

Notes on the History of Winsford.

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WINSFORD Rivers and Winsford Bosing were the names of the principal manors given in an old lease dated 1756. Collinson states that in 1272 John de Ripariis held the hamlet of Wyneford of Amicia, Countess of Lisle, by the payment of one knight's fee.¹ The perambulation of the Royal Forest of Exmoor, 1298, includes the "Villa de Wyneforde, cum boscis, brueris et aliis pertinentiis, quam Ricardus de Ripariis et Stephanus Beumunde tenent."² (Winsford Bosing, perhaps, taking its name from Beumunde). In the "Nomina Villarum" of 1316, the Lords of the Manor are Ricardus de Ryvers and Johannes de Acton. In the time of Fitz Joceline, Bishop of Bath and Wells, Alicia Roges gave to the church of St. Andrew at Wells, the church at Winsford, with all its appurtenances. According to Dugdale, William de Regny gave to the Priory of Barlynch, a ferling of land in the manor of North Wynesforde, and the advowson of the church of that vill; while sometime before 1268, by a gift of 200 marks from Hugo de Romenall, Treasurer at Wells, the Prior and Canons of Barlynch purchased a rent of 100 shillings a year, and half a virgate of land in Winsford, together with the advowson of the church. There appear to have been conflicting claims to the church and land of Wins-

1. *Collinson*. Vol. iii, p. 555.

2. Royal Forest of Exmoor. *Rawle*.

ford, which were settled by the transference of all asserted rights to the Priory, Hugo de Romenall making peace by supplying to the Prior of Barlynch the means of compensating the authorities at Wells for the loss of the church.¹ In 1280 the Priory endowed the vicarage with the whole tithe of wool, lambs, chickens, calves, pigs, ducklings, cheese, butter, flax, honey, and all other small tithes, and oblations and dues pertaining to the altar offerings of the church, with the mortuaries, and the tithe of all grist corn existing in the parish, and the whole tithe of hay, except the tithes coming from the Rector's domain. Also that the "Vicar, for the time being, shall have that field which lies between the house of the Rector of the church and the water of the Exe, as it is enclosed, together with the house of the Chaplain, which is situated in the same field, and the long cattle-shed which is situated outside the aforesaid field, together with the pasture for all his animals in the common pasture. But the small tithes of the parishioners, from the animals belonging to the Prior and Convent of Berlich, being kept, or grazing in the parish, the Vicar shall not receive." The Vicar agreed to pay the sum of ten shillings yearly to the Priory on the Feast of the Circumcision, and to bear all the ordinary burdens, but for extraordinary burdens the Priory agreed to bear two-thirds, the Vicar the remaining one-third.²

In the taxation of Pope Nicholas IV, the church was taxed at 12 marks, the vicarage at 8 marks.

Pension of the Prior of Berliz 10 shillings.

In 1453 the Priory, "considering that the income of the vicarage consisted chiefly of the tithes of lambs, calves and other animals, and that there was not sufficient allotment of land for their bringing up, decreed that the vicarage should be endowed with the glebe lands, and also the whole tithe of hay proceeding from the tenement of the Rector, the Vicar, for himself

1. Proceedings Som. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Society. Vol. xxviii.

2. Wells MSS.

and his successors, agreeing to pay the annual rent of 20 shillings to the Priory, and also to provide, at his own cost, two suitable processional wax candles, which ought to burn only at the time of procession as had hitherto been the custom."¹ The church was perhaps rebuilt about the middle of the fifteenth century, the glebe being added at the same time.

John Chester, Prior of Barlynch, became Vicar in 1483, on the death of John Stampe, retaining the office of Prior till his death,² thus keeping both the rectory and vicarage in the hands of the Priory. At the dissolution the rectory was valued at £9 10s. 0d. Collinson states that it was granted to the Earl of Hertford. In 1594, on the death of John Wyndeet, Vicar, by a copyist's error, the vicarage was called a rectory, and F. Gates was presented to the rectory by Robert Grace de Sutton, Clerk, of the County of Nottingham, the nomination being allowed by Sir Adrian Stokes and Lady Frances Suffolk. F. Gates was cited to Wells to show cause why Charles Chadwick should not be presented to the vicarage by Emmanuel College, Cambridge.³

The advowson of the vicarage was presented to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1589, by William Neale, Esquire, Auditor to the Treasury, and Alderman of the City of London. Charles Chadwick being the first Vicar appointed by the College.

