

THE 'BEAUTY OF HOLINESS' REVISITED: AN ANALYSIS OF INVESTMENT IN  
PARISH CHURCH INTERIORS IN DORSET, SOMERSET, AND WILTSHIRE,  
1560-1640.

by  
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## Abstract

This analysis of the extant material evidence of the interiors of parish churches in Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1560 -1640, challenges traditional assumptions about who decorated them, and what motivated them. Local studies show that what might appear as compliance to externally imposed requirements could also be a more complex story of parochial priorities and of local catalysts; some radical changes could appear traditional. Whilst donors' religious and secular motives were often interwoven, this study will show that there was no clear alignment between confessional positions and decoration, and that Protestantism continued to embrace the visual in parish churches. It will be argued that the enhancing of churches predated the 1630s, and anything that could be called Laudian. It is a central argument that Laudian should not be used as the reference point for church decoration, when Protestants of many hues, and some of no evidenced confessional position, were materialising 'the beauty of holiness'. In displaying layered identities, it will be shown that investors used similar images in domestic and public spaces. It will bring a new analysis of the furniture, fittings and fabric of parish churches which develops an understanding of the changed worshipping experience in those eighty years.

## Acknowledgements

In the course of this study, many debts have been incurred which I can never redeem. It is not just a duty, but a pleasure to acknowledge those debts, however inadequately.

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Many friends and neighbours have listened patiently while I described this study. My women's group, 'Monstrous Regiment', and my Book Club have learnt more about parish churches than they may have wanted to. I owe my friend, Martina Wright, a special debt, for her encouragement to start this study after my MA, and her sustained and constant support during it. To Miranda Baretto, I owe a large debt as she has kept me going in so many different ways over six years. My oldest friend, Sarah Hayward, who, with me, was inspired by our early modern History tutor, Conrad Russell, at Bedford College, University of London, visited some churches with me before her tragic death. My extended family here in England, in Canada, and in Germany, have also shown a great interest in this study, and their generous encouragement has sustained me through it. Alice and Isabel Orlik have not only travelled along their own learning journey in secondary school, parallel to my learning journey, but with their patient father, Anthony, have been able, at the knowing flick of a button, to end hours of frustration by a digital novice.

I can never repay the debts that I owe to all of these generous people. Michael Orlik, whose interests as a historian are more catholic than mine, deserves the final acknowledgement. He has proved to be not just a field trip companion. He has made this literal and metaphorical journey possible, not just by carrying an unequal share of the domestic daily round, but also by his constant support and interest. Like many of the investors in the parish churches studied, he has exceeded compliance with requirements, in his case with the Book of Common Prayer's required promise 'for better, for worse'. In exceeding compliance, he has made the 'worse' so much better; and made this thesis possible. I hope by dedicating it to Michael, that he will accept it as a small display of my gratitude for the generous investment that he has made into the study of these wonderful churches, these treasure houses of England.

Abstract

Acknowledgements

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## Abbreviations and notes

*BCP The Book of Common Prayer*: the text quoted is 1559 unless stated otherwise.

BL British Library

BLB British Listed Buildings: <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england#>, accessed on various dates as cited in the footnotes.

CCEd Clergy of the Church of England database: <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>, accessed on various dates as cited in the footnotes.

Cwa Churchwardens' accounts.

DHC Dorset History Centre (formerly Dorset Record Office).

FSL Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D. C.

GB The Geneva Bible, as listed in the bibliography.

*IME An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, Royal Commission of Historic Monuments in England*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/>, accessed on various dates as cited by entry and county.

KJB The King James Bible, 1611, also known as The Authorised Bible. All Biblical references taken from this unless otherwise stated.

NADFAS National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Society. (Became The Arts Society in 2017).

*ODNB Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004: <http://www.oxforddnb.com>, accessed on various dates as cited in the footnotes.

*OED Oxford English Dictionary*: <http://www.oed.com/>.

*REED Records of Early English Drama*, as listed in the bibliography.

SHC Somerset Heritage Centre (formerly Somerset Record Office).

TNA The National Archives, London.

*VCH Victoria County History*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/>, accessed on various dates, as cited by entry and county.

WSHC Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (formerly Wiltshire Record Office).

## Notes

Original spelling and punctuation for early modern sources has been retained except for u/v and i/j which have been modernised.

Most of the early printed books have been accessed through EEBO.

The date given on the Churchwardens' Accounts is frequently, but not necessarily, the date when the accounts were presented, and refers to the expenditure and income of the preceding twelve months. Many accounts are headed 'for the year (date)' and therefore it is unclear if it is the year preceding or the date of presentation. The accounts generally cover the year commencing Lady Day (25 March); although some commence at Easter, or Michaelmas (29 September). In most parishes the accounts are presented within a fixed period following the end of the twelve month period. In this thesis I have assumed the accounts cover the year preceding the date cited, unless otherwise indicated.

## INTRODUCTION: APPROACHING THE EARLY MODERN PARISH CHURCH

*'It was the genius of the church as an institution that it existed as the primary platform for the expression of instincts that were simultaneously worldly and spiritual'.<sup>1</sup>*



Figure 1. 1 The south door of the church of St John the Baptist, Biddisham, Somerset, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Marsh, "Sacred Space in England, 1560-1640: The View from the Pew," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 53, no. 2 (April 2002): 286-311, 302. In a different context, portraiture, Tarnya Cooper discusses the complexity in unpicking secular and religious intentions, and the tension between the desire to enhance a worldly reputation and to seek spiritual salvation: Tarnya Cooper, "Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620," in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling, and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 49-63.

This thesis examines the material evidence of the early modern parish church from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign to the outbreak of the Civil War in order to argue that changes in decoration of churches over this period were sponsored by Protestants of many hues, and were not the privilege of one group, those characterised by historians as Laudians. This chapter provides an introduction and framework, setting out its aims; why these eighty years were chosen, and why Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire are the focus of the study; the regulatory context for the period; the historiography, divided into six themes; the rationale for the methodology and sources; and lastly an outline of the structure of the thesis. By offering an interdisciplinary approach, foregrounding extant material evidence, and linking it to archival sources, this research contributes new evidence and analysis to scholarship on the more complex and calibrated story of the long English Reformation in the parish churches of South West England.

### *Aims*

Material evidence has emerged from the side-lines of historical scholarship in recent years to take a central role in the process of interrogating traditional assumptions about post-Reformation culture. Jonathan Finch writing in 2003 characterised the historiographical paradox:

The parish church was probably the single most important arena in which the Reformation was acted out, in terms of theological debate, in terms of direct intervention, and in terms of establishing a new religious ideology. However, the

material impact of the Reformation within the parish churches has yet to receive the detailed consideration it deserves.<sup>2</sup>

It was assumed until recently, because of a lack of studies of the material evidence, that post-Reformation churches were stripped bare, as a result of iconoclastic activity, Protestant asceticism, a lack of investment and general neglect.<sup>3</sup> Although there have been some significant developments in the decade since Jonathan Finch wrote this, the material evidence of the parish church remains a rich source to be further explored.<sup>4</sup> Adrienne Hood has argued compellingly that material evidence opens up new avenues of historical thinking and provides insights into the past that are not possible with documents alone, suggesting that for so long ‘material culture [was] an academic orphan, now turning into a star pupil’.<sup>5</sup> This thesis deploys the extant material evidence of the interiors of English parish churches in three counties as the primary source material to achieve a fresh approach, in order to gain a better understanding of how and why people of varied confessional positions changed the interiors of their churches during the ‘long Reformation’.<sup>6</sup> It is predicated on the importance of local studies, of which there has been a paucity in the context of analysing parochial material

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<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Finch, “A Reformation of Meaning: Commemoration and Remembering the Dead in the Parish Church, 1450-1640,” in *The Archaeology of the Reformation 1480-1580*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2003), 438.

<sup>3</sup> For a review of recent historiography on the paradigm shift from the traditional view that post-Reformation culture was visually illiterate, see Adam Morton, “Images and Senses in Post-Reformation England,” *Reformation* vol. 20, no. 1 (May 2015): 77-100.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the reasons for the lack of parochial studies specifically in the 1630s, see Fincham and Tyacke who attribute it to the absence of a single source, and the iconoclasm of the 1640s: Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 253.

<sup>5</sup> Adrienne Hood, “Material Culture: The Object,” in *History Beyond the Text: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, eds. Sarah Barber and Corinna Peniston-Bird (London: Routledge, 2009), 176, 187.

<sup>6</sup> John Spurr describes the parish church as ‘a unique local structure and [is] a major historical source’: John Spurr, *The Post-Reformation: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain 1603–1714* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006), 251.

evidence.<sup>7</sup> By using the context of individual parishes, it challenges established generalisations about the Laudian monopoly of enhancing churches, and of using Laudianism as a reference point for all changes before and during the 1630s. It brings new insights into the nature of patronage of, and investment in, parish churches, and into the labyrinth of apparent compliance with imposed regulations. It argues that changing church interiors reflected a variety of confessional and secular identities; and, also, that the changed interiors had exerted agency in creating and sustaining those identities, whose boundaries were both porous and intricate. It brings new evidence to show that the ‘old scholarly practice which sets up artificially rigid distinctions’ between the public and the domestic spheres has been further undermined.<sup>8</sup> This thesis also offers new examples to demonstrate that continuity and radical change are more complex concepts than has been recognised in parochial material culture; and that this raises questions as well about the nature of conformity. The complexity of identity as refracted through the prisms of conformity and orthodoxy, the porous nature of confessional identity, and the intermingling of confessional and secular identities are the contexts in which this project is located.<sup>9</sup> Now that a more complicated and nuanced story is emerging, this thesis contributes directly to changing understanding of material culture and

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<sup>7</sup> Alexandra Walsham emphasised the value of local studies in analysing the subtleties of pieties, compared to large studies: Alexandra Walsham, “Afterword,” in *Pieties in Transition: Religious Practices and Experiences, circa 1400 – 1640*, eds. Robert Lutton, and Elisabeth Salter (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 181-190. John Spurr discusses variables that constituted the local politics of a parish: Spurr, *The Post-Reformation*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Tara Hamling, “Visual Culture,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock, and Abigail Shinn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 84. Richard Cust makes the same point in the context of the common vocabulary of heraldic images: Richard Cust, “The Material Culture of Lineage in Late Tudor and Early Stuart England,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 247-274, 269.

<sup>9</sup> For an analysis of self-fashioning, identity formation, and the cultural institutions in which they are ‘inseparably’ interwoven, see the Epilogue to Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, London: Chicago University Press, 1984).

local studies, and its place in the larger story of how men and women in the parishes lived out the complexities of the Reformation in England.

### *Chronology and geography*

Although the weight of the material evidence lies in the later part of the sixteenth century and the first four decades of the seventeenth century, this pattern of investment only makes sense if the ambivalent story of the Elizabethan settlement and the ensuing national and diocesan requirements is first established as a conceptual framework. After the turbulent years of Henry VIII's break from Rome, the radicalism of Edward VI's short reign, and the reversal to Catholicism of Mary I's five years, the beginning of Elizabeth's long reign is a sensible starting point, where religious issues developed and reached sufficient stability for parishioners to invest in their churches again.<sup>10</sup> The end of the study is the beginning of the Civil War, and all the seismic changes it brought to the churches. The intervening 80 years provide an insight into the long Reformation, and how that played out materially and parochially.<sup>11</sup>

A first trawl through the volumes of Pevsner indicated that there was sufficient extant evidence in these three counties (as well as in others) to warrant a study. The Pevsner volumes, *The Buildings of England*, published by county, and in London in six discrete volumes, is an extraordinarily comprehensive and authoritative gazetteer of buildings

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<sup>10</sup> For details of patterns of investment, see Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 55-68. Fincham and Tyacke agree with Julia Merritt's findings in London, 'that the real take-off in church expenditure only began after about 1600': Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 61-62.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Marshall has argued that there is a consensus that c. 1640 is a good place to take stock for cultural historians of the English Reformation: Peter Marshall, "(Re)defining the English Reformation," *Journal of British Studies* vol. 48, issue 3 (2009): 568.



throughout England, including parish churches.<sup>12</sup> Despite Pevsner's derogatory comments about some buildings or their interior features, and its purely descriptive nature, it remains the best starting point to locate extant evidence. There were four primary reasons for choosing this West Country region: first the geographical variety of the area: ports, moors, downlands, uplands, market towns, small rural villages, cathedral cities, all gave a rich diversity to the area.<sup>13</sup> Second, three dioceses governed the three counties, Bath and Wells which is contiguous with Somerset; Salisbury which governed Wiltshire; and the Henrician creation, the diocese of Bristol, which governed Dorset, although Bristol itself was geographically detached from the Dorset part of the diocese.<sup>14</sup> There were also a significant number of peculiars, that is a parish or church which is exempt from the jurisdiction of the diocese in which it lies, and is subject to the direct jurisdiction of, for example, the monarch, a Dean and

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<sup>12</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner *et al.*, *The Buildings of England*. 46 vols. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951-1974); rev. eds. by Simon Bradley, Bridget Cherry *et al.*, 1974-2002; (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002-), as cited in the footnotes. Originally there were 46 volumes; now there are more as some new editions of a county have been split into two volumes, such as Oxfordshire. Simon Bradley, the Joint Editor of the Pevsner Architectural Guides, has told me that when the current revisions are complete, there will be 55 Volumes. The new edition for Dorset is due to be published May 2018, and the new edition for Wiltshire 2019/2020.

<sup>13</sup> For background to Somerset, see Thomas Barnes, "County Politics and a Puritan Cause Célèbre: Somerset Church Ales, 1633," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* vol. 9 (1959): 103-122; Thomas Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640: A County's Government During the 'Personal Rule'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); for an insight into medieval Somerset, see Katherine French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); for background on Wiltshire, see Martin Ingram, "Communities and Courts: Law and Disorder in Early Seventeenth-Century Wiltshire," in *Crime in England 1550-1800*, ed. J. S. Cockburn (London: Methuen, 1977), 110-134; and Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); for an analysis of the complexities of material culture and regional studies, see Helen Berry, "Regional Identity and Material Culture," in *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 139-157.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed geographical analysis of Somerset, and the contiguous nature of the county and the diocese, see Margaret Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory: The Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Early Seventeenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 11-12, 40-45; for the background to the wealth of the diocese of Bath and Wells, see Phyllis Hembry, *The Bishops of Bath and Wells, 1540-1640* (London: Athlone Press, 1967); for some background to Somerset's parishes, see Margaret Stieg, "Some Economic Aspects of Parochial Churches in the Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Seventeenth Century," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* vol. 3, no. 4 (Winter 1971): 212-222. I decided not to include Lydiard Tregoze in Wiltshire as a case study for two reasons: first, it has been the subject of significant scholarly interest, and second, although ostensibly a parish church, it was in function and purpose in effect a family chapel.

Chapter, or an Archbishop. As a result, peculiars provide a different structure of ecclesiastical governance.<sup>15</sup> These three dioceses were also led by Bishops of varied styles of churchmanship, including William Piers, Bishop of Bath and Wells from 1632 until 1670, a standard bearer for Archbishop Laud.<sup>16</sup> The third reason for choosing these counties is that they were not known predominantly to be strongholds of one confessional position, but rather they generate a kaleidoscopic picture, and often an ambiguous one. Fourth, these counties were reasonably accessible. Ann Hughes has persuasively argued that the nature of local communities was overlapping, and has demonstrated the dangers of attributing homogeneity to the counties in the context of the causes of the Civil War. Similarly, it would be wrong not to acknowledge the complexities of local patterns and worth repeating Ann Hughes's warning that the old chestnut of David Underdown's dichotomy between chalk and cheese country is not sufficiently nuanced.<sup>17</sup> David Underdown characterised the allegiances of the Civil War in

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<sup>15</sup> For more on peculiars, see Ingram, *Church Courts*, 36-37, 44-45, 212-213.

<sup>16</sup> "Piers, William (*bap.* 1580, *d.* 1670)," M. Dorman in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22237> (accessed November 5, 2017); for details of other key bishops, see Arthur Lake of Bath and Wells: "Lake, Arthur (*bap.* 1567, *d.* 1626)," Kenneth Fincham in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15896> (accessed November 5, 2017); Bishop Skinner of Bristol: "Skinner, Robert (1591-1670)," Vivienne Larminie in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25684> (accessed August 8, 2017); and Bishop Davenant of Salisbury: "Davenant, John (*bap.* 1572, *d.* 1641)," Vivienne Larminie in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7196> (accessed August 8, 2017); for an analysis of the different styles of preferment of bishops in James I's reign, compared to that of Charles I's, see Kenneth Fincham, "Episcopal Government," in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 71-91.

<sup>17</sup> Ann Hughes, "The 'Chalk' and the 'Cheese': David Underdown, Regional Cultures and Popular Allegiance in the English Revolution," *History Compass* vol. 11, issue 5 (May 2013): 373-380; Ann Hughes, "Local History and the Origins of the Civil War," in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603 to 1642*, eds. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Longman, 1989), 224-253; for another critique of David Underdown's thesis, see John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London: Longman, 1993), 224-241; David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603 to 1660* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).

Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire, as determined by local social structures that were themselves the result of topography and economic activity. His thesis rested on the argument that the nucleated downland ‘chalk’ areas, noted for sheep and arable farming, displayed royalist tendencies while the scattered parishes of woods, and pasture, where cheese and cloth were made, had strong Puritan links, resisted Laudianism, and were disposed towards the Parliamentary side. Hughes has argued convincingly that the way localities divided in 1642 was caused by a combination of many different factors, rather than by the stark divisions of ‘chalk’ and ‘cheese’.<sup>18</sup>

### *Context*

A brief synopsis of the imposed requirements for Churchwardens helps to contextualise their own investments, and those of other patrons.<sup>19</sup> The requirements for the furnishings in parish churches between 1560 and 1640 were laid down through a complex web: the Prayer Books of 1559 and 1604, Royal Orders, Canons, Royal Injunctions, Archbishops’ visitations, Bishops’ visitations and Archdeacons’ visitations.<sup>20</sup> The core edited texts for visitation articles and injunctions are Walter Frere for the reign of Elizabeth and Kenneth Fincham for

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<sup>18</sup> Hughes, “Local History,” 248.

<sup>19</sup> Criticism of W. K. Jordan’s work on charitable giving, including an ambivalent category ‘religion’, has been well rehearsed: for examples of criticism, see Steven Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 98-99; and D. C. Coleman, “Review: W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*,” *Economic History* series 2, vol. 13, no. 1 (1960-1): 113-115; for Jordan’s original thesis, see W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England 1480-1660: A Study of the Changing Patterns of English Social Aspirations* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959); W. K. Jordan, “The Forming of the Charitable Institutions of the West of England: A Study of the Changing Pattern of Social Aspirations in Bristol and Somerset, 1480-1660,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* new series 4, vol. 50, pt. 8: 3-99.

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth Fincham suggests that there is a paternity between different sets of visitation articles, for example Archbishop Bancroft’s Metropolitan Articles, compiled for ten dioceses in 1605, directly influenced sets at Bath and Wells in 1609, and Salisbury in 1614: *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. I*, ed. Kenneth Fincham, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), xvii. For an overview of Canons in this period, see Gerald Bray, “Canon Law and the Church of England”, in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Reformation and Identity c. 1520-1662 vol. I*, ed. Anthony Milton ((Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 168-185.

the early Stuarts.<sup>21</sup> The survival of episcopal and archidiaconal visitation articles and injunctions has been capricious, for example the survival rate from 1603 to 1640 is about 40%.<sup>22</sup> The detail of the requirements for each element of the church will be described in individual chapters, but a general overview follows as a chronological scaffold, first for particular features, and then for general repairs. This helps to contextualise the investment evident in the parishes.

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the 1559 Injunctions required a 'comely and honest pulpit, and, contradicting the 1559 Prayer Book, a peripatetic arrangement for the communion table.'<sup>23</sup> While the rubric of the Prayer Book demanded that, 'The table .... shall stand in the body of the Church, or in the chauncell,' the Government's intention through the 1559 Injunctions was that the communion table (not an altar) should be placed east to west in the nave or the body of the chancel during communion, and that it should be moved to the east end outside of communion time.<sup>24</sup> As will be seen, this peripatetic concept, expressed in the Injunctions, proved unmanageable. The Injunctions also ordered the removal of any images

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<sup>21</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation vol. III 1559-1575*, ed. Walter Frere and William Kennedy, (London: Longmans, Green, 1910). There are three volumes but this is the volume of most chronological relevance to this study; *Visitation Articles vol. I*, Fincham; in volume II in an appendix Kenneth Fincham gives a list of the extant printed and manuscript visitation articles 1603-1642: *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. II*, ed. Kenneth Fincham, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 257-280.

<sup>22</sup> None of these records survive for the episcopacies of Arthur Lake of Bath and Wells, and Nicholas Felton of Bristol: *Visitation Articles vol. I*, Fincham, xv.

<sup>23</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer*, Brian Cummings, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 124; George Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 30-34, 37; Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5, 205; *Visitation Articles III*, Frere and Kennedy, 16, 27-28; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 34.

<sup>24</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 52.

that were idolatrous or superstitious.<sup>25</sup> Margaret Aston has commented that, as early as 1560, Elizabeth was trying to halt the destructiveness that arose after 1559 by declaring that there were ‘forms of ecclesiastical art that were not to be seen as superstitious’, such as funeral monuments, and glass that the Ordinary had deemed non-superstitious.<sup>26</sup> These confusing directions were followed by the 1563 Homily Against Idolatry which provided a comprehensive and rigorous denunciation of images in public spaces of worship.<sup>27</sup>

Only a year after the Prayer Book and the Injunctions of 1559, Elizabeth was already modifying the requirements by new demands for the Decalogue. In a letter from Elizabeth to Archbishop Parker in 1560 she said that ‘the tables of the commandments may be comlye set, or hung in the east end of the chauncell’.<sup>28</sup> This was confirmed in the Royal Order of 1561 where the Decalogue was to be ‘fixed upon the wall over the said Communion board’.<sup>29</sup> Ten years later, the Canons of 1571 demanded that more biblical texts than just the Decalogue should be painted on the walls, requiring that ‘the walls of the churches be new whited, and decked with chosen sentences of the Holy Scripture, that by the reading and warning thereof, the people may be moved to godliness’.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, Henry Gee and William Hardy, eds. (London: Macmillan, 1896), 417-442; *Visitation Articles III*, Frere and Kennedy, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts vol. 1: Laws against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 314-317.

<sup>27</sup> Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 41-42; *Book of Homilies*, ed. John Griffiths (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Publishing, 2008, originally published by Oxford University Press, 1859), 167-272.

<sup>28</sup> *Correspondence of Matthew Parker D. D., Archbishop of Canterbury, Comprising Letters Written By and To Him from A. D. 1535, to His Death, A. D. 1575*, John Bruce and Thomas Perowne, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853).

<sup>29</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 35.

<sup>30</sup> *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Gerald Bray, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 193.

The Royal Order of 1561 also required the retention or rebuilding of the chancel screen up to the height of the beam, ‘putting some convenient crest upon the said beam towards the church’. The Order required ‘a comely partition between the chancel and the church’.<sup>31</sup> The Royal Order of 1561 also required that ‘the Font be not removed from the accustomed place; and that in parish churches the curates take not upon them to confer Baptism in basins but in the Font customably used’.<sup>32</sup> The 1604 Canons required ‘a font of stone in every church and chapel where baptism is to be ministered; the same to be set in the ancient usual places; in which only font the minister shall baptize publicly,’ which it commented ‘had been ‘too much neglected in many places’.<sup>33</sup>

The Canons of 1604 demanded and re-stated that ‘the Ten Commandments be set up upon the East-end of every church and chapel where the people may best see and read the same’.<sup>34</sup> The 1604 canons did not mention screens, but did require ‘a convenient Seat be made for the Minister to read Service in’.<sup>35</sup> They also modified the 1559 requirement for a pulpit to ‘a

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<sup>31</sup> Whiting, *English Parish*, 5, 205; *Visitation Articles III*, Frere and Kennedy, 108-109: ‘The rood –lofts, as yet, being... untransposed, shall be so altered that the upper part of the same...be quite taken down unto the upper part of the vaults, by putting some convenient crest upon the said beam towards the church. reedifying ....so it be to the height of the upper beam’. Parishes could remove the rood loft and the screen but, in that case, they had to erect a new screen: Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 31, 37.

<sup>32</sup> *Visitation Articles vol. III*, Frere and Kennedy, 109; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 40.

<sup>33</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 64; *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 375.

<sup>34</sup> *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377; Fincham and Tyacke make the point that the 1604 canon does not link the location of the Decalogue with the location of the communion table, as did the Elizabethan Injunction: Fincham, and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 73.

<sup>35</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 69; *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377.

comely and decent pulpit'.<sup>36</sup> The Canons omitted all reference to the peripatetic principle of the communion table and simply demanded that it was to be 'within the Church or Chancel'.<sup>37</sup>

On general repairs, the requirements varied in frequency. In 1559 the Royal Articles said in Article 38 'whether the churches, pulpits and other necessities appertaining to the same be sufficiently repaired, and if they be not, in whose default the same is'.<sup>38</sup> In 1561 Elizabeth had written to Archbishop Parker, expressing her concerns about the neglect of churches.<sup>39</sup> A short Homily appeared in 1563 'for the repayrynge and kepyng cleane, and comely adourning of Churches'.<sup>40</sup> In it parishioners were told of their obligation that the church be 'honourably adorned and garnished'.<sup>41</sup> After the 1563 Homily, it was Whitgift's 1602 survey that demonstrated the first articulated concern for decades.<sup>42</sup> This resulted in Canons 85 and 86 in 1604.<sup>43</sup> They required the churchwardens to ensure that their churches 'be well and sufficiently repaired...kept and maintained,' and also determined that churches should be

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<sup>36</sup> *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377.

<sup>37</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 109.

<sup>38</sup> *Visitation Articles III*, Frere and Kennedy, 5.

