

The Impact of the Reformation on the Parish within Cornwall and Wales

MTH CHURCH HISTORY, UWTSD

MARILLA WALKER



Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to identify whether there were similarities in the way the non-English speaking communities of Cornwall and Wales experienced a central Tudor Reformation. The aim of the research was to establish if patterns exist at a local level in how parishes dealt with the religious changes they were living through. Given the lack of surviving churchwarden accounts for Wales, much focus was placed on other ecclesiastical documents from the reformation in Wales and a qualitative approach taken rather than embarking on creating an empirical survey. Secondary evidence, particularly in relation to churchwardens' accounts, has also been considered. Although much work has been carried out on the Tudor parish it became clear from the research that a similar pattern of parochial agency existed within these parishes. Religious ritual and the extent of impact the Reformation had on worship, ceremonial ornaments and the physical church within Cornwall and Wales was comparable. Trends in parochial finance and communal identity demonstrated greater variation across the two non-English speaking areas of the Tudor realm.

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I dedicate this thesis to my family.

Contents

Introduction	5
1. Parochial Agency	12
2. Religious Ritual	35
3. Economic and Social Activity	55
Conclusion	61
Reference List	63

The Impact of the Reformation on the Parish within Cornwall and Wales

A comparative study of Tudor parish records from Cornwall and Wales analysing the impact of rapid religious change on Cornish and Welsh communities

Introduction

Given the breadth of research already carried out incorporating churchwarden accounts to explore parish life under the Tudors this research this thesis has evolved from the belief that there is still scope for another study based on churchwarden accounts. Literature focusing on Cornwall has not been extensive and new transcriptions has opened up greater opportunities of research. The number of surviving accounts in Welsh parishes has often resulted in Wales being overlooked or considered central to wider local surveys of parish life in ‘England and Wales’ under the Tudors.

To overcome the scarcity of Welsh churchwarden accounts, which is indeed a limitation in researching impact of the reformation in Welsh parishes, other ecclesiastical sources will be used in this study. It is hoped that supplementing research with visitation records for example, will provide the in-depth view of how local parishes dealt with the religious changes they were living through. Cornwall being part of the Exeter diocese since 1050 will also make it necessary to include some Devonian sources. Churchwarden accounts give a unique microscopic view, but cross referencing will ensure a more holistic assessment of the impact. This thesis does not intend to provide a ‘collection of empirical evidence to prove a particular point’¹ although by focusing on non-English speaking regions under the Tudor

¹ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 6.

government it does by default continue with a topographical bias; a methodological trend already set by previous academic research on individual counties or one county as a whole.

This thesis attempts a considered comparative approach of experiences in Cornwall and Wales only. By rejecting quantitative empiricism it intends to examine the sources to look for basic trends across the two regions. It will endeavour to show that the benefits of looking at both quite unique areas of the Tudor realm will outweigh the concerns regarding the historical record which will negatively impact upon the applied methodology.

The aim of this research in the first instance is to establish if there were patterns or similarities and differences of the extent of change impacting parishes within the non-English speaking communities of Cornwall and Wales experiencing a central Reformation enforced by the Tudor governments of Henry VIII through to Elizabeth I. To investigate newly emerging patterns of religious change being established in parishes, such as Stratton, within Cornwall alongside patterns of religious change in the local communities of the diocese of Wales between 1534-1603 during the reforms of the Tudor Monarchs. The intention is to discuss how much parochial agency existed within these parishes during this time. The discussion will then turn to religious ritual and the impact the Reformation had on worship, ceremonial ornaments and the physical church at a local level. This will lead into an exploration of trends in parochial finance and communal ties and identity.

To analyse and contrast existing Cornish and Welsh parish records, including churchwarden accounts, general receiver's books, episcopal registers, augmentations, parochial returns, bishop's transcripts, wills and probate records and manorial records. This thesis aims to consider what the Reformation meant for towns and villages in Cornwall and Wales.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

During the 1960s attention was given by historians to the religious feelings of the population and the unorthodox ritual, where links to pagan origins were discussed. Minorities and heretics were of interest.

A.G Dickens² focused on early signs of religious discontent which displayed some methodological bias according to Beat, but other historians such as J.J. Scarisbrick interpreted that the English people 'did not want the Reformation'.³ Leading Tudor revisionist Christopher Haigh believed that England remained divided well into the reign of Elizabeth..⁴ As recent as 1988 hardly anything was written on the social unit of the parish, as focus had been on religious history.⁵ Into the 1990s research from a variety of angles was carried out with detailed work exploring on clergymen and focus on the political developments of the Reformation.

Research moved to more studies of parish records. Cox had previously researched churchwarden accounts from the 14th century often dwelling on extraordinary specimen entries.⁶ In-depth ecclesiastical surveys across England and Wales were now explored putting customs and ritual under the microscope. Ronald Hutton's exhaustive studies of eighteen parishes examined activity in the parish and the development of rituals.⁷ Revisionist work by both Hutton and Scarisbrick demonstrated the significance of analysing surviving fraternity registers and churchwarden accounts. Charles Drew embarked on a discussion of the 'potential and the pitfalls of churchwarden accounts'.⁸ Empirical evidence and nationwide

² A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London: Batsford, 1964).

³ J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985) p. 1.

⁴ C. Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 285-95.

⁵ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996) p. 4.

⁶ J. Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the Fourteenth Century to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1919).

⁷ R. Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: OUP, 1994).

⁸ Beat. A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community* p. 82.

surveys were now embraced by historians researching religious change. An interest in parish life on the Continent in comparison with England has also been an area of consideration.

Social comparisons made within a European geographical framework.

Duffy researched the Tudor Reformation in the micro-scale incorporating the use of last wills and testaments.⁹ Duffy's 'Stripping of the Altars' focused on the devotional life of the parish. Greater use of local parish records by these works considered looking at the turbulent period of religious change through the eyes of the parishioners, giving greater consideration to what it felt like to live through this turbulent time and the collective capacity of the parish was acknowledged. Both Duffy and Whiting¹⁰ considered what the devotional nature of parishes was like on the eve of the Reformation and continued to research the South-West region.

Kumin's 'The Shaping of a Community'¹¹ took a comparative approach across a sample of ten case studies with surviving churchwarden accounts allowing an empirical methodology. It also included a great variety of other surviving records. Such works started to show an interest in the origin and early development of the parish itself. This new approach focused upon subparochial institutions or aspects of local identity. The Shaping of a Community' maintains' influence of princes and bishops, in contrast, appears only indirectly and this wider study corroborated earlier findings K.L. French's combined research on the community with an in-depth local survey of Bath and Wells.¹² Kumin stated that his priority was 'to assess how these signals were received, modified or resisted by people'.¹³ It is this aspect this thesis intends to explore further in relation to Cornwall and Wales.

⁹ E. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars* 2nd edition (London: Yale University Press, 2005) pp.504-23.

¹⁰ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹¹ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996).

¹² K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvanian: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

¹³ Beat. A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community* p. 6.

Historiography focusing on the Reformation in Wales was described by the eminent late historian Sir Glanmor Williams as ‘the dog that hasn’t barked’.¹⁴ This is clearly no longer accurate as much has been published since the 1960s but even today studies of religion in Wales ‘lag behind those dealing with England, Scotland, and Ireland in various respects’.¹⁵ The University of Kent’s 2010 conference on ‘Early Modern Churchwardens’ Accounts: Uses and Abuses’ led to the collection of essays ‘Views from the Parish’ which amid the ‘new’ British History saw continued research by Katherine K. Olsen which gave attention to Wales.¹⁶ Cornwall has seen a similar ‘lag’ regarding singular studies based on churchwarden accounts since E. Peacock’s founding work on Stratton.¹⁷ Joanna Mattingly has recently changed this situation by offering a new transcription of ‘Stratton Churchwardens’ accounts 1512-1578’ and without which, this dissertation would not be able to be researched.¹⁸

¹⁴ G. Williams, *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962).

¹⁵ K. K. Olsen, ‘Religion, Politics, and the Parish in Tudor England and Wales: A View from the Marches of Wales, 1534-1553’, *British Catholic History*, 30 (4) (2011), 527-526 p. 527.

¹⁶ V. Hitchman and A. Foster, (ed.) *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens’ Accounts c. 1500-c.1800* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

¹⁷ E. Peacock, ‘On the Churchwardens Accounts of the Parish of Stratton’, in the County of Cornwall, *Antiquity*, 46 (1880).

¹⁸ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens’ Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018).

THE HISTORICAL RECORD AND METHODOLOGY

Methodology has shifted to reassess English reactions to the Reformation at a grassroots level through using surviving primary sources. Use of wills need to be handled with caution and supplemented by the records of collective and communal institutions according to Kumin.¹⁹ Examining churchwarden accounts can enlighten us on the state of diocesan administration, or relations with the parish clergy and the ecclesiastical courts adds to this wealth of recorded activity.

There are seven sets of churchwarden accounts in Cornwall and this thesis acknowledges that this small sample will struggle to prove its representative nature with statistical accuracy.²⁰

Stratton also has a parish archive used to clarify obscure points known as the Blanchmister Charity records (named after the main 14th century family) which covers 340 separate items.

21

Hutton²² recorded only seven churchwarden accounts for parishes in Welsh diocese but this is reduced once looking at the Tudor Reformation time period and can also include St. Oswald of Oswestry which belonged to St. Asaph.²³ And these are partial, for example St Mary's Swansea covers Elizabethan period fully. With two in St. David's and four in St. Asaph out of 664 parishes.²⁴ No accounts from 1558 survived from Bangor and Llandaff so additional

¹⁹ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 3.

²⁰ Beat. A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community*.

²¹ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018) p.2.

²² R. Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: OUP, 1994) appendix, pp. 263-293.

²³ K. K. Olsen, 'Counting Communities, Counting Cultures: Problems and Progress with Early Modern Churchwardens' Accounts in Western England and Wales', in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts c. 1500-c.1800*, ed. V. Hitchman and A. Foster, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) pp. 89-107.

²⁴ K. K. Olsen, 'Counting Communities, Counting Cultures: Problems and Progress with Early Modern Churchwardens' Accounts in Western England and Wales', in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts c. 1500-c.1800*, ed. V. Hitchman and A. Foster, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) 89-107, (p.93).

source material will need to be examined in this work. It would indeed have been ‘helpful if Bishop Davies and his fellow-bishops and their successors had contrived to preserve the records of their sees rather more carefully’.²⁵

It will therefore prove ‘difficult to piece together evidence for some picture of the Reformation in Wales as a whole’²⁶ and impossible from churchwarden accounts. Wider sources such as Elis Gruffydd and Ieuan’s Memoranda will be considered as they provide a valuable perspective particularly on the upheavals of the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations in Wales.²⁷

²⁵ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.35).