The name of Mr. Thomas Dyke occurs in a poor rate of 1651, as rated for the Sheaf tithe. Sir Thomas Acland, seventh Baronet, married Miss Elizabeth Dyke, only daughter of Dr. Dyke, of Tetton, and the name of "Squire Ackland" appears in 1748, he having succeeded to the lands and part of the rectorial tithes belonging to Dr. Dyke.

The church was dedicated to St. Peter before the Reformation, as shewn by several Winsford Wills, but it became

1. Wells MSS.
2. *Archers' Religious Houses of Somerset.*
3. *Somerset Incumbents*, p. 466.

changed to St. Mary Magdalene. The Sunday after St. Peter's Day is still known as Revel Sunday.

According to the Wills there were nine stores in the church, viz. : St. Peter, B.V.M., High Cross, the Dead Light, St. James, St. Katherine, St. Anthony, Blessed Mary of Pity, and St. David.¹

In 1654, according to an old deed, the roof the south side of the church was relaid with lead by Joseph Williams, of Barnstaple, who undertook to cast and lay up the lead and keep it in repair, at his own cost, for a period of twenty years, for the sum of £12 6s. 9d.

During the eighteenth, and early part of the nineteenth centuries, the church was constantly in the hands of carpenters and masons for repairs. During the years 1804-5-6, the sum of over £368 was spent on the church, chiefly on the roof, which was then ceiled and plastered. In 1813 a new screen was erected, the Commandments and Coat of Arms being fixed above the screen, at the entrance of the chancel. These were removed by the late Sir T. D. Acland and the present Vicar in 1858, when the south porch was rebuilt. There is no evidence when the old screen was removed. During the years 1800 to 1834, no less than £1465 17s. 6d. was spent on the church, all of which was raised by rate in the parish. In 1890-1 the church was restored by the late Mr. Sedding, and a local contractor, at a cost of £1200.

It may not be out of place to remark that these sums were spent on the church when the yearly charges on the parish were very heavy. The poor rate was seldom less than £400 a year, sometimes above £500 and £600, and the highway rate often exceeded £50. The large sums spent on the church showed the zeal of the parishioners for the House of God, for while the church rate, when made, was compulsory, yet no sums were expended by the Wardens, except the ordinary and regular charges, but what were ordered and sanctioned by the

1. Wells Wills.

majority of the ratepayers at Vestry meetings called for the purpose. At the end of each year the accounts were audited, and signed by two magistrates. The average yearly expenditure on the poor, for the years 1800 to 1834, was £473 2s. 6d., on the church £43 2s. 3½d., on the highways £56 15s. 9d., a total average expenditure of £573, all raised by rate in the parish.

The bells were re-hung, and a new treble bell, bearing the inscription, "Pro Deo et Regina," erected in 1897 at a cost of £150. They had previously been re-cast and re-hung in 1764-5 by Thomas Bilbie, of Cullompton, at a cost of £105.

The organ was erected in 1860. It was presented to the parish by the Rev. D. Twopeny, Vicar of Stockbury, Kent.

The Coat of Arms bears the inscription I. R. Año Dñi 1609.

"I advertise thee to observe the mouth of ye King, and that for ye word of ye oathe of God." Ecclesiastes viii, 2.

"Curse not the King, noe not in thy thought, neither curse ye riche in thie bedchamber, for the fowle of heaven shall cary ye voice, and that which hath wings shall declare the matter." Eccles. x, 20.

