

THE DEATH OF THOMAS GODWIN, BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS (1584-90)

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THOMAS GODWIN, the second of the Elizabethan bishops of Bath and Wells, died at his birthplace, 'Ockingham'¹ in Berkshire, about 7.0 a.m.² on Thursday, 19th November, 1590. He had for a long time been suffering from a quartan ague³ and from gout, and he had deliberately left Banwell, where he normally lived, on about 7th October the previous year, to return to his native Wokingham, where he had started life in humble circumstances.

The bishop was a trained physician,⁴ and doubtless understood his own case. At 4.0 a.m. he sent young Nicholas Clunne, the servant who had been attending him throughout his sickness, urgently to 'Reddinge'⁵ to fetch some 'potticary stuff'. While Clunne was absent, certain of the episcopal household gathered round the dying bishop. There was Thomas Purefey, a young man of thirty-four, who had married Blandina, one of the bishop's daughters, and secured the position of chief officer to the bishop. His father, William Purefey,⁶ was also there; and Thomas Mydlehams, clerk, the bishop's servant; Joseph Colliar, clerk, who lived at Nunney in Somerset and was the friend of the bishop's eldest son, Thomas Godwin, and Thomas Manton, the parson of Elme in Somerset. There are references, also, to 'his son Pawle' being at Wokingham at this time, but this member of the Godwin family plays a passive part in subsequent events. He was probably the bishop's youngest son.

1 The modern Wokingham, *V.C.H. Berks*, iii, 225.

2 This and all other detail in the article are taken from P.R.O. 178/1966 unless otherwise stated.

3 Ague was a malarial fever. F.W. Price, *A Textbook of the Practice of Medicine* (8th Edn.), 274. A quartan ague recurred every third day.

4 *D.N.B.* He had been licensed to practise medicine in 1555.

5 Now Reading, *V.C.H. Berks*, iii, 336.

6 This was probably William Purefey of Shalstone, Buckinghamshire (d. 15 July 1595). He married Cecily Goodwin and their son Edward married into the Purefey family of Fenny Drayton in Leicestershire. (For evidence of the bishop's goods going to the Leicestershire Purefey family, see *infra*, p. 87). Browne Willis, *History of Buckingham* (1755), 262-3.



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(From the portrait in the bishop's palace at Wells)

The thoughts of those present were perhaps more of a certain black box or casket where the bishop kept his money, than of the condition of their master. This box was guarded most jealously by its owner. Robert, another of his sons, had seen it opened, but the bishop refused to allow him to look inside. Thomas Manton afterwards said that during the night Thomas Purefey had asked him to inform Thomas Godwin, the bishop's son, whom he doubtless knew to be Manton's friend and who was not present but in Somerset, that he, Thomas Purefey, would have the keeping of the black box and be responsible for it, and that William Purefey, his father, would be a witness to its safety. Thomas Purefey later told Clunne that, while he was away at Reading, the bishop had opened the casket and given him, Purefey, such money as it contained. He repeated the story to Mydleham and said that the money received by him and the bishop's son, Paul, was £41 11s. in gold and two or three gold rings. Mydleham also knew that the key had been handed to William Purefey by his son 'the which key he willed his father to keep very safe'. Joseph Colliar was a further witness of Purefey's gaining control of the casket. He asserted that about two hours before the bishop died, the key was delivered by Thomas Purefey to his father, William Purefey, for safe keeping, and the box was given to the charge of one 'Whitlocke'¹ of Wokingham.

During the same night Thomas Mydleham was set to write a lease for the term of twenty-one years, of the Manor of Westbury and Hewish to one Mr. John Bayes to the use of Paul, the bishop's son, 'and before it was fully wryten the sayd Busshope died. Then the sayd lease was burned'.

Purefey seems to have gone off to London immediately after the bishop's death, but on his return two days later, on Saturday 21st, November, he caused the casket to be opened and found, according to Colliar, only three crowns of silver and fifteen shillings of white money, one piece of gold and three seals ' . . . and finding no more, the above-named Thomas Purefey was in great anger that he found no more . . . ' He had heard Thomas Godwin, the bishop's son, say that he thought his father had not less than £500 in the casket. Thomas Manton agreed that he had heard Thomas Godwin and

¹ This was probably the Jerome Whitlocke mentioned by Thomas Manton. The Whitlockes (or Whitlocks) had held the manor of Beaches in Wokingham since the end of the fifteenth century. *V.C.H. Berks*, iii, 229.

Thomas Purefey say that they thought there was a large sum of money in the casket, and he was of the same opinion.

The bishop was buried on the following Tuesday, the 24th November,¹ in the south-side chancel of Wokingham church² and he is still commemorated there by a tablet on the north wall of the north aisle.³ The church was 'hanged with blacks'. Altogether about £61 was spent with John Johnson,⁴ a merchant taylor of London for 'blacks for the funeral of the bishop' although this sum probably covered funeral apparel as well as drapery.

The bishop seems to have spent the last year of his life preparing for his death. He continued to attend to some of the affairs of his estates; another of his sons-in-law, Thomas Emylie, who acted as his understudy, gave particulars of sixteen leases which 'were sealed and delivered by the bishop since his being sick but yet in the time of his life and good memory'. Only about ten days before his death he sealed a lease of a canonical house at Wells to George Upton, Esq.⁵ of that city. But there is some evidence that Thomas Godwin, the bishop's son, and Thomas Purefey, his son-in-law, were taking increasing control of the management of the episcopal estates. There is evidence too, to which we shall revert, that they were embarrassed by debt and that they looked to the annexation of the bishop's goods and chattels on his death as a means of release from their financial worries. The demands of Bishop Godwin's family are, indeed, an excellent example of a particular problem which arose from the marriage of bishops after the Reformation, that of deciding what their children might expect in the way of endowment from the episcopal estates. It was difficult to decide how much of the bishop's wealth might now be regarded as personal to himself and at his free disposal, and how much should be retained as the assets and perquisites of the episcopal office. In the words

1 Nicholas Clunne said in his first deposition that he went to London 'the morowe after the Bishop's funeral'. In his second deposition he described this as 'the Wednesday after the death of the bishop'.

2 S. H. Cassan, *Lives of the Bishops of Bath and Wells from the Reformation to the Present Time* (1830), 7.

3 *S. & D. N. & Q.*, xviii (1926), 198-9.

4 John Johnson was elected Master or Governor of the Merchant Taylors in July, 1607. C. M. Clode, *Memorials of the Guild of Merchant Taylors* (1875), 152.

5 George Upton was M.P. for Wells in 1584. *Official Returns of Members of Parliament 1213-1702*. He was admitted a freeman of Wells in the same year. *Wells City Charters, S.R.S.*, xlvi (1931), 189.

of Mr. A. L. Rowse, 'clerical dynasticism was well on the way'.¹ So were its attendant problems.

The crown was now vitally interested in the disposal of episcopal estates, for in 1559 an Act had been passed 'giving Authority to the Queen's Majesty, upon the Avoidance of any Archbishoprick or Bishoprick, to take into her Hands certain of the temporal Possessions thereof, recompensing the same with Parsonages impropriate and tenths'.² This Act specifically authorised the crown to appoint suitable persons to survey and value such estates 'as to your Majesty shall be thought meet and convenient to be taken into your Highness' Hands and Possession' and to return their clear yearly value by certificate into the Court of Exchequer. It is the return of such a commission,³ with its wealth of depositions and schedules of personal property, debts and obligations relating to Bishop Godwin, which has provided the scattered detail needed in order to reconstruct the death scene of the prelate and much biographical and other information about him previously unknown.

The records show that the liquidation of the bishop's assets commenced before his death. Hugh Brent of Wells, a freemason, told the Commission of Inquiry that, about a quarter of a year before the bishop departed from Towerhead in Banwell to Wokingham, 'he,' by the appointment of Thomas Godwyn, carried to Bristowe one bason and ewer and one bowl of silver and gilt, parcel of the bishop's goods which he delivered to one Mr. Colson, merchant, dwelling afore the high cross at Bristowe and brought from Mr. Colson £10 in money, which money he delivered to Thomas Godwyn then being his master'.⁴

1 For a discussion of this problem see A. L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth* (1950), 410-4, especially his remarks about Archbishop Sandys, 'At Worcester he made a very good thing for his family out of the possessions of the see, leasing lands on very long leases for inadequate rents to members of his family . . . When he left Worcester for London he stripped the episcopal residences of everything he could carry away'.

