

SOMERSET PAROCHIAL CLERGY, 1373-1404

BY ROBERT W. DUNNING, B.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.

In 1932 Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte published in these *Proceedings* a list of Somerset incumbents for the period 1354-1401, a period for which the episcopal registers of the diocese are missing.¹ One of the sources he used, and at second hand, was a list of clergy, with their benefices, dated 1389, which had been published earlier.² The provenance of this list was not given, and was apparently unknown to Maxwell Lyte. It belongs, in fact, to a series of documents in the Public Record Office known as Significations of Excommunication, and the series contains similar, and sometimes longer, lists of clergy drawn up in 1373, 1374, 1381, 1385, and 1404.³ The composite list of clergy which appears below is drawn from these documents to provide names of clergy and the dates of their appearance to supplement the list published by Maxwell Lyte and the much earlier compilation edited, uncritically, by F. W. Weaver, at the end of the last century.⁴

The documents which form the sources for the list were produced as part of the process of excommunication. Ecclesiastical authorities, having pronounced an offender excommunicate, were powerless to proceed against him further. Forty days had to elapse after sentence and if, at the end of that time, the offender remained obdurate the king's chancery was notified of the fact by the writ *Significavit*. This writ sought the aid of the secular authority to arrest him.⁵ The present list of clergy is drawn from six such writs sent by successive bishops of Bath and Wells for secular aid against those who had incurred excommunication for not paying taxes imposed on ecclesiastical property. In itself the offence was not uncommon, but in the period in question opposition to heavy taxation was widespread. The revolt of the laity, in part against the poll taxes levied by Richard II's government, is well known; it is less often realised that clerical opposition was equally common, involving in Bath and Wells diocese alone 27 beneficed clergy and chaplains in 1374, 67 in 1381, 26 in 1385, 11 in 1389, and 51 in 1404.⁶

Other names were also included in these writs. In each year there were laymen and clergy who were leasing church property; and in 1381 a number of monks were involved, including Hildebrand Inge, master of the priory of St. John at Minchin Buckland,⁷ and Abbot John and nine monks of Cleeve.⁸

The following list is arranged alphabetically according to the parish concerned. Some clergy were clearly not incumbents in the parish under which they appear: John Blake, for example, was described as clericus de Bridgwater, a phrase which implies inferior status. The words 'clerk' and 'chaplain' have in this list been used, as in the originals, to signify position as parochial clerk or chantry chaplain, and not as a description of a grade in Holy Orders. The letters *ML* and *W* refer to the lists published by Maxwell Lyte and Weaver.

¹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* 78 (1932), 44-108.

² *N.Q.S.D.* 13, 355.

³ Public Record Office, Chancery, Significations of Excommunication (C 85), 38/26 (1373), 38/27 (1374), 38/39-40 (1381), 38/41 (1385), 39/1 (1389), 39/12 (1404).

⁴ *Somerset Incumbents*, ed. F. W. Weaver (Bristol, 1889).

⁵ F. D. Logan, *Excommunication and the Secular Arm in Medieval England* (Toronto, 1968).

⁶ Three names are illegible.

⁷ *Victoria History of Somerset*, 2, 150.

⁸ The monks were Walter Topet, Richard Seuenhasse, John Bromhulle, John Brenne, William Tanton, John Tanton, William Drayton, Leonard Saundford and Thomas Dounster: P.R.O. C 85/38/40.