²⁶ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century’, p.35.

²⁷ K. K. Olsen, ‘Religion, Politics, and the Parish in Tudor England and Wales: A View from the Marches of Wales, 1534-1553’, *British Catholic History*, 30 (4) (2011), 527-526 p. 527.

1. Parochial Agency

CHURCHWARDENS

The first reference to the office of churchwarden appears in the 1287 Exeter statutes but arguably it already existed and was an idea taken from a parish within the diocese. The evolving role of the churchwarden administered goods and property and acted as a parish representative at visitations.

The churchwarden's role was to respond according to parish resources and needs. The many demands on their skills to act as fundraisers, contractors and arbitrators was varied and if they failed it would be their parishioners' souls at risk, so the benefits of having access to the parish treasury was still not considered an incentive.²⁸ However Kumin argues that 'someone had to do the job and, on balance, the prestige and power of the office probably outweighed its burdens.'²⁹ Politically they were not in a position to formulate policy and serving may have been considered more of a family honour or a burden to be shared. Cox contends that it was not until late in the reign of Henry VIII that civil functions were attached to the office of churchwarden.³⁰ Perhaps the added responsibilities may have been an added attraction.

From this time churchwardens acted as a 'conduit' for reforming religious policies to the reach the parish.³¹ This was not an easy position to be in when at a local level they needed to take into account the local customs and identity of those who had elected them and this may

²⁸ K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvanian: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

²⁹ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996) p. 30.

³⁰ J. Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the Fourteenth Century to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1919) Introduction p.2.

³¹ K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvanian: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) ch. 3.

explain how they ranged in power and local influence. Such differences in their roles can be seen in the way they were (or were not) entrusted with the parish treasury. Churchwardens used their records to protect their communities at visitations and in creating their accounts were in a position to define their community. At Stratton the 'High Cross wardens' were not called churchwardens until 1550 and the General Receivers were also known as 'stock wardens'. The General Receivers acted as parish treasurers and dealt with much larger sums of money receiving receipts from guild and store profits.³²

The types of people who became churchwardens varies across the individual parishes where records still survive. Gentry and lower social orders are typical although women could serve although this happened more in England (Cornwall, Devon and Somerset) and these were usually widows. A widow is known to have served at St. Ewen suggesting that family status was more important than gender limitations.³³ There is no evidence to suggest this happened in Wales. Kumin concludes that the very top and bottom layers of local society were less likely to serve as churchwardens even though the parish heavyweights were present at the passing and auditing of the accounts.³⁴ Residency was a fundamental requirement as was being on the subsidy roll, and basic experience in money and business matters.³⁵ Attempts to contain their influence shows that they could use their office for their own or to further family interests and differences exist in the limitations of length of office and number of times they could serve in the position. It therefore seems that despite their position of power in the parish the community wished for them to act as a subservient servant. Checks on their work or the weight of the burden of the office also lead to junior and senior churchwarden

³² J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018) p.4.

³³ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 40.

³⁴ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community* p. 36.

³⁵ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community* p. 32.

emerging or multiple positions being installed. However, it does not appear that the office held expectations of future promotion in civic duties (although churchwardens may have been recruited from these roles) and was unique in itself.

The churchwarden's role during the Reformation made them responsible for installing official changes in the litany and overseeing ornamental changes. The sources reveal little about their religious orientation but it is known that even Lollards did not refuse to serve their turn.³⁶ Churchwardens although not generally rich (of middling rank) were often prosperous in business and it is these skills which stood them in good stead to try to bring order to the chaotic and ever changing demands being made on them. Willingness to serve and a knowledge of the area and people was required. This may have meant they had less to lose if they chose to listen to their parishioners preferences religiously or were tardy in adapting to new demands and even if an oligarchy, a topic explored by the late Susan Reynolds³⁷ who put forward ideas on medieval social bonds, existed within a parish that may have held control of the selection process their position was not built by the gentry and operated separate from the gentry benefiting from the Dissolutions. Their detailed accounts, an inventory of ornaments and vestments and chapels construction and overseeing collections for works was essential to the reformation and for a centralised 'top down' approach.

The question of who constituted the priorities of the parish will be returned to in chapter 3, yet it is clear that the churchwarden was a manifestation of identity and embodied many local customs. He may have received directions from many places but during the Reformation parishes were able to express a will even under a coercive system of royal injunctions, visitations and penalties and the churchwarden's influence was substantial.

³⁶ R. G. Davies, 'Lollardy and locality', *TRHS*, 6(1) (1991), 191-212, (p206).

³⁷ S. Reynolds, *Ideas and Solidarities of the Medieval Laity :England and Western Europe* (Oxon: Routledge, 1995).

THE VOICE OF THE PARISH

There were degradations of literacy within a parish. Merchants would have a level of practical literacy, beyond the literacy of the Church and the law courts. Accounts were not new to cash economies of the Middle Ages. In Cornwall Stannary Courts included spoken business practices. The churchwarden accounts were usually given verbally before an audience before being submitted in writing to the archdeacon. A check was necessary given the amount of money spent by communities and how failing to equip the church with the correct ornaments could threaten the parish spiritually. Therefore, the creation of the accounts included a shared contribution of the parishioners. Accounts demonstrate non-literate, quasi-literate and aural practices that shape the process and transformed parishes into a textual parish.³⁸ All accounts intended to be read out loud as performances and to be relevant and to be commented upon (making an actual performance of the previous year). Public readings would have an aspect of interactivity. The corrected accounts following this audience results in literacy and aurality combined. They were often read out by a clerk which had carried out much of the writing process in this aural contract articulating the year's events.

Churchwardens themselves did not have to be literate as their main role was acting as a safeguard and the clerks could be dictated to and instructions written down in the same way contracts and wills could be constructed in medieval and early modern times. Often for this reason they read like a script, a dialogue and some including pronouns.³⁹ Choice of clerks were therefore important as both churchwardens and the parish relied upon them and as they were not specifically trained, structures vary greatly. The language accounts were written in

³⁸ K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvanian: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) ch2.

³⁹ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996).

also varies, as early surviving accounts were recorded in Latin but by the early sixteenth century most parishes in England had switched to English. In Cornwall accounts were often a mixture of English and using vernacular Cornish expressions. Much viva voce evidence from wardens and parishioners alike was accepted at Chancery courts where judge's conscience accepted unwritten evidence.⁴⁰ Clerks could also be called upon to read out Bede Rolls which included gifts made to the church by donors four times a year.

Churchwarden accounts show that literacy was not an issue, access and authority was. Parishes were equipped with the 'capacity to exercise local authority functions whenever the need arose' and had the channels for collective decision making.⁴¹ Parishioners created and used the churchwarden accounts. Literacy levels do not seem to have impacted on parish awareness and expectations of the clergy. Polruan claimed that the priest they had paid for should be subject to them!⁴²

There still remained the formidable barrier of language, an aspect which will be explored further in chapter two, discussing the English Bible and new common prayer books. Williams contends Bishop Barlow in gave no appearance of having known (Welsh) existed. Even Ferrar, for all his gracious words about the Welsh, could not really reach them. Small wonder that most of his flock remained unmoved by his Protestant zeal. Caernarv Clearly in an aural society lack of communication in the vernacular would place a Bishop in a weaker position.

43

Henry VIII's reign may have made little impact on the lives of ordinary people in Wales and Cornwall. However the radical changes introduced under Edward VI were felt in these non-

⁴⁰ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community*, p.25.

⁴¹ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community*, p.46.

⁴² Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community*, p.43.

⁴³ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.134).

English speaking regions. ‘The attacks on church property. The extinction of many of the features of medieval worship and the attempts to establish Protestant forms of belief and worship by means of a Book of Common Prayer enforced by Acts of Parliament had affect’.⁴⁴ in a quasi-literate parish the people could see the materialistic changes and heard the changes to the litany in Cornwall and Wales alike. In agricultural Wales and Cornwall, ingrained observances which defined and gave meaning to the cycle of the week and the seasons of the year were of greater importance.⁴⁵ This did not result in recusancy and was compatible with outward conformity to the changes in religious policy.

Memoranda found in the Book of Ieuan ap William ap Dafydd ap Einws offers the perspective of a Welsh layman. The contemporary section allows ‘a brief glimpse of the practical realities and the impact of wider religious, liturgical, and economic changes experienced under successive Tudor monarchs at a local and regional level’.⁴⁶ The book provides a revealing viewpoint on the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations and the apparent lack of success amongst the Welsh lay people. ‘Despite his clear humanist sympathies and the liturgical, doctrinal, and other upheavals which he witnessed in his local parish church of Ruabon...in many ways, Ieuan’s devotional world and interests remained traditional in nature and focus’.⁴⁷

This pattern continues into the 1560s as pessimistic reports from nearly all dioceses are penned by bishops troubled by the state of their sees in Wales. The bishops concur that there exists in Wales a widespread survival of traditional medieval practices among the people.

⁴⁴ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.48).

⁴⁵ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.55).

⁴⁶ K. K. Olsen, ‘Religion, Politics, and the Parish in Tudor England and Wales: A View from the Marches of Wales, 1534-1553’, *British Catholic History*, 30 (4) (2011), 527-526 p. 529.

⁴⁷ K. K. Olsen, ‘Religion, Politics, and the Parish in Tudor England and Wales: A View from the Marches of Wales, 1534-1553’, *British Catholic History*, 30 (4) (2011), 527-526 p. 532.

Bishop Robinson described how ‘ignorance continueth many in the dregs of superstition’ in Bangor. Williams proposes may be due to ‘the slackness, indifference or even hostility on the part of the officers of local government, among the laity. Or the shortcomings of the clergy through poverty and ignorance’.⁴⁸ Arguably though this confirms that the voice of the parish is heard by the churchwardens and bishops and confirms that literacy is not a barrier to parish agency.

LORDS

The early modern parish is a hierarchy; power and status are visually displayed. ‘In 1530 the seats of a parish church were designed to accommodate each element of the parochial community in a manner appropriate to its role and status’.⁴⁹

The priest would normally have stone seats located on the south side of the chancel. Beyond the chancel by 1530 a larger number of wooden benches or pews were built in the nave. The ones at Launcel in Cornwall are dated from the fifteenth century and have ‘carved ends of pre-reformation benches of Christ’s death, hell harrowing, resurrection and ascension to heaven’.⁵⁰ The Reformation changed not only the seating dynamics, but also the images and messages carved upon them. On the seating at Altarnum inscriptions and records indicate 1525 and St Columb Minor dates to 1525-1530. Alongside biblical figures, other images (such as Veronica at Altarnum) were chosen.⁵¹ Benches may also have been carved with heraldry to reflect their owners. After 1530 that saints and other religious imagery was

⁴⁸ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.55).