2 1 Eliz. Cap. XIX.

3 P.R.O. E.178/1966. A reference in the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* 1598-1601, cclxviii, 127. No. 139, makes it clear that the Crown acted by virtue of the Act of 1559 in giving warrants to the Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer for the disposal of episcopal lands during a vacancy.

4 This is probably Thomas Colston (d. 16 Nov. 1597), who lived at Wallsens Inn, a tenement in Corn Street near All Saint's Church in view of the High Cross from 1583 to 1597. He was a mercer and alderman of Bristol and sheriff there in 1561 and mayor in 1577. I have to thank Dr. Margaret Sharp and Miss Elizabeth Ralph, F.S.A. for these facts.

At the time of the bishop's removal to Wokingham, some of his hangings, those depicting St. Dunstan, were removed to the house of Sir Henry Portman, Bt.¹ at Orchard. So his cook, Robert Allen of Banwell said, but he does not add whether this was by way of gift or sale.

Henry Kindersley, a citizen and merchant taylor of London, reported other sales of property which had taken place even before the bishop's death. On 9th November, 1590, he had bought from Thomas Godwin and Thomas Purefey, two livery pots of silver all gilt weighing 144½ ozs. for £35, and three bowls of silver with a cover of silver all gilt weighing 100½ ozs. for £25, all paid for in ready money. Before that, at the end of October 1590, Peter Robinson a citizen and salter of London, had bought a standing cup of silver gilt for £10 14s. from them, and they had then disposed of the bishop's parliament robes for £9.

Similar tactics are reflected in the story of William Baylie of Clevedon in which Purefey again figures. Baylie told how 'a little before the death of the bishop', he, together with Purefey, William Baker, who was the bishop's bailiff at Banwell, and John Armstrong (the servant of that Thomas Manton who had been present at the bishop's death), made five packs of linen and of the apparel of Mr. Godwin and Mr. Purefey at Banwell. One pack was carried to the house of a widow in Banwell, the others were left in the chamber where they were baled, apparently to await the news of the bishop's death.

Immediately the bishop died, relatives and friends tried to liquidate as much of his property as possible before the sheriff arrived to seize the effects in the name of the crown. Thomas Purefey was, as we have seen, with the bishop at Wokingham, but his wife, Blandina, the bishop's daughter, was at the bishop's residence in Banwell. Joan Came, a widow of Banwell, describes this lady's actions. She said that she 'did carry the candle and did see Mistris Purefey, the wife of Thomas Purefey, (immediately after the death of Thomas late Bisshoppe of Bath and Welles) packe up all the best carpetes and coverlettes that were in the house at Towerhead

1 Sir Henry Portman (d. 1590) married Joan, daughter of Thomas Michell. He was knighted in 1574. A. W. Vivian-Neal, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxxxix (1943), ii, 48-9.

and all the best hangings and the Bisshoppes parliament robes,¹ and all his best apparell (saving such as the Bisshoppe carryed with him to Ockingham) and all the sheets (saving seventene or eightene paire of the worst, which Mistris Purefey sayd her brother Thomas Godwyn and Mr. Manton willed her to leave there *for a colour that the sheriffe might finde something when he came*).² All the linen was made up into four great packs and Mistress Purefey caused an inventory of the contents to be made 'that her husband might readily see by the said note taken . . . the substance of all the stuff that was packed up in the said four packs, without opening them'. Widow Came added that these packs were carried away *by night*² two days later.

Alice Nebbes of Banwell, corroborated this tale about William Baker, the bailiff, and Mr. Manton's man carrying away the packs of linen by night, but she did not know their destination. Alice Nebbes, an old lady of nearly sixty, seems to have disliked William Baker, and spoke freely. She said that when she was with Mistress Purefey after the bishop's death, William Baker was dealing with the house, goods and chattels of the bishop 'and did ridde and bestowe them at his owne pleasure, and would make reporte unto Mistris Purefey howe he had bestowed everything, saying such a thing is false : this thing is well, and so of everything as he thought good'. This happened several times in her hearing. Alice Nebbes tells of Mistress Godwin, the wife of Thomas Godwin, also assisting in the disposal of the bishop's pictures and in packing up his linen, four good feather beds and other furniture and bedding which was carried to the house of Mr. Francis Godwin, the bishop's second son, at Wells. Then there was the pewter. 'All the pewter was (after the Bishop's death) layed and hidden in the ground at Towerhead house, by William Baker, before Mr. Purefey came hither. And after Mr. Purefey came, then he willed the said Baker to carry all the said pewter into the Study at Towerhead house, but (she) knows not what became of it afterwards'.

Blandina Purefey, when questioned, denied responsibility for the disposal of the linen and said that 'her brother Thomas Godwyn

1 This appears to conflict with the evidence of the merchant Henry Kindersley, who stated that he had bought the bishop's parliament robes for £9 before his death. See p. 82.

2 My italics.

caused her to make up certain packs of linen which was carried away from Banwell after her father's death but whether she knoweth not and more she cannot say'.

Robert Allen of Banwell, who may have been the bishop's cook, also had intimate knowledge of the dispersal of the bishop's goods at Banwell immediately after his death. He speaks of thirty-six calevers¹, with their powder flasks, touch boxes and head pieces, hidden in the bishop's hop garden at Banwell by William Baker and other servants. All the pigs were delivered out of the gate of the bishop's palace at Banwell by the same William Baker and helpers on the Saturday or Sunday after the bishop's death (that is, even prior to his burial) before Thomas Purefey came down from London and, as Allen thought, unknown to him.

Many inhabitants of Banwell and the locality, when questioned by the commissioners, told a remarkable story. John Everett, a husbandman of Banwell, spoke of 'all the stuff which was conveyed away before the seizure of the sheriff'. Everett knew of one great chest of linen, of brass, pans, pots, spits and other iron ware, which he helped to load into the wagon of one John Callington of Burcott, to be carried to Wells. John Lunde, the bishop's principal officer of Wells, took a fine drawing table of walnut worth £6 and bedsteads, brass, pewter and iron ware to Wells loaded in two more wagons borrowed from local men, John Hawkins of Westwicke and Humphrey Edgill. Thomas Store of Banwell had three great 'stone horses'² of the bishop's brought to his house by three of the bishop's servants, but they were conveyed away 'in an evening' by Thomas Godwin and two others.

Richard Biddell, a mercer of Banwell, knew of two wagons loaded with three 'new and good trunckes wherein was put certain hops' carried, again, to the house of John Lunde of Wells.

Immediately after the death of the bishop, John Sawyer the Elder of Wulfarshill, made off with about six wagon loads of timber out of Banwell Park.

The active William Baker, pressed for a second lot of evidence, agreed that the bishop had, at the time of his death, 'a great store of linnen' and that two packs of it were sent to Wells with certain chests and trunks with the best cushions and that 'Edward Quarre

1 A calever (or caliver) was a large pistol or blunderbuss. J. O. Halliwell, *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, 6th Edn. (1904).

2 A stone horse is a stallion. J. O. Halliwell, *op. cit.*

of Banwell had one cart load of stuff with one trunk but what other stuff he knoweth not for that the cart was driven thither late in the duske evening and as he remembreth the same was covered with mattes'.

Similar events took place at Wokingham, but more openly. Nicholas Clunne, the bishop's servant whom we have met before, stated that before the bishop's death Thomas Godwin, the bishop's son, brought certain plate from Somerset to Wokingham and carried it with more plate to London. The day after the bishop's funeral, that is on 25th November, Godwin sent him to London to John Johnson, the merchant taylor, with more plate, which included 'two great white silver pots with eares' and some of the bishop's finest clothes among which were 'two gownes the one of silk rayshe,¹ the other of silk furred with caleverfurr'.² Joseph Colliar and Thomas Manton spoke of three more packs of goods taken away from Wokingham to Bagshot about a week after the bishop's death. One of these, of funeral trappings and of the bishop's apparel, was again carried to Johnson in London, but the other two packs were despatched to Somerset, either to Nunney or to Wells. (There is a discrepancy of opinion as to their ultimate destination).