<sup>39</sup> The Queen wrote, 'it breedeth no small offence and slander to see and consider, on the one part the curiosity and costs bestowed by all sorts of men upon their private houses, and on the other part the unclean or negligent order and sparekeeping of the house of prayer, by permitting open decays and ruins of coverings, walls and windows, by appointing unmeet and unseemly tables with foul cloths for the communion of the sacraments, generally leaving the place of prayer desolate of all cleanliness of and meet ornaments for such a place, whereby it might be known a place provided for divine service'; she asked them 'to determine upon some good and speedy means of reformation': *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, Bruce and Perowne, 26. For an analysis of how Elizabethan lay impropiators generally cared for the chancels, for which, they had responsibility, see Lucy Kaufman, "Ecclesiastical Improvements, Lay Impropiations, and The Building of a Post-Reformation Church in England, 1560-1600," *The Historical Journal* vol. 58, issue 1 (March 2015): 1-23.

<sup>40</sup> *Book of Homilies*, Griffiths, 273-278.

<sup>41</sup> *Book of Homilies*, Griffiths, 273.

<sup>42</sup> For more on Whitgift's survey, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 92-94; they take the view that the passage of time after years of turbulence, allowed for a new approach.

<sup>43</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 92. Some historians, such as John Spurr, see it as inspiring a boom in repairing and beautifying churches: John Spurr, *The Post-Reformation: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain 1603-1714* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006), 231.

surveyed once every three years by deans or archdeacons and any defects certified.<sup>44</sup> Kenneth Fincham has demonstrated that following the canons, the Metropolitan Visitation in the diocese of Bath and Wells in 1605 was rigorous and paid specific attention to the interior furnishings of parish churches.<sup>45</sup> The 1629 Royal Proclamation calling for the repair of churches and chapels is often seen ‘as the first shot in the Laudian campaign for beautification’, but its origins may have been non-partisan, bearing in mind Canons 85 and 86, and more in line with a general interest in church restoration in James I’s reign. Also, earlier in 1629 the House of Lords had expressed concern about ‘decay of churches’.<sup>46</sup>

The changing requirements demanded parochial responses, and these were sometimes more subtle than simply compliance or exceeding compliance, a theme to be explored later.

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<sup>44</sup> Julia Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and the Phenomenon of Church-Building in Jacobean London,” *The Historical Journal* vol. 41, no. 4 (December 1998): 935-960, 943-4; Julia Merritt has played down the role of the ecclesiastical authorities in the re-building of at ‘least eleven’ London churches ‘in the first decade of the seventeenth century’. Archbishop Bancroft’s articles for his Metropolitan Visitation of Ten Dioceses in 1605, including Bristol and Bath and Wells, included a question about the repair of the church ‘belonging in good reparations, and decently and comely kept,...the seats well maintained ...and if not, then through whose default and what defects are?’: *Visitation Articles vol. I*, Fincham, 10-11; Bishop Montagu of Bath and Wells made some amendments to Bancroft’s articles, for example, he added: ‘Whether there be any in your parish that have, or do refuse to contribute towards the reparation of the church, and the provision of necessities belonging to the same, you are to present them’: *Visitation Articles vol. I*, Fincham, 22.

<sup>45</sup> Kenneth Fincham, “Ramifications of the Hampton Court Conference in the Dioceses, 1603-1609,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 36, no. 2 (April 1985): 212.

<sup>46</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 237-238: Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke maintain that the 1629 royal proclamation calling for the repair of churches after years of neglect may well have been non-partisan and not, as often thought, the first salvo in the Laudian campaign; the Proclamation said: ‘That having of late taken special notice of the general Decay and Ruin of Parish-Churches in many parts of this Kingdom; and that by Law the same ought to be repair’d and maintain’d at the proper charge of the Inhabitants, and others having Land in those Chappelries and Parishes respectively; who had wilfully neglected to repair the same, being consecrated Places of God’s Worship and Divine Service: His Majesty doth therefore charge and command all Arch-Bishops and Bishops, That they take special care of the repairing and upholding the same from time to time, and by themselves, and their Officers, to take a view and survey of them, and to use the power of the Ecclesiastical Court, for putting the same in due execution; and that the Judges be requir’d not to interrupt this good Work, by their too easy granting of Prohibitions’, “Historical Collections: 1629”, *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 2: 1629-38 (1721): 1-46*: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=74894>, (accessed 26 November 2014).



## *Historiography*

The historiography dealing with the reformation of the English parish is extensive. In order to address it for this thesis, it has been structured by creating six strands: first the literature on the parish churches themselves; second, the recent work on the importance of material culture which challenges traditional assumptions; third, a snapshot of the historiography of the slippery concepts of conformity and orthodoxy; fourth, a consideration of the nature of confessional boundaries, specifically those groups labelled Laudian and Puritan; fifth, an overview of so-called religious and secular identities and the porous nature of those artificial boundaries; and sixthly, the literature which acknowledges the importance of local studies.

### *(i) Parish churches*

Studies about the internal fabric, furnishings and fittings of parish churches come from the fields of art historical scholarship, architectural historical scholarship, historical scholarship and antiquarian publications. In terms of subject content, there are four types of secondary literature about the furnishings and fittings, as well as the internal fabric of the church. First there are studies of particular types of evidence, for example works by Francis Bond and John Cox written at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as *Pulpits, Lecterns and Organs* and *Screens and Galleries*.<sup>47</sup> More recently there has been an edited edition of *Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the*

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<sup>47</sup> Francis Bond, *Wood Carvings in English Churches vol. II: Stalls and Tabernacle Work, Bishops' Thrones and Chancel Chairs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1910); Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908); Francis Bond, *Screens and Galleries in English Churches* (London: Henry Frowde, 1908); Francis Bond, *The Chancels of English Churches: The Altar, Reredos, Lenten Veil, Communion Table, Altar Rails, Houseling Cloth, Piscina, Credence, Sedilia, Aumbry, Sacrament House, Easter Sepulchre, Squint etc.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1916); J. Charles Cox, *Pulpits, Lecterns and Organs in English Churches* (London: Oxford University Press, 1915); J. Charles Cox, *Bench-Ends in English Churches* (London: Oxford University Press, 1916); J. Charles Cox, *English Church Fittings, Furniture and Accessories* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1923). However, since the beginning of the twentieth century, Elizabethan and Jacobean screens have been neglected.

*Present*.<sup>48</sup> As well as helping to build a database, these earlier studies of particular forms are also useful to gain a sense of what has disappeared over the last hundred years. Susan Wabuda's study of lecterns and pulpits was helpful in the detail, as well as for cross referencing.<sup>49</sup> Nigel Llewellyn's magisterial *Funeral Monuments in England* both changed scholars' understanding of continuity and discontinuity in monuments, and prompted a lively debate about the importance of confessional identity in their design, which will be explored later.<sup>50</sup> The second type of literature has been area studies, predominantly Pevsner's increasing number of volumes, and books such as Cautley's or Mortlock's studies and gazetteers of Suffolk churches.<sup>51</sup> By their very nature, they are valuable but local, essentially descriptive, and unable to provide an analytical overview of extant forms in parish churches across the country or a wide region. The third type represents a general approach and by their wide scope, can sometimes be too general for this study. For example, two studies of church buildings and liturgy by Nigel Yates have proved too wide chronologically and geographically to be helpful in the detail.<sup>52</sup> There appears not to be any survey of church

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<sup>48</sup> Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown, eds., *Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present* (London: The Ecclesiological Society, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> Susan Wabuda, "Triple Deckers and Eagle Lecterns: Church Furniture for the Book in Late Medieval and Early Modern England," in *The Church and the Book: Papers Read at the 2000 Meeting and the 2001 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Robert Swanson, (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 2004), 144-152.

<sup>50</sup> Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in England in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> Pevsner, *The Buildings of England*; Munro Cautley, *Suffolk Churches and Their Treasures* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1937); D. P. Mortlock, *The Guide to Suffolk Churches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2009).

<sup>52</sup> Nigel Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangements of the Anglican Church 1600-1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Nigel Yates, *Liturgical Space: Christian Worship and Church Buildings in Western Europe 1500-2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); similarly, Marcus Whiffen devoted just four pages to churches between 1603 and 1640: Marcus Whiffen, *Stuart and Georgian Churches: The Architecture of the Church of England outside London 1603-1837* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1948); George Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells's *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship*, contains some factual inaccuracies, as well as some generalised statements, not based on any stated evidence; for example, that high pews were built so that Puritans could conceal their refusal to make some gestures: Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 86. A factual mistake was to give the wrong date for the gallery at Abbey Dore, Herefordshire, on page 48. Addleshaw

furnishings and fittings in this period.<sup>53</sup> Then there are studies of wide scope which address a theme and which change the scholarly landscape, for example, as will be explored later, Tara Hamling's *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* and Anthony Wells-Cole's *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: the Influence of Continental Prints 1558–1625*.<sup>54</sup> The fourth type of literature is represented by collections of essays, often written by historians from different disciplines, such as the edited collection by Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie, *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*.<sup>55</sup> Such multiple author publications can bring a multi-disciplinary, and thus a fresh approach, to the understanding of material evidence.

## (ii) *Material culture*

Three broad premises have informed traditional assumptions about parochial material evidence in this period. The first is that the theological ideology that bred iconoclastic activity destroyed the union between art and religion. As a typical example, the book cover of John Phillips's *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535-1660* emphasised this in accepting the common belief that iconoclasm had 'reduced to literal rubbish the entire

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and Etchells attributed it to Lord Scudamore's refurbishment of Abbey Dore in 1634, but it is early eighteenth century.

<sup>53</sup> This view was endorsed by Olivia Horsfall Turner on 4 January 2014 in her lecture, 'English Parish Church Architecture 1560-1660,' at the conference 'Places of Worship in the British Isles 1550-1689,' Oxford University Department for Continuing Education.

<sup>54</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*; Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints 1558–1625* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997); how Hamling and Wells-Cole have both changed the landscape is discussed later.

<sup>55</sup> Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie, eds., *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Suzanna Ivanic in such a collection of essays urges 'investigating .... materiality to see how early modern religious people understood and interacted with the fabric of the world around them': Suzanna Ivanic, "Early Modern Religious Objects and Materialities of Belief," in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 322-337, 334.

medieval artistic heritage of England'.<sup>56</sup> Allied to this was the second assumption that art became redundant following the Reformation. Ernst Gombrich famously said in *The Story of Art*, that the impact of Puritanism on the visual arts was 'catastrophic'.<sup>57</sup> As late as 1985 and 1988 Patrick Collinson was describing a shift in the 1580s from iconoclasm to iconophobia, and a society suffering from 'severe visual anorexia'.<sup>58</sup> These concepts have dominated the writing for years, despite the tempered nature of Collinson's argument. But, as a result of these assumptions, until 2007, there was a 'dearth of art history books devoted exclusively to the impact of the Reformation on the visual arts'.<sup>59</sup> Until scholars such as Julia Merritt challenged it, there was a third assumption that the churches had been generally neglected and left in a state of disrepair.<sup>60</sup> John Summerson described the history of church buildings from 1545 to 1660 as a 'curious by-way in the story of architecture'.<sup>61</sup> Doreen Yarwood devoted less than half a page to Tudor, and then Stuart, ecclesiastical buildings, while Eric Delderfield

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<sup>56</sup> John Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535-1660* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1973); the theme is developed throughout the book, specifically 206-208; as recently as October 2017, this view was being maintained in an article in *The Times*: 'The stone churches that scatter our countryside stand bare as emptied tombs': Rachel Campbell-Johnston, "How Martin Luther's hammer blows changed British art for ever," *The Times*, October 21, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> Ernst Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 1960), 310; this is also quoted by Keith Thomas in his chapter: "Art and Iconoclasm in Early Modern England," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, eds., Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 16-40, 16.

<sup>58</sup> Patrick Collinson, "From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation," first published as *The Stenton Lecture 1985* (University of Reading, 1986), reprinted in *The Impact of the English Reformation, 1500-1640*, ed. Peter Marshall (London: Arnold, 1997), 279-308, 297; Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Third Anstey Memorial Lecture, University of Kent, Canterbury (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 117-119.

<sup>59</sup> Tara Hamling and Richard Williams, "Introduction," in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 1-13.

<sup>60</sup> A one-dimensional view of how the churches were in decay, neglect, and on the verge of collapse is argued by Kevin Sharpe: Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 317-318; Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building".

<sup>61</sup> John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), 99.

said, ‘the Reformation virtually put an end to church building for almost two centuries’.<sup>62</sup>

Mary Anderson in *The Imagery of British Churches* declared that ‘after the age of iconoclasm came that of neglect, and the churches were only saved from total ruin by the enthusiastic nineteenth-century restorers’. Such views persist as late as 2009 when Mortlock said ‘The Victorians inherited a legacy of neglect’.<sup>63</sup> However, interestingly the descriptions and the photographs in books on single types of evidence, such as stalls or pulpits by Cox and Bond at the beginning of the twentieth century, did not support the metanarrative of the lack of material investment in churches.<sup>64</sup> Their photographs and their textual examples of screens, pulpits, and pews show a rich evidential base of extant fittings and furnishings, which countered the general assumption that churches had been stripped bare. Nevertheless, until the 1980s these traditional assumptions presented a view of post-Reformation interiors of parish churches as places of destruction and neglect with an absence of investment in fabric, interior fittings and ornament.<sup>65</sup>

The Churchwardens’ accounts of Axbridge, Mere, Somerton, and Wimborne Minster, for example, testify to conscientious maintenance and regular repairs throughout this period.

They also provide evidence of investment in the reign of Elizabeth, but not on the scale of the

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<sup>62</sup> Doreen Yarwood, *The Architecture of England from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day* (London: Batsford, 1963); Eric Delderfield, *Guide to Church Furniture* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1966).

<sup>63</sup> Mary Anderson, *The Imagery of British Churches* (London: Murray, 1955), xiii; Mortlock, *Guide to Suffolk Churches*, 9.

<sup>64</sup> Francis Bond, *Wood Carvings in English Churches: Misericords vol. I* (London: Oxford University Press, 1910); Bond, *Wood Carvings II*; Bond, *Screens and Galleries*; Bond, *Chancels*; Cox, *Pulpits*; Cox, *English Church Fittings, Furniture*; Cox, *Bench Ends*.

<sup>65</sup> John Reeks talks about a lack of investment: ‘There were no side altars commissioned by wealthy patrons, no shrines for favoured local saints and no images merging local folklore with traditional Christian tropes. With similarly furnished interiors and a common liturgy, the experience of religion was far less geographically varied in the Church that Charles I inherited’: John Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset, 1625-1662, with particular reference to the Churchwardens’ Accounts,” (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 2014), 251. He also discusses the poor state of repair in Somerset’s churches before the arrival of Bishop Piers: 40, 54, 57-58, 94.

beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>66</sup> The extant material evidence produces more examples of investment in new projects from the beginning of the seventeenth century, than it does from the end of the sixteenth century. This points generally to a greater investment later in the eighty years than earlier, consequent probably on the passage of time, and the passing of the generation that had witnessed the turbulence of the years under Edward VI, Mary and the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. As described later, the accession of James I in 1603, and the publication of the Authorised Bible in 1611, meant that the Protestant settlement was here to stay, and that sponsors could have confidence in long term investment. A second reason why there is a richer material evidential base at the beginning of the seventeenth century is one of cyclical investment. After the new demands made on parishes at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, there is evidence that communion tables, and pulpits were built. These were probably erected hurriedly, and as thriftily as possible, given their uncertain future. Decades later, they probably needed replacing with more permanent and costly structures. These earlier examples are non-extant while some of their early seventeenth-century replacements have survived. For example, at Wimborne Minster the Churchwardens paid for the communion table to be repaired in 1568, a table which is non-extant. In the Axbridge accounts the table was mended in 1571, and a new table constructed in 1628. In 1583 and 1588 the Churchwardens' accounts at Somerton itemise expenditure on mending the communion table, and in 1590 there is income from the sale of the old table, while a new table was constructed in 1626, described in chapter 5. At Mere, in their accounts, the churchwardens itemise in the inventory in 1584 a communion table, and in 1636 refer in the inventory to both the old and the new communion

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<sup>66</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Axbridge; WSHC: 2944/44 Churchwardens' accounts Mere; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Somerton; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Wimborne Minster.

table.<sup>67</sup> The Wimborne Minster accounts in 1581 show that a new pulpit was built, now non-extant. At Mere the 1589 accounts and the 1625 accounts both itemise new pulpits. In Somerton a pulpit was repaired in 1586, and it is likely that the parish church had two pulpits before the 1616 pulpit, analysed in chapter 3.<sup>68</sup>

In her authoritative study, *England's Iconoclasts, Volume I: Laws against Images*, Margaret Aston challenged traditional assumptions about iconoclasm, demonstrating that the phenomenon was much more complex and inconsistent than had been thought. Aston convincingly showed that by 1563 the Elizabethan Settlement had made the way open for 'compromise, retention and even the restoration of imagery'.<sup>69</sup>

The assumption that art was eradicated was challenged significantly in 2007 when Tara Hamling and Richard Williams edited the ground-breaking volume *Art Re-formed*. In their introduction, they explain that the theme of 're-forming' revises traditional conceptions of the wholly destructive cultural impact of the Reformation to one of creative adaptation, transformation and innovation. Hamling and Williams suggest that 'examining the Reformation as a process of cultural transformation allows for continuities, discontinuities, innovation and destruction to find their rightful place'.<sup>70</sup> In the 'Afterword' in the same

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<sup>67</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1568; SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa cameley, 1571, 1628; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1583, 1588, 1590, 1626; WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1584, 1636.

<sup>68</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1581; WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1589, 1625; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1586, 1589, 1616.

<sup>69</sup> Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 336. Aston wrote many important articles and chapters, including "Puritans and Iconoclasts 1560-1660," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 92-121. For a summary of the historiography of iconoclasm, see chapter 1 of Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*.

<sup>70</sup> Hamling and Williams, "Introduction," 4-5.

volume, Maurice Howard summarised the change: that more creative and dynamic attempts to produce imagery for Protestants resulted in imagery that had been safely ‘re-formed’.<sup>71</sup>

Although Tara Hamling’s study, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain*, was centred on religious material in a domestic context, it has also transformed our understanding of the visual arts in the post-Reformation period.<sup>72</sup> While it is important to acknowledge discontinuity, continuity, adaptation and innovation have now been recognised in the post-Reformation visual world by a number of scholars.<sup>73</sup> As well as Hamling’s work, Maurice Howard has shown the continued use of monastic fabric, and its re-purposing. For example, he was able to demonstrate that ‘the fate of monastic sites in the urban environment provides one of the most emphatic pieces of continuity between their state in medieval times and their post-dissolution conversion’. He stressed that continuity extended beyond buildings ‘towards wider responsibilities of social provision’.<sup>74</sup> Alexandra Walsham has also shown a subtle relationship between monastic fabric, change and continuity.<sup>75</sup> As early as 1982 Robert Scribner had in the Lutheran context, in *For the Sake of Simple Folk*,

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<sup>71</sup> Maurice Howard, “Afterword. Art Re-Formed: Spiritual Revolution, Spatial Re-Location,” in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling and Richard Williams, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 267-271.

<sup>72</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*.

<sup>73</sup> In his book, where he posited that evangelicals were markedly sensual in their approach to worship, Matthew Milner described ‘Church interiors’ as remaining ‘intensely visual’: Matthew Milner, *The Senses and the English Reformation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 329.

<sup>74</sup> Hamling and Williams, *Art Re-formed*; Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*; Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, eds., *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Culture and its Meanings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Tara Hamling, “To See or Not to See? The Presence of Religious Imagery in the Protestant Household,” *Art History* vol. 30, no. 2 (2007): 170-197; Tara Hamling, “Old Robert’s Girdle: Visual and Material Props for Protestant Piety in Post-Reformation England,” in *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 135-163; in this chapter, Tara Hamling shows that the use of texts and objects were not a break with the past; as does Maurice Howard, “Recycling the Monastic Fabric: Beyond the Act of Dissolution,” in *The Archaeology of the Reformation*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2003), 221-234; Maurice Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 13-45, 29.

<sup>75</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 123-125.



persuasively placed visual culture at the heart of the success of the Reformation, as Tessa Watt also did in 1991 in *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* in England.<sup>76</sup>

Susan Hardman Moore demonstrated the survival of medieval typologies; and Nigel Llewellyn has described how there was, rather than mere continuity, a flourishing of monuments in *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England*; Ronald Hutton has made the general point that the Church of England may have sanctioned continuity because it helped to ease the process of transition.<sup>77</sup> Although there is now a consensus that art had not been eradicated, there is also agreement that in the context of religious art, ‘there was no consistent line of development and many degrees of opinion on the matter of church art’.<sup>78</sup>

The third assumption that churches were universally neglected has been challenged by a number of scholars. Much of chapter 3 in *Altars Restored* by Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke focuses on this theme.<sup>79</sup> John Schofield showed that the interiors were developing to express changes in liturgy and belief.<sup>80</sup> Significantly Julia Merritt has not only shown that the

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<sup>76</sup> Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>77</sup> Susan Hardman Moore, “For the Mind’s Eye Only: Puritans, Images and the ‘Golden Mines of Scripture,’” *Scottish Journal of Theology* vol. 59, issue 3 (August 2006): 281-296; Mary Anderson describes in very helpful detail medieval typologies, known in England since at least 685 in Jarrow, and famously in *Biblia Pauperum* c. 1300. Her theme was medieval typology and she did not set out to show continuity: Mary Anderson, *History and Imagery in British Churches* (London: Murray, 1971), chapter 3; it is post-Reformation historians who can show that continuity, for example, Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*; and Hutton, “Local Impact.”

<sup>78</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*, 4. For an analysis of the lack of a distinctive Calvinist type of art, see William Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>79</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*.

<sup>80</sup> John Schofield, “Some Aspects of the Reformation of Religious Space in London, 1540-1660,” in *The Archaeology of the Reformation 1480-1580*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2003), 310-324.

large number of rebuilt, repaired and ‘beautified’ churches in Jacobean London represented a more complex activity than had been thought; Merritt has also demonstrated that the effect of the propaganda of first the Laudians, and then the Oxford Movement, had concealed this significant Jacobean building programme.<sup>81</sup> We have now escaped the polemics of contemporaries which earlier historians had accepted. The tone of the poet and antiquary, John Weever, exemplified the tenor of contemporary conservatives in *Ancient Funeral Monuments* in 1631:

The contagious broode of Schismatics, who, if they might have had their wills, would not only have robbed our Churches of all their ornaments and riches, but also would have laid them level with the ground, choosing rather to exercise their devotion and publish erroneous doctrines, in some empty house, in the woods or common fields, then in those Churches, which they held to be polluted with the abominations of the whore of Babylon.<sup>82</sup>

Now scholars can look at the extant evidence in a more open-minded manner: for example, Clare Tilbury acknowledged that Churches were ‘being repaired, refurbished and beautified during James’ reign, well before the ‘Laudian’ era of the 1630s, and not only in London.’<sup>83</sup>

George Yule rebutted the negative reputation of Jacobean churches and showed that

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<sup>81</sup> Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building”. In his PhD thesis, John Reeks argued that, ‘This study will suggest that Merritt’s findings are not directly transferrable to the provinces and may instead reflect the urban characteristics of the parishes that she studied’: Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 41. Here it will be argued that Julia Merritt’s findings do have resonance in the three counties.

<sup>82</sup> John Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Islands Adjacent* (London, 1631).

<sup>83</sup> Clare Tilbury, “The Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes of Israel: An English Reformation Subject for Church Decoration,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 63, no. 2 (April 2012): 274-305, 276.

Episcopal records demonstrated repair, enhancement, restoration and new builds.<sup>84</sup> Both Julia Merritt and Diarmaid MacCulloch emphasised that late Elizabethan and Jacobean supporters of ‘beautification’ may well have clashed with, rather than fit into, a Laudian or the precursor of the Laudian model.<sup>85</sup> The importance of changes in church buildings is now being recognised by church historians such as Peter Marshall, Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie.<sup>86</sup> Andrew Spicer has developed our understanding of how space was adapted for the reformed liturgy, predominantly studying Scotland and mainland Europe, and there have been some more focused works, based on material evidence, on the use of space in England by scholars such as David Postles and Simon Roffey.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> George Yule, “James VI and I: Furnishing the Churches in His Two Kingdoms,” in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, eds. Anthony Fletcher, and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 182-208.

<sup>85</sup> Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building,” 956-959; Diarmaid MacCulloch, “The Myth of the English Reformation,” *Journal of British Studies* vol. 30, no. 1 (1991): 1-19; MacCulloch described the massive effort to equip church buildings for reformed worship which predated the Laudian campaigns and had different priorities from it. Alexandra Walsham points this out in “The Parochial Roots of Laudianism Revisited: Catholics, Anti-Calvinists and ‘Parish Anglicans’ in Early Stuart England,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 49, no. 4 (October 1998): 620-651, 625-626. In her thesis on churches in Sussex, Joan Barham agreed with Diarmaid MacCulloch that the charges of neglect were more a reflection of other agendas than they were a valid argument about the state of the church buildings; Barham came to the view that there had been a ‘minor building revolution’ in the Jacobean period that predated the Laudian changes; she found convincing evidence that, far from being neglected, the parish churches were valued, enhanced, by parochial communities, even by Catholic gentry; she formed the view that complaints about the state of church buildings were often linked to Puritans’ claims that buildings dedicated to God were not being maintained in a manner that made these buildings fit for the purpose of preaching God’s word, which was a direct criticism of the ecclesiastical authorities and the lay patrons who had received impropriations: Joan Barham, “The Impact of the Reformation on the Fabric and Furnishings of Sussex Churches c. 1540-1640” (MPhil thesis, University of Southampton, 2009).

<sup>86</sup> Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480-1642*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 172; Mears and Ryrie, “Introduction.”