⁴⁹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p. 190.

⁵⁰ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p. 196.

⁵¹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p. 190.

‘replaced wholesale on new benches by motifs that were non-representational or even secular’ especially on manorial pews. A constant message to parishioners of a family’s status in the village.⁵² Arabesque motifs also appear at St Minver and often new seats were paid for by influential and wealthy donors, with building overseen by churchwardens.

Aspects of power and status also manifest during the strains of the Reformation. ‘The royal supremacy created another unforeseen consequence in dioceses in Wales; causing struggles which really had very little to do with religion’.⁵³ Struggles for power within a diocese often became identified with an apparent zeal for reform or an alleged reluctance to accept change. A row over indulgences broke out in Bangor where accusations surrounding the continued selling of indulgences although the root was an old quarrel between Sir Richard Bulkeley on the one side and William Glynn and Edward Gruffydd of the Penrhy.⁵⁴ Poet, Sir Dafydd Trefor, remarks upon the clashes describing the ordinary parish clergy, ‘poor terrified oxen’ for whom it was ‘madness to venture amongst such great bulls’ as Glyn and Bulkeley.⁵⁵ However he refers to Glyn with real warmth.⁵⁶ In addition, arguments surrounding the living of Llangeinwen with the chapel of Llangaffo, in the island of Anglesey (one of a number of livings held by William Glyn) caused a move to deprive him of it in the autumn of 1536. However we are dependent on Sir Richard Bulkeley’s highly partisan accounts on this row.⁵⁷

The Reformation was seen as something to be contested by local magnates. Struggles for power shed unusually clear light on the pressures which powerful lay patrons, in Wales and

⁵² R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p. 196.

⁵³ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.41).

⁵⁴ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.43).

⁵⁵ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.45).

⁵⁶ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.45).

⁵⁷ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.43).

also at the centre of power in London, could in pursuing their own interests exert pressure on the clergy. Furthermore, they demonstrate how the religious changes could become little more than another stick with which to beat local rivals and to push family interests. Bangor is by no means an isolated instance of this; there are close parallels to be drawn in the other three Welsh dioceses.⁵⁸ Pg 45

However a more positive view is gained from the Stratton churchwarden accounts. Stratton's manorial centres of Binhamy and Efford, passed on through to the Arudells then the Chamonds.' The parish paid for a ringers' feast after his death'.⁵⁹ This would suggest respect if not fondness for their Lord. Cox argues that the role of the churchwarden took over what had 'formerly been in the control of Hundred and Manor Courts' as the reformation impacted on local government arrangements.

The memoranda found in the Book of Ieuan ap William ap Dafydd ap Einws dated 1541 may provide a window on Welsh views regarding related changes after the first Act of Union, noting that in 1541.⁶⁰

'Henry VIII caused the creation of the Maelor²⁵ as a shire [...] first the seventeenth of February and the thirty-second year of his reign.'⁶¹

Peter Roberts has previously pointed to Elis Gruffydd's chronicle as containing 'the only direct contemporary reference in Welsh' to the Act of Union.⁶² It is interesting that Ieuan similarly views the Act as having an administrative effect only.

⁵⁸ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.45).

⁵⁹ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018) p.13.

⁶⁰ K. K. Olsen, 'Religion, Politics, and the Parish in Tudor England and Wales: A View from the Marches of Wales, 1534-1553', *British Catholic History*, 30 (4) (2011), 527-526 p. 513.

⁶¹ NLW *Llanstephan* MS.117D.

⁶² P. Roberts, 'Tudor Legislation and the Political Status of 'the British Tongue,'. *The Welsh Language Before the Industrial Revolution*, ed. G. Jenkins, (Cardiff: UWP, 1997), p.125.

GENTRY

Local gentry were patrons to the parish (Nobility preferred monastic houses) and the gentry were 'less lofty'. This gave the gentry some authority but they were often part-time members of the community as they had more than one home.⁶³ There is much debate over the commitment from local gentry and in what capacity they participated in local religious life. Although their participation may have been with the aim to bolster status. French contends that legacies given to parish resulted in them being 'removed by building private chapels and elaborate pews' and they secured licences for hearing mass at home.⁶⁴ However, resident local gentry had more power than churchwardens as the wardens were accountable. The tomb effigy of Reginald Blanchminster and his father Ralph the elder at Stratton continued to be a tangible presence with the church and reminder of their power even after they were no longer the most important family or donors.

Clerical absenteeism in sees such as Bangor led to reliance on men drawn from gentry families and such secularisation could lead to friction, such as 'vendetta waged between Achdeacon William Glyn... a leading member of the house of Glynllifon and the formidable Sir Richard Bulkeley.'⁶⁵ It is notable that many clergy were drawn from among the younger sons of families of gentry like Wynn of Gwyndir as men of learning and local connections gave these new additions a close connection and shared interest. Such a positive force also brought more optimistic progress as a legacy. Cultural transformation of well-to-do sections of society, better educated.⁶⁶

⁶³ K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvanian: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) ch2.

⁶⁴ K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvanian: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) ch2.

⁶⁵ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.58).

⁶⁶ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.60).

In 1546 Henry VIII's raid on the chantries resulted in the Devereux family, rather than the Crown, gaining from the surrender of Lamphey.⁶⁷ They also purchased Haverfordwest Priory and Friary. GW 123 Whereas in 1537-8 the Devereux had been the patrons of the most conservative canons of St. David's, in 1546 the records of the Privy Council disclose that Richard Devereux and John Olde, Lord Ferrers's chaplain, were brought before it on charges of heresy.⁶⁸

There was initial reluctance for the gentry to show any enthusiasm for the Reformation. However, since Henry VIII's reign, the gentry had strong political, social and economic incentives to accept any changes introduced to religion by the State.⁶⁹ During Elizabeth's reign the 'pressure of secular considerations inducing them to conform increased'.⁷⁰ In Wales, Caernarvonshire justices like Richard Vaughan showed 'energy and ruthlessness in prosecuting the opponents of the religious policy of the Government'. Gaining the 'hatred of all papists that know him'.

Catholic exiles during Elizabeth's reign were often critical of conditions in Wales although they made little effort to re-convert their native country. In Robert Gwyn's letter from Douai in 1574, which he had fled to three years earlier in religious exile, criticises the Welsh gentry for being quarrelsome and materialistic. He rebukes the Welsh gentry for their reluctance to 'harbour in their households priests who could minister Catholic sacraments'.⁷¹ If this was indeed the reason, rather than the remoteness of location which seems to carry more weight,

⁶⁷ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.122).

⁶⁸ *Acts of the Privy Council, I 1542-47*, 401, 479.

⁶⁹ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.58).

⁷⁰ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.58).

⁷¹ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.55).

the Welsh gentry would appear the most influential actors in deciding the course of the reformation in the parish.

ROLE OF BISHOP

Friars, acted as royal confessors, were paid off with small, remote Welsh bishoprics, the poorest in England and Wales and worth no more than £131 a year by the valuation of 1535.⁷² That did not necessarily mean that he was indifferent to the welfare of his cathedral church and diocese. Thomas Skeffington made generous contributions towards the cost of building the tower at Bangor Cathedral. It cost him a 'goodly chestful of gold' and won him a cwydd of praise by one of his priets, the poet Dafydd Trefor.⁷³ By the beginning of the sixteenth century Bangors's bishops 'had for more than a century not been Welsh.'⁷⁴

In Wales, Bishop Barlow was the 'first whole-heartedly Protestant to reach a position of authority in the Welsh Church, and only in St. David's during his episcopate and that of his successor was any attempt to implant Protestant doctrine in Wales before the reign of Elizabeth'.⁷⁵ Bishop Barlow, by virtue of his headship of the priory of Haverfordwest, had control of three out of four pulpits in the town⁷⁶

Bishop Richard Rawlins, and most of his clergy were strongly conservative in their bent, while the laity were 'miserably ordered under the clergy'.⁷⁷ At Rawlins's instigation, (the

⁷² G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (pp.35-36).

⁷³ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.39-66, (p.36).

⁷⁴ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.35).

⁷⁵ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.111).

⁷⁶ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.112).

⁷⁷ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.112).

Black Friars of Haverfordwest) presented a series of articles against him at the King's Council. In January 1537 there were forwarded to Cromwell via Rowland Lee a series of charges of heretical beliefs held by Barlow, which were causing grave disquiet among the people of his diocese.⁷⁸ Cromwell was convinced of the righteousness of Barlow's cause. Barlow renewed his attacks on the canons following 1538 and the dissolution of the friaries.⁷⁹ In 1541..he obtained permission for the college at Aberwili to be transferred to Brecon.⁸⁰ Less than a year after Cromwell's fall from power and the Six Articles. Within a year of Edward's reign Barlow attained the wealthier see of Bath and Wells.

Fellow Protestant Robert Ferrar was elected Bishop of St. David's in 1548. He came in 1549 to a diocese that had long been sharply divided by conflict between bishop and chapter.⁸¹ Barlow brought Ferrar before the Great Sessions in a suit involving a charge of praemunire.⁸² Incongruous are the charges that Ferrar was unduly sympathetic to the 'maintenance of superstition in religion'.⁸³ Many of the articles centre on Ferrar's servants and friends rather than being attacks on himself.

Protestantism lack of success by the time of Mary is 'hardly surprising when the main weight of responsibility for implanting the new doctrines fell on the bishops'.⁸⁴ The dependence on powerful patrons accounted for the failure of each Bishop impose his authority on the chapter. In Cornwall a distant, figure 'upcountry at Exeter' had little effect even after John

⁷⁸ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.116).

⁷⁹ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.119).

⁸⁰ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.112).

⁸¹ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.124).

⁸² G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.130).

⁸³ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.131).

⁸⁴ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.134).

Vesey had been deprived and staunch Protestant and translator of sections of the Matthew Bible Miles Coverdale was given the see.

Under Elizabeth 'In Wales, Bishop Kitchen of Llandaff alone was prepared to take the oath. Bangor had been vacant since the death of William Glyn in 1558. The incumbent of St. Asaph diocese Thomas Goldwell was the staunchest and the most formidable of the Marian Bishops of Wales.⁸⁵ During the Elizabethan visitations of 1559 Gruffydd Robert was deprived the archdeacon of Anglesey although he had fled to the Continent some months earlier.⁸⁶ In the fourth Welsh diocese that of St. David's Henry Morgan, bishop there since 1554, was also steadfast in his refusal to accept the new settlement and was deprived in the summer of 1559. In Cornwall, James Tuberville declined the oath of supremacy, and in consequence was deprived. William Alley was chosen as the new Bishop of Exeter. Revenues of the see of Exeter had been drastically reduced by Elizabeth's Act of Exchange and due to this he diminished the number of canons of the cathedral from twenty-four to nine on the 22 February 1561. Although this had a direct effect on the diocese for a remote parish in Cornwall this would not have been felt but Alley would support all of the Elizabethan Injunctions and the intrusive visitations.