What is most remarkable about this spoilation of the bishop's goods is the speed with which it was effected (obviously an attempt to anticipate the coming of the sheriff to take possession of the void bishopric in the name of the crown), and the wide area over which the goods were dispersed.

We have already seen how most of the packing and removal took place within a few days of the bishop's death. Thomas Manton, the parson of Elme, gives more evidence of that. He relates on the report of his wife, how, on the Sunday after the death of the bishop, that is on 22nd November, Thomas Godwin brought a velvet coat and £15 in money to his home at Elme. He also knew that his servant, John Armstrong, carried four or five packs of apparel and linen from Banwell but he professed not to know their destination. We know that it was the parsonage house at Middlezoy.³

The chief beneficiaries were, naturally, the relatives and friends of

1 An inferior silk or wool material. *The Drapers' Dictionary*.

2 This is calaber, a kind of fur obtained from some foreign species of squirrel. J. O. Halliwell, *op. cit.*

3 See *infra*, p. 88.

the Godwin circle. It is difficult to determine exactly how much Thomas Godwin and Thomas Purefey derived from the spoil. They were clearly the chief agents in giving directions for the disposal of the goods, but it is not always possible to decide how far they retained the goods to their own use and how far they were acting as the unofficial executors of the estate.¹ Certainly Purefey and Godwin had need of ready cash. They had jointly incurred debts with London merchants, some of these in the name of the bishop, for liveries, and later for his funeral blacks, amounting to £365 14s. Some of this had been repaid in kind with part of the bishop's goods valued altogether at £48 4s. That left a balance of £317 10s. Then Thomas Godwin owed George Upton of Wells £210 and Upton must have been pressing for it, for about six weeks before the bishop died, on about 3rd October, 1590, Thomas prevailed on his father to assign to him bonds to the value of £139 13s. 4d. On about 18th October, Thomas Godwin the son, in turn made these over to George Upton in partial satisfaction of his debt of £210. That left a balance of £70 6s. 8d.

Then Thomas Purefey owed Richard Biddell of Banwell, a mercer, £13 6s. 8d. and Thomas Melam, a servant of the bishop, £30. We may say that their joint debts at the death of the bishop amounted to £431 3s. 4d.

If Thomas Godwin was interviewed by the commissioners, his deposition has not survived with the others. Thomas Purefey, however, put the responsibility for everything on his brother-in-law. According to him, all was done at the commandment or direction of Thomas Godwin.

Many of the bishop's chattels, besides those annexed by his family, went to his officers at Wells, to John Lunde, his servant, woodward, bailiff of the store and keeper of the palace there, to William Watkins,² and to others of his servants. Much of the property percolated to the inhabitants of Banwell, to the yeomen, husbandmen and labourers who were the episcopal tenants there, but the names of Edward Quarr, a yeoman, the two John Sawyers, both

1 On 2 September 1591 in answer to letters from (John Whitgift) the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chapter at Wells stated that there were no executors or administrators of the will or goods of the late Thomas bishop of Bath and Wells. *H.M.C. Dean and Chapter of Wells*, ii (1942), 320.

2 William Watkins, gent., was admitted a freeman of the city of Wells in 1589 and was mayor in 1592. *Wells City Charters, op. cit.*, 190, 116. He was M.P. for Wells in 1597. *Official Returns of the Members of Parliament*, 1213-1702.

yeomen, the already notorious William Baker and John Marten, a husbandman of Banwell, perhaps stand out as beneficiaries.

Outside the immediate locality, the geographical range of the distribution of the goods was very wide. The Purefey family shows its influence here. Mr. George Purefey of Drayton in Leicestershire, the high sheriff of that county, had twenty-five horses, although the cost of these, £66 13s. 4d., was afterwards charged to Edward Purefey.¹ Another Purefey, William Purefey of Hollingborne, Kent, acquired goods to the value of £10. John Walsall, Doctor of Divinity of Easling, Kent, selected the kind of goods which marked him as a special friend of the bishop.² He took possession of a 'College pot' of silver with a cover, worth £6, and 'one greate chaire wherein the said Busshopp was wont to be carryed', and at the time of the bishop's death he owed him £40 by bond. He was familiar enough with the bishop to dare to take this bond out of the forbidden black box at the bishop's decease, but the Exchequer commissioners got to know of it and charged it to his account. A Mr. Pike of Waverley, Surrey, managed to acquire 'certain plate' worth £6 13s. 4d. William Whitlock of Wokingham in Berkshire had one rochet of holland³ with cambric sleeves valued at £6 13s. 4d. and a great horse which cost him £10. It was called Boulting.

Then there were the local parsons. Robert Woolfall, clerk, parson of Wanstrow, took a mare worth 30s. and bedding and table linen. Thomas Manton, parson of Elme, had a featherbed, a bolster, a pair of blankets, a coverlet of tapestry, a cupboard and some of the bishop's books. Samuel Pettingale, the curate of Banwell, had a book called *Hector Pintus* worth 5s., bedding, an old pewter pot and a bundle of brush faggots, altogether worth 33s. 8d., and the choice of the parson of Badgworth, John Penwin,

1 Edward Purefey of Shalstone, Bucks (d. 1594) married Joyce, the daughter of his kinsman, George Purefey of Fenny Drayton in Leicestershire. Browne Willis, *op. cit.* p. 263. If that George Purefey is the one mentioned in the text, Edward was paying his father-in-law's debts. The father of this Edward was William Purefey (d. 1595). *Op. cit.* So he, Edward, may have been the brother of the Thomas Purefey who married Blandina, Bishop Godwin's daughter.

2 Godwin had been Dean of Canterbury (*D.N.B.*). He may have known Walsall in those days.

3 A bishop's rochet is a linen vest worn under a satin robe. J. O. Halliwell, *op. cit.* Holland was a fine linen fabric, originally called from the province of Holland in the Netherlands, and cambric a kind of fine linen originally made at Cambrai in France. *Drapers' Dictionary.*

fell on some old silk hangings worth 60s. But more serious trouble was caused by the pillaging of the parsonage house at Middlezoy, where Peter Rawlins was vicar.

John Armstrong, Thomas Manton's servant, had taken four packs of apparel and linen worth about £7 from Banwell to Middlezoy, assisted by Thomas Woolfall, the son of the Wanstrow parson, three or four days after the bishop's death. There the Rawlins family ripped up the packs of the bishop's goods and divided the spoil, although 'Thomas Woolfall did carry away in a wallet divers parcels of linnen as full as might be put into the same'. Joan Rawlins, the parson's mother, seems to have taken the initiative in the distribution of the goods. Sedwell Keene, her daughter, Margery Rawlins, another daughter, and John Rawlins, her son, who had a pair of buff hose and a board cloth of damask, all benefited from the windfall. Matthew Rawlins, another of her sons, was a tailor and he received a doctor's hood of scarlet lined with taffeta from his mother; he converted it into a waistcoat.

The crown acted promptly after the death of the bishop on 19th November, 1590. On the 28th November a commission was issued to Sir Henry Berkeley, Kt.¹ Thomas Horner, Esq.² and Phillip Bisse and John Langworth, Doctors of Divinity,³ out of the Exchequer. Thomas Fanshawe, the Queen's Remembrancer, provided them with instructions. They were to seize all the late bishop's goods and chattels, to 'praise' them and put them in safety towards the satisfaction of Her Majesty's debts. They were to search out what debts were due to the bishop and to seize the bonds made to cover them. They were to ascertain what corn was sown upon any of the demesnes or lands possessed by the bishop and to assess its value. Thirdly, and here we find another reason for the Crown's interest in the vacant see besides its powers under the 1559 Act, they were to find out who held the tenths, subsidies and benevolences due before the death of the bishop

1 Sir Henry Berkeley of Bruton, M.P. (d. 1601) was sheriff of Somerset in 1587. In 1591 he seems to have been acting as Deputy Lieutenant. S. W. Bates Harbin, *Members of Parliament for the County of Somerset* (1939), 129.