<sup>87</sup> Andrew Spicer, “‘Rest of their bones’: Fear of Death and Reformed Burial Practice,” in *Fear in Early Modern Society*, eds. William Naphy and Penny Roberts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997): 167-183; Andrew Spicer, “Architecture,” in *The Reformation World*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (London: Routledge, 2000), 505-520; Andrew Spicer, “Continental Calvinism and its Churches: An Overview,” *Aberdeen University Review* 58 (2000): 301-308; Andrew Spicer, “Rebuilding Solomon’s Temple? The Architecture of Calvinism,” in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands and Christian History*, ed. Robert Swanson (Woodbridge: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by Boydell and Brewer, 2000), 247-268; Andrew Spicer, “Qui est de Dieu, oit la parole de Dieu”, in *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559-1685* eds. Raymond Mentzer and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 175-192; Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton, eds., *Defining the Holy: Sacred Spaces in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Andrew

These challenges to the old orthodoxies have been born partly from a new concentration on extant material evidence. Far from a belief that all had been destroyed, scholars now recognise that ‘physical remains abound in the form of artefacts and parish buildings, especially the church itself’.<sup>88</sup> Hamling and Williams noted that fittings and furnishings in churches were now being treated as evidence in its own right rather than being used to illustrate conclusions drawn from documentary evidence.<sup>89</sup> Karen Harvey has urged the use of material evidence with a range of complementary sources, whilst Kate Giles has warned of the non-mimetic relationship between extant forms and textual sources.<sup>90</sup> Fincham and Tyacke noted the importance of church buildings for their book:

The most innovative of these (sources) are surviving artefacts, the fabric of church buildings, and furnishings such as communion tables and rails, fonts, imagery in stained glass, painting, or plasterwork, and communion plate ... Historians have been notably reluctant to incorporate such evidence onto their document-centred accounts, and these sources remain on the fringes of academic history, and are usually left to the

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Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); David Postles, *Social Geographies in England (1200-1640)*, (Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2007), 175-197, 199-222; Simon Roffey, ‘Recording the Parish Church Fabric: Objective and Subjective Approaches to Structural Analysis’, Conference paper taken from the ‘Institute of Field Archaeologists’ (2005), Warwick ‘My Parish’ link: [https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross\\_fac/myparish/resources/furthersecondaryworksinenglish/](https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/myparish/resources/furthersecondaryworksinenglish/) (accessed October 14 2013).

<sup>88</sup> Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, and Beat Kumin, “Introduction,” in *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, eds. Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, and Beat Kumin, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 3-14, 4.

<sup>89</sup> Hamling and Williams, “Introduction,” 3.

<sup>90</sup> Harvey, *A Student’s Guide*; Kate Giles, “‘A Table of Alabaster with the Story of the Doom’: The Religious Objects and Spaces of the Guild of Our Blessed Virgin, Boston (Lincs.),” in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Culture and Its Meanings*, eds. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 267-288, 285.

tender mercies of art historians or antiquarians. As a consequence, our understanding of Protestantism has been impoverished.<sup>91</sup>

The acknowledged link between material evidence and issues of identity is crucial for this research. Conor Lucey has shown this link in an edited volume on decorative plasterwork, and Michael Snodin and Maurice Howard have demonstrated it in their publication on ornament.<sup>92</sup> Andrew Morrall has also suggested taking ornament from the narrow confines of art history and aligning it more with the interests of social and cultural history.<sup>93</sup> Despite the significant progress made since the 1980s, there are still remnants of the old assumptions about visual arts, church interiors and even the use of material evidence itself.<sup>94</sup> In contrast the virtual Saint Paul's Cross project takes into account space, acoustics and the physical environment.<sup>95</sup> This study sits within recent directions in scholarship where material evidence is placed in the foreground, and where the old assumptions have been persuasively challenged: the tale of the churches was neither simply one of total destruction, nor of absence of visual arts, nor even of general neglect.

### (iii) *Conformity and orthodoxy*

The historiography has increased understanding of the nature of conformity and orthodoxy in the context of material evidence. In their seminal work, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face*

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<sup>91</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 6.

<sup>92</sup> Conor Lucey, "Introduction," in *Decorative Plasterwork in Ireland and Europe: Ornament and the Early Modern Interior*, eds. Christine Casey, and Conor Lucey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 21–35; Michael Snodin and Maurice Howard, *Ornament: A Social History Since 1450* (London: The Tate Gallery, 1996).

<sup>93</sup> Andrew Morrall, "Ornament as Evidence," in *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 47–66.

<sup>94</sup> For example, Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour: The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 87.

<sup>95</sup> <http://vpcp.chass.ncsu.edu>, (accessed 4 April, 2018). I am grateful to Jonathan Willis for pointing out this site.

of *English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700*, Fincham and Tyacke demonstrated the confusing history of orthodoxy and conformity with regard to altars. The impractical peripatetic principle, described earlier, was flouted from the 1570s onwards.<sup>96</sup> As early as 1565 Elizabeth was writing to Archbishop Parker, complaining about diverse practices; by 1604 the Canons, made that year, demonstrated that the Elizabethan Injunctions had generally been abandoned: the Canons now said that the table should be placed where the minister could be heard, and contained nothing on the specific alignment of the table or of its peripatetic nature.<sup>97</sup> Although from the late 1620s until 1640 altars were being ‘restored’, the absence of a consistent policy led to contention and diversity of practice during that period of ‘evolving and unstable orthodoxy’.<sup>98</sup>

Inconsistent enforcement’s charting of this unstable orthodoxy and inconsistent enforcement with regard to altars helps this research, and will be a central resource in chapter 4. Their book has been important because of its perspective on Calvinism as mainstream and Laudianism as effectively a species of ecclesiastical coup. Fincham and Tyacke’s views have led to the criticism that they have read History ‘backwards’: they see from the 1590s the ‘proto-Laudians,’ or to use their adopted phrase ‘avant-garde conformists,’ as the precursors to Laudianism, a theme to be explored in this thesis.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 52.

<sup>97</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 59, 73.

<sup>98</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 177.

<sup>99</sup> Fincham and Tyacke support the view that there was improvement to church interiors during James’ reign: ‘In some parts of the country, church interiors were remodelled not along Laudian lines but according to the more traditional pattern of improvements which, as we have seen, dated back to the beginning of James I’s reign’; however, Fincham and Tyacke do call the ‘parochial beauty of holiness’ before the enforced Laudian campaign, the ‘parochial avant-garde’: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 101, 227. It was Peter Lake who coined the phrase ‘avant-garde conformity’, for divines like Hooker: Peter Lake, “Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge and Avant-Garde Conformity at the Court of James I,” in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 113-133. Lake used it again, for example: Peter Lake, “Business as Usual? The Immediate Reception of Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity*,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 52, no. 3 (July 2001): 456-486, 482; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke used the term

The second example comes from Margaret Aston's most critical insights on orthodoxy and conformity regarding images in *England's Iconoclasts*. Here Aston described the evolving national regulations but also highlighted that Elizabethan bishops were men of varying shades of opinion, and so the Episcopal injunctions about permissible images were far from uniform in their approach.<sup>100</sup> Aston also suggested that the Elizabethan compromise both fostered and camouflaged conflict about images.<sup>101</sup> Aston shows that the discrepancy between theory and practice towards images was evident in the 1563 *Homily Against Peril of Idolatry*. Aston demonstrated that official iconoclasm continued in Elizabeth's reign only when an individual diocese shared the godly intention of the homily.<sup>102</sup> So orthodoxy and conformity towards images was a malleable concept at any one time, and also over time: in 'Puritans and Iconoclasts 1560-1660', and in her magisterial, posthumously published volume, *Broken Idols*, Aston has shown how attitudes to images had changed by the beginning of the seventeenth century, and again by the 1630s.<sup>103</sup> For example, in James' reign there was an increasing number of places where people could see crosses and images being put back inside and outside the church.<sup>104</sup> Aston sums up the competing forces: 'such was the ancient ambiguity of a situation in which images were simultaneously tolerated and proscribed, and in which the action of breaking them could be both legal and illegal'.<sup>105</sup> Aston stressed that not all who opposed church images were Puritans, nor did all who believed church images might

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extensively in *Altars Restored*, and chapter 3 is headed "Avant-Garde Conformity and the English Church, c. 1590-1625". For an analysis of how Laudians presented themselves in mutually exclusive versions, see Peter Lake, "The Laudian Style Order, Uniformity and the Pursuit of the Beauty of Holiness," in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 161-185, 184-185.

<sup>100</sup> Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 337.

<sup>101</sup> Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 337.

<sup>102</sup> Aston, "Puritans and Iconoclasts," 97.

<sup>103</sup> Aston, "Puritans and Iconoclasts," 97; Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 263, 953.

<sup>104</sup> Aston, "Puritans and Iconoclasts," 106.

<sup>105</sup> Aston, "Puritans and Iconoclasts," 109.

become idols feel impelled to destroy them.<sup>106</sup> Funerary monuments were seen by Elizabeth as a matter where other considerations came into play: familial identity and social order. Stained glass was where cost became a factor in survival.<sup>107</sup> The 1560 Proclamation forbade destruction of funeral monuments, and also forbade the destruction of glass without permission of the bishop, an important gloss on the Injunctions.<sup>108</sup> Margaret Aston suggests that Elizabeth was trying to halt the destructiveness of 1559 by placing limits on iconoclasm in the parishes, and by declaring that there were forms of ecclesiastical art which were not to be seen as superstitious.<sup>109</sup> Margaret Aston's view of Elizabethan ambiguity and of uneven enforcement is supported by Sarah Brown's description of the survival of the famous glass in Fairford parish church.<sup>110</sup> Trevor Cooper has written in a study of Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding that his private confessional views may have differed from his public conformity. He suggests that screens were built by people from across the confessional spectrum, and that Nicholas Ferrar may just have been wisely obeying authority in his furnishings at Little Gidding.<sup>111</sup> Margaret Aston's work helps this research in establishing the changing orthodoxy towards images, and the unevenness of enforcement both at any one time and over time.<sup>112</sup> The interplay of national, metropolitan and diocesan regulations about permissible forms and

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<sup>106</sup> Aston, "Puritans and Iconoclasts," 93.

<sup>107</sup> Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 316.

<sup>108</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, 218; Aston, "Puritans and Iconoclasts," 98.

<sup>109</sup> Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 316.

<sup>110</sup> Sarah Brown, "Repackaging the Past: The Survival, Preservation and Reinterpretation of the Medieval Windows of Saint Mary's, Fairford, Gloucestershire," in *Art, Piety and Destruction in the Christian West, 1570-1700*, ed. Virginia Chieffo (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 91-112.

<sup>111</sup> Trevor Cooper, "'Wise as serpents': The Form and Setting of Public Worship at Little Gidding in the 1630s," in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 197-219, 208, 215.

<sup>112</sup> Generically, the complex nature of enforcement is discussed by Kenneth Fincham: Kenneth Fincham, "Clerical Conformity from Whitgift to Laud," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church c. 1560-1660*, eds. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 125-158. Andrew Foster demonstrated that even for Archbishop Neile, enforcement was determined by local context: Andrew Foster, "Archbishop Richard Neile Revisited," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church c. 1560-1660*, eds. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 159-178.



images with parochial preferences will be an important area to examine, particularly evident with regard to communion rails in chapter 4. As far as can be established, no one has attempted to do this in terms of material evidence in parish churches.

(iv) *Laudians and Puritans*

The fourth theme centres on how the literature on material evidence informs an understanding of the complex and porous nature of confessional boundaries. As described above, historians such as Julia Merritt and George Yule have moved the debate on from polarised reductionism to an understanding that the building, repair and furnishing of churches is more complex than previously thought.<sup>113</sup> It is no longer possible to reduce the confessional world of this period into clearly delineated Puritans who abhorred ornament, and conservatives who decorated their churches. George Yule put it succinctly: ‘those who think that the Laudians had a monopoly of ornate churches should think again’.<sup>114</sup> As noted earlier, Julia Merritt points out, historiographically, that historians have endorsed the Laudian polemic, which has had serious repercussions for the way historians have perceived the confessional identities of those who made changes in their churches before the 1630s. Using London churches as examples Julia Merritt notes,

once again the evidence is clear: explicitly puritan parishes were prepared not only to enlarge but also to decorate their parish churches...Decoration could and did reflect different political and religious agendas.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building”; Yule, “James VI and I.”

<sup>114</sup> Yule, “James VI and I,” 201; Julia Merritt made an important point when she noted that Yule has a tendency to view all attention to church fabric between 1603 and 1625 as ‘a single, expression of the unified, moderate evangelical vision of James I’: Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building,” 937, n. 5.

<sup>115</sup> Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building,” 952. In his doctoral thesis, John Reeks does not believe that Julia Merritt’s findings in London transfer to the provinces; this research disagrees with Reeks’s view: Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 41. Even when historians acknowledge the changes in the early

The metaphorical elephant in the room is the definition of Puritans, the godly, ‘the hotter sort of Protestant’.<sup>116</sup> There is no space here to enter into this particular historiographical minefield. The doyen of scholarship on Puritanism, Patrick Collinson, has been joined by a legion of other stellar scholars: Peter Lake, Judith Maltby, Peter Marshall, Alec Ryrie, and Alexandra Walsham, to name but a few.<sup>117</sup> For this study, Puritans are defined as those members of the Church who wanted the Church to be further reformed, who were enthusiasts for inner spiritual self-examination, as befitted those who believed they were the predestined ‘elect’, and those who feared popery or anything that hinted at popish superstition.<sup>118</sup> Alec

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seventeenth century, they can often conflate all changes in Charles I’s reign with Laudian changes: Spurr, *The Post-Reformation*, 253.

<sup>116</sup> The term, ‘the hotter sort of Protestant’, was famously coined by Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Cape, 1967), 27. Alexandra Walsham analyses the ways in which Puritans identified themselves by their ‘disapproval of the lukewarm religion and profane lifestyle of the unregenerate and carnal majority’: Alexandra Walsham, “The Godly and Popular Culture,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, eds. John Coffey and Paul Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 277-293, 278.

<sup>117</sup> For an excellent analysis of the historiography of Puritanism, see chapters 5 and 8 of Marshall, *Reformation England*. Patrick Collinson’s major works include: Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*; Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, reprinted 2003); Patrick Collinson and John Craig, eds., *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998); Collinson, *Birthpangs*; Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Hambledon, 1994); Patrick Collinson, “Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism as Forms of Popular Religious Culture,” in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 32-58. Judith Maltby’s study of the conforming majority of ‘Prayer Book Protestants’ sheds new light on an understanding of Puritans: Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); this led to a lively polemic in which Peter Lake described as Judith Maltby’s ‘soggy middle’, the ‘Prayer Book Protestants’, in *Prayer Book and People*, and Judith Maltby’s criticised Haigh’s notion ‘Parish Anglicans’ as the ‘spiritual leftovers of Elizabethan England’: Peter Lake and Michael Questier, “Introduction,” in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church c. 1560-1660*, eds. Peter Lake and Michael Questier, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), ix-xx xv; Christopher Haigh, “The Church of England, the Catholics and the People,” in *The Impact of the English Reformation, 1500-1640*, ed. Peter Marshall, (London: Edward Arnold, 1997), 235-256; Judith Maltby, “‘By this Book’: Parishioners, the Prayer Book and the Established Church,” in *The Impact of the English Reformation*, ed. Peter Marshall (London: Arnold, 1997), 257-278, 259, reprinted from Kenneth Fincham, ed. *The Early Stuart Church* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993); Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Walsham, “The Godly.”

<sup>118</sup> For an analysis on whether predestinarianism was as closely identified with Puritans as had been thought, see Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, “Introduction: The Puritan Ethos,” *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 1-31, 8;

Ryrie's notion in his recent publication that 'puritan' should be an adjective rather than a noun is helpful here in considering the porous nature of confessional identities in relation to material evidence.<sup>119</sup> Very little has been written on this, a major area for this research, with some notable exceptions: Julia Merritt shows that the largest amount on a list of contributions collected from a single parish for the rebuilding of Holy Trinity the Less in 1606, came from the 'unequivocally' puritan parish of St Antholin Budge Row, while third on the list was the 'equally godly', St Anne Blackfriars.<sup>120</sup> As has been the case with Laudians, contemporary adversaries and some later historians have constructed a homogenous identity with which to label Puritans.<sup>121</sup> Although there were people with Puritan persuasions, this study is predicated on an understanding of the multiple gradations of confessional positions, and of their porous and malleable nature.<sup>122</sup>

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and David Como, "Puritans, Predestination and the Construction of Orthodoxy in Early Seventeenth Century England," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church c. 1560-1660*, eds. Peter Lake and Michael Questier, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 64-89.

<sup>119</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 6.

<sup>120</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 951-952. In her doctoral thesis on the study of churches within a thirty-mile radius of Westminster, Valerie Hitchman has produced significant evidence of the building programme that preceded Laud; Hitchman believes that there can be little doubt that parishioners wanted a decent, and in some cases a beautiful, place in which to worship God: Valerie Hitchman, "*Omnia Bene or Ruinosa?*: the Condition of the Parish Churches in and around London and Westminster c. 1603-1677," PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2008.

<sup>121</sup> Lake and Questier have pleaded for a consideration of identity formation rather than a monochrome analysis of categories: Lake and Questier, "Introduction", xviii.

<sup>122</sup> The nine essays in Peter Lake and Michael Questier's edited volume explore the malleability of conformity and orthodoxy: Lake and Questier, *Conformity and Orthodoxy*; as early as 1982 Peter Lake suggested that orthodoxy was dependent upon people's attitudes towards the two extremes, and that these attitudes were not consistent: Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the English Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake analyse the dynamic nature of conformity in the reigns of the first two Stuart kings: Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, "The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I", in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 23-49; Peter Lake and Alexandra Walsham have both talked about the complexity of categories: Lake, "Protestants, Puritans and Laudians"; Walsham, "Parochial Roots". For a local study of the complexities of confessional positions, see Anthony Fletcher, "Factionalism in Town and Countryside: the Significance of Puritanism and Arminianism," in *The Church in Town and Countryside, Studies*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1979), 291-300, 297; John Craig, *Reformation, Politics and Polemics: The Growth of Protestantism in East Anglian Market Towns, 1500-1610* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); and William Sheils, *The Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough 1558-1610* (Northampton: Northamptonshire Record Society, 1979),

A key question is what contemporaries meant, and what historians now mean by ‘beautification.’ Julia Merritt shows that Laudians and others meant different things by it.<sup>123</sup> Historians have adopted without question terms like ‘beautification’, ‘neglect’, ‘unadorned’, and have not recognised that contemporaries used them in polemical discourse, reducing the perspective to simple binaries.<sup>124</sup> Alexandra Walsham has shown that Churchwardens’ accounts indicate that a rise in expenditure was already under way before the Caroline campaign by several decades.<sup>125</sup> Fincham and Tyacke described the ‘broad spectrum of religious opinion among those undertaking remedial work’ in the reign of James I.<sup>126</sup> The parishes hold rich evidence to be interrogated: the complexity of confessional boundaries, along with the wide confessional spectrum of investors and those who wanted to change the interiors of their churches.<sup>127</sup> Recent work has necessarily added to that complexity and abandoned the easy divisions of Puritanism and Laudianism that made churches simple to read, and misleading to understand.

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119-127. For the porous nature of Puritan identity, see Marshall, *Reformation England*, 147. For a study of a well-known Puritan and a ‘cultural chameleon’, see Alexandra Walsham, “‘A Glose of Godlines’: Philip Stubbes, Elizabethan Grub Street and the Invention of Puritanism,” in *Belief and Practice in Reformation England: A Tribute to Patrick Collinson from his Students*, eds. Susan Wabuda and Caroline Litzenberger (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 177-206. For contemporary descriptions of Puritans, see Durston and Eales, *Culture of English Puritanism*.

<sup>123</sup> Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building,” 960.

<sup>124</sup> Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building,” 954-956, 960; Joan Barham has shown that the confessional identities of investors in Sussex stretched across a wide range and included Catholic gentry: Barham, “Sussex Churches.” Andrew Spicer’s analysis of Thomas Adams’s nuanced views of church buildings is a good example of how simple binaries are redundant: Andrew Spicer, “Holiness and the Temple: Thomas Adams and the Definition of Sacred Space in Jacobean England,” *The Seventeenth Century* vol. XXVII, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 1-24.

<sup>125</sup> Walsham, “Parochial Roots.”

<sup>126</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 101.

<sup>127</sup> Alexandra Walsham has suggested that official actions of the Laudian programme merely sanctioned and spurred on architectural improvements that were already underway: Walsham, “Parochial Roots,” 625.

It is a central argument here that, just as Laudians did not have a monopoly on enhancing their churches, nor does everything have to be referenced in Laudian terms. The Homily of 1563 ‘for the repayrynge and kepyng cleane, and comely adjournyng of Churches’ testifies to a desire for enhancement from the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign.<sup>128</sup> Following the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, the Metropolitan Visitation by Bancroft’s commissaries in the Diocese of Bath and Wells presented some churchwardens for such failures as not equipping their churches with tables of consanguinity, pewter pots for communion, Books of Common Prayer, pulpit cushions, and communion cloths. Concern about the interior equipment and furnishings pre-dated Bishop Piers.<sup>129</sup> Specific presentments of some churchwardens does not mean that all churches were neglected or in disrepair, but rather that there was a new set of priorities.

The historiography on Laudianism is extensive, and there is not sufficient space to consider it fully here. A few allusions will have to suffice. Laudianism was not a term used by contemporaries but appears to have emerged between 1685 and 1695. While few historians would now use it for a description of attitudes in the 1580s as G. J. Cuming did, Laudian and Laudianism are frequently used but as infrequently defined.<sup>130</sup> Fincham and Tyacke’s seminal

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<sup>128</sup> *Book of Homilies*, Griffiths, 273-8. In his monograph on church music, Jonathan Willis makes the same point about music, which was present in the Elizabethan church from the beginning; for an analysis of how music was valued from the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign, by for example, Jewell, Parker and Whitgift, see Jonathan Willis, *Church Music and Protestantism in Post-Reformation England: Discourses, Sites and Identities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 58, 61, 66, 69, *passim*.

<sup>129</sup> Fincham, “Ramifications,” 212, 221.

<sup>130</sup> G. J. Cuming, “The Making of the Prayer Book of 1662,” in *The English Prayer Book 1547-1662*, eds. The Archbishop of Canterbury, C. W. Dugmore, T. M. Parker, E. C. Ratcliff, G. J. Cuming (London: Alcuin Club Publications, 1963).

book, *Altars Restored*, revised the traditional notion that Laudianism was a conservative phenomenon and reframed it as an innovative coup overturning the Calvinist consensus.<sup>131</sup>

Patrick Collinson in his ‘magnum opus’, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, had independently come to the same conclusion as Tyacke, in portraying Elizabethan Calvinism as mainstream.<sup>132</sup> Tyacke’s views were then challenged by historians, such as George Bernard, Kevin Sharpe, and Julian Davies, who were also confusingly called revisionists.<sup>133</sup> This second revisionist wave challenged Tyacke’s views on three counts: there had been no Calvinist consensus to disrupt, that it was the King and not Laud who was the prime mover behind the ceremonial changes of the 1630s, and that these changes were not linked to an exaggerated perception of Arminianism.<sup>134</sup> Whilst Tyacke and Lake have portrayed Laudianism as radical and innovative, Bernard and Sharpe have stressed continuity.<sup>135</sup> The

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<sup>131</sup> It was Nicholas Tyacke who changed the traditional view before he collaborated with Kenneth Fincham: Nicholas Tyacke, “Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution,” in *The Origins of the English Civil War*, ed. Conrad Russell, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1973, reprinted 1978), 119-143; Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1650* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Peter Lake, “Introduction: Puritanism, Arminianism and Nicholas Tyacke,” in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, eds. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2006), 10; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*.

<sup>132</sup> Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*; Lake, “Tyacke,” 6.

<sup>133</sup> Marshall, *Reformation England*, 221; a synopsis of the historiography of revisionism can be found in Nicholas Tyacke’s “Introduction”: Nicholas Tyacke, “Introduction,” in *England’s Long Reformation 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (London: UCL Press, 1998), 1-32.

<sup>134</sup> George Bernard concluded that churchmen with views like Laud and Neile had been promoted before 1625 and regarded the policy of Laud and Neile as a direct continuation from Whitgift: George Bernard, “The Church of England, c. 1529-c. 1642,” *History* 75 (1990), 183-206, 195, 201-204; this is cited by Marshall, *Reformation England*, 221. Kevin Sharpe propositioned that it was the King, not Laud, who was the prime mover behind the ceremonial changes: Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, chapter 6; Julian Davies insisted on the role of the King: Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Richard Cust has wisely concluded that the two men, the King and Laud basically shared the same basic aims and assumptions: Richard Cust, *Charles I* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005), 135. Peter Marshall gives a succinct synopsis of this second revisionary wave: Marshall, *Reformation England*, 221-223; and Peter Lake has helpfully detailed the historiography: Lake, “Tyacke,” 1-15.

<sup>135</sup> Tyacke, “Counter-Revolution”; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*; Lake, “Tyacke”; Peter Lake has argued that the Calvinist consensus has been exaggerated: Peter Lake, “Calvinism and the English Church,” *Past and Present*, no. 114 (February 1987): 32-76; the different kinds of Calvinists have long been acknowledged. Kendall in 1979 identified ‘Credal Calvinists’ as opposed to ‘Experimental Calvinists’: R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Anthony Milton has argued that there was a

metaphorical waters have been further muddled by the use of Arminianism and Laudianism synonymously. Leif Dixon has given helpful descriptions, showing the distinction. He defines Laudianism as

the programme of reform and approaches to Church governance particularly associated with William Laud. This programme was characterised by a hostility to predestinarian preaching and Word-based piety, and a parallel promotion of the sacraments and the ‘beauty of holiness’.<sup>136</sup>

Laudianism became a politically identifiable programme for enforcing uniformity and ceremonialism and was more than ‘an ‘Arminian’ rejection of Calvinist predestinarianism’.<sup>137</sup> Arminianism is a term over which much scholarly ink has been spilled. Used polemically by contemporaries, its manifestation in England from the early seventeenth century can be characterised in contrast by its theological opposition to Calvinist predestinarianism, by their views on human free will in salvation, and the nature of the visible Church.<sup>138</sup>

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‘Jacobean consensus’, however muddled and compromised it was: Anthony Milton, “The Church of England, Rome and the True Church: the Demise of Jacobean Consensus,” in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 187-210; Peter Lake and Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake analysed the similarities and differences between the ecclesiastical policies of the first two Stuarts, and the international contexts of their policies: Fincham and Lake, “The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I”; Arnold Hunt gives an overview of ‘Jacobean consensus’ in a review article: Arnold Hunt, “A Review Article: A Jacobean Consensus? The Religious Policy of James VI and I,” *The Seventeenth Century* 17, 1 (April 2002): 131-140.