CLERGY

A particularly important source of collective awareness was the relationship between community and clergy ... and communities started to monitor the behaviour of their priests.

⁸⁵ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.145).

⁸⁶ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.54).

Offering more financial support to the clergy was common but this increased lay expectation.⁸⁷

Under Henry VIII nearly all the Welsh and Cornish parishes were large in area, small in population and accrued small incomes. This poverty was bound to affect the quality of the clergy. When confronted with the great doctrinal issues of the Reformation changes neither they nor their parishioners were likely to have a very clear understanding of their significance.⁸⁸

The clergy in Caernarvonshire seem to have accepted the policies leading up to and including the royal supremacy. There is no surviving return from the diocese of Bangor, but there is no reason to suppose that their reaction was any different from that of the rest of the clergy of Wales who were willing to take the oath.⁸⁹ Reactions in Cornwall appear similar, although some celebration of Saints days and entertainments continued, clearly ignored by local clerics. Under Edward VI, Cornwall made its greatest challenge involving then link between community and clergy and this will be discussed in the next section focusing on ‘rebellion’.

Mary’s accession saw the restoration of clerical discipline regarding marriage and in Bangor, as elsewhere, Mary’s decree forbade any married priest to say mass, but the deprivations did not begin until March 1554. Bangor is the only Welsh diocese where we can see in detail something of what went on.⁹⁰ If a married priest parted from his wife, he was to make a penance and then could minister elsewhere.

⁸⁷ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996) p. 42.

⁸⁸ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.39).

⁸⁹ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.40).

⁹⁰ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.51).

Fifteen priests were ejected due to being married and over ten of them found other livings in the diocese. Sometimes there was a straightforward exchange or others played a kind of game of ‘musical benefices’.⁹¹ In Bangor and St. David’s it is possible to make estimates from episcopal registers to reach an idea of the proportion of clergy deprived although these may be underestimated.⁹² The upheaval caused amongst the clergy during April 1554 to March 1555 was far greater than that caused by any other change in religious policy in Wales.

Higher clergy in Wales changed tact during the restoration. We cannot trace behaviours of lesser clergy (or parishioners) as well in the records. The only local cleric deprived about this time was John Herde. Rector of Llanenddwyn.⁹³

In 1559 the visitors were insisting upon two things to which the clergy had to subscribe; the royal headship as embodied in the Act of Supremacy; and worship according to the Prayer Book as prescribed by the Act of Uniformity.⁹⁴

Judging by the very small numbers of the clergy who refused to accept the oath GW 147 They seem to have been largely successful in attaining their objective, even though the new Prayer Book was, to all intents and purposes the markedly Protestant book of 1552 which must have been most distasteful to the conservatively minded.⁹⁵

They must have had some misgivings as to the fitness of some to minister in a reformed church. It was hardly concerned with the laity at all and of short duration – brief tour – no

⁹¹ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.51).

⁹² G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.51).

⁹³ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.54).

⁹⁴ G. Williams, ‘The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.146).

⁹⁵ G. Williams, ‘The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.147).

acquainting them with the state of religion in diocese. The new Bishoprics were required to send a certificate of their clergy to Archbishop Parker. Surviving returns for three dioceses are available and are of considerable value and interest. Details of pluralists and absentees are recorded and they demonstrate the existence of serious abuses; but generally, they were at least no worse in Wales than elsewhere, including Cornwall.⁹⁶ An early report from Bishop Meyrick to Archbishop Parker told of widespread absenteeism and non-residence among his clergy.⁹⁷

Unfortunately, these returns tell us nothing of the reaction of either the clergy or the laity to the church settlement.⁹⁸ No reaction in either Cornwall or Wales took place as had occurred previously in reaction to Edward's Reformation. A limited number of deprivations were carried out by the visitors of 1559. The most striking features are the fewness of the clergy who can be shown to have been deprived and those who were removed were drawn from the higher clergy instituted during Mary's reign.⁹⁹

Bangor and St. David's being remote diocese, the expectation would be fewer deprivations. But in Bangor the ratio of one deprivation to eight clergy is reached and in St. David's one to six. This is surprisingly high in terms of English conditions and may be explained due to a high number of unofficial clerical marriages before the Reformation, given that Protestantism had been slow to be adopted. This may have also affected how some priests felt about a denomination that accepted clerical marriage.

⁹⁶ G. Williams, 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.147).

⁹⁷ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.54).

⁹⁸ G. Williams, 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.149).

⁹⁹ G. Williams, 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.148).
G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.60).

There was general readiness of the clergy and laity alike to conform, outward at least, to the new settlement. The standard of training and accomplishment of men being ordained into holy orders due to Elizabeth's religious changes was also greatly improved.

VISITATIONS

The pace of Henry VIII's reformation was being implemented in the diocese of Bangor comes in a letter by the Bishop in 1537. Bulkeley states that Cromwell was unhappy with the way the royal visitors had carried out their work in the diocese which 'was never visited but superficially by the King's authority and that it is not so ordered as other men's dioceses be throughout the realm'. The letter was also concerned with idolatry and the incestuous and abominable living as well of priests as of other laymen'. Bishop Salcot argued the royal visitors 'took no superficial procurations'.¹⁰⁰

Under Elizabeth the Welsh bishoprics, together with those of Hereford and Worcester, formed the western circuits. The real work of the visitation fell to the lot of five clerics and lawyers: Richard Davies, Richard Pates, Thomas Yonge, D. Rowland Merick and George Constantine. The nobility and the gentry were only to be called upon if the authority of the divines was resisted.¹⁰¹ The visitation was not one to be undertaken lightly, as formidable opposition could certainly be expected. 'The Marian bishops, with the exception of the trimmer, Kitchen, were intractable'.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.54).

¹⁰¹ G. Williams, 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.142).

¹⁰² G. Williams, 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.143).

Unfortunately there is less information to be gleaned about the activities of the western visitors than of any of the others.¹⁰³ If the visitors for the western circuit ever returned such a report it has long been lost or destroyed. The only traces of their work which have survived are three sets of visitation articles for the cathedrals of Worcester which is incomplete, Hereford and Llandaff. They issued injunctions dated 9th August 1559 at Llandaff Cathedral, in addition to visiting the cathedrals they also held sessions at convenient centres like Wrexham on 2nd Oct 1559, where they gave judgment over the rectory of Trefriw in favour of Thomas Davies, later Bishop of St. Asaph.¹⁰⁴ At Stratford-Uppon-Avan on the 31st October they deprived John Blaxton archdeacon of Brecon and Thomas Harvard, prebendary of Llangamarch of thie livings... three days later... they deprived John Lloyd, Dean of St. Asaph.¹⁰⁵ They were probably still at St. Asaph on the 4th December when Richard Davies was elected Bishop and may have supervised the election of their number, Rowland Meyrick as Bishop of Bangor in December 1559. By 10th January 1560 they were at St. David's when the election of Thomas Young as bishop took place with the chapter borrowing their seal to seal the letter to the Queen announcing their election.¹⁰⁶

The filling of vacant bishoprics must have been one of the visitors' most important tasks – the diocese appear to have been kept vacant as long as possible for the Queen's enrichment. In Bangor a new Bishop was chosen by Cardinal Pole to a see that had been left vacant since 1551. William Glyn tried to carry out Pole's programme by summoning regular synods of his clergy to instruct them and as a distinguished Cambridge theologian of Anglesey routes was

¹⁰³ G. Williams, 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.144).

¹⁰⁴ NLW Bodewryd MS. 335.

¹⁰⁵ G. Williams, 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.144).

¹⁰⁶ G. Williams, 'The Elizabethan Settlement of Religion in Wales and the Marches 1559-60' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.141-153, (p.144).

well-suited to carry out this work.¹⁰⁷ Two of the three visitors who came to Bangor had close connections with the diocese. Richard Davies was the son of a Caernarvonshire curate and was soon to be bishop of St. Asaph and St. David's successively, and the other, Rowland Meyrick, was the son of a well-known Anglesey family and was to be the first Elizabethan bishop of Bangor.

Visitations themselves were an expensive affair, involving feasts at the time of auditing or modest breakfasts and parishes were expected to treat visiting Ecclesiastes.¹⁰⁸ Churchwardens were 'asisted by sidesmen' or synodsmen' to 'support wardens presentments at synods (or) visitation courts'.¹⁰⁹ Canons of 1603 show there were two or three in every parish. In addition, there were Chantry and Chapel wardens and wardens of the guild within a parish (who handed over their funds to the churchwarden). In the Stratton churchwarden accounts it is recorded that during Henry VIII's 1534 the visitations they were 'payd for expenses to launceston for to make answer to be kynges commysynors for be church lands xvj d.'¹¹⁰

Beyond the visitations, we can also see other official attempts to ensure the Royal Injunctions and Prayer Book were accepted. As if to compensate for the reduction in holy days, and to provide a dynastic rather than ecclesiastical focus to the Anglican calendar, the government of Queen Elizabeth encouraged prayer and festivity on 17 November, the anniversary of the queen's accession. 'Crownation Day'.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.53).

¹⁰⁸ J. Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the Fourteenth Century to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1919) p.10.

¹⁰⁹ J. Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the Fourteenth Century to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1919) Introduction p.2.

¹¹⁰ E. Peacock, 'On the Churchwardens Accounts of the Parish of Stratton', in the County of Cornwall, *Antiquity*, 46 (1880).

¹¹¹ D. Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells 2nd edition* (Gloucester: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 2004) p.50.

REBELLIONS

The means of measuring the popular allegiance are crude and imprecise: bequest in wills, church building and pilgrimages. Of the nature of popular belief and devotion it is extremely difficult to generalise – even when just looking at one Welsh county such as Caernarvonshire. But what evidence there is suggests that the forms of contemporary religious worship and teaching were widely accepted without question. Only two cases of heresy occurring in the pages of the medieval registers of St. David's diocese both relate to south Pembrokeshire.¹¹²

Although no rebellion during Edward's reign, in Wales attacks on church property created hostility. The Catholic poet, Sion Brwynog, assailed the Edwardian changes with tremendous contempt and vigour; He speaks not of mass on Sunday, nor of confession, any more than would a horse. The coldness in our times, the churches are as cold as ice.¹¹³ Other 'similar onslaughts like those in the cwndidau of Glamorgan give a form impression' caused.¹¹⁴

There existed a sizeable community of English speaking people who could be influenced by Protestant literature of Henry VIII's reign.¹¹⁵ Lady Jane Grey was actually proclaimed Queen at Beaumaris and Denbigh and probably Caernarvon and other places in north Wales.¹¹⁶ However Mary's accession was undoubtedly popular in Wales. However, only a tiny minority of Welsh clerics were deprived of heretical beliefs during Mary's reign.¹¹⁷ Richard

¹¹² G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.112).