2 Thomas Horner of Mells, M.P. (c.1546-1611) was a J.P. and sheriff for Somerset in 1607. Bates Harbin, *op. cit.*, 130.

3 Philip Bisse was sub-dean of Wells Cathedral in 1578 and, in turn, Baron of the Exchequer and Communar there. *H.M.C. The Dean and Chapter of Wells*, 308, *et. seq.* John Langworth, Prebendary of Brent and Huish and Archdeacon of Wells, was admitted a canon residentiary in October 1589. *Op. cit.* 315.

and what remained unpaid. The commissioners were to let out the demesne of the bishopric for Her Majesty's best profit during the vacation and to certify what timber trees were felled upon the possessions of the bishopric in the late bishop's time and for what purpose. Lastly, they were to report on the state of repair of the bishop's house and on the conditions of the woods.

By the 10th December the commission was at work taking depositions from witnesses at Wells. This commission took evidence of the disposal of the bishop's goods and chattels from thirty-one persons, all of them from the locality, from Banwell, Wells, Westbury and Hewish. They were all either relatives, officers or servants of the bishop and they were nearly all interested parties. They included Francis Godwin, his second son,¹ Blandina Purefey, his daughter and her husband Thomas, Thomas Emylie, a son-in-law, George Upton, John Lunde, and William Watkins. Thomas Manton, the parson of Elme, was questioned and William Baker, the bailiff of Banwell, Howard Batt, the keeper of Banwell Park, William Jennings, the reeve of the manor of Banwell, and John Wensley, the bailiff of the hundred of Wells Forum. The impressions one derives from their evidence in general is of curiously short memories. The destination of goods was frequently not known, but the sheriff had already seized a fair amount.

On 23rd December the commissioners were still taking evidence, this time from John Marshall of Hewish. By now James Godwin, the undersheriff, had sold Marshall and William Watkins goods of the bishop worth £109 16s. 10d.

This first commission secured a list of the leases which the bishop had recently signed, and of his creditors, and the amounts they owed for fines or rents of land, and a schedule of the property in his houses at Banwell. A jury was empannelled for the last purpose. But on the whole one gets the impression that the job had not been very thoroughly done.

Meanwhile, John Lunde had been busy 'by virtue of a warrant from her Majestie's commissioners directed unto him and others her highnes officers'.

On 12th December he seized all the corn and hay in the bishop's barn at Wells and in the barton there, and all the straw. On 15th

¹ Francis Godwin, D.D. (1562-1633) was successively the bishop of Llandaff and Hereford. He was the author of *De Praesulibus Angliae Commentarius* (1616) and other learned works. *D.N.B.*

December he took possession of the corn, straw, wood, timber, growing wheat, ricks of hay and goods and chattels at Banwell and the timber at Westbury;¹ then back again at Wells on 19th December he seized, on the Queen's behalf, the four water corn mills there, the timber and two closes of green wheat.

The crown was obviously not satisfied with the result. On the 30th November, 1591, a second commission was given to Thomas Emylie, the bishop's understeward and son-in-law, and to William Watkins, to pursue enquiries further. Unfortunately the instructions issued to them are so mutilated as to be unreadable.

Their action was less prompt but was more thorough than that of the first commission. On the 17th, 20th and 21st December they were taking depositions at Wells. This commission called forty-eight witnesses, as against thirty-one of the first one, but only seven were persons who had previously given evidence. Nevertheless, in general these seven gave much more full and detailed evidence the second time, especially Nicholas Clunne, William Blake and John Warren, a butcher of Banwell. The second commission called their witnesses, too, from a much wider area. They had been to Middlezoy on 19th September and had asked eight of its inhabitants about the ravaging of the parsonage house there, and they questioned four of the London merchants, Henry Kindersley, John Johnson and John Young, who were merchant taylors, and Peter Robinson, the salter, about the episcopal goods which they had received. They made a lengthy and detailed list of goods, chattels, household stuff, plate, apparel and sums of money of the bishop and of Thomas Godwin his son and Thomas Purefey his son-in-law 'as were of *newe* found' by the jury they had sworn in. They detailed, too, all the sums of money which they had received for goods found out by the first commissioners, Sir Henry Berkeley and others, and the debts they had discovered by themselves.

Elizabeth kept the see void for nearly three years. The next bishop, John Still, was not consecrated until 11th February, 1593,² and during the vacancy the crown was receiving the revenues through Thomas Sherwood, who had been appointed the general

1 Westbury was another of the episcopal manors. P.R.O. Rentals and Surveys, Roll 951, 34 Eliz.

2 *Handbook of British Chronology*, 138.

receiver. His commission was dated 12th February, 1591 (33 Eliz.).¹

The object of this paper is not, however, to discuss the administration of the episcopal estates. That subject awaits my later and fuller investigation. Here we are concerned with the disposal of Bishop Godwin's goods and chattels and the revelation of information about his family and household.

Long after John Still had taken over the episcopal office, Thomas Emylie and William Watkins were pursuing the debts owed to his predecessor. In the Hilary term 1596 (38 Eliz.) they delivered to Thomas Fanshawe, the Queen's Remembrancer, a schedule of bonds which they had taken for debts still amounting to £247 13s. 4d. They were acting by virtue of 'several commissions' out of the Court of Exchequer.

The enquiries continued into the next reign. On 28th November, 1605 (3 Jas.) Francis Godwin, the bishop's second son, (by then Bishop of Llandaff), was commissioned with Henry Poole, Kt., George Escott, Esq., and others to go more closely into the matter. They were ordered to examine what goods, chattels and lands the late bishop had possessed since his coming to the see and particularly since 9th October, 1589 (31 Eliz.)² and what property Thomas Godwin and Thomas Purefey, here described as 'the factor and dealer of the bishop', had at that date and since. They were to seize all lands possessed by either of them on 9th October, 1589 (31 Eliz.) and to ascertain if any goods found by a former commission were sold under value, and by whose authority they were sold. They were to search out the debts due to the crown from the bishop's estate and they were given powers to compound for these debts in certain cases.

Yet again on 26th June, 1607 (5 Jas.) another commission was issued to Francis, Bishop of Llandaff, John Baker, Doctor of Theology, Robert Robotham, Archdeacon of Llandaff, George Upton, Esq., John Adams, Esq., and Paul Godwin, clerk, probably the bishop's son, and there is evidence that they concentrated on mopping up the outstanding debts.

But we are not concerned here to trace the history of the bishopric

1 P.R.O. S.C. 6/Eliz./2013 and 2014.

2 The significance of this date is that it was probably that on which the bishop left Banwell to retire to Wokingham. Samuel Pettingale in his deposition said that he had left 'about 7th October' the year before he died.

into the reign of James, but to see what this remarkable document¹ reveals of the intimate life of Bishop Godwin.

Firstly, as to his marriage and family. He married Isabel Purefey,² the daughter of Nicholas Purefey of Shalstone, Buckinghamshire,³ but she died before he became Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1584. Then he was accused of a second and notorious marriage when he was 'aged diseased and lame of the gout', the story of which is founded on Harington,⁴ Wood's *Athenae* and Coles' *Collections*, and adopted, with a reservation, by Cassan, by *D.N.B.*, and by Rutter.⁵ The story, as told by Harington, is that this second marriage was used by Sir Walter Raleigh, who was scheming to acquire the manor of Banwell, to disgrace the bishop in the eyes of the Queen. Raleigh stated that the bishop had married a girl of twenty who had substantial dowry and that he had conveyed half the bishopric to her. The Earl of Bedford took the bishop's part and contradicted Raleigh, saying that the bishop's new wife was a Londoner's widow with a son of almost forty. Cole gives her name as Margaret Brennan, daughter of William Brennan of Wells, who married first the bishop and then William Martin of Totnes.⁶ Cassan gives her surname as Boreman, not Brennan, and suggested her marriages were in the reverse order, that is, she married William Martin first and came to the bishop as a widow.

The outcome of the affair was that the Queen's anger was turned against Godwin. She sent him several sharp messages, and in order to save Banwell, which was, after Wells, the most valuable of his manors,⁷ he parted with Wiveliscombe, another of the favourite residences of the Bishops of Bath and Wells,⁸ but '... he neither gave Wilscombe for love, nor sold it for money, but left it for feare'.⁹

Certainly Sir Walter Raleigh was out to filch something from the bishop, and the Queen was aware of the depredations of Godwin's relatives even before his death. The records of the Dean and

1 P.R.O. 1788/1966.

2 *D.N.B.*

3 Nicholas Purefey, d. 18 February 1547. Browne Willis, *op. cit.*

4 *Nugae Antiquae*, Parks Edn. (1804) ii, 151.