<sup>136</sup> Leif Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians in England c. 1590-1640* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 211. Anthony Milton said that Laud and his supporters wished to principally restore the beauty of holiness. This implies that others had not wanted ‘the beauty of holiness’ in their churches: Anthony Milton, “Unsettled Reformations, 1603-1662,” in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Reformation and Identity c. 1520-1662 vol. I*, ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 63-83, 70-71.

<sup>137</sup> Milton, “Unsettled Reformations, 1603-1662,” 72.

<sup>138</sup> Dixon, *Practical Predestinarians*, 211. For more discussion on Arminianism, see Hugo Blake, Geoff Egan, John Hurst and Elizabeth New, “From Popular Devotion to Resistance and Revival in England: The Cult of the Holy Name of Jesus and the Reformation,” in *The Archaeology of Reformation c. 1480-1580*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2003), 175-197; Fletcher, “Factionalism”; Lake, “Tyacke”; Michael Questier, “Arminianism, Catholicism, and Puritanism in England during the 1630s,” *The Historical Journal* vol. 49, no. 1 (2006): 53-78; Tyacke, “Counter Revolution”; Tyacke, *Anti Calvinists*;

Anthony Milton has characterised Laudianism as ‘not necessarily innovative,’ but distinctive in the 1630s through ‘the systematic way in which ceremonial and disciplinary policies were enforced’.<sup>139</sup> He went on to argue that the ‘coherence of the Laudian ideal can be exaggerated,’ that the inconsistencies of the Laudian texts derived from the peculiarly unstable nature of Laudian orthodoxy and the apparently uncoordinated manner of its creation’.<sup>140</sup> In addition, and significantly, Arminianism suffered from being identified with Carolean political absolutism, in the popular mind.<sup>141</sup> The lack of homogeneity, the inconsistencies and incoherence were also evident in, for example, the differences of view and enforcement that the Laudian bishops practised over the altar policy or the reception of communion.<sup>142</sup>

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Walsham, “Parochial Roots”; Lake, “Calvinism and the English Church”; Marshall, *Reformation England*, 143-145, 215-218, 220-225, 247.

<sup>139</sup> Anthony Milton said, ‘The Laudian policies were not necessarily as innovative as their opponents claimed, that individual elements of their policies can be found to have precedents stretching well back into the Jacobean period, and even earlier. What is distinctive about the 1630s, it has been argued, is both the systematic way in which ceremonial and disciplinary policies were enforced, and also, in particular, the rationale with which these policies were imposed’: Anthony Milton, “‘The Creation of Laudianism’: A New Approach,” in *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell*, eds. Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust and Peter Lake (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 162-184, 162.

<sup>140</sup> Milton, “Laudianism,” 164, 180-181; Peter Marshall has argued that it was not so much Laudianism’s antecedents or its coherence that was significant, as its ambition and the effectiveness of its implementation: Marshall, *Reformation England*, 226.

<sup>141</sup> Tyacke, “Counter-Revolution,” 140.

<sup>142</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 176-210, 210-218, 238; Kenneth Fincham, “The Restoration of Altars in the 1630s,” *The Historical Journal* vol. 44, no. 4 (2001): 919-940; in this article, he says that the controversy over reception became a new device to tackle the long-standing dispute over kneeling at communion; and that the diversity over practice arose because neither Metropolitan had determined it. For the godly, such as Robert Woodford, the altar policy was an evil; in his Diary he wrote in August 1637, ‘There is a gen[er]all visitacon of Churches in this diocesse by some of the worsor sorte of divines & by [ap]p[ar]iters & to observe the standinge of the tables whether altarwise or not & to set them so; oh Lord looke uppon us in m[er]cy it is an evill time’: *Robert Woodford’s Diary 1637-1641*, John Fielding, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for The Royal Historical Society, 2012), 95-403; *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, 218-9, 159; Peter Helyn, *Cyprianus Anglicus* (London, 1671), 366. I am grateful to Trevor Cooper for the last three references, which arose from his lecture: Trevor Cooper, ‘Deerhust Annual Lecture’, 12 September 2015.



Since church furnishings have not always been taken seriously as a form of historical evidence, it has been too easy to label casually the decorative or the expensive as Laudian, but also because the metanarrative of the historiography of Laudianism has imposed itself upon the material evidence. In this project, the material evidence will be deployed to challenge the metanarrative, as Giorgio Riello has suggested.<sup>143</sup>

The use of this misleading description is beginning to change with the work, for example, of Julia Merritt and George Yule who have both challenged some of the easy labelling of church interiors as ‘Laudian’. The superficial use of ‘Laudian’ to describe elements of church interiors has been widespread: as an example, Addleshaw and Etchells wrote, ‘A notable screen of the Laudian period is one in Cartmel Priory, in Lancashire, put up between 1618 and 1622’.<sup>144</sup> The dating was significantly some years before Laud himself possessed significant office or influence.

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<sup>143</sup> Giorgi Riello argues that objects not only challenge the ‘broad sweep of events’, but also ‘recast historical narratives’: Giorgio Riello, “Things that Shape History: Material Culture and Historical Narratives,” in *History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 25-46, 41; Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton have also made a plea in their introduction to place material evidence in a dialogue with the narrative: Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton, “Introduction,” in *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England-Essays in Honour of Professor W. J. Sheils*, eds. Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 1-27. Glenn Adamson has suggested that material culture ‘also helps us to create a more nuanced picture of history, one with multiple registers – something more like a full symphony than a single line of melody’: Glenn Adamson, “The Case of the Missing Foot Stool: Reading the Absent Object,” in *History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 192-207, 205.

<sup>144</sup> The screen at Cartmel is cited in chapter 4, and Figure 4. 11; Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 38. Pevsner describes the early seventeenth century communion rails at Melcombe Horsey, Dorset as ‘Laudian’, with no evidence other than they were rails from the early seventeenth century: John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Dorset* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin, 1972), 278; more recently Graham Parry has used the description ‘Laudian’ for ‘the arts of religion’, although he has said it is inaccurate: ‘The most natural descriptive term for my subject is ‘Laudianism’, although this is not strictly accurate, since many of the features of the movement were evident

The reason for this indiscriminate use of ‘Laudian’ as a description for church interiors is that historians have considered that only Laudians wished to beautify their churches. This would be a logical view in the context of the old polarised reductionist paradigm of Puritans and Laudians. It is also as a result of church interiors not being treated as evidence in their own right, but rather as fitting into the imposed narrative. It therefore followed that anything ornate or even expensive looking must be called ‘Laudian’; and anything that could not fit into that conceptual model was called pre-Laudian, proto Laudian or ‘avant-garde conformist’. The authors of parish church booklets have often taken their lead from scholars.<sup>145</sup> The local material evidence will challenge this teleological presumption. Julia Merritt has shown that rebuilding was compatible with a view of the Jacobean church as the high-water mark of moderate Puritanism, and that it was not a coercively driven campaign. Rather, the programme represented a wide range of different types of individual and collective social,

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before Laud became the leading figure...The term ‘Laudianism’ is so appropriate to my requirements ....that I have used it freely to describe the increased emphasis on ceremony, liturgy and ornament in the services of the Church from the middle of the second decade of the seventeenth century’. ‘The Laudian movement-we may term it for convenience rather than for strict accuracy...it had begun in the second decade of the century’: Parry, *Glory, Laud*, xi, 6, 31; Parry describes St Katharine Cree in the City of London, as ‘Laudian in a very restrained way’: Parry, *Glory, Laud*, 6, 31. This description is challenged by Peter Lake in a thoughtful and precise analysis: Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker’s Revenge: ‘Orthodoxy’, ‘Heterodoxy’ and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 311; Fincham and Tyacke have described the consecration service there by Laud as deliberately exhibiting Laudian notions of the ‘beauty of holiness’: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 143.

<sup>145</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch commented that architectural historians have often labelled church buildings and furniture Laudian that were not: MacCulloch, “The Myth,” 14. An example of parish booklets is the booklet for Sherrington, Wiltshire, which says the 1624 ‘Communion Rail is of the earliest English type, i.e. as introduced by Archbishop Laud’: *A History of Sherrington and its Church* (Warminster, 2004), 3; the leaflet for Rodney Stoke, Somerset, described the 1625 wooden font cover as ‘a fine example of Jacobean wooden furnishing from the Laudian period about 1625’; the 1625 rood screen as ‘Jacobean’; the 1625 pulpit as ‘Laudian’ and the 1634 altar or communion table as ‘Jacobean’: F. E. Booth, *Church of Saint Leonard Rodney Stoke: Architectural and Historic Features* (n. p., 1981).

practical and religious impulses.<sup>146</sup> As discussed earlier, Julia Merritt has pointed out that historiographically, historians have endorsed the Laudian polemic, which has important consequences for the way historians have understood the confessional identities of those who made changes in their churches before the 1630s.

Citing as an example the ostentatious and grand interior of Croscombe, Somerset, George Yule has said, as quoted earlier, that Laudians did not possess the monopoly of decorated churches.<sup>147</sup> To be purist, Laudian can only be used for the period 1635 to 1640, and only where the pressure from the Laudian Ordinary is visible.<sup>148</sup> To be less than purist, the term can be applied from the early 1630s when Neile and other enthusiasts were sponsoring changes.<sup>149</sup> In contrast to the metanarrative that changes were driven by the authorities, the term ‘locally-led decoration’ will be deployed in this thesis to indicate a locally driven initiative, where appropriate.

One of the reasons why historians may not have understood the complexity of the relationship between confessional identity and material evidence is that it is only relatively recently that

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<sup>146</sup> Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building,” 936. In her recent book Margaret Aston argues, ‘Although Laud has gained the repute of being the chief promoter of ‘the beauty of holiness’, there were already patrons at work sponsoring new art in places of worship before he came to power’: Aston, *Broken Idols*, 263.

<sup>147</sup> Yule, “James VI and I,” 210.

<sup>148</sup> Laud became Archbishop in 1633. His Metropolitan visitation began in the spring of 1634 when his commissioners visited seven dioceses in his province. Unlike the Archbishop of York, Neile, Laud held back on imposing railed altars until the remaining thirteen dioceses were visited from April 1635. Fincham and Tyacke suggest that Laud held back in the hope of obtaining a royal declaration on the altar. The three dioceses in which our case studies are located, Bristol, Bath and Wells, and Salisbury were subject to the visitation in 1634 and therefore railed altars were not required in the articles of the 1634 first seven dioceses visited. In Bath and Wells, Piers introduced in Bath and Wells the railed altar policy on his own authority following the test case of St Gregory’s: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 198-199, 201-202.

<sup>149</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 263.

there has been an understanding of reception theory. It is summarised in Hamling and Williams' introduction to *Art Re-formed*, where they explain that reception theory acknowledges that the potential audience for an image could be widely diverse and can be fragmented according to characteristics such as class, gender, age and confession.<sup>150</sup> Virginia Chieffo says that the reception of artefacts and buildings demonstrates an interdependent but uneasy relationship between art and faith.<sup>151</sup> To cite just three examples of how reception theory enhances our understanding: in their article on the chancel at East Knoyle, Wiltshire, Louise Durning and Clare Tilbury persuasively argue that the significance of images and texts could be interpreted in whatever way the viewers' beliefs directed, challenging Fincham and Tyacke's description of the chancel as 'the most dramatic surviving Laudian interior,' a theme to be explored in chapter 6.<sup>152</sup> Second, Clare Tilbury has also written about the deployment of heraldry as images for the twelve tribes of Israel. These well-known images became popular during James' reign, but their meaning shifted when deployed during the 'Laudian' programme at Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire. 'The claim of England as Israel which the heraldry can be seen to represent, is here made conditional, less to do with a triumphant Reformed nation than with the necessity of a nation to reform'.<sup>153</sup> Third, Laura Sangha's closely argued work on angels is not predominantly about their images, but her argument refers to the angel motif and has resonance when images of angels are considered. Sangha contends that angels were theologically malleable and therefore were recruited by people of all confessional stripes to support their particular stance, an area explored in chapter 4.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Hamling and Williams, *Art Re-formed*.

<sup>151</sup> Chieffo, "Introduction," 14-18.

<sup>152</sup> Louise Durning and Clare Tilbury, "'Looking unto Jesus': Image and Belief in a Seventeenth-Century Chancel," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 60, no. 3 (2009): 490-513; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 262-263.

<sup>153</sup> Tilbury, "Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes," 305.

<sup>154</sup> Laura Sangha, *Angels and Belief in England, 1480-1700* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012).

Anne-Francoise Morel's publication on seventeenth-century church architecture analysed how consecration sermons reveal the mixed drivers for building and designing churches 1603-1736.<sup>155</sup> This research is positioned within the new understanding of the complex nature of confessional identities, and their porous boundaries, particularly porous when material evidence within churches is considered. The notion of reception theory and of malleable images will be a concept explored and extended.

(v) *'Religious' and 'secular' identities*

The fifth strand explores how the historiography informs an understanding of religious and secular identities. Religious identity was not a sealed category separate from social, familial, civic and community identities. There has been recognition that changes to parish churches and their interiors were driven by a mixture of factors: the wish to exert social control, the desire to exhibit family status, the competition between parishes and the need to flaunt civic pride.<sup>156</sup> In their work on French temples, Raymond Mentzer, Matthew Koch and Andrew Spicer all agree that non-liturgical drivers, such as civic competition, familial status and an overt display of loyalty to the Crown were also very powerful.<sup>157</sup> Richard Cust describes the lavish display that Sir Henry Shirley and other Catholic gentry created on their family funeral

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<sup>155</sup> Anne-Francoise Morel, "Glorious Temples or Babylonian Whores: The Architecture of Church Buildings in England 1602-1736. Glorierijke Tempels of Babylonische hoeren: De Beschouwing Van Kerkgebouwen in Engeland 1602-1736 in Consecratiepreken" (PhD thesis, University of Ghent, 2010-11). A new publication, emanating from her PhD thesis is expected: Anne-Francoise Morel, *Glorious Temples of Babylonian Whores: The Architecture of Church Buildings in England 1603-1736 according to Consecration Sermons*. This is a working title, and no place or date of publication is yet available.

<sup>156</sup> Susan Orlik, "What factors influenced the form and function of galleries in places of worship in England and Scotland 1560-1640?" (MA thesis, University of Birmingham, 2009).

<sup>157</sup> Raymond Mentzer, "The Reformed Churches of France and the Visual Arts," in *Seeing Beyond the World: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition*, ed. Paul Corby Finney (Cambridge, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 199-230; Matthew Koch, "Calvinism and the Visual Arts in Southern France 1561 to 1685", in *Seeing Beyond the World: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition*, ed. Paul Corby Finney, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Cambridge: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 163-198; Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*; Spicer, "Qui est de Dieu."

monuments, indicating drivers of social status coexisting alongside a monument in a religious context. Richard Cust has also shown that the need for Catholic gentry to display their ancestral distinction was matched in Shirley with his desire to maintain his honour through his prolific antiquarianism.<sup>158</sup> Very little has been written about the mixture of religious and secular drivers for changes in churches despite the material evidence, apart from a substantial cadre of work on funeral monuments, although Julia Merritt describes a complex range of ‘incentives on the part of many different actors within a parish’, which ‘could include questions of taste and fashion, local identity, and a desire to ensure a venue in which local elites could assert their status’.<sup>159</sup> Vanessa Harding has emphasised the continuity of expression of social status through elaborate tombs and commemorative monuments. Harding makes the interesting point that it may well have been the continuity of social value from the pre-Reformation period (wealth, status, family, occupational and local affiliations) that provided ‘the necessary framework for the relatively smooth transition from Catholic to Reformed ritual’.<sup>160</sup> The most comprehensive work on funeral monuments, *Funeral Monuments in England* by Nigel Llewellyn, has given birth to an interesting scholarly debate.<sup>161</sup> His main argument is that the purpose of funeral monuments was disputed by contemporaries, and that the changes to their form were ‘consequent upon their newly

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<sup>158</sup> Richard Cust, “Catholicism, Antiquarianism and Gentry Honour: The Writings of Sir Thomas Shirley,” *Midland History* vol. 23, no. 1, (1998): 40-70, 52. Peter Marshall describes Catholics investing in their parish churches: Peter Marshall, “Confessionalisation and Community in the Burial of English Catholics, c. 1570-1700,” in *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England-Essays in Honour of Professor W. J. Sheils*, eds. Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 57-75, 72. In her research in Sussex, Joan Barham found that Catholic gentry invested in their parish churches: Barham, “Sussex churches.”

<sup>159</sup> Julia Merritt, “Religion and the English Parish,” in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Reformation and Identity c. 1520-1662 vol. I*, ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 122-147, 140.

<sup>160</sup> Vanessa Harding, “Choices and Changes: Death, Burial and the English Reformation,” in *The Archaeology of the Reformation*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2003), 386-398, 393, 395. Ronald Hutton made the same point: Ronald Hutton, “Local Impact of the Tudor Reformations,” in *The Impact of the English Reformation, 1500-1640*, ed. Peter Marshall (London: Edward Arnold, 1997), 142-166.

<sup>161</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, 14.

developing role in post-Reformation society as ritualised, permanent replacements for the dead and exemplars for the living'. Both Margaret Aston and Peter Sherlock have challenged his perception, and have declared that monuments were more about confessional identity than he had recognised.<sup>162</sup> Sherlock says that they remained 'remarkably religious in the wake of the Reformation'.<sup>163</sup> Whilst Llewellyn has included religious identity in the drivers for the monuments and their images, he has also emphasised secular identities such as patriarchal status. Jonathan Finch has criticised Nigel Llewellyn's book for different reasons: for paying too little attention to historically specific construction of cultural roles and meanings.<sup>164</sup> What is interesting about this lively scholarly debate is that all the participants are agreed that the various drivers represent a mixture of different kinds of identity. In this there is a consensus that confessional identity was not self-contained. The discussion is about the interpretative emphasis of one form of identity compared to another. Julia Merritt has also emphasised the 'wide range of social, practical and religious impulses,' which resulted in changes to the churches in London and their decoration.<sup>165</sup> In her article on the heraldic imagery of the twelve tribes of Israel at Burton Latimer, Clare Tilbury suggests that heraldry belonged to both social and religious spheres; and that the placing of the images in the nave demonstrated to the non-armigerous parishioners both their social status through the heraldic images, and their religious identity as the children of Israel, descendants of their lineal ancestors, the patriarchs.<sup>166</sup> Apart from funeral monuments, there has been a lack of analysis of religious

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<sup>162</sup> Margaret Aston, "Art and Idolatry: Reformed Funeral Monuments?" in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 243-261; Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>163</sup> Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, 4.

<sup>164</sup> Finch, "A Reformation of Meaning."

<sup>165</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 950.

<sup>166</sup> Tilbury, "Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes"; for more on the link between the synoptic quality of heraldry and the synoptic quality of some biblical images, see Tara Hamling, "Visual Culture."

and secular identities in relation to material and visual evidence in churches. This research engages directly with this theme.

(vi) *Local contexts*

Local context is important for an understanding of the relationship between the material evidence and the construction and communication of identities. In the sixth strand of the historiography scholars acknowledge the importance of local studies. In Europe Matthew Koch has emphasised the regional diversity of the Huguenot temples.<sup>167</sup> In an English context, Alexandra Walsham has outlined the need for local studies to understand the network of religious affiliations, and has treated the subject of the parochial roots of Laudianism in a sensitive way, far removed from the traditional binary reductionism.<sup>168</sup> In the parameters of parochial church interiors, the material evidence suggests a more complicated analysis than that there were parochial roots to Laudianism.<sup>169</sup> This resonates with the nature of complex and porous confessional boundaries. The need for attention to local context in relation to conformity and orthodoxy is described by Margaret Aston: she notes that the extent of destruction of images by 1570 depended on local practice as well as on the legal

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<sup>167</sup> Koch, "Calvinism and the Visual Arts." Koch showed that the differences were allied to finance and materials, so that the austere tradition of southern French architecture is reflected in the southern Huguenot temples, such as the temple at Collet-de-Dèze.

<sup>168</sup> Alexandra Walsham eschews the compartmentalisation of those who aspired to a more ceremonial approach, urging that we avoid choosing between the false dichotomy of loyal Prayer Book Protestants and disgruntled church papists; Walsham adheres to the notion of a finely graded spectrum and she has judged that it is worth reconsidering the possibility that many of the concepts associated with Laud had parochial, if not popish, foundations and roots: Walsham, "Parochial Roots of Laudianism"; Walsham gives a qualified assessment that there was a possible convergence between anti-Calvinist strands and a current of conservatism that ran through many parishes. Peter Lake and Michael Questier analyse the lack of geographical, or chronological uniformity or ideological stability: Lake and Questier, "Introduction," ix-xx. Even such a high-status church as Westminster Abbey has been shown by Julia Merritt to be far more complex than simply Laudian: Julia Merritt, "The Cradle of Laudianism? Westminster Abbey, 1558-1630," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 52: 4 (2001): 623-646.

<sup>169</sup> Walsham, "Parochial Roots."



requirements.<sup>170</sup> This comment can be extrapolated to enforcement on a range of issues from altars to imagery in the period.

Local studies have proved important, for example Sarah Brown's study of Fairford, Louise Durning and Clare Tilbury's study of East Knoyle, and Clare Tilbury's work on Burton Latimer.<sup>171</sup> Books on churches in local areas abound, but their usually descriptive lists do not aid an analysis of the issues around material evidence and identities. Pevsner can be useful, for instance he sometimes points to a comparable fitting or piece of furniture, such as the pulpit at Biddisham compared to that at Weare.<sup>172</sup> However, because of the colossal breadth of his gazetteers, Pevsner is unable consistently to make connections that only a detailed local study could make.<sup>173</sup> Robert Whiting's study, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* was an examination of the material evidence of wide historical and geographical scope.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 325.

<sup>171</sup> Brown, "Repackaging the Past"; Durning and Tilbury, "Looking unto Jesus"; Tilbury, "Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes"; Joan Barham's survey of all 284 extant churches in Sussex was able to show that, far from being neglected, they were valued and enhanced by parochial communities long before the 1630s: Barham, "Sussex Churches."

<sup>172</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South and West Somerset* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003, first published by Penguin, 1958; the 2003 edition republished the 1958 edition published by Penguin), 88, 332; interestingly, the Biddisham entry refers to the Weare pulpit but the Weare entry does not refer to the Biddisham entry; in the 2014 edition, neither entry mentions the other: Julian Orbach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; South and West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 118, 654.

<sup>173</sup> Orlik, *Galleries*; for example, Kentisbeare, Devon, has an unusual west gallery built in 1632, while three miles away, the town of Cullompton, an economic rival, built one in 1637, a possible example of parochial competition to which Pevsner makes no reference: Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon* (London, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1989, reprinted with corrections 1991, reprinted New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2004), 303-304, 304; 514-515, 514.

<sup>174</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*. His earlier study was also useful for cross referencing the database: Robert Whiting, *Local Responses to the English Reformation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

Studies of broad themes can also be very helpful for highlighting important issues for local contexts. An example is Anthony Wells-Cole's *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: the Influence of Continental Prints 1558-1625*.<sup>175</sup> In this study, which has changed profoundly the way we look at images, he showed the implications of the significant points of entry of foreign prints on the continental-type decoration in the major ports, and then in the hinterland by dissemination through the river ports.<sup>176</sup> He also demonstrates through close local study that John Cosin's pre-Civil War woodwork in Durham was stylistically different from the woodwork being produced around London at the same time. Although Cosin, Laud and Neile all represented the same desire for 'the beauty of holiness', the local workshops came under different foreign influences.<sup>177</sup> Nigel Llewellyn also highlights local contexts in his broad themed study.<sup>178</sup> His study shows local variations, and his approach to the local workshops, transportation, materials and external influences all combine to make the importance of local context highly significant. The lack of studies that interrogate identities in a local context may be related to the capricious nature of the survival of both textual sources and material evidence.<sup>179</sup> Steven Hobbs has shown how to use wills to interrogate burial places and investment, but generally there is a lack of such studies.<sup>180</sup> Such lacunae may lead to generalisations which need to be qualified. Julia Merritt speculated in her seminal article on London, that in more rural parishes, church re-building and decoration might have represented 'the vision of a single wealthy aristocrat or gentleman'.<sup>181</sup> Further local research in West

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<sup>175</sup> Wells-Cole, *Continental Prints*.

<sup>176</sup> Wells-Cole, *Continental Prints*, 299.

<sup>177</sup> Wells-Cole, *Continental Prints*, 200. John Cosin was chaplain to Bishop Neile of Durham (1623), vicar of Elwick (1624) and rector of Brancepeth (1626).

<sup>178</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*.

<sup>179</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of sources, see Laura Sangha and Jonathan Willis, eds., *Understanding Early Modern Primary Sources* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2016).

<sup>180</sup> Steven Hobbs, "Piety and Church Fabric in Sixteenth-Century Wiltshire: Evidence from Wills," *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* vol. 98 (2005): 81–89.

<sup>181</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 950.

country parishes will investigate whether this was the case. This research is placed within the literature that acknowledges the need for local studies, and seeks to relate local contexts to the way extant material evidence can progress an understanding of conformity and orthodoxy, of the complexity of confessional boundaries, and of the interpenetration between religious and secular identities.

In summary, this is the first study to focus on the material evidence of parochial churches outside London and by foregrounding extant material evidence to argue that this was not just a tale of complete destruction, nor of an absence of visual art, nor even of neglect.<sup>182</sup> I will examine the complexity of identity within the context of the malleable nature of conformity and orthodoxy, the porous nature of confessional identity, and the intermingling of confessional and secular identities.

#### *Methodology and sources*

The research has been empirically led by the extant material evidence of parish churches in Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire. Analysing all volumes of Pevsner created a nationwide database of the extant evidence for these eighty years.<sup>183</sup> Then focusing upon the three counties, and cross referencing with antiquarian publications, such as Edmund Rack's *Survey of Somerset* in the 1780s, along with a cross-referencing of gazetteers and books on single sorts of furniture and fittings, such as Cautley's *Royal Arms and Ten Commandments*, the

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<sup>182</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building."

<sup>183</sup> Pevsner, *The Buildings of England*.

database was further constructed.<sup>184</sup> As other resources were deployed, the database was cross-referenced and amended.