- AISHOLT. Robert, 1381.
John Machon, chaplain, 1381.
- ALLER. William Vynour, 1374; the William Vyriour of 1376-7 *ML*.
- ALLERTON. William, chaplain, 1404.
- ANGERSLEIGH. William, 1381; possibly William Cantelo *ML*.
John, 1404; probably John Noble *W*.
- ANSFORD. Walter, 1374.
- ASH PRIORS. John, chaplain, 1381.
- BABCARY. Adam, 1385. Adam of Usk's exchange with Hugh Wacham must therefore have taken place *ML*⁹.
- BAGBOROUGH. Richard, 1381; presumably Richard Forest *ML*.
- BANWELL. John, 1404; probably John Cockyng *W*.
- BATCOMBE. William, 1374; probably William Baker *ML*.
- BATHEALTON. William, 1404; probably William Dorcetree *W*.
- BEERCROCOMBE. William, 1404.
- BISHOP'S LYDEARD. John Thursteyn, clerk, 1381.
Richard, 1404; possibly Richard Lorgh *W*.
- BRADFORD ON TONE. Thomas, chaplain, 1381.
- BRADON, SOUTH. William, 1381.
- BRATTON SEYMOUR. Peter, 1385; presumably Peter Byrd *ML*.
- BREAN. William, 1374.
- BRENT, EAST. Walter, 1385.
Philip, 1404; probably Philip Yerdele *W*.
- BRIDGWATER. John Blake, clerk, 1381.
- BROMPTON RALPH. William, 1381.
John, 1389.
- BROMPTON REGIS. William, 1404; probably William de Wappeton *W*.
- BRYMPTON D'EVERCY. Simon Steynton, 1389.
- CAMERTON. John, 1385; probably John Bole *ML*.
- CANNINGTON. Walter, 1404.
- CHARLTON ADAM. John, 1381.
- CHARLTON MACKRELL, Chantry. John, 1381.
- CHEDDAR. John, 1374; probably John Whyttok *ML*.
- CHERITON. Walter, 1385.
- CHEWSTOKE *see* STOKE.
- CHILTON CANTELO. William, 1389; presumably William Ryel *ML*.
- CHINNOCK, MIDDLE. William, 1381.
- CLOSORTH. William Clyfton, 1373.
Lawrence, 1374.
- CLUTTON. Richard, 1404; probably Richard Spicer *W*.
- COKER, EAST. John, 1385; presumably John Paule *ML*.
- COKER, WEST. John, 1374.
- COMBE ST. NICHOLAS. William, 1373.
John, 1381.
Richard, 1404.
- COMPTON DUNDON. John, 1381.
- CORSTON. Richard, 1385.
- CREWKERNE, SECOND PORTION. William Ponton or Pouton, 1381.
- CRICKET MALHERBIE. Peter, 1404; evidently Peter Byschop *W*.
- CRICKET ST. THOMAS. William, 1374, 1381.
- CUCKLINGTON. William, 1374.

⁹ Adam of Usk (c. 1352-1430) was a prominent cleric and lawyer, and author of a chronicle for the years 1377-1404. He was resident in Oxford while holding Babcary, which he exchanged in 1387: A. B. Emden, *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*.

- CURRY MALLET. Richard, 1381; presumably Richard Craddoc *ML*.
John, chaplain, 1381.
- CURRY RIVEL. John, clerk, 1381.
- DOWLISH WYLLAM (? DOWLISHWAKE). John, 1381.
- EASTHAM. Thomas, 1381.
- ELM. Walter, 1404.
- ENMORE. Thomas, 1381.
Robert, 1404; probably Robert Moulhanger *W*.
- EVERCREECH. Walter Edward, 1374.
- EXTON. William (le) Venour, 1374.
- FARLEIGH HUNGERFORD. William, 1385; probably William Banwell *ML*.
- FARMBOROUGH. John, 1385.
- FIVEHEAD. John, 1404; probably John Goolde *W*.
- GOATHILL. William, 1381.
John, 1385.
- HARDINGTON. Edmund, 1404; evidently Edmund Gamage *W*.
- HASELBURY PLUCKNETT. Thomas, 1381; possibly Thomas Antony *ML*.
- HATCH BEAUCHAMP. Thomas, 1381; presumably Thomas Wyldemersshe *ML*.
John, 1404; probably John Grafte *W*.
- HEATHFIELD. John, 1381; presumably John Hore *ML*.
William, 1404; probably William Mogrygge *W*.
- HINTON BLEWETT. John, 1404; probably John Ford *W*.
- HOLFORD. Thomas, 1404; probably Thomas Bruning *W*.
- HORSINGTON. William, 1381; presumably William Tomer *ML*.
- HUIISH CHAMPFLOWER. Ralph John, 1381.
- HUIISH EPISCOPI. William, 1385.
- HUNTSPELL. William, 1385; probably William Loryng *ML*.
- ILCHESTER, ST. MICHAEL. Roger, 1381.
- ISLE ABBOTTS. Nicholas, 1381.
- KEINTON MANDEVILLE. William, 1374.
- KILVE *see* STRINGSTON.
- KINGSTON ST. MARY. Thomas, 1404; possibly Thomas Galon *W*.
- KINGSTON SEYMOUR. John, 1404.
- KINGWESTON. William, 1374; Richard Palmere's incumbency was therefore apparently interrupted *ML*.
- KYNGESTON (? KINGSTONE). Walter, chaplain, 1404.
- LANGFORD BUDVILLE. Richard Puryman, chaplain, 1381.
- LANGRIDGE. William, 1374.
- LIMINGTON. John, 1381, 1385.
- LIMINGTON, Chantry. Richard, 1381.
- LYDFORD, EAST. Richard, 1385; probably Richard Budel *ML*.
- MARKSBURY. Walter, 1374; probably Master Walter Okeburne *ML*.
- MARSTON BIGOT. Thomas, 1374; probably Thomas Walsh *ML*.
- MARSTON MAGNA. William, 1381.
- MERRIOTT. John Jene, 1381.
- MIDSOMER NORTON. John, 1374; possibly John Hesre *ML*.
- MILBORNE PORT. Henry, 1385; *ML* needs revision here.
- MILVERTON. Thomas Beupel, chaplain, 1381.
- MISTERTON. Thomas, 1381.
- MONKSILVER. William, 1404.
- MONTACUTE. William, 1385; probably William Norman *ML*.
- MUCHELNEY. Robert, 1381.
- NETTLECOMBE. John, 1373.
- NORTON (probably NORTON FITZWARREN). Robert, chaplain, 1404.