The oak pulpit is Jacobean, as are also the communion rails. In the east window of the chancel there is some pre-reformation stained glass. It consists of a figure of the Virgin and child. Underneath is a Latin inscription in old English characters, which formed part of a longer inscription, but one portion of the glass seems to have been inverted. The beginning is "Ore p āiabs dñm," the latter part looks like "Vicariis

Ore p āiabs dñm "zmoq" "zmoq"

or Vicarius huius," neither of which make good Latin. They are probably put in out of place, and require more of the

original inscription for their interpretation, "hujus," most likely, was followed by "Ecclesiæ." The general purport of the inscription would appear to be an invitation to pray for the souls of the Vicars of this church.

A description of the church plate I must leave to the abler hands of Prebendary Hancock. The silver paten bears the inscription: "The gift of Thomsin Widlake, bought by Roger Widlake, 1633."

In the Wardens' accounts for 1598, Thamosen Widlake was chosen Warden for the north side of the parish, and one item in the same accounts is: "Their is due to Roger Widlake from the pr̄yshe xxs. vijd." An old parchment deed in my possession, dated 1597, sets forth the purchase by lease of the tenement of West How in the parish of Exton, but adjoining the village of Winsford, by George Widlake, for the benefit of his two daughters, Thamosen and Jane Widlake. The parish registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials commence with the year 1660. They contain little more than the bare entries. In 1665, the plague, or some other sickness, must have visited Winsford with some severity, as there were thirty-two burials in that year, fourteen being in April, and several in May.

The old church accounts commence with the year 1550, and continue regularly till 1576, then 1594 to 1599. Overseer accounts, 1651 to 1654, then regularly since 1714. In the older accounts, a body known as "The four men" were elected annually to assist the Wardens in the management of the church stock. They rendered their accounts in December. In 1595 they were known as "The eight men," four from the north side, and four from the south side. The older accounts contain few entries of great interest, being little more than moneys received and expended. It is remarkable that they contain but one reference to the change of religion in Mary's reign: "1558—Except the tabernakell which is not yet allowed for." A Vicar, Ægidius Hillyng, was appointed in

Mary's reign. He was deprived in 1560, because, at the Royal Visitation, and subsequently for a year, he absented himself from his benefice. In 1662, Joseph Chadwick, Vicar, was deprived for refusing to subscribe to the Book of Common Prayer.¹

The accounts of the Teithingmen for 1596 are interesting :

“Their is in the Hande of Bartholomewe Harroode, one teithinge muskett performed.

Itē) One curatt performed lacking a pike.

Itē) Their is in the hande of William Norman the bodye of one costlett lacking a gourgett to the same.

Itē) Their is in the hande of Robert Pearse one costlett performed.

Itē) One muskett with his flaxe, twichboxe, moll and rest.

Itē) Their is in the hande of William Norman one sheef of arrowes.

Itē) Their is in the hande of Willia) Bradford, fermer, one payer of Almett Ryvete.

The brass tablet erected in the church is to the memory of the Lyddon family of Edbrooke, a farm near the Exe, about half-a-mile from the village. The first mention of Lyddon in Winsford is in 1561, when among the “dettes owed to the p—sshe” we find Nicolis Liddon iij*s.* iiij*d.* A deed in my possession, dated January 7th, 167*9*, sets forth the purchase of Edbrooke (also called Brooke Sandford Tenement), on a 99 years lease from Ferdinando Gorges of Eye, co. Hereford, the son of Thomas Gorges, Esq., of Heavitree, Devon, by William Liddon. In 1680 the freehold was purchased by his son, Robert Liddon. The said William Liddon contributed two shillings to the Benevolence granted to Charles II in 1662.

The will of Thomas Gorges, dated 1665, mentions his “demesne of Edbrooke, a little manor in the parish of Wins-

1. Somerset Incumbents.

ford, which I purchased of my honoured nephew, John Sanford, of Ninehead, Somerset."¹

The Sanfords resided at Winsford for many generations; they came originally in the time of Edward I. The Lyddons owned and occupied Edbrooke till 1894, when it was sold.

Since 1664, a space of 236 years, there have been seven Vicars of Winsford, an average of over thirty-three years.

1. Somerset Wills. Vol. vi.