¹¹³ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.44).

¹¹⁴ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.49).

¹¹⁵ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.112).

¹¹⁶ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.51).

¹¹⁷ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.52).

Davies found it necessary to go into exile on the Continent, but his ministry had been in Buckinghamshire. There were only three burnings for religion in Wales during Mary's persecutions, but this may also reflect the persecuting zeal of bishops and on the social status of the heretics'.¹¹⁸

Welshmen of the Catholic revival, Morris Clynnog (destined to become the next Bishop of Bangor) and Gruffydd Robert (archdeacon of Anglesey) would become Welsh Catholic exiles of Elizabeth's reign. They refused to compromise and went abroad to direct the campaign for reconversion from exile.¹¹⁹ In John Jones, Caernarvonshire gave Welsh Catholics one of the noblest martyrs.¹²⁰ The Catholics of Douai believed in Wales almost all recusants and as it were their own and say no Queen's officers dare apprehend any man there. They were out of touch as the Established Church was legally in possession of the religious field.¹²¹

Welsh Catholic laymen who went into exile – Hugh Owen. 'intelligencier-in-chief to the Spanish government among the emigres'.¹²² Yet Caernarvonshire was not a hotbed of recusancy. Although there was a secret printing press at Rhiweldyn by the Pughs of Creuddyn, which Printed Y Drych Cristionogawl.¹²³ Wales geographically was too remote to

¹¹⁸ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.53).

¹¹⁹ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.53).

¹²⁰ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.56).

¹²¹ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.58).

¹²² G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.56).

¹²³ <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/printed-material/y-drych-cristianogawl/#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-694%2C0%2C4494%2C3821> (Accessed 25th April 2022)

be used as apolitical weapon against Elizabeth and even the Rhiwledyn venture was a tragic failure.

Sentiment to Edward's Reformation is clearer when looking at Cornwall. During the serious resistance in the South West in 1549 when rebels required 'images to be set up again in every church', although in only one parish does it appear that this was followed. In Stratton the parishioners appear to have re-erected its deposed figures. This suggests that not all of the rebels' articles were important to the parishes in Cornwall.¹²⁴ Strong feeling against the English Edwardian Prayer Book and the Visitations were though. In addition, the 1549 rebels' articles included 'put from his benefice and the parishioners there to choose another' and although this may be borrowing from the German Peasants to shows how they felt they should take over the authority when the need arose.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 158

¹²⁵ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 45

2. Religious Ritual

SHRINES, RELICS AND SAINTS

‘Before its reform, the quantities of cloth owned by a parish church were usually substantial and often impressive.’¹²⁶ These were used for rites and to cover holy images and relics at certain times in the religious calendar. In 1530 the High Cross Guild purchased five altar cloths and these were blessed at Stratton in 1512.¹²⁷ This would suggest that by the time of the Break with Rome such items were often relatively new.

Both Cornwall and Wales are known for their Saints and by the early modern period this connection to patron saints had not disappeared. At Stratton it is likely Sir John Arundell the elder who died in 1511, brought the cult of St. Armel (Henry VIII’s favourite saint) to Stratton. A Breton Saint of Welsh origin shown as priest leading a dragon. He was the patron saint of sweating sickness.¹²⁸ At St David’s the Cathedral church, not to mention many lesser shrines, was the last resorted-to place of pilgrimage in the land and a hotbed of what Barlow deemed superstition and idolatry.¹²⁹ The canons were determined that the cathedral should remain at St. David’s. It would be foolish to discount sentiments and they were probably reluctant to lose a valuable source of income which accrued to them through the offerings of the faithful.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.77.

¹²⁷ BL, *Stratton High Cross Wardens’ Accounts* Additional MS32243.

¹²⁸ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens’ Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018) p 11.

¹²⁹ G. Williams, ‘The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David’s 1534-55’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.112).

¹³⁰ G. Williams, ‘The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David’s 1534-55’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.120).

At Stratton St Armel's altar stood next to the chapel of St. George and directly under St. George's mounted chapel and although Welsh might have incorrectly thought to have been Cornish.¹³¹ Additional funds attained at Camborne for their St. Ia relic, 'for offering to the saint's foot', in 1534-5 only amounted to 1d so such images may only reflect 'the piety of earlier rather than current generations'.¹³² Barlow castigated the canons for setting firth 'feign relics' 'for to allure the people to superstition on St David's Day although Carmarthen would have been a more convenient administrative centre as the largest town in Wales, with connecting roads'.¹³³ In the early sixteenth century the English celebrated a round of religious festivals, holy days and saints; days, many of which chartered the annual Christological cycle.¹³⁴ Both Cornwall and Wales kept this traditions strong and the secular attempts to fill this void in Elizabeth's reign didn't stop the tradition of Celtic saints although these were no longer venerated. The 'two heads of silver plate enclosing two rotten skulls stuffed with putrefied clouts; item, two arm bones, and a worm-eaten book covered with sliver-plate' at St. David's had been seized by London during Henry VIII's reign.¹³⁵

There was in Caernarvonshire no shrine which compared in intensity of popular esteem with that of the Virgin Mary at Pen-rhys in south Wales or Winifred's Well at Holywell or Edrefl's image at Llandderfel in neighbouring Merioneth, The bishop of Dover suppressed the friary at Bangor August 1538. He found the 'holiest relic' in north Wales. It was a considerable pilgrim attraction and was worth 20 marks a year to the friars before the friary was suppressed. The relic was also removed and taken to London.¹³⁶ After the suppression

¹³¹ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578*, p 12.

¹³² R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.155.

¹³³ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.119).

¹³⁴ D. Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells 2nd edition* (Gloucester: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 2004) p.xi.

¹³⁵ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.120).

¹³⁶ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.47).

of their cults, the ‘abused’ images themselves were sometimes allowed to remain in their churches; ‘they were yet lurking in some places’ in 1547.¹³⁷

IMAGES

Church buildings were decorated with scared figures, often funded by guilds or individuals in the parish. At Camborne a guild maintained a figure of St. Ia. A rood group, a Mary and an Armil was commissioned by Stratton in 1531, but in other parishes between 1528-31 support for holy images seems to have decreased. At St. Austell there was refusal to provide the image lights that had been endowed and the endowment was converted ‘to their own uses’.

138

Attacks on images following the 1536 Royal Injunction suggests co-operation by parishes. In Camborne the last offerings to St. Ia occurred in 1535 and by 1539-40 Plymouth delivered objects to the mayor ‘offering peace and other gifts but also a cross from St Saviour’s hand, a crown from ‘Our Lady’, clothes from the Virgin and Child and tapers from before St. Clare’.¹³⁹ There was recorded destruction throughout the diocese of Exeter and at St. Mawes in the Sand St. Saviour was ‘defaced and pulled down’,¹⁴⁰

Even if the iconoclasts were disliked, in the South West they rarely encountered resistance. Even in distant Cornwall, a friar at Mawgan in Pydar complained in 1538 that ‘men were too busy pulling down images without special commandment of the prince’ In some places ‘much strife and contention was provoked between 1547-48 under Edward. At St. Neots parishioners obediently removed the figures in their church but were ordered by two

¹³⁷ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.156.

¹³⁸ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.155.

¹³⁹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.157.

¹⁴⁰ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.156.

gentlemen to reinstate them. By 1549 the traditional rood lightings and 'wax silver' collections had everywhere ceased, and that the images themselves had been almost everywhere deposed. At St Laurence Exeter two apostles and a mounted George were 'carried out of the church'. At Crediton, gold scrapped from the images on their tabernacles was sold.¹⁴¹

There was a revival under Mary between 1554-55 Antony re-erected their rood images. Between 1556-57 the patron of St. Brannoc was re-erected at Braunton. The St' George at Braunton had to be restored 1557-58. Payment and scale of restored roods and rood images was relatively modest in comparison with pre-Reformation standards.¹⁴²

Cheaper substitute roods were used. Antony spent 10 s on painting its rood and 3S 4d was spent by Stratton on repainting its St. Andrew. Only occasionally, as at Camborne, does an image appear to have attracted offerings. Such inferior and rushed images were often criticised. A Cornish women castigated all images as 'stokes and stones'. 'idols and whores'. Worshipping them she protested could only 'damn souls'.¹⁴³

In Wales, Bishop Robinson in 1567 made comments on 'the images and altars standing in churches undefaced'¹⁴⁴ suggesting images were protected and used later than the Protestant Injunctions had demanded.

STAINED-GLASS

¹⁴¹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.158.

¹⁴² R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.160.

¹⁴³ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.160.

¹⁴⁴ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.55).

Iconoclasm was not only directed at images. The official assault was renewed in 1559, when a Royal Injunction repeated the Edwardian prohibition of ‘superstitious’ glass.¹⁴⁵

Damage in Devon and Cornwall may be indicated by the window glazing recorded in 1547-53 at Bodmin, Camborne and Stratton as well as Ashburton, Dartmouth and St Mary Steps Exeter. And by the window repairing recorded in 1553-8 at Antony, Coldridge, Crediton, Dartington, Dartmouth, St. Petrock Exter, Morebath, South Tawton and Stratton.

The Edwardian destruction was not complete but the damage was severe and was not fully repaired during Mary’s reign. Resistance to iconoclasm was rare, people had a strong sense of duty to the crown, especially when glass was replaced with royal coat of arms. This sense of duty may have been a strong motive for Churchwardens overseeing attacks.¹⁴⁶ No significant revival of coloured glass under Mary, although in both regions it is more likely that money was a reason for slowness to replace with white glass.

Local implementation of iconoclasm was predictably slow. In 1565 a glazier received £2 for ‘mending the windows’ at Breock. Stratton spent £1 2s 6d on ‘new glass’ and 13s on glass repairs in 1567. Glass appears to have been destroyed more gradually than most other types of pictures. Whiting considers that this may be because ‘two dimensional glass pictures were unlikely to attract worship’. William Harrison in his ‘description of England’ written in 1577 explains a more practical reason for this too; ‘the want of sufficient store of new stuff’.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.146.

¹⁴⁶ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.147.

¹⁴⁷ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.146.