- OAKE. John, 1381.
- ORCHARDLEIGH. John, 1385.
- PENDOMER. Roger, 1374.
- PETHERTON, NORTH. John Colle, chaplain, 1373.
John Legh, clerk, 1381.
- PETHERTON, NORTH, Shearston Chapel. William Serle, 1381.
- PILTON. Thomas, 1374.
- PITMINSTER. Richard, 1373.
John, chaplain, 1381.
- PODIMORE MILTON. William, 1381; probably William Gregory *ML*.
- PORTBURY. John, 1404; probably John Walteres *W*.
- POYNTINGTON. Henry, 1385; evidently Henry Willes *ML*.
- PUCKINGTON. William, 1381.
- QUANTOXHEAD, EAST. Philip, 1381; Richard Pouldon did not, as *ML*, remain until 1403.
- RADSTOCK. Thomas, 1374; probably Thomas Bardolfe *ML*.
- RIMPTON. John, 1381, 1385; evidently John Lynne *ML*.
- RODNEY STOKE. Nicholas, 1374, 1381; probably Nicholas Styland *ML*.
- ST. DECUMANS. Simon, 1373.
Richard, 1374, 1381; presumably Richard Sherwynd's exchange in 1372 was not effective *ML*.
John Touker, chaplain, 1381.
- SALTFORD. William, 1385.
- SAMPFORD BRET. John, 1381; possibly John Bensyn *ML*.
John, 1404; possibly John Cory *ML*.
- SANDFORD ORCAS. William, 1385.
- SEABOROUGH. Thomas, 1381.
- SEAVINGTON. Roger Baker, chaplain, 1381.
- SHEARSTON *see* PETHERTON, NORTH.
- SHIPHAM. Nicholas, 1374; evidently Nicholas Drayton *ML*.
- SKILGATE. John, 1374; presumably John atte Brugge *ML*.
- SOMERTON, Chantry. Adam, 1381.
- STOCKLAND BRISTOL. Thomas, 1381; possibly Thomas Copp *ML*.
- STOGUMBER. John, 1404; presumably John Lodre *W*.
- STOGURSEY. John, 1404.
- STOKE, NORTH. William, 1404; probably William Ploute *W*.
- STOKE PERO. John, 1404; possibly John Spoer: *Register of Henry Bowet* (Som. Rec. Soc. 13), no. 290.
- STOKE (probably CHEWSTOKE). Thomas, 1385.
- STRATTON ON THE FOSSE. John, 1385; probably John Brooke *ML*.
- STRINGSTON, Chapel. Richard, 1381.
- TAUNTON, ST. MARY. Matthew, 1381; presumably Matthew Palmere *ML*.
- THORNE ST. MARGARET. William, 1381.
- THORNFALCON. Robert, 1381; probably Robert Edyngton *ML*.
- THURLOXTON. William, 1381; possibly William of Esshe *ML*.
John, 1404.
- TINTINHULL. John, 1385; presumably John Stone *ML*.
- UBLEY. Thomas, 1404; possibly Thomas Legh *W*.
- WALCOT. Peter, 1374; *see ML*.
- WEARE. Robert, 1385.
- WEDMORE. Robert, 1404; probably Robert Tanner *W*.
- WELLINGTON. John, clerk, 1381.
Robert, 1404.
- WESTBURY. Robert, 1374; possibly Robert Edyngton *ML*.
- WHATLEY. Richard, chaplain, 1404.

WHITELACKINGTON. John, 1404; possibly John Strete *W*.
WINSFORD. John, clerk, 1381.
WITHIEL FLOREY. Robert, 1381.
WITHYCOMBE. John, 1404.
WIVELISCOMBE. William Utinam, chaplain, 1381.
YEOVILTON. Master Walter Mabeley, 1374.
YEOVILTON, Speckington Chapel. William, chaplain, 1404.