5 Cassan, *op. cit.* 8-9. J. Rutter, *Delineations of N.W.Somerset* (1829), 135.

6 *D.N.B.*

7 A rental of 1591-2 shows Wells worth £179 14s. 9½d. and Banwell worth £148 5s. 5d. P.R.O. Rentals and Surveys, Roll 951.

8 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xxix (1883), i, 19.

9 Harington, *op. cit.*

Chapter of Wells contain a letter of 13th June, 1585 from John Wolley to them in which he says, ‘ . . . Her Majestie hath beene of late enformed that my lorde bysshoppe of that see hath made a lease to his sonne of the mannor of Wiveliscombe or some good parte thereof, for which he had beene before written unto by her majestie in the behalfe of Sir Walter Rawley, a gentleman of principall accompte and service aboute her ; which dealinge, as her highnes hath good cause to mislike withall, for as muche as the bysshoppe by his letters protested he coulde not with good conscience lease the same, without allmoste the ruine of the same by your chapter seale unto him, requiringe you not onlie to persiste in the same deniall (yf happelye he urge you further to the confirmation thereof), but also to refraine from the confirminge of any other lease to be made by the bysshoppe for his benefitt, till her pleasure be farther knowen and her highnes’ signified unto you to doe the same. Which her majestie’s good pleasure she willed me, from her owne mouthe, by these letters to make knowen unto you . . .’¹

On 4th November, 1585, the bishop leased the manor of Wiveliscombe to the Queen for ninety-nine years at a rent of £80.² Yet it appears that the lease was not, after all, transferred to Raleigh. Mr. Waldron says that it went to one Bond.³ This is borne out in the Minister’s accounts already referred to,⁴ where George Bond, Kt. is shown as paying a rent of £80 a year as the farmer of the manor.

Yet how true is the story? Certainly pressure was being put on the bishop to yield lands to a court favourite, but the post-reformation bishops were becoming used to the depletion of their estates. A biographer of Sir Walter Raleigh,⁵ suggests that the scandalous report which is ascribed to Raleigh is false and that Harington, who gave it, is more famed for his wit than for his veracity. He points out that the bishop’s own son, Dr. Francis Godwin, makes no mention of these charges against his father in his *Catalogus Episcoporum Bath. et Well.*, and he defends Raleigh’s reputation. ‘It is one thing, however, to ask of a bishop an advantageous lease. It is quite another thing to invent or to circulate against a bishop a foul piece of scandal’.⁶

1 *H.M.C. Dean and Chapter of Wells, op. cit.*, 307-8.

2 *Ibid.*, 309.

3 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xxix (1883), i, 21.

4 P.R.O. S.C. 6/Eliz./2013 and 2014. Also Rentals and Surveys, Roll 951.

5 E. Edwards, *The Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, i (1868), 131.

6 Edwards, *op. cit.*

In the accounts of Thomas Sherwood, the general receiver, for the two years following the bishop's death,¹ there is a record of a certain Elizabeth Bowerman, widow, as farmer of the rectory of Northlode for 51s. 8d. a year. That Elizabeth is undoubtedly the one who, as his 'relict' proved the will of William Bowerman of Wells, Esq., on 23rd February, 1590-1,² for in the Valor for 1591-2 (see p. 92), the rectory of Northlode is still shown in his name. That will shows that this William Bowerman (who must be differentiated from his uncle, William Bowerman, the sub-dean of Wells, whose will was proved in February, 1570), had a daughter Margaret alive when he made his will on 18th September, 1590 and a son Andrew,³ and it is this William Bowerman (or Bowreman) who, aged sixty-one years, gave evidence before the first commissioners and whose deposition reveals such significant facts.⁴ He shows that his daughter (unfortunately her Christian name is not given), had married a Thomas Godwin, but it is Thomas Godwin the bishop's son, not Thomas Godwin the bishop. He referred to 'his sonne-in-law Thomas Godwyn the Busshopes sonne'. Further he said that 'before he would geve his consent to the mariage of his daughter unto Thomas Godwyn the Busshopes sonne, . . . (he) . . . asked the Busshopp whether his sonne was under collector and by meanes thereof answerable to the Queene for the collection of the tenthes and subsidies, who answered him that he was not, but only delt as his servant and that the accompt was only chargable upon the sayd Busshop for otherwyse he would not have geven his consent to the marriage of his daughter unto him'.

William Bowerman mentioned no other daughter in his will, so it is clear that his Margaret married not Thomas Godwin the bishop but Thomas Godwin the bishop's son. But the bishop *did* marry a second time, although the only reference to the lady which I have so far been able to trace is contained in the Banwell Parish Registers :

'1587. Sibyll, the wife of the Right Reverent father in God,

1 P.R.O. S.C. 6/Eliz./2013 and 2014.

2 F. Brown, *Somersetshire Wills*, First Series (1887), 68. This is probably the same William Bowerman who was a J.P. in 15 Eliz. (Serel MSS., vol. v, Som. Arch. Soc., Taunton Castle) and admitted a Freeman of Wells in 1566, *Wells City Charters*, *op. cit.*, 182.

3 Brown, *op. cit.*, 68.

4 As proof of identification he specifically refers to his son, Andrew Bowerman, in this deposition.

Thomas Godwin by God's providence 23 of () buried the first of December'.

This reference makes it quite clear that she did not outlive the bishop to marry William Martin of Totnes as a second husband.¹

The bishop's second wife is therefore still much of a mystery, but let us see what is revealed of his family. Thomas Purefey in his deposition states that Thomas Godwin was the eldest of the sons. His marriage, his control of the bishop's affairs and his debts we have already considered. His role as tax-collector is revealed by William Bowerman and by Thomas Purefey, who stated that Godwin 'was reputed and taken for collector of the tithes and subsidies of the diocese of Bath and Welles under the said Bishoppe and did exercise the same'. Thomas Mydleham added that Godwin had certain books of collection for the tenths, subsidies and benevolences at Nunney at the house of Joseph Colliar, clerk. Colliar said that Thomas Godwin had left them there after staying with him a week. Godwin was the Member of Parliament for Wells in 1586² and in that capacity was in the same year admitted a freeman of the city of Wells, on payment of a nominal fee of one dozen gloves.³

The bishop's most famous son is the second one, Francis. He was described as 'Francis Godwyn, clerk', and his age was given as twenty-nine years, by the commission of 10th December, 1590. He was married. Joan Comes' deposition refers to four pictures being sent to his house at Wells,⁴ 'for that Mistress Godwin, the wife of Mr Francis Godwin did earnestly request that the same might be carried thither'. We have already seen that after he had become Bishop of Llandaff he was serving on a commission to seek out his late father's goods. He admitted that he had acquired most of his father's books, but stated that they were given to him a year and a quarter before the bishop's death. Thomas Manton confirmed that a great number of books which were the bishop's were lent or given to Francis Godwin in the bishop's lifetime 'only excepted Tullis workes in two great volumes, and some ii or iii volumes of St. Augustine and others'. These were sent to Francis Godwin after the death of the bishop.

1 I am much indebted to Rev. J. Bromwich for this information.

2 *Official Returns, op. cit.*

3 *Wells City Charters, op. cit.*, 186.

4 He was the tenant of a canonical house at Wells. *H.M.C. Dean and Chapter of Wells, op. cit.*, 314.

Robert Godwin seems to have been the bishop's third son. He was described as 'clerk', aged twenty-seven, when interviewed by the first commission in December, 1590. By the following December he had become the parson of Kingston Seymour.

Both Francis and Robert were provided by their father with offices in the ecclesiastical hierarchy at Wells. On 29th March, 1585 Francis Godwin, M.A. was installed in the prebend of Combe VII pursuant to a mandate of the bishop.¹ By 1st April, 1587 he held the prebend of St. Decuman and was admitted a canon residentiary. The bishop gave him a dispensation from the order which limited the number of canons in order to secure this position.² In September, 1588 he was elected to capitular office as one of the two surveyors of houses³ and he was re-elected the following year.⁴ On 20th December, 1589 he was given the prebend of Combe VIII,⁵ which his brother Robert had held since 2nd January, 1586-7.⁶ We are not told what compensation was given to Robert.

We have already noticed the intention to draw up a lease of the Manor of Westbury and Hewish to the use of 'Pawle, the Bishhoppe's son' and that later Paul Godwin was serving as a commissioner. We know, then, that the bishop had four sons.