The next stage was to identify those parish churches where the evidential base suggested the usefulness of a field visit. Having identified them, led by the primary source, field visits were made to 24 churches in Dorset, 57 churches in Somerset, 33 churches in Wiltshire, and 60 churches outside the three counties, a total of 174.<sup>185</sup> A diagrammatic map shows the churches surveyed in Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire [Diagram 1. a].<sup>186</sup> It seemed important to gain a perspective from beyond the three counties, and so 60 churches in a further 23 counties were studied. Every church used in this thesis has been visited in person; and this was logistically challenging as security measures taken by conscientious churchwardens often involved negotiating access to locked buildings.<sup>187</sup> There are a very few churches, cited from secondary sources, for which it has not been possible to gain access. A list of every church surveyed, some more than once, is appended [Appendix 1]. Each field study was followed by the compilation of field notes, and a photographic record, which was labelled and appropriately stored and then entered into a relational database, 'Access', which I customised to allow me to interrogate the evidence.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, Mark McDermott and Sue Berry, eds. (Padstow: Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 2011); Munro Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments in Our Churches* (Ipswich: Norman Adlard, 1934); books such as Delderfield, *Guide to Church Furniture*, were useful for cross referencing against the database, as was J. Charles Cox, and John Alfred Harvey, *English Church Furniture* (London: Methuen, 1907).

<sup>185</sup> A small number of the visits were first made as part of the field work for the research for the MA; some of these were re-visited for this doctoral research, for example Puddletown, Dorset, has been visited three times.

<sup>186</sup> Because of the small scale of the diagrammatic map, a dot may represent more than one surveyed church.

<sup>187</sup> Only one church out of over the scores of churches, where access was negotiated, refused to make access possible, a tribute to the generosity of churchwardens, clergy and keyholders.

<sup>188</sup> <https://products.office.com/en-gb/access> (accessed 25 August 2017): The 'Microsoft Access' database allows many comparisons, for example, by specific type of objects, by detail such as inscriptions, by date, by location,

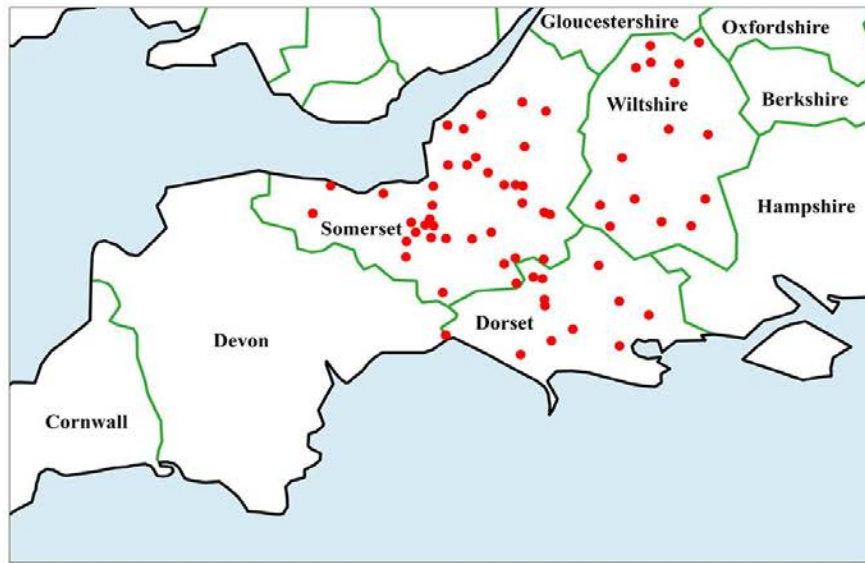


Diagram 1. a  
Diagrammatic map showing the churches surveyed in Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire.

The challenges of the material evidence are well known: the pervasive so-called restoration by the Victorians; the remodelling of pieces of woodwork; the moving of evidence resulting in the unknown position of the original fitting or piece of furniture, nowhere more obvious than with communion tables and communion rails, discussed in detail in chapter 5. To address these challenges, nineteenth-century faculties have been studied to clarify the position of the material evidence before ‘Victorianisation’; where available, contemporary seating plans have

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by patssron, and by combinations of these and other data; it was possible to quickly find comparable Biblical inscriptions on the evidence, or to identify where in the three counties communion rails and communion tables were erected in the same time span; the database was also constructed to have links to the online clergy data base, CCed, and the British Listed Buildings sites:

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england#.WZLgZbpFyUk>, (accessed frequently);

<http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>, (accessed frequently).

been used; and churchwardens' accounts and other archives have been analysed to interrogate the evidence on the location of fittings, fixtures and furniture.

Once the field visits and their findings were analysed, I constructed an archive trail for each parish to identify the primary sources available. By judging the material evidence and the textual sources available for each parish, I was able to prioritise those churches of most potential interest. These sources comprised mainly Churchwardens' accounts, Churchwardens' presentments, wills and inventories, witness statements from ecclesiastical court books of deposition, and parochial faculties.<sup>189</sup> Only a few years survive in some Churchwardens' accounts and for many parishes none survive for this period; the fragmentary Churchwardens' presentments in Somerset that may survive for the parishes studied are uncatalogued and difficult to access.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> For the usefulness of Churchwardens' accounts, see Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster, "Introduction", in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens Accounts c.1500–c.1800*, eds. Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 1-13; Clive Burgess, "Introduction," in *The Church Records of St Andrew Hubbard Eastcheap c. 1450-c. 1570*, ed. Clive Burgess (Loughborough: London Record Society, 1999), vii-xxxiii; and Andrew Foster, "Churchwardens' Accounts of Early Modern England and Wales: Some Problems to Note but Much to be Gained," in *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, eds. Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, and Beat Kumin, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 74-93; for the role of Churchwardens, see Eric Carlson, "The Origins, Functions, and Status of the Office of Churchwarden, with Particular Reference to the Diocese of Ely," in *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520–1725*, ed. Margaret Spufford, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 164-207; and Craig, *East Anglian Market Towns*, chapter 2; and for their roles with regard to vermin, a constant problem in West Country churches, see Christopher Webb, "Vermin: Churchwardens and the Support of the Parish Poor," in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens Accounts c. 1500–c. 1800*, eds. Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 143–156; for details on how the churchwardens managed their finances, see Valerie Hitchman, "Balancing the Parish Accounts," in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens Accounts c. 1500–c. 1800*, eds. Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 15-45; for a discussion of the social standing of men chosen to be churchwardens, see H. R. French, "Localism and the 'Middle Sort of People' in England 1620-1750," *Past and Present* no. 166 (February 2000), 66-99.

<sup>190</sup> For example, the Churchwardens' accounts for Durston, Somerset, only commence in 1633 and therefore there are only seven years of accounts before this study ends: SHC: D\P\durn/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Durston, 1633-1719; an example of a parish rich in material evidence with no surviving Churchwardens'

25 of the 114 parish churches studied in Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire, had sufficiently rich primary evidence to develop into detailed case studies, using the material evidence, but also, where they existed, archival sources, and secondary sources specific to that parish, or unusually general secondary sources which referred to an individual parish. Out of print church booklets in the British Library proved an invaluable resource, for cross referencing and for identifying non-extant furniture and fittings, which contextualised the extant examples; and the edited collections of *Records of Early English Drama* helpfully led to new avenues to pursue, for example the tensions in Lyme Regis between the Mayor and the churchwardens, and the row between the Corporation and the Dean and Chapter at Wells during Queen Anne's visit in 1613.<sup>191</sup> There were inevitable disappointments: rich material evidence in a parish sometimes was not matched by archival material. The imbalance between the richness of the extant material evidence and the relative scarcity of archival sources is a common challenge for students of material culture.<sup>192</sup> Conversely, some rich archival sources were discovered for parishes where there was thin or no longer extant material evidence.<sup>193</sup>

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accounts is Bridgwater, Somerset; Churchwardens' presentments are fragmented and uncatalogued by the SHC until the late seventeenth century and a trawl through Margaret Stieg's extensive archival references found none for this period that linked church repairs and the parishes studied: Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*, 223-226, 249; the only surviving Act Book for a Bath and Wells Archdeacon, that of the Archdeacon of Taunton 1623-4, has only three references to the parishes studied, Trull, Durston and North Petherton, and none refers to the interior of the church, except the reference to Trull cites the rectorial farmer for 'want of paving' in the 'chauncell': 'Collectanea II: The Act Book of the Archdeacon of Taunton 1623-1624', arranged by T. F. Palmer in *Somerset Record Society*, vol. 43, 1-177, 91, 97, 128, 154, 171; Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*, 167-168; Kenneth Fincham found presentments of churchwardens following Bancroft's Metropolitan Visitation in 1605, in Bath and Wells, for failures to equip and furnish the church: Fincham, "Ramifications," 212, 221.

<sup>191</sup> James Stokes, ed., *Records of Early English Drama: Somerset including Bath vol. 1* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), 371-373; Rosalind Conklin and C. E. McGee, eds., *Records of Early English Drama: Dorset*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999), 223; Wiltshire is still being compiled.

<sup>192</sup> Giles, "A Table of Alabaster."

<sup>193</sup> The disappearance of evidence in even the last hundred years is exemplified by Cox's photograph of the hour glass bracket at Chelvey, Somerset, which is now non-extant, and replaced by a replica: Cox, *Pulpits*, 157.

Churchwardens' accounts have only survived in a fraction of the parishes where the material evidence is rich. A cause of disappointment was a trawl through the six volumes of *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament: House of Commons*.<sup>194</sup> It was hoped that this would produce evidence of 'scandalous ministers', and provide a retrospective insight into the confessional position of the minister and his parish; but there was no match between the ministers referred to the Committee for removing scandalous ministers and the parishes where extant material evidence had been identified.<sup>195</sup> A secondary source that points to primary and secondary sources, *The Victoria County History*, varied in its detail.<sup>196</sup> As Robert Tittler has said, all investigations remain at the mercy of the sources, but in creating record linkage wherever possible, this study has been able to present a more detailed local overview.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament: House of Commons*. vols. 1-6, edited by Maija Jansson (Rochester, N. Y. and Woodbridge: Rochester University Press, 2000). The tract of John White, the chairman of the Committee for Scandalous Ministers, celebrated the ejection of the one hundredth delinquent minister, but none from Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire was among those expelled: John White, 'The first century of scandalous, malignant priests made and admitted into benefices by the prelates, in whose hands the ordination of ministers and government of the church hath been, or a narration of the causes for which the Parliament hath ordered the sequestration of the benefices of severall ministers complained of before them, for vitiousness of life, errors in doctrine, contrary to the articles of our religion, and for practising and pressing superstitious innovations against law, and for malignancy against the Parliament', (London: Printed by George Miller, 1643). This was referred to by Morrill, *Nature of the English Revolution*, 78-79.

<sup>195</sup> For example, Alexander Huish, minister of Beckington, Somerset, and Richard Erle, minister of Hemington, Somerset, were ordered to be sent for as delinquents by the Committee for removing scandalous ministers: *Proceedings in the Opening Session*, Jansson, vol. I, 12 December 1640, vol. II 4 January 1641; the extant material evidence of Beckington and Hemington was not sufficient to warrant investigation of them as part of this research.

<sup>196</sup> The volumes of *The Victoria County History* will be referenced by county. Similarly, the NADFAS's surveys are patchy; only a few churches had benefitted from the detailed survey that NADFAS has made of some churches, for example that of Mere, Wiltshire: SWHC: 2145/15 NADFAS Survey of the church of St Michael the Archangel, Mere, Wiltshire, 2002.

<sup>197</sup> Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Public in Provincial England, 1540 to 1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 43.



One of the methodological challenges for this type of study stems from the ambiguities in the Churchwardens' accounts which do not always make clear in their itemised lists of expenditure what was maintenance and what were new projects. In some years the descriptions 'reparacions' or 'mending' are specifically noted, as for example at Wimborne Minster in 1566 (repairing the spire and boarded floor), 1569 (mending the seats), 1572 (mending the spire), 1583 ('the Reparacons of the Church'), and 1603 (amending the seat), at Somerton in 1589 (repairing the church roof), and at Mere in 1601 ('reparacons of the church'), 1602 ('reparacons of the church this yeare') and 1625 (double rate 'for that the Church was verie much in Decay').<sup>198</sup> The adjective 'new' is helpfully applied occasionally to an item in the accounts to indicate that these were new constructs, as at Wimborne Minster in 1571 (new casting of the lead, and two new windows in the spire), 1617 (new forms), and Somerton in 1589 (new pulpit). Frequently the entry in the accounts does not make it clear if it is for repairs or for something new: one example from many is from the accounts of Cameley for 1620 which specified 'setting upp the tymber worke of the portch'.<sup>199</sup> It is not possible to determine in this instance from this and adjacent items whether this was a repair or a new porch. In general, the linkage of archival sources to the extant material evidence can sometimes help to determine what were maintenance, and what were new. The maintenance and expenditure on new items was paid for by the church rate, fund raising and gifts.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1566, 1569, 1572, 1583, 1603; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1589; WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1601, 1602, 1625; Baker, "Mere," 247, 248.

<sup>199</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1571, 1617; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1589; SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1620.

<sup>200</sup> For more on sources of income, see Hitchman, "Balancing the Parish Accounts," 20.

Another challenge presented by the Churchwardens' accounts for this period is the way in which gifts were noted, or not noted.<sup>201</sup> While most Churchwardens' accounts note gifts under receipts, they are frequently sums of money, as the accounts of Cameley (1615 a gift of 20s), Cheddar (1617 five donors gave from 12d to 2s), Somerton (1586 a gift of 3s 4d; 1588 one gift of 10s towards repairing the church roof; 1595 two gifts of 2s and 3s 4d; 1606 a gift of 2s), all in Somerset, and Cerne Abbas (1630 a gift of 10s) and Wimborne Minster in Dorset (unusually gifts noted in 33 years between 1573 and 1635) testify.<sup>202</sup> Within parishes and across parishes, the gifts vary from a few pence, to 20s. The number of donors in any accounting year might vary from one to nine. Occasionally the item notes the purpose of the gift of money. For example, gifts for the 'reparacions of the churche' are specified in the Somerton accounts in 1586, 1588, 1606, 1622; and in Wimborne Minster's accounts in 1583.<sup>203</sup> This general purpose does not help the researcher. Rarely are details of the item more specific, as for example at Somerton in 1588 when William Newman gave 10s 'towards the repaying of the church rooffe.'<sup>204</sup> When money was given by the living or by the deceased in a will, the donor can specify an object that is to be purchased with that money. Examples of

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<sup>201</sup> There is substantial evidence of recorded gifts from the living and the dead in the pre-Reformation period, as historians such as Clive Burgess, Eamon Duffy, and Ronald Hutton have demonstrated: Clive Burgess, "Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government: Lessons from London and Bristol," *English Historical Review* cxvii, 2002, 306-332; Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (London: Yale University Press, 2001); Beat Kumin, *The Shaping of a Community: the Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400–1560* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996). For a wider view of fund raising in medieval Somerset parishes, see Katherine French, "Parochial Fund-Raising in Late Medieval Somerset", in *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, edited by Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, and Beat Kumin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 115-132.

<sup>202</sup> For more on gifts as income, see Hitchman, "Balancing the Parish Accounts," 20; SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1615; SHC: DD\SAS\C/795/SE/14 Churchwardens' accounts of Cheddar, 1617; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1586, 1588, 1595, 1606; DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas, 1630; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1573, 1574, 1582, 1583, 1584, 1585, 1586, 1587, 1588, 1590, 1591, 1592, 1595, 1604, 1608, 1611, 1612, 1614, 1617, 1619, 1620, 1621, 1622, 1624, 1625, 1626, 1627, 1628, 1629, 1630, 1633, 1634, 1636.

<sup>203</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1586, 1588, 1606, 1622; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1583.

<sup>204</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1588.

such gifts are: in 1630 John Thorne left in his will 10s for a ‘Pulpett cloth’ at Cerne Abbas; in Mere in 1631 ‘a silver bowl’ which cost £3 17s was purchased with ‘parte of the five pounds given’ in the will of James Alford. In Wimborne Minster in 1614, Mrs. Gudry ‘hath given a silke cloth to the Church to be a covering for the corps of the poore when they are brought to be buried’; also, in Wimborne Minster in 1630 a ‘faire new Bible’, and ‘a faire newe pewter flagon’ were donated, with no value attached.<sup>205</sup>

The challenge for the student of material evidence is that the accounts do not necessarily list the donation of a screen, pulpit, table, lectern. Where the churchwardens were paying for such items of expenditure from their accounts, they list them, but where no money changes hands, but simply the donor gave the item itself, the churchwardens do not necessarily note it. Mrs. Gudry’s covering cloth for the dead was a rare exception. The challenge of these lacunae in the accounts can sometimes be overcome. An analysis of the material evidence can sometimes find evidence of the donor’s name or initials.

### *Thesis structure*

The thesis is led by the material evidence, so it was appropriate to structure it by type of material evidence. Funerary monuments are excluded because there is such a substantial and authoritative cadre of scholarship on them.<sup>206</sup> I decided to group my case studies according to the following chapters and themes. Five chapters focus upon a type or types of items of furniture, fittings or fabric: Pews are linked to the concept of the use of space; Pulpits are examined through the notion of lines of sight; the chapter on Thresholds (windows, doors,

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<sup>205</sup> DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Cerne Abbas, 1630; WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1631; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1614, 1630.

<sup>206</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*; Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*.

screens and ceilings) is conceptually linked to access; the chapter on Communion Rails, Communion Tables and Fonts is inevitably linked to sacramental furniture and fittings; and the chapter on Walls is linked to their prescribed purpose for ‘edification’, ‘comely ornament and demonstration’.<sup>207</sup> Constructing the thesis as a ‘virtual’ tour of a parish church, these themes emerged, following the detailed work, as the most appropriate for the specific material evidence. While the themes explored in the historiography, the malleability of conformity and orthodoxy, the porous nature of confessional boundaries, and the intertwining of religious and secular identities, underpin all five chapters, there are other areas that are explored as well.

The chapter on pews interrogates the evidence and finds that seating was more complicated than simply a response to overcrowding and the demands of the new Reformed liturgy. The evidence shows both subtle and radical changes, that displayed complex identities. The adjective Laudian was inappropriate in itself, or as a point of reference for the decoration of the churches, an argument continued in all chapters. In the chapter on pulpits the lack of alignment between confessional positions and decoration is further examined, as is the way pulpits materialised agency in creating and sustaining a wide variety of identities. In exceeding compliance with the imposed requirements, the investors demonstrated the importance of local events as catalysts for their investments. In the chapter on windows, doors, screens and ceilings, the notions of inclusion, exclusion and liminality are explored. It will be argued that as places of transition, these four types of threshold sometimes demonstrated through their appropriate imagery the totality of the life of a Reformed

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<sup>207</sup> The concept of the virtual tour partly came about because of the observation made by Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie about how little we know of the lived experience in the parish church: Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie, “Introduction,” in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 1-10.

Protestant. It will also be shown that, whilst some thresholds appear to manifest a continuity of tradition, this was deceptive as their function was for a new, innovative purpose. They also displayed non-physical attributes such as authority, the elect and non-elect, heaven, and lineage. In the chapter on sacramental fittings and furniture, the material evidence is interrogated to establish whether the local pattern of investment was congruent with the general pattern. The evidence demonstrates how the complex and various orientations and locations of the communion tables changed the worshippers' experience and understanding of the sacramental liturgy. It will be shown that the local responses to imposed demands in the 1630s were more finely gradated than previously thought, and that parochial priorities may disguise apparent conformity to those demands. In the chapter on walls, repair, renewal and innovation were all on display, and in the examples of expressions of authority, continuity and innovation co-existed visually. The evidence demonstrates that this re-imagining of the visual changed the worshippers' experience, was conducive to piety, and met the imposed requirements for ornament, edification and demonstration of the building as a church. The use of typology on walls is interrogated, and it will be shown that the concept of the 'beauty of holiness', materialised on the walls, was not the monopoly of one confessional position.

Structuring the thesis with these linking themes is not an exact science. A thematic structure inevitably involves revisiting some churches in several chapters. An effort has been made to help the reader with the revisiting of parishes by cross referencing a description from a parish in a previous chapter through footnotes.

Having established the reasons for this research in this area over these 80 years, and having provided a historiographical summary, and the context of imposed ecclesiastical regulations, the most convenient and comfortable starting point in this virtual tour of the English parish church is seating.

## CHAPTER 2

### SEATING AND THE USE OF SPACE

#### “HUC ADES NON VIDERI SED AUDIRE ET PRECARI”<sup>1</sup>

##### *Introduction*

In the post-Reformation period, seating became a source of controversy between individuals, as they worked out their view of their metaphorical places in their community, compared to their physical places in church, which were assigned by the Churchwardens. The archival sources of pew disputes in the courts are testimony to the former, and pew plans describe the latter. Seating was also a source of tension between Laud, his fellow enthusiasts, and parishioners, as Bishops ordered uniformity in the 1630s by the cutting down of high sided pews, the removal of pews from the east end of the chancel, and the eastwards orientation of pews in the parish churches.<sup>2</sup> These episcopal drives ran into parochial opposition, where the

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<sup>1</sup> Inscription on the gallery of the church of St Mary, Puddletown, Dorset, dated 1635, which translates as: “*You come hither not to be seen but to listen and to pray*”.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 238, 243; *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. II*, Kenneth Fincham, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), xxiii; George Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 89-90; Kevin Dillow, “The Social and Ecclesiastical Significance of Church Seating Arrangements and Pew Disputes, 1500-1740,” (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1990); Catherine Wright, “The Spatial Ordering of Community in English Church Seating, c. 1550-1700,” (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2002). Ephraim Udall, Rector of St Augustine’s, City of London, and writer, was not a Laudian, but he found high sided pews anathema: ‘In high and scattered pews, where we are separated so, that we can neither see, nor hear one another, this Communion seems to be rent and divided into so many single societies of twos and threes, as there be pewfuls in the church, more like so many private Masses and Houselings, rather than one Communion’: Ephraim Udall, *Communion Comeliness: Wherein is discovered the conveniency of the peoples drawing neere to the Table in the sight thereof when they receive the Lords Supper. With the great unfitnesse of receiving it in Pewes in London for the Novelty of high and close Pewes* (London, 1641), 4-5, 8-13, quoted by Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 120.

material assets of the seats and their symbolic importance were threatened.<sup>3</sup> Bishop Piers, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who was a standard bearer for Laud in the 1630s, seemed to have learnt a lesson when he returned to his see at the Restoration, and added to his Visitation Articles, ‘Is there any Strife and contention among any of your Parish for their Pews or Seats in the Church?’<sup>4</sup> Archbishop Neile had understood earlier the delicate nature of seating, when he wrote a letter to John Bridgeman, the Bishop of Chester in 1635,

But for the rest of your intentions for the disposing of seats...to remove any from the place where they and their ancesters have time out of mind accustomed sitt, will beget more brabbles, suits in law and prohibitions, then either you or I would be contented to be troubled with.<sup>5</sup>

How space was used for seating, and what that use of space meant in terms of combined identities is the focus of this chapter. Controversies are only one half of the story: parochial pride, the display of familial identity, subtle changes, and radical new uses of space all contribute to the development of church seating.

There is a significant body of scholarship on seating. The work of Christopher Marsh and Amanda Flather established some important principles: congregational seating was ordered by

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<sup>3</sup> For an analysis that social status had more resonance because of the symbolic importance of the church, see Christopher Marsh, “Sacred Space in England, 1560-1640: The View from the Pew,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 53, no. 2 (April 2002): 286-311, 286, 310.

<sup>4</sup> Church of England, *Articles of Visitation and Inquiry...within the Diocese of Bath and Wells* (London, 1662), ‘Articles concerning the Parishioners’, Article 15, 10, quoted by John Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset, 1625-1662, with particular reference to the Churchwardens’ Accounts,” (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 2014), 141.

<sup>5</sup> Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 139, n. 27: Staffordshire Record Office, D1287/P399/123, 7 January, 1635.



the Churchwardens hierarchically, by gender, age, by moral reputation, and by ‘degrees and estates’.<sup>6</sup> Marsh and Flather have both demonstrated that a seat in proximity to the pulpit was a coveted prestigious location.<sup>7</sup> Both have described how, as an arena of contest over seating, the church was the locus of constant negotiation of social position, a highly dynamic space.<sup>8</sup> Amanda Flather has neatly summed up her findings, ‘The parish church was the most important arena in early modern society in which the finely grained boundaries of hierarchy were spatially, materially and symbolically mapped out’, and seating was part of the ‘shared system of meanings’ which underpinned order and stability in a strictly hierarchical society.<sup>9</sup> In his work on funeral monuments Peter Sherlock has postulated a relationship between the living and the dead by the juxtaposition of the remains of the dead with the seats of the living.<sup>10</sup> In his comprehensive study of church interiors, Robert Whiting’s overview of seating

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<sup>6</sup> Christopher Marsh’s views are developed in three articles: Christopher Marsh, “‘Common Prayer’ in England, 1560-1640: The View from the Pew,” *Past and Present* no. 171 (May 2001): 66-94; Marsh, “Sacred Space”; Christopher Marsh, “Order and Place in England, 1580-1640: The View from the Pew,” *The Journal of British Studies* vol. 44, no. 1 (January 2005): 3-26. Amanda Flather first wrote a paper based on work in Essex: Amanda Flather, *The Politics of Place: A Study of Church Seating in Essex, c. 1580-1640*, (Friends of the Department of English Local History, Friend Papers no. 3, Leicester, 1999): 2-54; in 2007, she wrote: Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Cox listed bench ends and these have been used for cross referencing: J. Charles Cox, *Bench-Ends in English Churches* (London: Oxford University Press, 1916). Margaret Aston described segregation by gender in seating before and after the Reformation: Margaret Aston, “Segregation in Church,” in *Women in the Church*, eds. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood. *Studies in Church History*, 27 (Oxford: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by Basil Blackwell, 1990): 237-294. Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes described hierarchies of seating by social gradations: Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994, reprinted Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Keith Thomas has written about age as a determining factor in church seating: Keith Thomas, “Age and Authority in Early Modern England,” Raleigh Lecture on History, Read 16 June 1976, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 62 (1976): 205-248, 209. Catherine Wright developed the criteria for allocating pews through her doctoral study of 691 pew disputes; Wright also showed that most pew disputes were between people of equal rank, and predominantly the middling sort; Wright demonstrated that people’s seating could be mobile, for example on widowhood: Wright, “Spatial Ordering”. Kevin Dillow also used pew disputes to determine criteria for the allocation of seating, and concluded there was no one single method in parishes: Dillow, “Pew Disputes.”