CHANTRIES, SERVICES FOR THE DEAD VESTMENTS

Masses for the dead were arranged by guilds and not only in Cathedral towns such as Exeter, but also in rural communities. Within Cornwall, communities such as North Petherwin had altars erected and adorned due to guild donations during Henry VIII's reign.¹⁴⁸ There were comparatively few chantries, guilds and fraternities in north Wales. There was the quite large Kyffin chantry in Bangor cathedral, following a survey of endowments, these were swept away. Bishop Robinson in 1567 made comments on 'lewd and indecent vigils and watches observed, much pilgrimage going on, many candles set up to the honour of the saints, some relics yet carried about, and all the country full of beads and knots'.¹⁴⁹

The purchase and donations of vestments continued through the period 1530-1547 as can be seen in Cornwall at Antony and Stratton. By '1540 high expenditure was becoming less frequent' and both Antony and Stratton spent only £7 in 1540-41. Religious fraternities were central to the purchase of vestments. Exeter St Mary Major within the diocese 'could boast twenty copes and vestments' as well as banners owned by the fraternities. The purchase and donation of vestments continued through 1530 to 1547.¹⁵⁰

Vestments were central to the Catholic seven sacraments and some had appeared out of hiding during the Restoration. After Parker's restrictions in 1566, Whiting states that 'Those purchased by parishes in Elizabeth's reign were in most cases relatively cheap'.¹⁵¹ Stratton Churchwarden accounts demonstrates that 15 shillings was expended on cloth at 1562-63.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.160.

¹⁴⁹ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.55).

¹⁵⁰ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.78

¹⁵¹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.82.

¹⁵² J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018)

ALTARS AND CHURCH PLATE

After 1530 to the end of Henry VIII's reign the mass continued to be given official approval and was celebrated in parish churches through Cornwall and Wales. Stratton had a new altar erected out of wood in 1531 and 'individuals continued to invest'.¹⁵³

Once Edward VI's regime brought in its official campaign against the mass and altars were prohibited in 1550, parish fraternities so closely associated with the sacraments ended up being suppressed. The deposition of the altars by the end of 1551 can be seen not only in Exeter churches but in 'rural parishes like Camborne, ...North Petherwin (and)... Stratton'.

¹⁵⁴ Such a trend can be seen across the Devonian and Cornish diocese:

[It was] A.D. 1549 when the mass was turned [out] from its place on Whit Sunday. [It was] A.D. 1550 when the altar in Ruabon was taken down on the fourth day of January

[It was] A.D. 1553 when the [communion] chalice was taken from Ruabon on the third day of July¹⁵⁵

The communion tables installed in parishes from 1550 onwards were often sold or destroyed within Cornwall during Mary's reign, but communion tables were then reauthorised by Elizabeth in 1559. In the South West this resulted in parishes having to erected new ones and often in haste and were quite modest in comparison with previous designs. Stratton's Elizabethan communion table cost only 3s which was 'modest in design and cost'.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.24.

¹⁵⁴ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.25.

¹⁵⁵ K. K. Olsen, 'Counting Communities, Counting Cultures: Problems and Progress with Early Modern Churchwardens' Accounts in Western England and Wales', in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts c. 1500-c.1800*, ed. V. Hitchman and A. Foster, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) 89-107, (Appendix).

¹⁵⁶ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.31.

In Wales the same pressure from above was being exerted. The north Walian, William Salesbury, published a pamphlet sharply censuring traditional medieval teaching concerning the altar and defending the Reformers' attack on it.¹⁵⁷ The Catholic poet Sion Brwynog describes the Edwardian changes to the church and sentiment held by the Welsh people;

‘Was it not a bitter blow to have cast down the altars within a day or two?

... they church that with its incense well healed us. There was once oil as a symbol of balm for the soul;’¹⁵⁸

Church plate and chalices for the sacrament was another area of contention in Cornwall and Wales. The parish of Stratton invested in two new chalices in 1518, paid for by the guild of the High Cross and blessed by the Bishop.¹⁵⁹ Investment continued until Henry VIII's death with new chalices also bought by other Cornish parishes such as Camborne. Whiting contends that ‘after the accession of Edward VI all sources indicate an almost total cessation of expenditure on church plate, with one dubious exception at Braddock; none of the extant chalices is datable to Mary's reign’.¹⁶⁰ This would suggest that investment even during the Catholic Restoration was impressive. Whiting argues this may have been due to communities' alienation through the previous reign's confiscation and also due to church plate being lost to Churchwarden sales or theft within the parish; trends which began under Henry VIII.¹⁶¹

Indeed Stratton raised £6 through parish sales before 1546. At Davidstow in 1545 ‘the constable persuaded the parishioners to sell their best chalice but kept the proceeds for

¹⁵⁷ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.49).

¹⁵⁸ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.55).

¹⁵⁹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p. 57.

¹⁶⁰ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.58.

¹⁶¹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.59.

himself'.¹⁶² Parishes were prepared to sell off such items due to the witnessing confiscations during the Dissolution of the Monasteries and enquiries about chantries resulted in concern that such items would be seized next. At Davidstow 'the chalice sale followed rumours that royal commissioners were about to seize' such jewels of churches as they listed to take'.¹⁶³

Such concerns were well-founded as under Edward VI the official campaign against church plate did commence with devastating impact. Between 1547 to 1549 parishes in Cornwall obediently compiled inventories, sent representatives and began to deliver sacramental items which they had long cherished. Liskeard for example surrendered three chantry chalices to royal agents in 1548.¹⁶⁴

Further changes to adopting the cup instead of the old chalice under Elizabeth required parishes to make further changes. Such change was secured by episcopal pressure on the parish begun by Archbishop Parker in 1569. By 1566 Archbishop Parker only allowed one type of cloth, alongside the simple clerical surplice adopted a simple cloth for the communion table was endorsed. In Stratton Churchwardens purchased a cup in 1570 which shows an early change (a year earlier than Exeter and a dramatic adjustment given that Crediton and Woodbury. Closer to Exeter continued to use an old chalice) but by 1580 the cup was accepted across the diocese.¹⁶⁵

In Wales, Protestant communion tables caused Bishop quarrelling with a Protestant chapter 'could not agree among themselves over the position of the new communion table in the

¹⁶² R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.59.

¹⁶³ PRO, STAC 3, Star Chamber, Proceedings, Edward VI.

¹⁶⁴ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.59.

¹⁶⁵ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.64.

church'. In St. Peter's Carmarthen, the table was moved a dozen times within a very short space of time.¹⁶⁶

In 1552-53 a wholesale confiscation of church plate and vestments was brought in. returns for this act has only survived for one Welsh county, Glamorgan. 'if the consequences in that county are typical, then we must assume that most Welsh churches were deprived of treasured possessions. This can hardly fail to have led to some resentment against 'Reformers' who seemed chiefly concerned to line their pockets at the expense of the parish.¹⁶⁷

ROODS AND ROOD SCREENS

In the 1520s new rood screens were constructed at St. Columb Minor and Stratton built new parcloes in 1531. Production 'slumped soon after the ascension of Edward VI' and only slightly increased again during Mary's reign. At Stratton one reason may be linked to the dissolution of 'Our Lady Holy Maidens' Guild as this was 'followed by the drawing down of our lady chapel' and the demolition of its enclosing screens.¹⁶⁸ The contract for a new rood loft at Stratton in 1531 specified wooden altars at its north and soft ends. They were to be dedicated to Mary and the Breton St. Armil.¹⁶⁹

Many moderate protestants felt that the rood loft might merit retention in a modified form... as seating for the congregation. Radical protestants rejected such compromise fearful of 'sensuous distractions from hearing God's word' and the images and pictures on roods were

¹⁶⁶ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.133).

¹⁶⁷ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.49).

¹⁶⁸ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.15.

¹⁶⁹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.200.

considered even more offensive for being ‘so publicly displayed’. In 1530 a considerable number of lofts had been recently constructed. Cornwall and Devon raised at least eight in 1520-29. At North Petherwin the project began in about 1520 when three parishioners travelled to Hatherleigh to buy timber. However, three Tywardreath parishioners refused to contribute anything to loft erection in 1508.¹⁷⁰

By 1563 most of the slower parishes fell into line in the South West and the lofts. St. Mary Steps Exeter and Stratton were all reduced in 1563-65.¹⁷¹ The Stratton churchwardens demolished their rood beam and ceiling in 1564 then paid for the ‘taking down of the rood loft’ in 1565.¹⁷²

The Elizabethan assault not only destroyed or mutilated the loft itself; it also damaged the adjacent fabric. At St. Petrock Exeter the reduction of the loft in 1561-62 was followed in 1563-64 by the ‘stopping up of the rood loft door’. Excommunication by one cleric persuaded the leading inhabitants of South Tawton to demolish their rood loft in 1563.¹⁷³

PAINTINGS

Medieval churches were full of paintings, murals, inscriptions and pictures on wood and canvas. Money for such decorations was often provided by the parish guilds or benefactors. For example, Christ’s sufferings were shown in paintings at Breage paid by the guild. During Mary’s rule it is notable that in several parishes, including St Petrock’s Exeter and Stratton this reign saw no apparent efforts to replace the murals that had been obliterated under

¹⁷⁰ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.201.

¹⁷¹ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.207.

¹⁷² J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens’ Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018)

¹⁷³ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.207.

Edward VI. Similarly modest was Marian expenditure on other types of painted picture. After 1559 parish churches ceased almost totally to invest in new religious painting.¹⁷⁴

Losses and destruction was part of the iconoclastic policy of Edward's reign – white liming of the church obliteration of this type occurred not only in Exeter but also in the remoter parishes like Antony and Stratton in Cornwall. At St. Petrock in 1548-49 the wardens paid for 'washing away images'. Such murals that survived Edward's reign were attacked in Elizabeth's reign. By 1562 destruction even took place in the West and South West including Ashburton, Woodbury 1564-65 and Chagford in 1567.

Edward's reign saw storage of a crucifixion at St. Laurence Exeter, and a Mary and John at Dartington. Their 'mending' in the next reign suggests damage or neglect. Others were lost to their churches by sale, as at Stratton where they fetched 2s 8d in 1549. There were also burnings at Exeter and the church at Crediton with two pieces of our lady.¹⁷⁵

BIBLES, PRAYER BOOKS AND PULPITS

In 1530 the pulpit was already a feature of many parish churches. 'The Holne pulpit is dated by its heraldry to 1504-19 and its Launceston counterpart to 1524.'¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.122.

¹⁷⁵ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, ch.8.

¹⁷⁶ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.10.