There is no evidence that James Godwin, the undersheriff, who was active in his official capacity in valuing and selling the bishop's property, was another. He was probably a member of that other Godwin family of Wells who were burgesses and mercers there in the sixteenth century.⁷

The bishop had three daughters. There was Thomas Purefey's wife, Blandina, and two others, whose names are not revealed, who married Thomas Emylie and his brother, Dennis Emylie.⁸

It seems that both of the Purefey's, Thomas and Blandina, Thomas Godwin and his wife, and Robert Godwin normally lived in one of the two houses of the bishop at Banwell. Walter West said that

1 *H.M.C. Dean and Chapter of Wells, op. cit.*, 307.

2 *Op. cit.*, 311.

3 *Op. cit.*, 313.

4 *Op. cit.*, 315.

5 *Op. cit.*, 315.

6 *Op. cit.*, 310.

7 Brown, *Wills*, First Series, 17. James Godwin was M.P. for Wells, 1592-3. *Official Returns, op. cit.* It is almost certainly he who had been admitted to the freedom of Wells in 1589. *Wells City Charters, op. cit.*, 190.

8 P.R.O. Req. 2/96/42.

Thomas Godwin 'did use to lye in a good oken bedsted of wainscott in the leaden chamber at Banwell house'. He also said that Robert Godwin slept in a certain bedstead with a half head. Thomas Purefey is described as 'of Banwell'.

The document shows clearly that the centre of the bishop's interest was Banwell, not Wells, and it answers Buckle who wrote, when discussing the dates of the various architectural changes to the palace at Wells, that it was curious that Francis Godwin made no reference in his *Catalogus Episcoporum Bath. et Well.* to any Elizabethan improvements. He was certain that Francis Godwin would have mentioned any improvements made by his father the bishop.¹

We now know that Bishop Godwin did not make any improvements at Wells. On the contrary, Thomas Brenton said that the bishop's palace had been allowed to fall into decay since Bishop Godwin's accession to the see; the damage amounted to about £100. The palace was partly pulled down and was otherwise wilfully allowed to decay, and some of the stones were carried away to Banwell for the building of a new house for the bishop's son, and some were carried to other places. John Mayne, a plumber and tiler, agreed that £100 would not suffice to repair the plumbing and tiling of the bishop's palace at Wells. Richard Counsell, one of the workmen at Wells, spoke of the 'great waste and spoyle' in the bishop's woods and said that 200 oaks had been felled every year since the bishop's coming.

The references to the new house which the bishop built at Banwell are most interesting. The manor house at Banwell is generally supposed to have been despoiled by the Protector Somerset during his tenure of the manor and it has been said that no bishop lived there subsequently.² This is now revealed to be incorrect. William Baker deposed that the house at Banwell was 'in reasonable good use for reparations and better than the said bishop found it'. The Jury sworn by the first commissioners also found that the manor house at Banwell was reasonably well repaired and that £5 would repair the tiling and plumbing. There is no description of the appearance of this old bishop's palace in the last decade of the sixteenth century, only references to its external surroundings, to the barn, the stable, the slaughterhouse, the fowl yard and the

1 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xxxiv (1888), ii, 90.

2 C. S. Taylor, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, li (1905), ii, 63.

beerhouse with its furnace of copper, a leaden cooler, the keeve¹ standing under the cooler and a vat. There was too, a great nut tree in the Court Orchard there.

But of the new house which the bishop built, 'for his son', at Towerhead, at the eastern extremity of the village, much more detail is revealed. Rutter knew of this house. He said it was called Towerhead House and when he wrote in 1829 described it as a large substantial structure in the Elizabethan style, retaining much of its original character, including the front porch, over which was the bishop's arms impaling Bath and Wells, with the curious motto, '*Godwyn—wyn God wyn all*'. The commission survey tells us more of this house. It had, we find, a hall, a great chamber, a parlour with a little chamber above, two more little chambers, a study, a kitchen, a larder, a backhouse and a dairy, and there was a well which served it outside.

But this new home of the bishop was *not* at that time called Towerhead House, but, and this again shows that the bishop from Berkshire felt himself an exile in Somerset, 'Ockingham House'. In the Exchequer Commission survey, listed among the goods and chattels of which John Lunde took possession in the name of the crown within the manor of Banwell, there is a clear reference to '... the new house called Ockingham House as was the late Bishop's'. John Armstrong spoke of 'Ockingham house in Banwell,' in his deposition and Walter West, the Axbridge brewer, referred to 'Ockingham house' five times.

Where was it sited ?

The fullest evidence of its location is that given by F. A. Knight in *The Sea-board of Mendip*. He says that it was at Towerhead, three-quarters of a mile to the east of the church, at the foot of the northern slope of Banwell Park, but it had been pulled down about 1840 and a new building erected to the south-west of it. This modern farmhouse had incorporated in it some remains of the bishop's house, some old stone doorways, an oaken iron-studded door and a sculptured stone in the outer wall bearing upon a shield the bishop's arms, impaling those of Bath and Wells, and surmounted by the motto seen by Rutter in 1829. The foundations of Godwin's house were to be discerned in the short turf of the orchard to the north-east of the farm. The causeway which Bishop Godwin was

1 A keeve was a large tub or vessel used in brewing. Halliwell, *op. cit.*

reported to have constructed from his house to the church for the convenience of his family could still be traced in part.

We learn a little about the personnel of the bishop's household from the survey. It appears that there were four of the gentle class who yet described themselves as his servants or officers. Thomas Purefey, his chief officer, Thomas Emylie, his understeward and John Lunde, we have already met, but there was also William Watkins. We need to turn to the Minister's Accounts already mentioned¹ to complete this list of his officers. Anthony Paulett was his chief steward and drew a fee of £13 6s. 8d. a year. This seems to have been an almost honorary and nominal office (it was held by the Paulett family all through the sixteenth century) and Paulett took no part at all in the spoilation of the bishop's goods at his death. Robert Berkeley² was his auditor and received £9 6s. 8d. a year, Arthur Hopton³, as surveyor had £6 13s. 4d., Thomas Sherwood, the receiver general, £10 and Leonard Crosse,⁴ the deputy of Thomas Purefey, the bailiff of the liberty, received the high wage of £14 6s. 8d. Thomas Emylie, so we learn from these accounts, received £7 6s. 8d. for his work as understeward to Paulett and clerk and recorder of all the courts of record in the bishopric. John Lunde, a pluralist, received, £19 13s. 4d. in the year September, 1590 (32 Eliz.) to September, 1591 (33 Eliz.), and £21 13s. 4d. the following year as keeper of the palace at Wells and of the convict's prison there, and as bailiff of the bishop's stannaries within the manor of Wells and elsewhere⁵ and keeper of the woods and wastes.

Below the hierarchy there were at least twenty-two who served the bishop in his household and on his estates, besides the common labourers. There was, perhaps, also Robert Allen of Banwell who was a cook and may have had charge of the bishop's kitchen. He was certainly well informed about the contents of the bishop's house and gave a long and detailed deposition. The most important of the lower ranks was Thomas Mydleham, clerk, who had charge of

1 P.R.O. S.C. 6/2013 and 2014.

2 Son of Sir Maurice Berkeley of Bruton (d. 1581). Bates Harbin, *op. cit.* 118.

3 Probably the nephew of Sir Ralph Hopton of Witham (d. 1572). Bates Harbin, *op. cit.*, 120.

4 M.P. for Wells in 1597. *Official Returns, op. cit.* He was mayor of Wells in 1590. *Wells City Charters, op. cit.*, 115.

5 The Bishops of Bath and Wells had had mining rights on Mendip from at least the time of Richard I. J. W. Gough, *The Mines of Mendip* (1930), 49.

some of the bishop's records including some acquittances for subsidies. He was described as 'a notary public of Banwell' by the second commission, and obviously acted as a confidential secretary to the bishop. We have noticed that he was present at his death. He claimed that the bishop owed him £30 and that, in part payment of this, the day before the bishop's death Thomas Purefey delivered him a great salt of silver and gilt, weighing $39\frac{1}{2}$ ozs., which he pawned to Lydal, a merchant of Reading, for £9. Of this he delivered £6 10s. to Purefey who spent it on the bishop's funeral, and he kept £2 10s. He also claimed that Thomas Purefey gave him a piebald nag before the death of the bishop, in recompense for certain charges which he had incurred in riding from Wokingham in Berkshire into Somerset to take a view of the muster of clergy there. Nevertheless the commission later charged it to him.