<sup>7</sup> Marsh, “Sacred Space,” 307; Flather, *Gender and Space*, 135.

<sup>8</sup> Flather, *Gender and Space*; Marsh, “Common Prayer”; Marsh, “Order and Place.”

<sup>9</sup> Flather, *Gender and Space*, 135, 166.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 177.

has suggested that galleries were built because of ‘the importance of the Protestant sermon’, and the ‘increasingly acute shortage of seating space’.<sup>11</sup> These two drivers for building seats will be developed, and other drivers will be analysed.

The use of space has attracted significant scholarly attention in recent decades. Steven Hindle has helpfully analysed parochial transactions which entailed the negotiations of the ‘relativities of space and status’. By so doing, he drew attention to the tension between the communal use of space and the individual’s sense of a place.<sup>12</sup> David Postles reminded us that spaces can have multiple meanings, and that attitudes to church space were both complicated and inconsistent. Building on this substantial scholarship, this chapter will develop an understanding of some of the complexities of seating. By focusing on the material evidence, the placement of the seats, their decoration, and their physical demonstration of layered identities, this will help to question the traditional views, that the reasons for seating were simply two-fold: the demands of the new liturgy, and the acute demands on seating of an increased population. The role of memory in seating will be contrasted with radical changes; the complexities of identity will demonstrate that the Laudians in the 1630s did not have a monopoly in erecting decorated seating. In considering these themes, there will be four parts to this chapter. The first section will focus on the subtle reconfigurations that were realised in

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). In my MA dissertation I was able to show that galleries were built for these and other reasons, for example, the influences behind the building of Wolverhampton’s gallery were different from those behind Moreton Say’s or Puddletown’s or Lyme Regis’s: Susan Orlik, “What factors influenced the form and function of galleries in places of worship in England and Scotland 1560-1640?” (MA thesis, University of Birmingham, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Steven Hindle, “A Sense of Place? Becoming and Belonging in the Rural Parish, 1550-1650, in *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, eds. Alexandra Shephard and Phil Withington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 96-114.

seating and space through memory, for example in changed decoration on seating, and in the modified use of an elite family space for seating. Secondly radical changes will be discussed, at Cameley where a family pew was installed behind the pulpit with seats facing west, and then at Bridgwater where the Corporation erected a unique configuration to emphasise their primacy in the town. The third section of this chapter will be an analysis of the role of artisan and parochial networks in decorative styles for pews. Fourthly there will be an examination of how seating and the use of space were taken to a new level, using three examples of understudied galleries, one erected by a family for themselves, one by a merchant for the congregation, and one by the Churchwardens on behalf of the parish. All of these resulted in changes in the worshipping experience.

### *Memory and Space*

The importance of scholars' interest in remembrance for material culture has been well summarised by Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist.<sup>13</sup> While memory is a cognitive function, remembrance is a 'cultural production'. Gordon and Rist argue that remembrance, built on memory, was visible and legible everywhere in early modern surrounds.<sup>14</sup> They also argue that 'artefacts, then, hold politico-religious meanings which.... reveal the extent to which

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<sup>13</sup> Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist, "Introduction: The Arts of Remembrance", in *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, eds. Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 1-15; their argument is that the early modern period was a more complex moment of 'memorial transformation' than the suppression of memory in twentieth century France, posited in the monumental work of Pierre Nora: Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire* vols. 1-3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); it was originally published in seven volumes in 1984. He gave a briefer version in Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de memoire", *Representations* no. 26 (Spring, 1989): 7-24. For more on the relationship between memory, society and cultures, see Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg, eds., *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Gordon and Rist, "Introduction: The Arts of Remembrance," 3.

theology, so often seen as an abstraction, found material expression in remembrance'.<sup>15</sup> Some seating is an example of 'the arts of remembrance'.

In order to consider what subtle configurations occurred in the post-Reformation period, it is necessary to reflect on what seating existed before the Reformation, and what new demands were made after 1560. Whilst there is evidence of pre-Reformation fixed seating in the nave, particularly from the fifteenth century, there has only been fragmentary work on medieval nave seating and this has made it impossible to form 'a synoptic overview'.<sup>16</sup> Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' accounts describe the purchase of seats relating to social status.<sup>17</sup> Whilst fixed seating was not new in the post-Reformation period, the drivers for it were different. The increase in the population and the requirement to attend church demanded strategies for ordering the congregation and for the creation of extra space, such as galleries. The new liturgy required the congregation to be seated for longer periods as sermons became more significant, and also required the congregation to respond in unison throughout the service.<sup>18</sup> This was a change from responses to the medieval liturgy where individual meditation and acts of singular piety were possible for parts of the Mass. Julia Merritt notes how the adaptation of the medieval structure, and the location of fittings and furniture 'could make the experience of worship vary considerably in different communities'.<sup>19</sup> The necessity

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<sup>15</sup> Gordon and Rist, "Introduction: The Arts of Remembrance," 4.

<sup>16</sup> P. S. Barnwell, "Seating in the Nave of the pre-Reformation Parish Church," in *Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present*, eds. Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown (London: The Ecclesiological Society, 2011), 69-86, 69.

<sup>17</sup> Barnwell, "Seating in the Nave," 79; examples cited are the churches of St Edmund, Salisbury, All Saints, Bristol, and All Hallows, Sherborne.

<sup>18</sup> In George Abbot's Visitation Articles for Gloucester in 1612 the Churchwardens were asked, 'Whether any of your parishioners...doe not reverently behave themselves during the time of divine service, devoutly kneeling, when the generall confession of sinnes, the letany, the ten commandements, and all prayers and collects are read...standing up when the articles of beleefe are read': *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. I*, Kenneth Fincham, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), 104.

<sup>19</sup> Julia Merritt, "Religion and the English Parish," in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Reformation and Identity c. 1520-1662 vol. I*, ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 130-131.

to sit through long sermons was the reason Thomas Wilson complained that, ‘the preachers of God mynd so muche edefiying of soules, that thei often forget, we have any bodies’.<sup>20</sup> Fixed seating was in that sense both a continuation in that there had been some such seating, but it was also innovative in its widespread adoption and the creation of new spaces such as galleries. Churchwardens had no canonical requirement, specific to congregational seating, to guide them in this period. In Elizabeth’s reign Visitation Articles do not appear to refer to congregational seating at all, although some Elizabethan articles enquire whether the minister has a seat.<sup>21</sup> In the early seventeenth century, Visitation Articles refer to the catch all Canon 85 of 1604 when enquiring about seating, which was a generic requirement about keeping the church adequately repaired. Canon 85 of 1604 required that ‘Churches be kept in sufficient Reparation: The Church-Wardens or Quest-Men shall take care, and provide that the Churches be well and sufficiently repaired....and all things there in such an orderly and decent sort’. An example of referencing seating to Canon 85 can be found in 1634 in Laud’s Articles for Lincoln, which typically asked whether ‘the seats [were] well maintained according to the 85 Canon’.<sup>22</sup> In the 1630s the concerns of Archbishop Neile and other bishops that the nave pews should be of a uniform height, facing in the same eastwards direction, are demonstrated in their Visitation Articles.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Wilson *The Arte of Rhetoryke* (London, 1553), quoted by Ceri Sullivan, “The Art of Listening in the Seventeenth Century,” *Modern Philology* 104, (2006-7): 34-71, 34.

<sup>21</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation vol. III 1559-1575*, Walter Frere and William Kennedy, eds. (London: Longmans, Green, 1910): enquiries about the minister’s seat can be found in Parker’s Injunctions for the Norwich Diocese, 1569, no. 8, 208-209; and Sandys’ Articles for Worcester Diocese, 1569, no. 24, 225.

<sup>22</sup> *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, 86; *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Gerald Bray, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 379.

<sup>23</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 238, 244; *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, xxiii.

Unlike other countries that needed to structure their churches and seating for the Reformed liturgy, the constraint of the medieval structures in England determined a conservative approach to the reconfiguration of seating. In Scotland, there were radical initiatives where the builders of a group of new churches, designed T-shaped structures with the pulpit half way down the nave wall, facing the T, and with the preacher audible and visible to all as they faced him in their seats.<sup>24</sup>

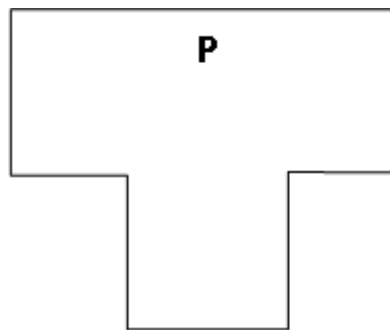


Diagram 2. a Diagram of a T-shape kirk in Scotland after the Reformation. P indicates the position of the pulpit.

This arrangement is evident in the new churches at Prestonpans and Dirleton, East Lothian, Anstruther and Kemback, Fife, and Weem, Perthshire.<sup>25</sup> In France the Reformed Protestants built temples in the round, such as Le Paradis, Lyon, where the seating was circular, as it also

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<sup>24</sup> Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 413.

<sup>25</sup> For more detail on Prestonpans, see Andrew Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 61-62, and Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Scotland: Scottish Architecture from the Reformation to the Restoration, 1560-1660* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 184; for more details on Dirleton, see Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism*, 47; for more detail on Anstruther, see Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*, 77-78, and Howard, *Architectural History of Scotland*, 190, and John Gifford, *The Buildings of Scotland: Fife* (London: Penguin, 1988), 67-69; for more details of Kemback, see George Hay, *The Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches, 1560-1843* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), and Howard, *Architectural History of Scotland*, 178, and Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*, 54, and Gifford, *Fife*, 257; for more details of Weem, see Hay, *Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches*, 54, and Howard, *Architectural History of Scotland*, 186.

was within the square church at Burntisland, Fife [Figures 2. 1 and 2. 2].<sup>26</sup> In Germany, at Freudenstadt in Württemberg, between 1599 and 1615, a new church was constructed as an L-shape with the pulpit at the apex of the L, facing both arms of the building, with men sitting in one section, and women in another.<sup>27</sup> These radical designs for new churches were in sharp contrast to the small changes made in English churches to accommodate seating within the constraints of medieval structures. Even when new churches were built in England, they were constructed as a simple rectangle such as at Easton Royal, Wiltshire in 1591, Risely, Derbyshire in 1593, or Folke, Dorset in 1628.<sup>28</sup>

Three examples will demonstrate modest changes at work in church seating after 1560. In chronological order, first, the 1560 pews at Trull, Somerset, were erected in the period of transition at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign and inform the historian of both placement of seats and the images they displayed. The 1560 pews exist alongside pre-Reformation pews and some Victorian ones [Figure 2. 3].<sup>29</sup> A local craftsman, Simon Warman carved the bench

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<sup>26</sup> For more details on French Huguenot temples, see Hélène Guicharnaud, "An Introduction to the Architecture of Protestant Temples Constructed in France before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," in *Seeing Beyond the World: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition*, ed. Paul Corby Finney (Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Cambridge: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 133-155; Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*; Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton, eds., *Defining the Holy: Sacred Spaces in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); and Raymond Mentzer, "The Reformed Churches of France and the Visual Arts," in *Seeing Beyond the World: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition*, ed. Paul Corby Finney (Cambridge, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 199-230. For more details of Burntisland, see Gifford, *Fife*, 110-112, and Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*, 51, 57, and John Blyth, *Burntisland: Early History and People* (Kirkcaldy: Fifeshire Advertiser, 1948).

<sup>27</sup> Reinhard Lieske, *Protestantische Frömmigkeit im Spiegel der kirchlichen Kunst des Herzogtums Württemberg* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1973), 37-43; I am grateful to Michael Orlik for translating this.

<sup>28</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, second edition revised by Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin in 1963, second edition 1975), 233-234; Clare Hartwell, Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Derbyshire* (New Haven and London, 2016, first published by Penguin, 1953, second edition 1978, reprinted with corrections and addenda 1986), 573-575; John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Dorset* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin, 1972), 207. Folke and Easton Royal may have been re-built on the footprint of the previous building, but this is speculative.

<sup>29</sup> Mark McDermott, "Early Bench-Ends in All Saints' Church, Trull," *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society* vol. 138 (1994): 117-130.

ends at Trull from the 1540s to 1585.<sup>30</sup> The Pre-Reformation images on the bench ends include processional figures and the Instruments of the Passion. The post-Reformation distinctive images of Simon Warman's 1560 bench ends include a moulding of a stem crossed obliquely at regular intervals by a leaf, which provides a consistent border on all the 1560 bench ends. This distinctive use of rigid foliage was unlike the work of any other Somerset carvers.<sup>31</sup> The images inside this consistent border include plants, fruit, leaves, vases, a man with a splendid hat and a beard, vines, a mythical head, a double headed man, and the star of David, as well as intricate patterns [Figures 2. 4].<sup>32</sup> The imagery represents a change from the extant pre-Reformation images at Trull, which include processions and the Instruments of the Passion, a medieval devotional tool regarded as idolatrous by 1560.<sup>33</sup> The innovative use of grotesque imagery, a mixed composition of humans and animals, was a novel, Renaissance import. Henry Peacham described grotesque as, 'an unnaturall or unorderedly composition for delight sake, of me(n) beasts, birds, fishes, flowers without (as wee say) Rime or reason'.<sup>34</sup> It may indicate that the commissioning Churchwardens or the craftsmen were driven by changing fashion, as much as by post-Reformation caution.

1560, a year after Elizabeth's accession, was a time of transition. The evolving requirements made changing demands: the Elizabethan Injunctions of 1559 were based on the Edwardian

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<sup>30</sup> Todd Gray, *Devon's Ancient Bench Ends* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2012), 160; for details of Simon Warman's life in the village of Bicknoller in the Quantocks, see McDermott, "Early Bench-Ends."

<sup>31</sup> Gray, *Ancient Bench Ends*, 160. At Broomfield, as well as Trull, the mouldings are stopped at the bottom of the bench, which is very distinctive: McDermott, "Early Bench-Ends," 118.

<sup>32</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS/25 Record of church furnishings relating to the church of All Saints, Trull, (Compiled by the National Association of Fine Arts Societies NADFAS), 1998; there are also partitions, and interior decoration of some of the backs of the pews with similar intricate patterns.

<sup>33</sup> Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 41-42.

<sup>34</sup> Henry Peacham, *The Art of Drawing with the Pen* (Da Capo Press, 1606), 36.



Injunctions of 1547, but were more conservative. Injunction II explained that images were superfluous items of superstitious belief, and

to the intent that all superstition and hypocrisy crept into divers men's hearts may vanish away, they (the clergy) shall not set forth or extol the dignity of any image, relics or miracles; but, declaring the abuse of the same, they shall teach that all goodness, health, and grace ought to be both asked and looked for only of God, as of the very Author and Giver of the same, and none other.

Injunction XXIII ordered the clergy to

Take away, utterly extinct all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables, candlesticks, trindals and rolls of wax, pictures and paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition, so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass windows, or elsewhere within their churches and houses; preserving nevertheless, or repairing both the walls and glass windows.<sup>35</sup>

As discussed in chapter 1, the 1560 proclamation forbade the destruction of funeral monuments, and forbade the destruction of glass without the permission of the Ordinary. It looked as if Elizabeth was trying to stop the destruction that arose after 1559 by imposing limits and by declaring that there were forms of ecclesiastical art that were not seen as superstitious, as Margaret Aston noted.<sup>36</sup> The 1563 Homily against idolatry spoke of the danger of idolatry of images in public spaces of worship:

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<sup>35</sup> *Visitation Articles III*, Frere and Kennedy, 16.

<sup>36</sup> Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts vol. 1: Laws against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 314-316.

Images placed publicly in Temples, cannot possibly be without danger of worshipping and idolatry, wherefore they are not publicly to be had or suffered in Temple and Churches.<sup>37</sup>

The Homily's 'lengthy discussion provided a comprehensive and rigorous denunciation of religious images in the context of worship'.<sup>38</sup>

Despite these changes, Warman's distinctive style can be found in his prodigious output in other Somerset churches, showing images both acceptable pre-Reformation and post-Reformation: Spaxton, Bishops Hull, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Monksilver, East Quantoxhead, Lyng, Cothlestone and Broomfield [Figure 2. 5].<sup>39</sup> On Broomfield and Trull bench ends he carved his name and additionally at Trull on two bench ends his initials S and W were carved, with the W created from the beaks of two birds [Figure 2. 6].<sup>40</sup> His work at Trull indicates a craftsman, successfully networked, who continued to produce decorated seating throughout the decades of religious upheaval, but who also changed his vocabulary, either to meet the changed liturgy and requirements, or to exhibit fashionable grotesque imagery, or both. His work also suggests that investors continued to commission decoration, for their seats,

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<sup>37</sup> *Book of Homilies*, ed. John Griffiths (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Publishing, 2008, originally published by Oxford University Press, 1859), 167-272.

<sup>38</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*, 41-42.

<sup>39</sup> Julian Orbach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; South and West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014). Jerry Sampson has found identical square four-point punches, dots and circular punches that confirm that Trull and Broomfield's benches as the work of Simon Warman: Jerry Sampson, "Medieval Benches and Bench Ends of Somerset: Towards an Archaeological Approach," in *Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present*, eds. Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown (London: The Ecclesiological Society, 2011), 87-110, 96. Broomfield's pew ends include the same moulding as Trull's with an oblique leaf, vines, plants, birds, and intricate patterns.

<sup>40</sup> On the west wall of the north aisle above linen fold panelling is the inscription 'SIMON WARMAN MAKER OF THYS WORKE AN[N]O D[OMI]NI 1560'. A symbol of a bird has been carved in front of the numerals 1560.

although in a changed form, through the decades of turbulence, and of adaptation to the Elizabethan religious settlement. Space continued to be deployed to display decoration, but the new requirements built on the memory of medieval displays, responded to reformed sensitivities around the visual and the material, and achieved reformed decoration.

The 1569 Trull seating plan demonstrates that the nave and the side aisles were filled with pews.<sup>41</sup> The heading of this plan indicates that a group of individuals chosen by the Parish had decided the seating arrangements.<sup>42</sup> This may suggest that there had not been permanent seating arrangements until shortly before the plan, possibly because the seating had only just been completed.<sup>43</sup> The plan has been badly damaged but it is possible to see the segregation of men and women and that at least some pew allocations were linked to property.<sup>44</sup> McDermott has shown that seats were linked to the same properties in the 1569 plan as in the 1635 plan.<sup>45</sup> The material evidence of Trull's seating and the extant plans show continuity, as for example

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<sup>41</sup> SHC: D\P\tru/24/5 Trull Church pew allocation, 1569. I am grateful to Mark McDermott who generously sent me his transcription of the badly damaged Trull 1569 seating plan.

<sup>42</sup> SHC: D\P\tru/24/5 Trull pew allocation, 1569: "This table made the Seenthe daye of Marche Annodni 1569 And in the eleventh yere of [torn away] witnessithethat there was An order taken by the condysente of the hole perisshenars of Trull to chuse Sertayne men to [torn away] and cotyers accordyngly to there discrecions The names of them ar these that ware chosen that is to saye Roberte Babb const[torn away] John Domete Thomas Boncombe Wyllyam Gyll Wyllyam Marshwell & John Waye and so they have plasede every m[torn away] in sattis convenyauntly in the church accordyngly to there discrecions as hereafter in this table dothe appere."

<sup>43</sup> McDermott, "Early Bench-Ends," 120. I am grateful to Trevor Cooper who showed me his lecture on seating plans: 'The arrangement of post-Reformation Church Interiors, from Contemporary Plans', Lecture to the British Society of Antiquaries, London, 23 January 2016.

<sup>44</sup> SHC: D\P\tru/24/5 Trull pew allocation, 1569.

<sup>45</sup> McDermott, "Early Bench-Ends," 121. SHC: D\P\tru/24/6 Trull Church pew allocation, 1635; the link between pew allocation and property is made explicit in the 1635 plan: "A Table conteynyn all the Seats in Trull Church expressing to whose & what Tenements they doo now severally belong taken out of & compared with an Ancient Table thereof long since made, which tyme and alteracon hath defaced and made uncertaine, examined allowed & consented unto by those whose names are heerunto subscribed Anno Domini 1635 Roger: Derby beinge then the Curate. Richard Skinner William Hewett Churchwardens." McDermott shows that there is only one isolated reference to payment for seats before 1560, when in 1527 when Thomas Heryng paid 4d for 'a sege off the chyrch': McDermott, "Early Bench-Ends," 122.

the aisles followed the same lines as those used for pre-Reformation processional routes.

Parochial identity and communal identity were sustained drivers for building decorated seats.

The significance of a network, both of craftsmen, and of parishes, is a characteristic to be explored later, for example at Mere and Folke.

The second example of modest change and the role of memory comes from the royal peculiar of Wimborne Minster, Dorset, where the spire of the central tower collapsed in 1600. The eighteenth-century antiquarian Hutchins quoted a Mr Coker's contemporary description of the disaster:

1600 the choir being full of people at 10 o'clock service, and the streets, it being market day, a sudden mist and tempest arising, the spire being of great height fell, and battered the lead, and broke the timber of the roof, yet was 'no one hurt'.<sup>46</sup>

After the spire collapsed and destroyed the choir stalls, they were rebuilt in 1610, replacing like with like, according to memory. Their status as choir stalls seems clear, despite their being dubbed 'Jacobean communion seats'.<sup>47</sup> This is improbable for three reasons: first the Churchwardens' accounts noted singing boys; secondly in 1602 the Churchwardens' presentment declared that two men had 'sat in the quire at prayer time and keep the quiremen out of their places'. Although this presentment occurred when the medieval stalls had been destroyed, it does not change the argument that the choir had their designated places.<sup>48</sup> Third

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<sup>46</sup> John Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset vol. II*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (London, 1774), 91-97.

<sup>47</sup> George Yule has described them as 'Jacobean communion seats': George Yule, "James VI and I: Furnishing the Churches in His Two Kingdoms," in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, eds. Anthony Fletcher, and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 182-208, 195.

<sup>48</sup> J. M. J. Fletcher, "A Century of Dorset Documents," *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* vol. 47, (1926): 24-50, 44.

the material evidence suggests that it was impractical for them to have been communion seats, because they were inaccessible to an administering celebrant, and there were only a small number compared to the scores of communicants.

The town appears to have been beset with religious divisions.<sup>49</sup> Their controversial Puritan preacher, Thomas Norman, was able to pursue his confessional practices because, as a royal peculiar, Wimborne Minster was exempt from Episcopal control.<sup>50</sup> Norman's views did not suit everyone, as the Churchwardens' presentments show.<sup>51</sup> In a parish where there were obvious tensions, and divisions, there was nevertheless sufficient agreement to invest in replacing the destroyed choir stalls, and in maintaining singers and at least two organs. The presence of quiremen and singing boys in both the Churchwardens' presentments and the accounts testify to the musical tradition, which endured from the pre-Reformation collegiate musical life.<sup>52</sup> The presentments even cite that in 1608, 'Harrye Kent being in the Quire irreverently mysyouse hymself in time of devyne servys'.<sup>53</sup> These extravagant canopied stalls, cut down by 'restorers' in the 1850s, still sport their misericords displaying foliage, fruits, and a bearded man, images that were common on medieval misericords [Figure 2. 7].<sup>54</sup> Replacing

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<sup>49</sup> For evidence of religious divisions, see the transcriptions of the Churchwardens' presentments: Charles Mayo, *A History of Wimborne Minster; the Collegiate Church of Saint Cuthberga and King's Free Chapel at Wimborne* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1860), 28-132.

<sup>50</sup> J. M. J. Fletcher, "A Dorset Royal Peculiar," *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* vol. 38 (1918): 93-111; this gives a helpful explanation of the status and the implications of the royal peculiar. For an outline of the work of the peculiar court, see A. W. Stote-Blandy, "The Royal Peculiar Court of Wimborne Minster: Some Notes of Many XVIIth Century Records of its Transactions," *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* vol. 64 (1942): 43-57; in this article, he suggests that Thomas Norman was a Puritan and a law unto himself, enjoying a living in the royal peculiar and therefore exempt from Episcopal control.

<sup>51</sup> Fletcher, "A Century of Dorset Documents," 33, 45, 100.

<sup>52</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Wimborne Minster, 1566, 1612, 1616, 1624, 1628.

<sup>53</sup> Fletcher, "A Century of Dorset Documents," 44.

<sup>54</sup> The cutting down of the stalls was a subject of interest for C. R. Mackintosh, the young architect, who came to England to sketch, visited Wimborne Minster in 1895, described what he saw as 'irremediable vandalism', and

the medieval choir stalls and repeating traditional imagery, even if responding to the new requirements, on the misericords was a statement about sustained identity, local pride and the continuation of the Minster's musical tradition.

The last example of subtle reconfiguration of the use of space for seating is from the Tynte family pew at Chelvey, Somerset. The decorated family pew can be dated 1621 as its identical ornamental frieze is replicated on the extant reader's desk, which is dated 1621, and displays the initials of the Rector, William Gregory. The arcaded family pew stands at the west end of the south chapel, facing east [Figure 2. 8].<sup>55</sup> The chapel contains medieval canopied tombs which indicate continuity in the discrete use of space, dedicated for the use of an elite family. In 1621, the use of this space was still for an elite family, for the family of Edward Tynte, Lord of the Manor and holder of the advowson; but the space was deployed for the seating of the family during services as well as for memorials.<sup>56</sup> The chronology of parochial events and investment indicate the importance of local factors. Edward Tynte had been Lord of the Manor since 1603. Adjacent to the parish church was Chelvey Court, which he had started to

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said that 'Ignorance and restoration-they usually go together': Brenda Flint, "'The benches in Ye Quire': Furniture from Wimborne Minster, Dorset," *Regional Furniture* vol. XXI (2007): 113-127, 116. A canopied stall before they were cut down was drawn in Mayo, *History of Wimborne Minster*, 43. For details of medieval misericords, see Francis Bond, *Wood Carvings in English Churches: Misericords vol. I* (London: Oxford University Press, 1910).