On the other hand an impressive number of structures were created in the era of reform. Early renaissance features appear on the extant examples of Landcross. During 1544-47 Stratton constructed a pulpit. Under Edward, Camborne and St Mary Steps at Exeter also added theirs. The pulpit at Fowey dates from the Elizabethan era and during this reign St. Petrock Exeter also added one.¹⁷⁷

In Wales:

[It was] A.D. 1548 when the pulpit in Ruabon was made on the seventeenth day of March [by] Dafydd ap John ap Ieuan ap Tudur Penllyn¹⁷⁸

The bishop of Bangor, John Salcot, in June 1535 found himself sorely handicapped in his desire to ‘accomplish the diligent setting forth and sincere preaching within the diocese of Bangor of the royal supremacy’ because himself was ignorant of the language of his flock; but he hoped he could accomplish this by means of other people.¹⁷⁹ One of the first effects of the break with Rome was the tightening up of clerical marriage. Canon Law forbidding the marriage of priests had widely been ignored in medieval Wales, nowhere more than in the diocese of Bangor. A petition from the diocese in January 1536 to Cromwell. If they had to put away these women it would be to ‘the great loss and harms of the king’s subjects, the poor people... and we ourselves shall be driven to seek our livings at alehouses and taverns’. As early as 1535, one of Barlow’s servants in the town of Tenby possessed a copy of the New Testament in English and other similar books.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*. p.185.

¹⁷⁸ K. K. Olsen, ‘Counting Communities, Counting Cultures: Problems and Progress with Early Modern Churchwardens’ Accounts in Western England and Wales’, in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens’ Accounts c. 1500-c.1800*, ed. V. Hitchman and A. Foster, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) 89-107, (Appendix).

¹⁷⁹ G. Williams, ‘The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.40).

¹⁸⁰ G. Williams, ‘The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David’s 1534-55’ in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.112).

Even the supply of Bibles and Paraphrases to the churvhes of St. David's diocese became a weapon of conflict between warring Protestant. Ferrar alleged that Constantine had 'cornered' the supply and was holding all copies back.¹⁸¹ While Constantine retorted that Ferrar and 'his' clergy were not making any efforts to obtain them.¹⁸²

The Protestant experiment, had met with little success in the diocese of St. David's by the eve of the Marian reaction.¹⁸³ When Ferrar preached at Abergwili 'a mile or tow from the English town of Carmarthen' he found 'Scare three or four who understood him'.¹⁸⁴

Edward's Act of Uniformity and the enforcement of the first English Book of Common Prayer in 1549 'created a special problem for those parts of the realm where English was not the language for everyday use – the Channel Islands, Calais, Ireland, Cornwall and Wales.' Yet a French translation was provided for Calais and the Channel Islands. A Worcester printer, John Oswen, was given the right to print prayer books for Wales, but this may have meant printing English books for use in Wales.¹⁸⁵ As no official translation was produced we can presume it was a cause of resentment from the work of Sion Brwynog's comments on the priest forced to use the English version 'He understands not what he says; he is foolish and yet will not be silent'.¹⁸⁶

Priests would have had some understanding of English as witnesses to English language wills, but English may have been as difficult as Latin to master. To the parishioners English

¹⁸¹ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.133).

¹⁸² G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.137).

¹⁸³ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.134).

¹⁸⁴ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.134).

¹⁸⁵ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.50).

¹⁸⁶ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66.

services would have been incomprehensible. No effort had been made present doctrines in the vernacular so the mass of parishioners in Wales would have remained unmoved by Protestant teachings. William Salesbury published a version of the epistles and gospels of the Prayer Book in his *Kynniver Llith a Ban* but we do not know how widely this was adopted.

In Cornwall, Mary's reign saw such bibles and paraphrases generally removed from public display, although at least one parish in Cornwall retained them as late as 1557.¹⁸⁷ By Spring 1559 Elizabeth revived the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI's reign and continued the assault on Catholic books. 'They had disappeared from inventories at... St Breock by 1565...At St Breock a psalter, a processional and a manual had gone by 1560, and a mass book, portis, processional and a manual by 1565. In Cornwall, slower to remove Catholic books, 'two pieces of old books' would be sold by Stratton church in 1570.¹⁸⁸

In Wales, the trigger which alone could release the dynamic forces of Protestantism was the appeal of the vernacular. Without it, the new doctrines were doomed to remain as *ffydd sayson* (faith of Saxons') for most Welshmen, while the mass appeared as *hen ffrainc y saint* (the old privilege of the saints').¹⁸⁹ The translation of the Bible and Prayer Book into Welsh was begun in 1567. Ever since this time the Welsh-speaking population had been hearing week in and week out all the year around in 1567. The parish church and its pulpit were still much the most powerful medium of persuasion and propaganda as far as the mass of the populace was concerned.¹⁹⁰ Although impact on literacy was limited. The literacy campaign was launched by Welsh humanist reformers with ideas from the Renaissance and

¹⁸⁷R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p. 91..

¹⁸⁸ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018)

¹⁸⁹ G. Williams, 'The Protestant Experiment in the Diocese of St. David's 1534-55' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.111-139, (p.135).

¹⁹⁰ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.61).

Reformation and return to the Celtic Church based on scriptural authority, the historical destiny of the Welsh, (the ancient empire). Yet it is questionable whether they more right to claim over the Celtic Church than traditional papists.

The impact of the Welsh Bible and the Welsh book of Common Prayer was a slow and almost imperceptible process even with the translation of the litany in 1562. When Salesbury and Davies's first translation of the New Testament into Welsh was published in 1567 Davies wrote, as a preface to it, his well-known Epistol at y Cembrau or Address to the Welsh Nation.¹⁹¹

Davies contribution to the actual translation of the New Testament was very modest as compared to that of Salesbury. GW185 Bishop of St. Asaph 1560. There is no doubt that the New Testament was regarded by Davies and Salisbury as no more than the first instalment of the translation of the whole bible. The needs of the people as well as the terms of the act of 1563, urgently called for it.¹⁹²

The achievement of William Salesbury – It is not often that a single individual can be said radically to have influenced the course of a nation's history.¹⁹³

Salesbury failed to take into account 'the limitations in the training and equipment of the average parish priest who would after all be the key users.'¹⁹⁴ To expect them to indulge in the mental enunciatory gymnastics necessary to 'translate' Salesbury's scholarly idiosyncrasies into 'ordinary' Welsh intelligible to their parishioners was asking too much.¹⁹⁵ Salesbury was

¹⁹¹ G. Williams, 'The Achievement of William Salesbury' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.191-206, (p.183).

¹⁹² G. Williams, 'The Achievement of William Salesbury' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.191-206, (p.186).

¹⁹³ G. Williams, 'The Achievement of William Salesbury' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.191-206, (p.191).

¹⁹⁴ G. Williams, 'The Achievement of William Salesbury' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.191-206, (p.196).

¹⁹⁵ G. Williams, 'The Achievement of William Salesbury' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.191-206, (p 200).

a master of the Welsh prose, as Bishop William Morgan recognised when he acknowledged him to be the pioneer of biblical translation to whom Wales owed more than to any other, Morgan.... Virtually adopting Salesbury's translation in his own New Testament of 1588.

Salesbury worked to secure the official recognition of the need for a Welsh Bible and Prayer Book and the establishment of Welsh as the language of public worship and no equivalent campaign was successful in Cornwall at this time.

Bishop Robinson in 1567 believed continuation of traditional worship was due to the 'slow progress made towards circulating a knowledge of the Scriptures and order of service in Welsh.'¹⁹⁶ Rowland Puleston of Carnarvon wrote *Llefr o'r Eglwys Christnogedd* in 1583 to provide a summary of the books of the New Testament in absence of a Welsh Bible. Even with a Puritan tone to the introduction he was unable to publish his manuscript (perhaps from lack of support) but he expected to which suggests there were more Welshmen with these radical anti-papal views.¹⁹⁷

At St. Mary's Swansea, a dispute between the vicar and churchwardens broke out regarding use of the Welsh language. Although not in the accounts, it has been traced by Olsen using the Consistory Court of the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen. Roger John Hopkin and Morgan Rosser presented articles against the vicar due to failure to celebrate services in Welsh. He was order to carry out the service in the Welsh tongue every third Sunday. In June 1593 further articles demonstrate that this wasn't the end of the matter as burial services were still not being held in the Welsh tongue.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.55).

¹⁹⁷ G. Williams, 'The Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Caernarvonshire' in *Welsh Reformation Essays*, ed. G Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) pp.35-66, (p.59).

¹⁹⁸ K. K. Olsen, 'Counting Communities, Counting Cultures: Problems and Progress with Early Modern Churchwardens' Accounts in Western England and Wales', in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts*

There was also a lack of qualified Welsh preachers. In 1561 Bangor had only two men and St. Asaph had only five. By 1570 St. David 's only had ten and had fourteen by 1583. Although progress was made in the 1590s, for example St. Asaph attained fifty-four out of one hundred and forty-four St. Asaph. Many could clearly not preach in Welsh then and clerical standards needed to improve if the 1567 Welsh Book of Common Prayer was to be deployed freely and make an impact.¹⁹⁹ Interesting the St Mary's Swansea churchwarden accounts are recorded in English with some Welsh words.²⁰⁰ The Book of Borough and Parish Leases has been used by Olsen to get a rounded view of the parish, which she concludes as a prosperous, ethnically mixed port town which had an acquaintance with the English tongue due to the trading port.

The first book to be printed on Welsh soil, Y Drych Cristianogawl ('The Christian Mirror'), produced by a secret recusant press in a cave on the Welsh coast near Llandudno, has received some notice, as have the writings of some Welsh Catholics in exile.²⁰¹ Demonstrating some attempt for Catholic Welsh to win the war of words.

BELLS AND ORGANS

Money was spent on upkeep on three bells and organ at St. Mary's Swansea. And a regular payment for an organ player was made.²⁰²

c. 1500-c.1800, ed. V. Hitchman and A. Foster, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) 89-107.

¹⁹⁹ K. K. Olsen, 'Counting Communities, Counting Cultures: Problems and Progress with Early Modern Churchwardens' Accounts in Western England and Wales', in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts c. 1500-c.1800*, ed. V. Hitchman and A. Foster, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) 89-107.

²⁰⁰ K. K. Olsen, 'Counting Communities, Counting Cultures: Problems and Progress with Early Modern Churchwardens' Accounts in Western England and Wales', p93.

²⁰¹ <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/printed-material/y-drych-cristianogawl#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-694%2C0%2C4494%2C3821> (accessed on 25th April 2022).

