday after Easter ..		

Query, was the second item intended as a special rejoicing on the return of Mr. Tompson to his parishioners?

LIST OF THE VICARS OF CASTLE CARY,

FROM THE REGISTERS OF THE BISHOPS AT WELLS.

A.D.	NAME	BISHOPS	PRESENTORS	REMARKS
1312	John, Vicar of Castle Cary	Jno. Drokensford, 1309 to 1329	The Prior and Convent of the Benedictines at Bath	John, Vicar of Castle Cary, was appointed <i>Penitentiary</i> of the Deanery of Cary. See Appendix I
1328 July 8	Walter Hayne -	The same	The Prior and Chapter of Bath	
1347 Aug 3	Robert Godard -	Ralph de Salopiâ, 1329 to 1363	The same	
1348 Dec 3	Stephen de Kynar	The same	The same	He is called "Priest"
1402 Jan 11	Richd. Cranbourne or Cranbury	Ralph Ergum, 1388 to 1403	The same	He is called "Chaplain"
1413 Aug 13	Richard Brook -	Nicholas Bubwith, 1407 to 1424	The same	Rector of Stafford, in the Dio- cese of Sarum, exchanged with Richard Cranbury
1427 July 20	Walter Harris -	John Stafford, 1424 to 1443	The same	

A.D.	NAME	BISHOPS	PRESENTORS	REMARKS
1443 April 14	Nicholas Westhill-	Thomas de Beck- yngton, 1413 to 1464	The Prior and Chapter of the Convent at Bath	
1492 Nov 10	William Lutte -	Richard Fox,* 1492 to 1494	The same	W. Lutte resigning, a pension of £4 was assigned to him
1498 Oct 13	John Morris -	Oliver King, 1495 to 1503	The same	
1518 Mar 19	Henry Kensycke -	Card. Adrian de Cas- tello, 1504 to 1518 (deprived 1518)	The same	See Appendix No. II
1546 Oct 10	Ambrose Marshall	William Knight (deprived 1553)	On the presenta- tion of Thomas Clerk, Esq.	Bishop Knight became a con- vert to the reformed religion
1554 Nov 20	Richard Chevers by deprivation of the preceding	Gilbert Bourne, 1554 to 1558 (deprived 1559)	On the presenta- tion of William Crowches, Esq.	

* Two Bishops were intermediate between Bishops Beckynton and Fox, viz : Bishop Freeas or Free, and Bishop Stillington.

A.D.	NAME	BISHOPS	PRESENTORS	REMARKS
1564 Aug 31	John Furse -	Gilbert Berkley, 1559 to 1581	Collated by the Bishop of Bath and Wells	On the death of the last In- cumbent
1592	John Taunton -	Thomas Godwin, 1584 to 1590	On the presenta- tion of Francis Kirton of Lon- don	John Taunton was appointed after the death of Bishop Godwin, but before the episcopate of Bishop Still in February, 1592, probably by a commission. There is no institution of this Vicar in the Registry at Wells ; his name occurs in the parish book
1623	John Tompson -	Arthur Lake, D.D. 1616 to 1626	Edward Kyrton, Esq.	John Tompson is the Vicar mentioned in the parish ac- counts, (<i>vide supra</i>). The advowson was granted to Kyrton by Bishop Montagu
1663 Aug 2	John Creed -	William Pearce, D.D. 1632 to 1670	On presentation of "Kingsmilli Ar- migeri "	

A.D.	NAME	BISHOPS	PRESENTORS	REMARKS
1721 Nov 1	Samuel Woodforde A.B.	George Hooper and John Wynne from 1703 to 1743	On presentation of Rachel Ettricke	
1771	Thomas Wickham (died 1786)	Edward Willes, D.D. 1743 to 1773		Thomas Wickham was also Rector of Shepton Mallet
1787	John Turner -	Charles Moss, D.D. 1774 to 1802	The Bishop	Collinson says that when he wrote his history Mr. John Taylor was Vicar. He must have mistaken this name for Turner: no such name as Taylor is found among the Vicars
1795	Charles Moss, Sub- Dean of Wells	The same	The same	
1801	William Hunt -	The same	The same	
1845	Richd. Jno. Meade 25th Jan, 1845; Prebendary of Wells 7th May, 1844; Canon of Wells 29th May, 1863	George Henry Law, D.D. 1824 to Sep. 1845	The Bishop, acting by the Bishop of Salisbury his Commissary	In the 20th Edw. I (1292), the Church of Kari or Carie was taxed in xx marcs. In 1426 the Vicarage is valued at £10 or xv marcs. The same value is given of it 1431, 1445, &c.

APPENDIX No. I.

John, Vicar of Castle Cary in 1312, was Penitentiary of the Deanery of Cary. As everyone may not know what this word means, I give the interpretation of it from Webster's Dictionary "One who prescribes the rules and measures of penance."

The following account of a penance at Rome, Barcelona, &c. is given by Dr. T. Forster, F.L.S., a gentleman of the Roman Catholic religion, and author of a very useful and entertaining work, called the "Perennial Calendar." The ceremony, he says takes place on Holy Friday, at the time of Vespers. It is preceded by a short exhortation, during which a bell rings, and whips, or strings of knotted whipcord, are distributed quietly among such of the congregation as are on their knees in the middle of the nave. . . . On a second bell the candles are extinguished, and the former sermon having ceased, a loud voice issues from the altar, exhorting to think of unconfessed, unrepented, or unforgiven crimes. This continues a sufficient time to allow the kneelers to strip off their upper garments, the tone of the preacher is raised more loudly, and he vehemently exhorts his hearers to recollect that Christ and the martyrs suffered much more. . . . The flagellation then begins. The darkness, the tumultuous sound of blows in every direction, "Blessed Mary pray for us," bursting out at intervals, the whole scene fixes you to the spot in a trance of horror beyond expectation or bearing. The scourging continues ten or fifteen minutes, and when it sounds as if dying away, a bell rings which seems to invigorate the penitents, for the lashes beat about more thickly than before. Another bell rings, and the blows subside. At a

third signal the candles are re-lighted, and the Minister (the Penitentiary) who has distributed the disciplines, collects them again with the same discretion. The penitents appear too much ashamed of their transgressions to make a show of their penance, so that it is difficult to say whether even your next neighbour has given himself the lash or not.

Perennial Calendar for March, p. 111.

APPENDIX No. II.

Mr. Robert Lemon, of the State Paper Office, in a letter dated November 21st, 1828, and addressed to the Right Honorable Henry Hobhouse, (then keeper of the State Paper Office), states that he found at the Chapter House, Westminster, where many of the State Papers were then preserved, a very curious paper, viz:—"A Petition from certain inhabitants of Wincanton to Lord Cromwell (who in 1536 had been appointed Vice-Gerent of the Kingdom in Ecclesiastical matters,) complaining of the conduct of the Curate of Wincanton, who led a very dissolute life, and would not allow them to read the Word of God in English; they were, therefore, obliged to seek spiritual comfort from the Parson of *Castle Cary* (Mr. Kensycke*), which so exasperated the Curate of Wincanton, that he threatened to fight any of his parishioners who did so; and he was so continually practising his "schol of fence" that they were all frightened to meet him."

R. L.

* See the List of Vicars, A.D. 1526.