<sup>55</sup> The Chelvey 1887 survey described it: 'side aisle 1 ancient seat for adults 10 ½ ft in length accommodating 7 persons': SHC: D\P\Chvy/8/2/2 Correspondence, specification, copy faculty 1887 re church restoration, including application form for grant for work, 1886-8, 28 May 1887.

<sup>56</sup> Edward Tynte's non-extant tombstone was inscribed in Chelvey church with the words, "Lord of this mannour by his owne purchase": Anonymous, "Chelvey Court, Somerset, the Residence of Mr Cottle," *Country Life* 27, no. 698 (May 21, 1910): 738-744, which refers to PRO STAC 8/160/17 item; John Collinson, *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset volume II* (Bath: R. Crutwell, 1791), 316-318; there is a ledger slab to Robert Tynte, who died in 1636, the younger son of Edward Tynte and named in Edward's will: TNA: PROB 11/157/92 Will of Edward Tynte of Chelvey, 1630. For the background to advowsons, see Peter Smith, "The Advowson: The History and Development of a Most Peculiar Property," *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* vol. 5, no. 26 (2000): 320-339.

rebuild in 1618. He only invested in his parish church after the Rector, Hugh Davis, a controversial figure in Chelvey and in his other parish, Brockley, died in 1619. Hostile relations between Tynte and Davis were evident in the pursuit of a complaint to Star Chamber by Tynte's father-in-law that Edward Tynte had been the object of ridicule in a libel produced by the Rector in 1603. Part of the libel described Edward Tynte, 'our galefaced Landlord walkes with hornye hedd baylie, Hay brave velvet jerkin'.<sup>57</sup> It was only after Davis's death that Tynte was minded to invest in the church with decorated woodwork. Whatever national events were occurring, Chelvey is an example of the importance of local factors. It demonstrates a modest change in the configuration of space to accommodate seating for the manorial family, in an area already dedicated for their exclusive use. Memory again played a significant part in the deployment of space for seating in that the space continued to be used by the leading family, now dedicated for the use of the living as well as traditionally for the dead.

### *Radical Change in the Use of Space for Seating*

Some changes in seating and the use of space represented a radical departure from the pre-Reformation arrangements. Bridgwater and Cameley, both in Somerset, are illuminating in this regard. The seating for the minister and his family at Cameley, for example, broke from the medieval pattern of providing sedilia in the chancel for the priest and his assistants at

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<sup>57</sup> The ownership of the Manor of Chelvey by Edward Tynte is confirmed as occurring between 1602-1603 through a series of examinations in Star Chamber on a libel: James Stokes, ed., *Records of Early English Drama: Somerset including Bath vol. 1* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), 75-77. David Underdown believes that this suit was brought because Hugh Davis called him a 'courtier' and that was by then a term of abuse: David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603 to 1660* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 127. For more on libels, and the link with sedition, see Alistair Bellany, "'Raylinge Rymes and Vaunting Verse': Libellous Politics in Early Stuart England 1603-1628," in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, eds. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 285-310.

Mass.<sup>58</sup> First a medieval priest would have had no family to accommodate, and second, the minister was not confined during services post-Reformation to the chancel where the priest had traditionally been. In 1628, a year after the arrival in Cameley of the new Rector, Samuel Oliver, a square pew was built behind the pulpit and the reader's desk [Figure 2. 9].<sup>59</sup> The new pew stood in front of the chancel arch and behind the reader's desk which was adjacent to the pulpit. It had seats for several people, some facing west towards the congregation [Figure 2. 10]. The panelling and decoration of the reader's desk and the pew behind appear all of one piece [Figure 2. 11]. The lunettes and the double hearted motif, common in the West Country from 1580 to 1700, are the same on both.<sup>60</sup> From the exterior it looks like one piece of furniture. This was a radical innovation in the use of space for seating, first because the seats did not face east, and second because the minister had placed his family in pole position, both in its proximity to the pulpit, and in the lines of sight of the west facing congregation.

The Churchwardens' accounts for 1628 linked the items of 72 panels, nails, rails, board, all brought from Bristol for 'Mr Olyver Seate'.<sup>61</sup> When the work was complete there were surplus panels and the accounts noted that Mr Olyver 'hath taken and paid for them 2s 6d'.<sup>62</sup> Since the pew could hold eight or ten people, it seems likely that it was for his family, and

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<sup>58</sup> For more details of sedilia, and extant examples, see Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 190.

<sup>59</sup> The reader's desk, the pulpit and the pew all appear to be dated from the years 1628-30.

<sup>60</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS\37 Record of church furnishings relating to the church of St James, Cameley, (Compiled by the National Association of Fine Arts Societies NADFAS), 2006.

<sup>61</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly\4\1\1 Churchwardens' accounts of Cameley, 1628: '[6 dozen of panells att 16d a dozen/ [5 dozen nailes at 10d a dozen/ [6yards of raile at 2d per yard/ [For a little thyn board/ [For carriage these stuffes from Bristoll/ [John Willcock for 12 days work in making of Mr Olyver/ [Seate in the church at 15d a day/ [For glue about the work'.

<sup>62</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly\4\1\1 Cwa Cameley, 1628.



maybe friends. Behind the pulpit and the adjacent reader's desk, the congregation would have seen family members, some facing them, but all in the most prestigious place in the church. In 1630, the Churchwardens wrote an unusual note in their accounts, unusual because Churchwardens' accounts rarely made judgments upon actions:

Item Received of master Thomas Hippisley nowe, on ester eve parte of xxxs he promised to paie us for the new seate made by the parishioners for master Olyver att first, whoe by reson of unkindnes sho(w)ed him there aboute left it & builte one in the Chauncell we saie received of master hippisly twoe shillings & sixe pence.<sup>63</sup>

Three years later in 1633 Thomas Hippisley, probably the uncle of the young John Hippisley, Lord of the Manor and patron of the living, paid the balance of '27s 6d'.<sup>64</sup>

There had been a row and Samuel Oliver had relinquished his family pew, and taken himself off to the chancel, where he had built himself another seat. Presumably the ejected family members took seats in the nave with the rest of the congregation. What is tantalisingly unclear is who had been 'unkind' to Samuel Oliver: was Thomas Hippisley being unkind to the Rector in objecting to the predominant position of the 'Oliver' pew behind the reading desk, a prime position which a member of the elite family would have considered theirs? Was a third party, unnamed, being unkind? Did the parishioners baulk at the Rector's family pew when they saw its physical extent and their new lines of sight, even although the Churchwardens had commissioned it? These questions are at present unanswerable. One possible explanation is that, a year after the new Rector arrived in 1627, the Churchwardens either willingly, or by

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<sup>63</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1630.

<sup>64</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1633.

the new Rector's persuasion, built a new reader's desk and behind it a pew for several people. After it was constructed, the parishioners, or some parishioners, objected to the size and prominent position of the pew behind the reader's desk. Mr Oliver then built a seat for himself in the chancel. Mr Hippisley paid the Churchwardens 30s (2s 6d in 1630 and 27s 6d in 1632) for the pew behind the reader's desk, a prominent position for a member of the leading family. The total cost of the 1628 work, which probably included the readers' desk and the pew behind the reader's desk, was 43s 10d. Mr Hippiely had paid therefore for the pew behind the reader's desk but not for the reader's desk. The use of space to seat the family of the Rector had caused a row that had rolled on for years. John Fielding, in his work on Puritan ministers in Northamptonshire, makes the point that Puritan ministers often faced opposition for reasons that had nothing to do with their confessional position as such; for example he cites Thomas Sutton, vicar of Islip, who was bitterly opposed by some parishioners over his social pretensions, specifically his choice of tenants.<sup>65</sup> If some of the parishioners of Cameley, or the Hippiseys, had objected to Oliver's confessional stance, his seizure of the most prominent place to seat his family would have provided an easy excuse to start a dispute.

This dispute appears to be about social status ('order and place'-to use Marsh's terms), and the tensions between a patronal family, minor gentry, the Hippiseys, the parishioners, or some of the parishioners, and a Rector who was proclaiming his social status alongside the liturgical dominance of the word preached from the pulpit and read from the desk. Tensions over seating in church have been well rehearsed by scholars such as Christopher Marsh and

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<sup>65</sup> John Fielding, "Conformists, Puritans and the Church Courts: The Diocese of Peterborough, 1603-1642," (PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1989), 169.

Amanda Flather.<sup>66</sup> The lines of sight had been changed for the congregation twice in a few years: first they had within their vision the family of the Rector, looking westwards at them from the pew behind the reader's desk and the pulpit. Then they had Thomas Hippisley and with whomever he sat, looking westwards at them from the disputed family pew. The Rector had moved from the family pew, when he was not preaching or reading the Word of God, to the chancel, and depending on where he sat, could have been obscured from the congregation's view by the chancel arch. It would all have been very cramped in the small chancel, with the rails in front of the table, first in one position and then reluctantly in a second further eastward, as will be discussed in chapter 5.

Samuel Oliver was one of a number of Puritan preachers in north Somerset: others included Samuel Crooke of Wrington, William Thomas of Ubley and Humphrey Chambers of Claverton.<sup>67</sup> They served the Chewton Mendip lectureship around 1630.<sup>68</sup> Samuel Oliver's priority, the preaching and hearing of the Word of God, was made manifest in the pulpit and reader's desk that were built just a year after his arrival in Cameley. The large pew behind the reader's desk was another matter, a declaration of dominant social status, a declaration that may have led to the dispute with probably some parishioners, or a leading member of the patronal family, Thomas Hippisley. Identities and their assertion in material form were not always straightforward and often reflected a mixture of the worldly and the spiritual. The

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<sup>66</sup> Marsh, "Common Prayer"; Marsh, "Sacred Space"; Marsh, "Order and Place"; Flather, *Gender and Space*; Dillow, "Pew Disputes"; Wright, "Spatial Ordering."

<sup>67</sup> Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, 77, n. 17, which references *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* (1943-6) xxiv, 136; for more on Samuel Crooke, see Patrick Collinson, "Shepherds, Sheepdogs, and Hirelings: The Pastoral Ministry in Post-Reformation England," in *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay*, eds. William Sheils and Diane Wood. Studies in Church History, vol. 26, (Oxford: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by Basil Blackwell, 1989), 185-220, 188, 194.

<sup>68</sup> Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, 77.

radical change in seating and the use of space had unforeseen consequences in this small rural church.

The second example of the innovative use of space for seating is from an important strategic town, Bridgwater. When the Corporation of Bridgwater decided to build decorated pews for themselves in the early seventeenth century, and place the pews behind a decorated chancel screen, and in front of the fifteenth-century rood screen, they were using space for their seating in a radical way. The new chancel screen, which will be discussed in chapter 4, and the decorated pews for the Mayor and Aldermen, are jointly called the Corporation Pew [Figures 2. 12 and 2. 13]. The screen was built standing in front of the chancel arch, facing the congregation, on a north-south axis. With the existing rood screen in front of the communion table, the screen acted as an enclosure for these seats, placing the Corporation east of the pulpit, and discrete from the rest of the Congregation.<sup>69</sup> The chancel screen, along with some of the early seventeenth-century pews, were moved between 1848 and 1857 to their present position, on an east-west axis in the south aisle.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> The 1559 Injunction required a partition between the chancel and the nave. The Royal Order of 1561 required the retention or rebuilding of the chancel screen up to the height of the beam, 'putting some convenient crest upon the said beam towards the church'. The Order required 'a comely partition between the chancel and the church': Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 31, 37; Whiting, *English Parish*, 5, 205; *Visitation Articles III*, Frere and Kennedy, 108-109. The Canons of 1604 did not mention screens and there is little mention in visitation articles for decades.

<sup>70</sup> A P Baggs and M C Siraut. "Bridgwater," in *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 6, Andersfield, Cannington, and North Petherton Hundreds (Bridgwater and Neighbouring Parishes)*, ed. R W Dunning and C R Elrington (London: Victoria County History, 1992), 192-206. *British History Online*, accessed February 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol6/pp192-206>.

The story of this rich structure, the Corporation Pew, is not well supported by archival material. There are no extant Churchwardens' accounts and no nineteenth-century faculties. There is a documented pew dispute from 1631 to 1634 which is helpful on the seating arrangements in the church as a whole, and there is the transcribed will of a former Mayor in 1620, which helps to date the Corporation Pew as prior to 1620.<sup>71</sup> There are also a number of documentary sources for the history of the Borough, including the letters patent, which established the Corporation's rights to the Rectory, and the leasing of tithes by the Borough which ensued. As shown in chapter 1, the imbalance between the richness of the extant material evidence and the relative scarcity of archival sources is a common challenge for students of material culture.<sup>72</sup>

From the early fourteenth century, St Mary's church had stood in the middle of Bridgwater.<sup>73</sup> Bridgwater, described as 'rich and sturdily independent,' the premier port of the county, was generally prosperous, despite the vicissitudes of trade.<sup>74</sup> As an administratively strategic

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<sup>71</sup> SHC: D\D\cd\71 Deposition book, 1631-5, 1631-4; SHC: DD\X\SR/5/c403 Abstracts and notes made from the wills of the Taunton Archdeaconry Probate Court, 1890-1; The Reverend Bartlett made these partial transcriptions 1890-1891. John Stradling's will was dated 25 January 1620 and proved 10 March 1620; it is this document that allows the *VCH Somerset* to make the statement, 'A second screen was erected west of the rood screen in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps forming the new aisle mentioned in 1620': Baggs and Siraut, "Bridgwater: Churches," *VCH, Somerset*, vol. 6, 230-235.

<sup>72</sup> See chapter 1 for more on this challenge; and Kate Giles, "A Table of Alabaster with the Story of the Doom": The Religious Objects and Spaces of the Guild of Our Blessed Virgin, Boston (Lincs.)," in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Culture and Its Meanings*, eds. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 267-288.

<sup>73</sup> For a description of the church by Edmund Rack, see *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, eds. Mark McDermott and Sue Berry (Padstow: Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 2011), 230-233; John Collinson, *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset volume III* (Bath: R. Crutwell, 1791), 88.

<sup>74</sup> Baggs and Siraut, "Bridgwater: Economic history," *VCH, Somerset*, vol. 6, 213-223; J. F. Lawrence, revised and completed by J.C. Lawrence, *A History of Bridgwater* (Stroud: Phillimore, 2005), 78-9; Thomas Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640: A County's Government During the 'Personal Rule'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 8, 10, 17, 60.

Borough, it shared the Quarter Sessions with Wells, Ilchester and Taunton, and enjoyed its own Justices of the Peace.<sup>75</sup>

The relationship between the Corporation and the Parish is at the heart of the story of the Corporation Pew. In 1548, the rectorial rights of Bridgwater were granted to the Earl of Bath. This must have been varied as the Corporation was already collecting tithes before 1571, when this right was granted by Elizabeth's Letters Patent.<sup>76</sup> Part of the terms of the 1571 grant charged the Corporation with stipends of £20 for a man 'to preach and teach in town and neighbourhood', £13 6s 8d for a curate and another sum for a schoolmaster.<sup>77</sup> Exercising its rights as rector, the Corporation was taking one-tenth of the agricultural produce of the parish, which realised significant sums; for example the Rectory Accounts of 1579 show receipts of £124 13s 5d, payments £81 13s 3d and the balance of £43 0s 2d.<sup>78</sup> There is substantial archival evidence that the Corporation lost no time in maximising its financial advantage by leasing out its tithes.<sup>79</sup> The Corporation held the rectorial rights, paid the stipends of the clergy and was receiving substantial income. This enhanced its position of power in the town and in the parish.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Baggs and Siraut, "Bridgwater," *VCH, Somerset*, vol. 6; Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, 48-60.

<sup>76</sup> Lawrence, *History of Bridgwater*, 76-7; SHC: D\B\bw/2433/1 Church Records, other than accounts, including leases of tithes, 1571.

<sup>77</sup> Baggs and Siraut, "Bridgwater: Churches," *VCH, Somerset*, vol. 6, 230-235.

<sup>78</sup> Lawrence, *History of Bridgwater*, 76-7.

<sup>79</sup> SHC: D\B\bw/2179 Church records other than accounts, 1564; SHC: D\B\bw/2180 Church records other than accounts, 1571; SHC: D\B\bw/2181 Church records other than accounts, 1571; SHC: D\B\bw/2183 Church records other than accounts, 1571; SHC: D\B\bw/2182 Church records other than accounts, 1576.

<sup>80</sup> For an analysis of how the Reformation empowered civic authorities, see Robert Tittler, "Reformation, Resources and Authority in English Towns: An Overview," in *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640*, eds. Patrick Collinson and John Craig (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 190-201.

Their civic power and authority was expressed by the size, magnificence and the position of the Corporation Pew [Figure 2. 13]. The date of its installation and its original configuration in front of the chancel arch can be supported by four pieces of evidence. The first two are linked: in 1885 Sydney Jarman transcribed the inscription on the brass to John Stradling, who was Mayor of Bridgwater three times, in 1604, 1611 and 1618,

Here lies Stradling, sprung from a noble race. He was thrice mayor of this Borough. In his youth as merchant he went to the Spanish shores, that he might seek abundant and hard-earned wealth. From this time in Port, resting in everlasting peace, he rejoices and is himself made companion with the Angelic choir. After darkness I hope for light. John Stradling his only begotten son and heir to his piety, has therefore placed this in 1620.<sup>81</sup>

Secondly, it is fortunate that Reverend Bartlett transcribed some wills from Taunton Archdeaconry Probate Court before the archives were destroyed in the Second World War. He found that John Stradling wished in his will 'to be buried in the New Ile. 40s to the Church'.<sup>82</sup> There is therefore a link between a new aisle where it would be appropriate that a former and thrice Mayor should request to be buried and the date 1620.<sup>83</sup> This indicates that the Corporation Pew, the only new aisle, was in place by 1620. The third piece of evidence is a print of a lithograph, believed to be by John Chubb, a well-known local artist who died in 1818. The lithograph is reproduced in Powell's *History of Bridgwater* [Figure 2. 14].<sup>84</sup> This places the Corporation Pew with its distinctive crest of obelisks in front of the chancel arch

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<sup>81</sup> Sydney Jarman, *Handbook of St Mary's Church Bridgwater* (Bridgwater: Gazette Office, 1885).

<sup>82</sup> SHC: DD\X\SR/5/c403 Abstracts, 1890-1.

<sup>83</sup> Aisle can be defined as 'Any of the more or less linear areas into which a church is divided': *OED*.

<sup>84</sup> A. H. Powell, *The Ancient Borough of Bridgwater* (Bridgwater: Page and Son, 1907), facing page 216. The SHC has now been able to trace the original of the lithograph, and make it available: SHC: A\DQO/54/4 Lithograph of the interior of St Mary's church, Bridgwater, before 1818.

and the fifteenth-century rood screen, which can be seen behind it. The lithograph does not clearly show whether the Corporation pews faced west, towards the seated congregation, in the nave, or faced inwards towards each other. In the former possible arrangement, the Corporation would have had their backs to the east end and the communion table, whilst in the latter, facing each inward, it would have replicated a college arrangement. The fourth piece of evidence about the new aisle comes from a very colourful pew dispute between Avice Garvin, who claimed to have sat in her pew for 23 years and Joane Bale, a midwife and a keeper of an ale house who claimed the right to the same pew.<sup>85</sup> This dispute has the added fascination of a physical fight between female witnesses in a kitchen in an inn at Wells when they were attending the Bishop's Court for the case. In the statements of the witnesses made between 1631 and 1634 they helpfully gave information about the new aisle. John Devenish gave evidence in support of Avice Garvin and said

alsoe the seates in the ile wherein the Maior Masters and the companie of the corporation of the said towne of Bridgwater aforesaide have and doe use to sitt & be in att prayer tyme.<sup>86</sup>

The combination of Stradling's will and the witness statements in 1634 mean it had evidently been in use by 1620.<sup>87</sup>

The evidence of two witnesses in 1634 confirms that the communion table was in the chancel at the east end:

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<sup>85</sup> SHC: D\D\cd/71 Deposition book, 1631-4.

<sup>86</sup> SHC: D\D\cd/71 Deposition book, 1631-4.

<sup>87</sup> The will is only partially transcribed and the preamble has not been transcribed.



this respondent verylie believeth that the seate in question mentioned in this interrogated standeth aboute some twentie paces from the westend of the said chauncell of the church of Bridgwater aforesaid, and some 26 paces or thereabouts from the communion table wherefore itt now standeth in the chauncell.<sup>88</sup>

In locating also the disputed pew, a second witness said,

that the seate in question in this respondents judgment & as she verilie believeth is mere twentie yarges from the wester end of the chauncell of the said church of Bridgwater, and farther off from the communion table.<sup>89</sup>

The clear implication is that the communion table was at the east end of the chancel by 1631-1634, which shows that the Mayor and Aldermen were sitting west of the communion table; this begs the question whether it had been moved as a result of the installation of the Corporation Pew. Such an interpretation would support the view, already expressed, that the consequent change of use of the chancel, was not the result of any Laudian intention.

The Corporation Pew was still in its original position when Edmund Rack undertook his survey in the 1780s; he refers first to the fifteenth-century rood screen,

The chancel is divided from the nave and ayles by a curious open work Gothic screen, over which is an organ loft with large toned organ and gallerys to the right and left and right...In front of the organ loft are six pews inclosed with a very antique and curious

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<sup>88</sup> SHC: D\D\cd/71 Deposition book, 1631-4.

<sup>89</sup> SHC: D\D\cd/71 Deposition book, 1631-4.

open archd screen on which is a profusion of fine ancient carvings. The spot thus inclosed is called the Mayor's Ayle and will hold the whole corporation.<sup>90</sup>

Like the gentry in some churches, the Corporation wanted to sit discretely as a display of corporate pride. At present, no other configuration has been found of a Mayor and Corporation sitting in what was essentially an enclosed pew either with their backs to the chancel, facing west to the congregation in the nave, or facing inwards towards each other. There is no evidence to suggest which way they faced.<sup>91</sup> John Fielding found that, when the 1637 visitors arrived at All Saints, Northampton, they discovered the seats of the Mayor and Aldermen around the communion table in the chancel on an east-west axis, with the Mayor seated at the east end.<sup>92</sup>

The arrangement of seats in the chancel around the communion table, for example at Deerhurst, Gloucestershire, and Hailes, Cheshire, are well known, and described by R. H. Murray in 1905.<sup>93</sup> These seats around the communion table in the chancel were different from the arrangement at Bridgwater. At Deerhurst and Hailes the seating in the chancel around the table was provided for the congregation during communion.<sup>94</sup> There is evidence from other Boroughs that the Mayor and Corporation had specified seats, as the 1636 dispute at Axbridge

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<sup>90</sup> *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, McDermott and Berry, 231; in contrast, Collinson does not note the Corporation Pew: Collinson, *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset vol. III*, 88.

<sup>91</sup> Tony Woolrich claims that the Corporation sat facing west but no evidence is provided for this: Tony Woolrich, *Saint Mary's Church Bridgwater*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Bridgwater: St Mary's PCC, 2004), 2, 14.

<sup>92</sup> John Fielding, "Conformists, Puritans and the Church Courts," 99.

<sup>93</sup> R. H. Murray, "The Evolution of Church Chancels," *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society* 31 (1905): 67-93.

<sup>94</sup> Yule, "James VI and I," 182-208.

demonstrates.<sup>95</sup> Kenneth Fincham found that at St Mary's Dover from the 1650s the Mayor and Jurats (as the Aldermen in the Cinque Ports were named) sat at the east end facing the congregation with the communion table centrally placed in the chancel. He suggests that, as the Corporation claimed they had been there 'time out of mind', this arrangement was based on a pre-Laudian pattern.<sup>96</sup> Although civic pride and aldermanic status appear to have been at work also in Dover, the seating arrangement is different from Bridgwater. Pride and status also appears to have been at work at St Saviour's Dartmouth where the town council in 1614 placed themselves along the east wall with a specially carved and cushioned seat for the Mayor.<sup>97</sup> At Bridgwater the lines of sight both for the Corporation and the congregation would have been singularly different from Deerhurst, Hailes, Dover and Dartmouth. At Bridgwater, John Devenish in his deposition to the Court for the pew dispute, as quoted earlier, clearly described the seating arrangements for the Corporation. The enclosed space made the Corporation discrete from the congregation, visible, prominent, near the pulpit for practical as well as symbolic reasons: physically to hear the Word of God and symbolically to show that they held the hearing of the Word of God as important. The lines of sight for the congregation would have been unusual and challenging; they will be discussed in chapter 4. Behind the Corporation Pew screen, they would have seen the Mayor and Corporation, then the rood screen, and behind that the communion table.

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<sup>95</sup> SHC: D\Pa\4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Axbridge, 1636: in the Axbridge Churchwardens' accounts there is the resolution in 1636 of a dispute between the Corporation and the Churchwardens about how much they should pay for their seats, which they had built themselves 'at their proper Coste'. In the agreement of this resolved dispute, it refers to 'the mayor & Alderman, and capitall Burgesses of this Burrowe, touching the seates wherein the said Mayor Alderman and capitall Burgesses do nowe usually sit, & within the body of the parishe Church of Axbridge'. The location of the seats for the Mayor and Corporation of Axbridge were in the body of the church, and they were specifically for them and their successors.

<sup>96</sup> I am grateful to Professor Kenneth Fincham for kindly pointing out his work to me: Kenneth Fincham, "'According to Ancient Custom': The Return of Altars in the Restoration Church of England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* sixth series, vol. 13 (2003): 29-54.

<sup>97</sup> Yule, "James VI and I," 201.

There has been some important work on the developing identity of civic authorities after the Reformation. Robert Tittler showed that, whilst pre-Reformation civic culture had gone hand-in-hand with the Catholic Church for centuries, after the Reformation Corporations were compelled to devise new supports to serve the same civic ends. Burgesses found ways of expressing the legitimacy of oligarchical rule by aligning themselves to God and the King. Tittler has suggested in the context of public civic seating that, in the face of discontinuity with the Reformation and innovation, patterns of symbolic usage became more important than ever.<sup>98</sup> The screen and pews at Bridgwater took the placing of the Mayor and Aldermen in the church to a new level of visual dominance.