William Baker, yeoman, was, we know, the bailiff at Banwell, William Jennings was the reeve there, and Howard Batt was the keeper of the park. Thomas Williams was the bishop's coachman and drove the coach which, with its two great horses, cushions and harness was annexed by Thomas Godwin and cost him £36 10s. At Wells, John Wensley was the bailiff of the hundred, Richard Cocke the lead-reeve, William Richardson the overseer of the barn, and the manor of Westbury was in the charge of a reeve called Nicholas Boulting.

It is not possible to give a firm figure for the value or quantity of the bishop's goods and chattels from the evidence provided by the Exchequer survey. Fortunately the lists of debts supplement the facts given in the depositions, for most of those who made off with the bishop's goods were charged with their cost when the commissioners found out and many were slow payers. Even so, there are obvious omissions and contradictions in the evidence provided. Where quantities and the names of purchasers are stated, the price is often omitted; the commissioners did not at any stage draw up a final schedule of the bishop's property, or if they did it is not attached to the other papers, and the document is so badly mutilated in places as to be undecipherable. But some kind of estimate can be made.

We may take just one class of goods, the bishop's livestock. William Baker, the bailiff of Banwell, and Thomas Purefey, gave a reasonably full account of the numbers of each kind of animal, and William Baker supplemented this before the second commission by

naming the purchasers where he knew them. By comparing the evidence of various witnesses, it is possible to draw up a more or less comprehensive schedule of one's own by listing only those beasts whose purchasers are known, and by supplying what seems to be the standard price where the real purchase price is omitted. Thus oxen were nearly always charged at £6 a yoke, steers at £3 each, a three-year old bull was £2, heifers were 26s. 8d. each, cows £2 to £2 5s., yearlings £1 each, calves 10s., sheep 8s. and a young pig cost 2s. 6d.

Using this method of listing, we can account for twelve horses and three colts (although Baker said there were eight). Of these one was the great horse called Boulting which went to Jerome Whitlocke and two other great horses for the coach. They were all worth £10 each. There was also a sumpter horse which, with its saddle, went to John Johnson, the London merchant, and a mare 'colour brown bay' worth £1 6s. 8d. which Thomas Manton had. The horses, at a most conservative estimate, were worth £42.

By the same method it is possible to account for only fifty-two pigs, whereas Walter West, the Banwell butcher, said that there were 68 and he doubtless knew. These 52 pigs alone account for about another £14 worth of stock and included two 'very great' boars at £2 each.

302 sheep valued at £121 can be accounted for, but there is a reference to four score untraced rams as well.

The most satisfactory total is that of the 171 cattle, which compares pretty well with the list given by William Baker. There were 2 bulls, 7 bullocks, 36 oxen, 35 steers, 14 heifers, 15 cows and 62 yearlings and calves, worth altogether about £337.

These rough and very conservative estimates show that the livestock of the bishop was worth something over £510, made up as follows :—

| | £ | s. | d. | |
|--------|-------|----|----|--|
| Cattle | 337 | 0 | 0 | |
| Sheep | 121 | 0 | 0 | |
| Horses | 42 | 0 | 0 | |
| Pigs | 14 | 0 | 0 | (This figure should probably be doubled) |
| | <hr/> | | | |
| | £510 | 0 | 0 | |
| | <hr/> | | | |

The missing four score rams would bring up the sheep figure, and we would expect it to be higher, since the bishop's estates lay largely in the Mendip sheep-farming area.

We must not forget the poultry in the fowl yard at Banwell. There must have been numerous hens and ducks but they are too unimportant to gain mention. But Walter West said that the garden at Banwell House was adorned with a peacock and three peahens, (Mr. Christopher Payne of Hutton took them and was charged 7s. 0d.) and that there were 37 'gannyes'¹ at Banwell and 9 at Ockingham House. And there were swans even then. John Warren of Banwell said he had seen 'two old swannes² whereof one was marked with the St. Andrews crosse'³ and that there followed them 'two young signettes marked with the ragged staff.' He does not state whether this was at Wells or Banwell, but presumably at Banwell, since he lived there.

Looking at the bishop's assets in crops and grain, we can but accept the static position as given to the first commissioners by William Baker, who accounted for the Banwell stocks, and Richard Counsell and William Richardson who spoke for Wells. Unfortunately, the units of measurement are not uniform, but to form some idea of the division of crops on the bishop's demesne lands, putting the totals for Banwell and Wells together, we get this result :—

| | | <i>Crop</i> | <i>Amount</i> | <i>Value</i> | | |
|--------|---------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----|-----------|
| | | | | £ | s. | d. |
| Wheat | growing | 132 acres | 62 | 0 | 0 | |
| | stored | 42 loads | 84 | 0 | 0 | |
| | stored | 50 bushels | 7 | 10 | 0 | |
| | | | <hr/> | | | 153 10 0 |
| Barley | stored | 49 qtrs. | 44 | 2 | 0 | |
| Hay | stored | 90 loads | 30 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | | <hr/> | | | 74 2 0 |
| | | | <hr/> | | | £227 12 0 |
| | | | <hr/> | | | |

1 Gannies were turkeys. Halliwell, *op. cit.*

2 For the sake of those who do not know Wells, the moat around the Bishop's Palace is noted for its swans, which have been trained to ring a bell when they are due to be fed.

3 Both the Cathedral Church of Wells and the Parish Church at Banwell are dedicated to St. Andrew.

This gives the impression that wheat was the predominant crop ; it accounts for over half the total value. But we must remember that this is a winter, December, picture and includes the winter-sown wheat. A summer count would give a higher figure for barley and hay in growing crops.

There were other crops less important financially, but which added variety to the diet of the bishop's household and which fill out the picture of a self-sufficient economy. Beans were grown at Banwell. Over 100 bushels were accounted for to the second commission at 2s. 4d. a bushel. The same commission was told of 200 lbs. of hops sold at 8d. a lb. by Walter West, the bishop's brewer. It is interesting to learn of hops being grown at Banwell in the late sixteenth century. This explains why the bishop had a well-equipped brewhouse. There were also crops of apples and of walnuts which probably came from the great nut tree in the Court Orchard. If we allow £250 to cover his crops and produce, we shall probably not be far wrong.

Again, accepting the round figures given to the first commission by William Baker and John Lunde, who was the woodward, we can make a rough estimate of the bishop's resources in cut wood and timber at Banwell and Wells. We have noticed that the commissioners were enjoined to make a special enquiry about this and that several witnesses spoke of the waste of wood and timber during the bishop's lifetime and after. A standard price for a piece of timber was 6s. 8d., for a load of wood 5s., for timber trees 5s. a pair. This gives the following totals :—

| | £ | s. | d. | |
|---------------------|-------|----|----|-----------|
| 68 pieces of timber | 22 | 13 | 4 | |
| 160 loads of wood | 40 | 0 | 0 | |
| 30 timber trees | 7 | 10 | 0 | |
| | <hr/> | | | |
| | £70 | 3 | 4 | (say £70) |

The piles of thorn faggots, timber from the park at Banwell and ' oken boordes ' which come under these headings were much in demand by the inhabitants of Banwell.

The bishop's furniture is much more difficult to assess. The first commission used a jury to draw up a schedule of the goods remaining at Banwell in the manor house and in the new house at Towerhead, and comparison with what was found elsewhere shows that

both places had been denuded of all the most valuable goods. In two of the little chambers at Ockingham House there were two carpets described as 'old', one of 'dormie'¹ and one of tapestry worth 10s. Divided between these two rooms were also hangings and two old velvet cushions worth £3, three green 'linney wolsey'² curtains and three curtains of red and green say³ worth 10s. altogether, seven chests in the wardrobe worth 26s. 8d., two old cloth chairs of green worth 5s. and twelve joined stools worth 10s. The parlour and the little chamber above it were left with only their hangings, three curtains of green say and a cupboard cloth. The great chamber still retained its valuable hangings of old tapestry. They were worth £6 13s. 4d. and were afterwards acquired by Geoffrey Upton, but the only other contents were two chairs, one of leather and the other of old silk worth 5s., and six livery cupboards worth 30s.