²⁰² K. K. Olsen, 'Counting Communities, Counting Cultures: Problems and Progress with Early Modern Churchwardens' Accounts in Western England and Wales', in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts*

They were more Protestant in their function and form and in 1565 Stratton bought a new one for 36. Pre-reformation, bells were sometimes engraved with a religious symbol and inscriptions would often appeal on the parishioners behalf to God or a saint.²⁰³ On 1 May 1549 Stratton had four bells, alongside two sacring bells, a lynch bell and a bedesman's bell.²⁰⁴ Stratton's general receivers' accounts records bell casting in 1557-59, 1564-65 and again in 1577-78. Bells constantly required repair or new bell ropes. As late as 1578 John White (perhaps a Bristol bell founder) was employed to recast a bell for £15 13s 10d and this time a separate bell account was made.²⁰⁵

Only under Elizabeth would investments in pictures and inscriptions recover and then usually these were on church bells.²⁰⁶ Into the 17th century bell-ringing and celebrations of Coronation day were routine. Change was often slower on bells than on other church objects of the reformation. Whitely explains this could be due to the inaccessibility of bells to focal inspection and also due to their limited importance in the propagation of religious beliefs. Many moderate protestants felt that the rood loft might merit retention in a modified form, especially as a gallery for the choirmen and muscians.²⁰⁷

The new position of choirmaster came into being during Elizabeth's reign, suggesting that communal singing had been established as part of worship. Stratton's "querman" is noted as early as 1562-63 and singing boys or "singing scholars" helped the choir at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun.²⁰⁸ Organs are not referred to at Stratton until 1525-26 when glue was bought to

c. 1500-c.1800, ed. V. Hitchman and A. Foster, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) 89-107.

²⁰³ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) p.176.

²⁰⁴ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p. 23

²⁰⁵ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578*, p. 23.

²⁰⁶ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p.176.

²⁰⁷ R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church*, p. 200.

²⁰⁸ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p.18.

mend them. In 1531 the organs were to be moved to a separate loft attached to the rood screen on the north side of the Lady Chapel. The organs continued to be used into the reign of Elizabeth I.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p.23.

3. Economic and Social Activity

PAROCHIAL ORGANISATION

The Reformation saw the parish community act as a corporate body. To start to articulate parish needs and concerns back to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Kumin contends that ‘the creation of the parochial network was an achievement of the high Middle Ages’.²¹⁰ Bishop Peter Kennel’s 1287 statutes urged parishes to elect responsible custodians to manage resources and the responsibilities of churchwardens can be seen to evolve. The written annual account of the parishes’ activities as well as the stock. Such a statute might reflect practices already in place somewhere within the Bishop’s diocese that was then being rolled out to all. The accounts were often prefaced with ‘By the commandment of the whole parish’ demonstrating the trust parishioners put into their churchwardens but also how serious these accounts were to the community. The accounts show the level of clerical instruction, litany and finances. The accounts record how seats and pews were distributed often representing power dimensions within communities and the different ways that parishes elected their churchwardens also reveals much about a community’s organisation. Relations with parish priests can be seen, especially if a priest took on the duties of being the scribe. The accounts also represent negotiation of the Bishop’s expectations and participation in the written administration process ‘imposed’ upon the parish. However they gained much in return, the parishioners could keep track of the churchwardens, observe one another’s contributions and make plans for the next year in a communal way. Therefore local interests and politics shaped the accounts. The fact that parishes could not co-operate itself legally like a town adds to variation and some parishes had vestries or overreaching patrons and they give us a glimpse of the parishes’ health and dominant interests. The rate of survival of churchwarden often

²¹⁰ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996) p. 1.

relies upon how they were constructed – whether in bound volumes or individual parchment or rolls. Early modern accounts switched over to the use of books and there were fewer missing, but organisation of parish archives is another contributory factor. Some were in parish chests where others were taken home by churchwardens for safekeeping. The fact the accounts were a source of power seems to have been understood in this instance.²¹¹

Dependence on memory does not disappear... The social role of vocalisation as pertinent to understanding them... like the Priest's performance of the litany is significant in relation to service books. By the mid C16th Tudor legislation added the finishing touches to the shaping of the community by turning it into a local government unit' redefining its role further'.²¹²

John Bossy asserted 'that the church of the last medieval centuries was not in actual fact a parochially grounded institution' so from this we can conclude that the external pressures of the Reformation created more cohesiveness.²¹³

In the building and enlargement of the church the parishioners at Stratton 'strove to achieve the Cornish (and West Devon) idea of a three hall church with three similar gables at each end.' The parish had major building projects for forty-five years demonstrating a secure organisational structure. Such work included widening of the north aisle and the complete demolition and rebuilding of the Lady Chapel and Chancel.²¹⁴

²¹¹ K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvanian: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) ch. 1

²¹² Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996) p. 1.

²¹³ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996) p. 8.

²¹⁴ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p.3.

PARISH IDENTITY

Creating churchwarden accounts was a community defining exercise that acknowledged the importance and uniqueness of a parish's own church, space, history and ritual.²¹⁵

Churchwarden accounts can provide a sense of solidarity separate from the outside world. The accounts were used in different ways and represent different priorities for the parish. Therefore this was not just a record for the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Churchwarden accounts could also be seen as a 'perfect memory'. They also include local traditions and idiocrasies, with community goals noted. They also affirmed who was part of the parish and what membership meant to the community. This exclusivity can vary between parishes and different criteria was applied to those who could participate in the creation of the records, based on income (householders) or age. Churchwarden accounts gave parishioners an opportunity to vocalise concerns and priorities and such comments would be recorded by the clerk for future reference. It is not surprising that they therefore also show inharmonious occasions, especially given the financial dimensions recording debts and recovery of lost revenue and social financial obligations. The accounts show communal responsibilities and ways of operating alongside the religious cultural practices upheld in each community.

'Communal fashion did not assure everyone's participation in the parish but did ensure everyone could participate'. The reading out of the accounts became a ritual, gave a sense of the parish's shared history and a sense of belonging: 'the development of new liturgical and social customs'.²¹⁶

Both secular and voluntary shared activities in the parish helped consolidate community.

²¹⁵ K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) ch. 1

²¹⁶ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge, 1996) p. 1.

Marshall contends that the ‘nurture of pride and intense loyalty amongst its member’ of the Tudor parish with collective responsibilities and capabilities to act ensures that community can be used to describe the parish at this time.²¹⁷ Agreements between several parishes about the mutual attendance of church ales and minimum contributions on such occasions.²¹⁸

Robert Swanson argues the activities of churchwarden and lay control over church wealth would foster ideas of lay control in a wider sense.²¹⁹ Social superiors and political masters prompted or activated the local celebrations, even if ordinary villagers and townsfolk joined in and made them their own.²²⁰

GUILDS

Parish fraternities created neighbourly solidarity.²²¹ At Lostwithiel in 1549 the suppression of the important guild of St. George would lead to an assault on its chapel in the parish church, so the dissolution of guild inevitably had both a tangible and intangible impact on the parish. Bodmin accounts which start from 1469 show that there were 40 fraternities. ‘Our ladies maiden’ at St Andrews Stratton contributed to church stock every year.²²²

Guilds added another layer of bureaucracy that the churchwardens were required to be subservient towards. They also gave another opportunity for greater number of men (or women) to serve the parish. The lowest receipt at Stratton was in 1548 after the abolition of

²¹⁷ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 1.

²¹⁸ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 47.

²¹⁹ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 52.

²²⁰ D. Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells 2nd edition* (Gloucester: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 2004) p.xiv.

²²¹ Beat A. Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400-1560* (Oxon: Routledge,1996) p. 51.

²²² E. Peacock, ‘On the Churchwardens Accounts of the Parish of Stratton’, in the County of Cornwall, *Antiquity*,46 (1880).

the guilds.²²³ Stratton had at least six guilds or fraternities between 1530-47. Although this figure may be higher as stores sometimes had associated guilds.²²⁴ At Stratton there were four stores: St. Armel, St. George, Our Lady Holmadon, The Trinity. Mattingley contends that single gender groups are not guilds. The Trinity store had been founded by Sir Ralph Blanchminster to give money for two priests to celebrate for his soul, one being for the trinity. The store of St. Armel may have included a guild founded in 1512. It is suggested that Our Lady and St George amalgamated in the 1540s. There was also a Robin Hood group and two men (the Sextons) raising funds for the gravediggers' salary.²²⁵ Three more single gender groups and in two cases aged specific groups are commonly found in parishes. Young men, maidens and wives of the parish. At Stratton Our Lady's Maidens occur and the St. Armel store may have been the young men's group. The wives have left no trace. Robin Hood activities involved both young men and maidens.²²⁶

Guild members expected prayers to be said for their souls in return. The guilds at Stratton had their own chapels/aisles and altars. Also within the accounts at Stratton there are over one hundred surnames linked with store, stock or guild offices.²²⁷ French's research also demonstrates that in the South west, parishes were more accepting of women's leadership and this may be due to guild experience. And all women parish guilds were often the largest.²²⁸ Guilds proved essential in generating funds for the parish and such activities organised such

²²³ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p.4.

²²⁴ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p.19.

²²⁵ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p.19.

²²⁶ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p.19.

²²⁷ J. Mattingly, *Stratton Churchwardens' Accounts 1512-1578* (Woodbridge: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2018), p.20.

²²⁸ K. French, *The People of the Parish Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Pennsylvanian: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) ch. 2.

as church ales, Robin Hood activities, parish plays and seasonal celebrations helped to maintain solidarity.

Conclusion

Churchwardens prove central to the political organisation of the parish at this time of great religious change. Benefactors were reduced and the South West rebels during Edward's reign were driven by beliefs concerning salvation and hid material items needed for the Catholic rites. Clashes in Welsh diocese against a never ending cycle of different Bishops display a similar level of conviction. However this was soon to diminish and by 1569 it is fair to describe both regions as demonstrating 'dutiful obedience; during the Northern Earls Rebellion against Elizabeth despite similar religious views, so the centralised system of the Tudor Reformation had managed to seize control equally efficiently in both Cornwall and Wales.

Within the parish itself traditional artefacts were protected but once taken the wealth spent on restoring such ornaments was not at the same level. Guilds paid for paintings and fraternities included women, and the young giving them a sense of belonging. Building projects across the regions do not stop due to the Reformation and pride in the parish remains. The network of guilds and church ale activities continue so the parish cannot just be considered a political unit to serve the Tudor Monarchs. Experiences due to language is the greatest similarity between Cornwall and Wales. The use of the vernacular by both Edward VI and Elizabeth I alienate both regions. Conversely, the way in which they react to this pressure is quite different with the Welsh communities responding with Welsh transactions and the Cornish react through rebellion. It is remarkable that in such a short period the English translations of Elizabeth's reign do appear to have been adopted by Cornish parishes, although the accounts only confirm purchase not regular use in a remote part of England, far from London.

The historical record demonstrates a wide range of contemporary financial strategies and communal experiences. Trends have shown themselves and are arguably more than just coincidences even given the sample and discrepancies of material used in this thesis. The parish was not sterile or in decline in 1530s Wales or Cornwall and the churchwarden accounts show that this was not the case in the 1570s either. Reliance on finance from the dead and on the living existed. The Reformation was disruptive and the impact was complex. The old saints' days were fondly preserved in the popular memory, in farming practices and days of markets and fairs. The use of language and its place in worship was an important aspect of local identity and culture and served to differentiate how both communities maintained agency and lived through the Tudor Reformation.

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