All the other refinements, the better hangings and the silk carpet of imagery worth 13s. 4d. acquired by William Watkins, the numerous bedsteads, the bolsters and cushions, the damask tablecloths and napkins, the fine holland sheets, the blankets, the coverlet of tapestry lined with blue linen, the silver and plate and brass and pewter, had been whisked away.

Let us first try to account for the furniture, pewter and brass excluding the linen, hangings and cushions. We have seen that John Lunde carried off the prize, 'a fair drawing table of walmutt tree' worth £6, Thomas Mydleham had a good bedstead of wainscot, Robert Godwin had a new square table and another long one out of the bishop's palace at Wells, and John Seffe of Banwell acquired a black leather chair worth 5s. The bishop owned at least 28 beds ranging from several good ones of wainscot worth 30s. each to plain ones at 4s. Brass candlesticks are charged at 1s. each, old pewter ones at 2d. each and old pewter dishes at 6d. each. A little joined stool cost 1s. A total estimate for the furniture, brass and pewter is £67.

Of all his personal property it is the amount which the bishop had invested in bedding, linen, hangings and cushions that is truly

¹ A form of dornock, named after Dorneck, the Dutch word for Townay. It was applied, according to *The Drapers' Dictionary*, both to table-linens and to coarse damask.

² Linsey-woolsey was a coarse cloth spun from a mixture of linen and woollen. *The Drapers' Dictionary*.

³ Say was a thin serge or woollen cloth. *The Drapers' Dictionary*.

remarkable. He had spent more than twice as much, say £156, on that than on furniture, pewter and brass. He had earned a reputation for hospitality ' . . . he was a man very well esteemed in the countrie, beloved of all men for his great housekeeping ; of the better sort, for his kinde entertainment and pleasing discourse at his table '.¹ Such hospitality would demand a good stock of linen.

It has been possible to trace 60 featherbeds, a figure which relates very closely to the 28 beds, because it was the practice in the bishop's spacious household to use two featherbeds on each bedstead.² These featherbeds charged at £1 each, their bolsters at 3s. 4d., and the blankets, were mostly acquired in small lots and were much in demand among the inhabitants of Banwell.

The bishop's bedding and linen were obviously the most prized of his possessions. It was that which was first parcelled up and carried off after his death, and the quantity of it is remarkable. To mention only some of the items, there were at least 40 pairs of sheets, 9 tablecloths of damask or diaper,³ 32 blankets, 50 bolsters and pillows, 6 tapestry coverlets, 12 square Arras⁴ cushions and 5 long ones, 2 of velvet and 12 others not specified, 100 napkins of damask or diaper, and numerous hangings, including the best, those depicting St. Dunstan, which had been carried off to Sir Henry Portman.

The bishop's plate is more difficult to value because the price for about one-third of it, that which went to the merchant John Johnson of London in part payment of a debt, is not given. The remainder, with a few minor exceptions, was divided between Mr. Pike of Waverley, Surrey, whose lot was worth £66 3s. 4d., and Thomas Godwin who was held liable for £66 13s. 4d. for two great standing pots of silver and gilt, one old basin and ewer of silver, one gilt bowl, one college pot of silver, and one silver bowl.

Something must be allowed, say £35, although this is an underestimate, for all the miscellaneous articles not listed under the previous categories of goods. These included the weapons left in the manor house at Banwell, 2 corslettes worth 36s. 8d., 18 calivers, 5 flasks with touchboxes and 4 headpieces ; the contents of the

1 Harington, *op. cit.*

2 Deposition of Alice Nebbes.

3 Diaper was a rich figured or printed cloth usually of linen, but sometimes of silk. *The Drapers' Dictionary*. Halliwell, *op. cit.*

4 Arras was a superior kind of tapestry, so named from Arras, the capital of Artois, which was celebrated for its manufacture. *The Drapers' Dictionary*.

dairy there, a double cheese-press, 2 tubs, 4 pails, a butter churn and 3 cheesevats, all worth only 10s. ; the kitchen utensils, a gridiron worth 8d., a pair of pot hooks and 3 spits 6s. 4d., odd lots of wool at 6d. a lb. (which was comparatively expensive in an age when a pig cost only 2s. 6d.) and candles at 3d. a lb. And yet this £35 does not include agricultural implements and carts for which there are no prices at all.

Lastly there were the bishop's clothes, pictures and books. It is quite impossible to value these accurately. The best of the clothes went, as we know, to John Johnson, the Watling Street merchant, to offset debts. It included the prelate's parliament robes worth £9, 'a chymer of silke grogayne',¹ 'a tippett or ritche taffata',² 'a gown of silk grogayne faced with calever and lyned with squirrell', 'a gown of silke rashe, faced with calever and lyned with squirrell', '2 satten cassockes lyned with squirrel and 1 newe taffata hatt'. Then there was the doctor's hood of scarlet lined with taffeta which was converted into a waistcoat by the Middlezoy tailor, one velvet coat of which Thomas Godwin took possession, and the rochet of holland with cambric sleeves which William Whitlocke of Wokingham had. It was worth £6 13s. 4d.

We must remember that the books which were listed represent a depleted library, for Francis Godwin claimed to have acquired most of them before his father's death. They included a Bible, ten books of Common Prayer, Holinshed's Chronicles, the Works of St. Augustine, 'a great bocke of cosmographie' in Latin called *Theatrum Orbis*, a herbal and various religious pamphlets.

The four pictures taken, according to the evidence of Joan Came, to the house of Francis Godwin at Wells, are of great interest.

They were portraits of the Archbishop of Canterbury (John Whitgift), the Lord Chancellor (presumably Sir Christopher Hatton who held this office from April 1587 to November 1591), the Lord Treasurer (Burghley) and Sir Francis Walsingham. It would be of great interest to know if these portraits still exist, but Mr. J. F. Kerslake of the National Portrait Gallery who has kindly investigated this question, has not been able to identify them with any pictures

1 A chymmer was a loose upper robe, especially that worn by a bishop. Grograin was a coarse kind of taffeta. *The Drapers' Dictionary*.

2 A tippet, in ecclesiastical terms, is a band of silk or other material worn round the neck, with the two ends pendant from the shoulders in front. *New English Dictionary*.

extant. Both books and pictures confirm the prelate's reputation as a scholar and a courtier on familiar terms with the greatest in the land before the unfortunate dispute about the secession of the manor of Banwell.

Omitting, then, the clothes, pictures, books and agricultural deadstock, we may say that Bishop Godwin's personal estate in movable goods was worth about £1,300, made up as follows :—

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----|-------|--------|
| Cattle | .. | .. | .. | £514 |
| Crops | .. | .. | .. | 250 |
| Plate | .. | .. | .. | 200 |
| Bedding and linen | .. | .. | .. | 156 |
| Wood and timber | .. | .. | .. | 70 |
| Furniture, brass and pewter | .. | .. | .. | 67 |
| Miscellaneous | .. | .. | .. | 35 |
| | | | Total | £1,292 |

Perhaps, allowing for the articles not included and the conservative nature of all the totals given, £1,500 gives a fairly just estimate of his resources. For a person of his position, the bishop certainly died a poor man. He lived in an age of extravagance, when a state visit might cost Burghley £2,000-£3,000 and when seven doublets and two cloaks, a small part of Leicester's wardrobe, were worth £543¹. If we multiply by thirty we should say that, in modern values, the bishop was worth £45,000.

No account has been given here of the spoliation of the episcopal estates by the bishop's relatives during his brief tenure of office. That awaits my further study. Yet there is evidence of their acquisition of estates as well as offices and goods.² How much we wonder, did Harington know when he wrote that Godwin was 'used like a leaden conduite pipe to convey water to others, and drinke nothing but the dreggs and drosse and rust itself'.

Let Harington, who, for all his bias against the bishop, made a fair-minded summary of his qualities write his epitaph. 'His reading had bene much, his judgement and doctrine sound, his government mylde and not violent, his mynde charitable, and therefore I doubt not but when he lost this life, he wonne heaven according to his word, win God, win all'.

¹ Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth*, 253.

² e.g. H.M.C. *Dean and Chapter of Wells*, *op. cit.*, 312, 314.