There are some straws in the wind about the religious sentiment of the parish. The number of visiting preachers to the town who are thought to have been Puritans between 1603 and 1623 is notable.<sup>99</sup> Using Wells Consistory Court records Lawrence provides evidence of visiting Puritan preachers from 1603.<sup>100</sup> John Devenish was vicar of Bridgwater from 1605 until at least 1639.<sup>101</sup> We know from his 1644 will that he described himself as ‘John Devenish the

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<sup>98</sup> Robert Tittler, *Townpeople and Nation: English Urban Experience c. 1540 to 1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 121-139, 133, 135; Robert Tittler, “Seats of Power: The Symbolism of Public Seating in the English Urban Community, c. 1560-1620,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* vol. 24, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 205-223, 214.

<sup>99</sup> Lawrence, *History of Bridgwater*, 93: he gives names, dates and payments made.

<sup>100</sup> Lawrence, *History of Bridgwater*, 93. For details on visiting preachers in towns, see Christopher Kitching, “Church and Chapelry in Sixteenth-Century England,” in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1979), 279-290; Paul Seaver, “Puritan Preachers and their Patrons,” in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, eds. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 128-142; Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Third Anstey Memorial Lecture, University of Kent, Canterbury (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 42-44.

<sup>101</sup> <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/index.jsp>, (accessed 15 January, 2015).

elder late of Bridgwater in the county of Somersett clerke'.<sup>102</sup> He gave weekly lectures from 1607, and in the 1630s was still preaching on Sunday afternoons.<sup>103</sup> He held conventicles in his house, to which two churchwardens came. In 1636, the churchwardens left unpresented one who had been excommunicated at the previous episcopal visit.<sup>104</sup> Other misdemeanours included keeping hats on during services, and failure to read the litany every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday.<sup>105</sup> The churchwardens did not ring the bells in honour of the King's Coronation Day on 27 March 1637. They were presented the next day.<sup>106</sup> All of this indicates a godly parish. Evidence points to Devenish's Puritan leanings; he was briefly suspended in 1636 but only two specific complaints were made: singing Psalms in his 'conventicle' and spending only half an hour in church explaining the catechism.<sup>107</sup> One of the churchwardens, Humphrey Blake, had to do penance for not informing against him.<sup>108</sup>

John Devenish the vicar, George Swankin preacher from 1595 to 1622, and George Wootton curate from 1623 to 1645 (when he briefly became the Vicar) were increasingly well paid. This suggests that this was not a poor parish, that the Corporation was minded to increase the

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<sup>102</sup> TNA: PROB 11/261/602 Will of John Devenish, Clerk of Bridgwater, 9 November 1644, proven 28 February 1656.

<sup>103</sup> Lawrence, *History of Bridgwater*, 93. For details on lectureships, see Patrick Carter, "Economic Problems of Provincial Urban Clergy," in *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640*, eds. Patrick Collinson and John Craig (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 147-158.

<sup>104</sup> Margaret Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory: The Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Early Seventeenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 303.

<sup>105</sup> Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*, 303.

<sup>106</sup> Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*, 303.

<sup>107</sup> Lawrence, *History of Bridgwater*, 93; Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*, 303; one possible explanation for Devenish's alleged brevity in catechising could be that learned godly ministers preferred preaching, a proposition which Ian Green suggests: Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechism and Catechizing in England, c. 1530-1740* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1996), 130.

<sup>108</sup> David Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum* (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1973), 21; Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 143.

clerical income to encourage the ministers to stay, and that the Puritan position of John Devenish was in line with that of the Corporation and the Churchwardens.<sup>109</sup>

The dominant position of the seating for the wealthy Corporation at Bridgwater appears unusual. It was a radical use of space, and brought together the civic pride of the Mayor and his fellow burgesses, the importance of preaching, and the emphasis of the Reformed liturgy on hearing the Word. The decoration of the pews was allied to the decoration of the screen, to be explored in chapter 4. The Corporation's power and status were displayed through their investment in decorated woodwork, located in an unusual, exclusive, pole position, which emphasised their leadership of their godly community.

#### *Decoration and Networks*

The seating at Trull, Wimborne Minster, Chelvey, Cameley and Bridgwater had all been decorated. As a theme that runs through the chapters of this thesis, decoration and confessional position did not have a clear alignment, specifically the old assumption that all decoration was Laudian. There is material evidence, however, that decoration linked different parishes stylistically. Two parishes exemplify this, Folke in Dorset, and Mere in Wiltshire.

At Mere the pews, built between 1638 and 1641, have three knobs at each end, with the middle knob raised above a semi-circle enclosing a shell. All the corners, except those in the

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<sup>109</sup> Baggs and Siraut, "Bridgwater: Churches," *VCH, Somerset*, vol. 6, 230-235. A link between flourishing late medieval fraternities and the establishment of lectureships in another area, which was also evident at Bridgwater, was made by Beat Kumin, "Voluntary Religion and Reformation Change in Eight Urban Parishes," in *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640*, eds. Patrick Collinson and John Craig (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 175-189, 189.

west end of the north and south aisles, have square half shells in the same style [Figure 2. 15]. This distinctive style is also found at neighbouring Maiden Bradley. The inner-frame decoration is consistent with decoration of this period.

The Churchwardens' accounts at Mere provide us with some helpful detail on the pews. They tell the story of the building of new seats in the nave from 1638-1641; they unusually name the craftsman responsible for the seats and the carved pew ends: 'William Walter the Joyner of Bradley'. They name him not once but several times as he was paid in instalments over the years of the work.

In 1638, the accounts noted the transport of the seats from 'Bradley' and the expenditure for the joiners of '10s' and '£14',

Item to Thomas Lyewit & his sonne for carrying of the new Seates from Bradley 8d

In 1639,

Item to goodman Walter the Joyner the 26<sup>th</sup> of Maye for new ordering the Seates and for mending of Mr William Ambroys seate 26s

Walter the joyner this yeare 1638 for the making and setting up of the new Seates on the northside of the Church £19 10s

In 1640,

paid to William Walter the Joyner of Bradley for setting upp the Women's seates in the South and North side of the Church £27

In 1641,

Item paid to William Walter of Mayden Bradley for the new seating £24.<sup>110</sup>

In total, William Walter was paid £85 16s 0d in instalments; others involved in various tasks were paid £4 16s 11d. The total expenditure on the new seats was £90 12s 11d, which represents well over half of the total expenditure over these three years of £156 7s 8d, and well over half the total income in these three years of £170 9s 6d. This was a substantial investment paid in instalments.

To add to this unusual identification of the joiner, is the material evidence, not just of the pews in Mere church, but also those in Maiden Bradley from where the joiner responsible for Mere's pews had come [Figure 2. 16]. The material evidence would suggest that the pews of Maiden Bradley and Mere came from the same workshop, that of William Walter, as did the pulpit at Maiden Bradley [Figure 2. 17].<sup>111</sup> The permeability of the boundaries between joiner and carpenter can be seen in the accounts of Mere, a characteristic of rural communities. Luke Hughes has suggested also that itinerant carvers moved between joiners' workshops, so it would have been possible for William Walter the joiner to have used peripatetic carvers for the shell crests.<sup>112</sup> Hughes suggests that the inferiority of the woodwork, for example the inferior guilloche work, could be because of the importation on an industrial scale of pre-prepared panels from the Baltic, and the widespread use of copying from pattern books.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> WSHC: 2944/44 Churchwardens' accounts of Mere, 1638-41.

<sup>111</sup> Pevsner, *Dorset*, 345-7, 320.

<sup>112</sup> Luke Hughes, "Ecclesiastical Joinery of the First Half of the Seventeenth Century in South Wiltshire and Beyond: The Influence of Economic and Social Developments," *Ecclesiology Today* issue 52 (Summer 2015): 25-60, 42.

<sup>113</sup> Eltringham has suggested that unlike the Ordinances for Beverley, the Salisbury Ordinances make no reference whatsoever to the control of the quality of workmanship offered by members of the Company. In Beverley, there were three Searchers appointed to look for faulty workmanship: G. J. Eltringham, "Salisbury Companies and their Ordinances, with Particular Reference to the Woodworking Crafts," *The Wiltshire*



Although he is able to show that the shell motif, at Mere and Maiden Bradley, and at Folke, can be described as a ‘Salisbury style’, he is unable to shed light on the obscure aspect of whether the Salisbury guild had any force beyond the city of Salisbury.<sup>114</sup>

Salisbury, like many towns, only had one company for the building and allied trades. This lasted until 1617 when the Salisbury Joiners formed their discrete Company. Their new Charter declared that a joiner could ‘use and exercise all and every arts and mysteries of joining, carving, inlaying and such turning as such joiners did use’. The demarcation disputes continued in Salisbury.<sup>115</sup>

The material evidence of the pews displays parochial identity and pride. The Churchwardens had commissioned decorated pews that enhanced the appearance and the status of their rebuilt parish church. In 1642, the Churchwardens were making gradated charges for seats from 5s to 1s.<sup>116</sup> The scheme also gives an insight into the networking involved in commissioning ‘William Walter the Joiner’. There is no way of knowing at present whether Mere was

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*Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* vol. 54, no. 195 (1951): 185-191, 191. For an analysis of the changing fortunes of carpenters and joiners in another cathedral city, see Sheila Sweetinburgh, “The Economic Impact of the Reformation and Two Canterbury Parishes,” in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens Accounts c. 1500–c. 1800*, eds. Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 46-62.

<sup>114</sup> Hughes, “Ecclesiastical Joinery,” 29, 33; for the present we can assume that this ‘Salisbury style’ is a stylistic description, where craftsmen were influenced more by the work of the Flemish Hans Vredeman de Vries, than by the other sources, such as Serlio or Ditterlin.

<sup>115</sup> Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition, A History of Early Furniture in the British Isles and New England* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1979), 43, 45; “Salisbury: Trade companies since 1612,” in *A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 6*, ed. Elizabeth Crittall (London: Victoria County History, 1962), 136-138. *British History Online*, accessed February 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol6/pp136-138>; Eltringham, “Salisbury Companies”; Charles Haskins, *The Ancient Trade Guilds and Companies of Salisbury* (Salisbury: Bennet Brothers, 1912).

<sup>116</sup> WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1642.

copying Maiden Bradley's lead or the converse; whether it was entirely a practical response to problems of 'decay'; or whether copying was the sincerest form of flattery, or whether it was a competitive process.<sup>117</sup> It could have been a mixture of all these drivers. There is some background to William Walter. There are no extant records for his own birth, but his six children's births are noted at Maiden Bradley between 1625 and 1636.<sup>118</sup> In his will of 1654, he is described as 'Joyner of Maiden Bradley, and left to his sons various pieces of timber and the 'working tools belonging to my trade'.<sup>119</sup> There are few clues about the confessional position of Mere: Mere appears to have been a conforming parish, which also hung onto traditional customs, with a conforming minister, who carried on anti-Puritan activities before 1642 and was later to be imprisoned by Parliament.<sup>120</sup> The commissioning Churchwardens of Mere went far beyond what was necessary for seating in decorating their pews, but there is no cause to align decoration with a confessional position.

At Folke, the pews erected to embellish the newly re-built church of 1628 bore similarities to Mere's.<sup>121</sup> Folke's pew ends have fluted enrichments with shell cresting which are also compatible with this decade [Figure 2. 18].<sup>122</sup> Similar decoration of shell crests can be found dating from the first four decades of the seventeenth century at Chilthorne Domer and Mudford, Somerset, and Tisbury, Wiltshire, and, as seen, at Mere and Maiden Bradley. At

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<sup>117</sup> In 1625 the Churchwardens had raised a double rate 'for that the Church was verie much in Decay': WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1625.

<sup>118</sup> WSHC: (no catalogue number) Bishop's transcripts, Maiden Bradley, Bundle no. 1: Ann was born 1625, John 1627, Margaret 1629, Mary 1631, Mathyas 1632, and Samuel 1636.

<sup>119</sup> TNA: PROB 11/234/588 Will of William Walter, Joyner of Maiden Bradley, 1654.

<sup>120</sup> WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere; A. G. Matthews, *Walker Revised: Being a Revision of John Walker's 'Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion 1642-60'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 371.

<sup>121</sup> There was a brief in May 1626 'For repairing the Church of Folke in Dorsetshire': Wyndham Anstis Bewes, *Church Briefs or Royal Warrants for Collections for Churches* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896), 123.

<sup>122</sup> The acorn finials on the pews are modern: "Folke," in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, Volume 1, West*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952), 110-114. *British History Online*, accessed February 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/dorset/vol1/pp110-114>.

Mere and Maiden Bradley was evidence of a joiner's network. At Folke the evidence is of a stylistic network of shell-heads, which were used there and elsewhere in Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset.<sup>123</sup> The two Somerset parishes, the three in Wiltshire, and Folke in Dorset are all in a cluster on the Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset boundary, and can be characterised as locally-led decoration. At present, there is no evidence of a workshop, that could have served these six parishes, so only speculation is possible about parochial copying and competition. Luke Hughes' suggestion of the widespread importation from the Baltic of pre-prepared panels, would lend credence to the possible existence of networking craftsmen.

This new seating at Folke immediately gave rise to an acrimonious dispute, in 1629, where Walter Rideout a gentleman and a Puritan, attacked the idiosyncratic Vicar, Abraham Forrester. Rideout's attack was a mixture of personal invective, dislike of the Vicar's other role as local physician, and personal differences. In a colourful libel, dated 1629, Rideout called the new building, the pews and the pulpit a 'dumb shew'. Rideout alleged in the libel that Forrester's response to Rideout was: 'why doe you hold it unnecessary to beautifie the temple of the Lord'. To this Rideout countered with the view that it matters much more how we come into the Temple of the Lord. It is impossible to untangle Rideout's motives as a hotter sort of Protestant, who cared more about inner piety than outward display, from the vituperative mix of his seven themed complaints against Forrester.<sup>124</sup> One of the more colourful diatribes in this long libel is Rideout's complaint that, as well as neglecting his ministerial duties to act as a physician, Forrester was handling samples of bodily fluids,

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<sup>123</sup> Hughes, "Ecclesiastical Joinery."

<sup>124</sup> WSHC: D5/21/3/9 Among these libels is a long letter to the rector of Folke, Dorset, attacking him for his slanderous, uncharitable behaviour, 1629.

brought to him in the church, with the same hands into ‘the Sanctuary of the Lord’, and ‘That he was fitter for a pisspott than for a Pulpit’.<sup>125</sup>

In 1629, a year after the new rebuild of the church at Folke, Dorset, the Churchwardens presented Rideout to the Dean of Sarum, for refusing both to accept the position of his new seat, and to pay towards the cost of the new pews. The seating arrangements had been agreed by ‘common consent...there should be placed...according to their severall rankes and degrees’.<sup>126</sup> The details of this long presentment include evidence that the Churchwardens had offered Rideout two alternatives to the seat to which he objected.<sup>127</sup> The unreasonableness of Rideout seems to be confirmed by the events of 3 December 1630 when he,

did break open a Locke sett upon the seate appointed for the churching of women, ... he ... severall tymes uncivilly climed over the said seate, and giveth out in speeches that he will sitt in the said seate notwithstanding Mr Deanes order to the contrary.<sup>128</sup>

At 71 he was demonstrating enviable agility. There are two phrases in the Churchwardens’ presentment that are worth noting: first they use the same phrase, ‘severall rankes & degrees’

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<sup>125</sup> WSHC: D5/21/3/9 Libel Folke, 1629. The Rector received a medical licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1629, the same year as the libel: [http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/files/Medical\\_Licences.pdf](http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/files/Medical_Licences.pdf), (accessed 13 January, 2106): Reg. Abbot 3, f.103. Another example of a minister who also practised as a physician can be found in Halifax: Collinson, “Shepherds, Sheepdogs, and Hirelings,” 189-190.

<sup>126</sup> DHC: PE/FOL/RE/1/1 At the back of the register order for allotting seats to parishioners after the rebuilding of the church, 1629; WSHC: D5/28/29 The presentment for Folke, Dorset. It mentions new seats just built throughout the church and a resulting pew dispute, 1629.

<sup>127</sup> WSHC: D5/28/29 Presentment for Folke, 1629.

<sup>128</sup> Bob Machin, “‘To take their plases where they shall not offend others’: the 1635 Reseating of Puddletown Church, Dorset,” in *Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present*, eds. Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown (London: Ecclesiological Society, 2011), 171-182, 171-2; WSHC: D5/28/30 The presentment for Folke, Dorset, 1630.

that the Churchwardens of Puddletown used in the 1634 memorandum, to be discussed later. Second, they use the word convenient, ‘for his wife a convenient seate’, just as the witnesses at North Petherton had used it. The word ‘convenient’ is used in Visitation Articles to assess seating. For example, in 1615 the Archdeacon of Berkshire, Lionel Sharpe, enquired whether there were ‘convenient seates placed in the church and chancell’.<sup>129</sup> The use of the word convenient in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could mean an appropriate size and it could also mean ‘befitting, becoming to or for a person’.<sup>130</sup> That it is used in Visitation Articles, as well as in parochial records, when describing a contested seat would indicate the second definition as well as the first. The concept of a pew that befitted a person’s status appeared to be a concept familiar to both parishioners and the ecclesiastical authorities, but one that was subjective: what was ‘convenient’ in one person’s eyes, may well not be befitting in another’s. Despite the disputed details, this common language suggests a broad discourse within communities about the nature of social status, and where one person’s self-image of his place in the hierarchy could clash with the ‘common consent’ of the parishioners, enacted by the Churchwardens. By absorbing the language of the Visitation Articles, in deploying specifically the word ‘convenient, Rideout was manipulating the language to strengthen his own case.

At Folke, just at the moment when the parish could have been enjoying its new seating in its rebuilt church, the big contemporary issues about ministerial duty, and the efficacy of beautifying churches were played out in a local, bitter and personal antagonism. The local

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<sup>129</sup> *Visitation Articles vol. I*, Fincham, 130; other examples can be found in this volume: 84, 179, and in *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, 101.

<sup>130</sup> *OED*. The 1563 Homily ‘for repairing and keeping clean of churches’ required that the church have ‘places convenient to sit in’: *Book of Homilies*, Griffiths, 273-278.

narrative and the meta-narrative met in Walter Rideout. The identity of the parish was displayed by this investment in a rebuild, the refurbishing of the interior and the decoration of the pews, again going far beyond what was necessary. What makes Folke unusual is the documentary evidence that shows some tension and discord at the same time as parochial identity was being made manifest in the investment in a rebuilt church and its interior. At Folke, as elsewhere, the evidence indicates that Protestants of many stripes were decorating their churches. Also at Folke, and at Mere, parochial and craft networks were exercising their stylistic influence in a perceptible geographical cluster.

#### *Taking Seating and the Use of Space to a New Level*

Having first discussed the role of memory in the use of space and seating, then radical changes to seating, and thirdly, the importance of stylistic and craft networks, this final part of the chapter takes three examples to demonstrate the use of levels for seating and the maximising of space: North Petherton, Somerset, Lyme Regis, Dorset, and Puddletown, Dorset. Galleries have been neglected, presumably because of the relative paucity of archival and material evidence. I have identified only nineteen extant galleries in parish churches in England, built between 1560 and 1640.<sup>131</sup> Whilst the galleries at Lyme Regis and Puddletown were for congregational seating, the one at North Petherton was for a different purpose.

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<sup>131</sup> Orlik, "Galleries": galleries have been neglected; for example, in his study of 153 parishes Kevin Dillow rarely mentions them, and Christopher Marsh in his articles on seating mentions them once: Marsh, "Sacred Space", 306; Dillow, "Pew Disputes"; and Marsh, "Common Prayer"; Marsh, "Order and Place." Because of the wide scope of his book, Robert Whiting refers to galleries in less than a page and is only able to generalise about the motives for building them: Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 209.

At North Petherton, a member of the gentry Thomas Wroth, recently arrived at his nearby country seat, and other members of the family struck an agreement with the Churchwardens of which they kept a note in 1627:

Memorandum that the Fiveth day of August anno domino 1627 anoque Caroli iii  
...that they the said Sir Thomas Wroth Sir Peter Wroth John Wroth Esq & John Wroth  
shall have power & libertie to erect and sett upp at their owne coste one Gallery lofte  
or seate over the south dore of the parishe church of North petherton aforesaid  
between the windows on each side of the said dore, And the same Gallery & seates to  
use & enjoy for them & their families during the lives of them the said Sir Thomas  
Sir Peter John & John Wroth & of the survivors of them.<sup>132</sup>

The family pew takes the form of a gallery sitting over the south porch. The tiered Jacobean pews with a central aisle are now almost hidden from the nave by a later, probably Victorian external front [Figure 2. 19].<sup>133</sup> The agreement indicates that the family pew was constructed in the years immediately before 1627.<sup>134</sup> The pew was entered through the south porch and with a staircase to the gallery, allowing for a discrete entrance for the family. It is possible that the room over the south porch had been used as muniment room or for a priest since the church was rebuilt c. 1500-1530.<sup>135</sup> In their elevated place, the family could enjoy the warmth of a fire, whose chimney stack is extant. The chimney stack appears to have been built later

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<sup>132</sup> SHC: T\PH\dev/5 Churchwardens' accounts of North Petherton, 1627.

<sup>133</sup> Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West* (2014), 496-7: Pevsner thinks this external front was probably made during Richard Carver's restoration 1838-1839.

<sup>134</sup> Genealogy Collection, 486:

[http://archive.org/stream/northpethertonre01peth/northpethertonre01peth\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/northpethertonre01peth/northpethertonre01peth_djvu.txt), (accessed 19 February, 2015): 'The Gallery (south side) bears the date 1623'; SHC: T\PH\dev/5 Cwa North Petherton, 1627.

<sup>135</sup> Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West* (2014), 496.

than the church because it partially obscures a window. It was probably built at the same time that the Wroths annexed the room over the south porch for their family use. It has some resonance with the private aisle built by Alexander Seton, James VI's Lord Chancellor, at the west end of the church at Dalgety Bay. This laird's loft opened onto the church and included a fireplace.<sup>136</sup>

Two witnesses in a pew dispute of 1624-5 made specific reference to the lack of seating space in the church at North Petherton, using almost identical wording, 'And not neither as yet is there anie convenient or sitting place to erecte or build a new seate in the said parishe church'.<sup>137</sup> The testimony of the witnesses to the lack of space, along with the extant evidence of a 1629 bench end, which indicates at least some new congregational seating at this time, would suggest that the building of the family pew 1623-7 was a piece in the wider story of seating or the lack of it in the parish church in the 1620s. The pressure on church seating from a growth in population has been discussed, for example, by Christopher Marsh.<sup>138</sup> Within a broader context, the population in England and Wales had increased between 1540 and 1600 by roughly 45 percent, from under three million to over four million. By 1650 there had been a further increase to around 5,250,000.<sup>139</sup>

Of the affiliations of the leading parishioner, Sir Thomas Wroth, there can be little doubt.<sup>140</sup>

When he inherited his father's fortune, Sir Thomas purchased Petherton Park, and established

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<sup>136</sup> Spicer, *Calvinist Churches*, 67.

<sup>137</sup> SHC: D\D\cd/59 Deposition book, 1624-1625.

<sup>138</sup> Marsh, "Sacred Space," 292; Marsh, "Order and Place," 3.

<sup>139</sup> Underdown, Revel, *Riot and Rebellion*, 18.

<sup>140</sup> For an analysis of the importance of lay individual and corporate Puritan patronage in the parishes, see Jacqueline Eales, "A Road to Revolution: the Continuity of Puritanism 1559-1642," in *The Culture of English*



his family seat there in 1614.<sup>141</sup> He was knighted in 1613, as part of James I's enthusiasm for creating titles.<sup>142</sup> Sir Thomas was a significant member of the Somerset gentry: a Justice of the Peace, Recorder of Bridgwater, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Sheriff, MP for Bridgwater in 1628 and then for the Long Parliament in 1640. In 1635, he had been involved in a conventicle, and made little secret of his Puritan sympathies.<sup>143</sup> In the Long Parliament, Wroth identified himself with opposition to the King.<sup>144</sup> He was appointed one of the Commissioners to try the King. He attended only one session and did not sign the death warrant.<sup>145</sup> He was pardoned at the Restoration and retired to Petherton Park until his death at the age of 88 in 1672.<sup>146</sup> His will of that year gave a clear view of his Puritan position, when he expressed a hope that God would 'receive my soule into those celestiaall mansions which my Saviour hath purchased and provided for all the Elect'.<sup>147</sup>

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*Puritanism, 1560-1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 184-209.

<sup>141</sup> "Wroth, Sir Thomas (1584-1672)," John Wroughton in *ODNB*, see online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30085> (accessed November 15, 2017).

<sup>142</sup> Wroughton, "Wroth," *ODNB*.

<sup>143</sup> Barnes, *Somerset*. 16, 277; Wroughton, "Wroth," *ODNB*.

<sup>144</sup> Wroughton, "Wroth," *ODNB*.

<sup>145</sup> Wroughton, "Wroth," *ODNB*.

<sup>146</sup> Wroughton, "Wroth," *ODNB*.

<sup>147</sup> TNA: PROB 11 339/530 Will of Sir Thomas Wroth of Petherton Park North Petherton, Somerset, 1672; the preambles of wills on their own are notoriously dangerous gauges of the confessional position of the testator; this has been well rehearsed by, for example, Clive Burgess, "'By Quick and By Dead': Pious Provision in Late Medieval Bristol," *The English Historical Review* vol. 102, no. 405 (October 1987): 837-858; J. D. Alsop, "Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 40, no. 1 (January 1989): 19-27; and Michael Zell, "Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Wills as Historical Sources," *Archives* vol. 14, no. 62 (Autumn 1979): 67-74. In his will Sir Thomas Wroth also requested that he should be buried 'in the Chancell of my Chappell of Newton Placey in the aforesaid county toward night and in a private manner' without any Pompe or Ceremony' (Newton Placey was the name for North Newton, the nearby chapel that he had built); although an avoidance of pomp was not by itself a token of Puritanism, the rest of the wording in the will, and the evidence from his life seem compelling. For more details on funerary rites and an avoidance of pomp, see David Cressy, "Death and the Social Order: The Funerary Preferences of Elizabethan Gentlemen," *Continuity and Change* vol. 5, issue 1 (May 1990): 99-119, 105-106.

The presence of the extended Wroth family in the gallery altered significantly the visual and auditory experience for those in the nave. Their elevation and their separateness were made physically manifest. By contrast, in Chelvey, Somerset, Holcombe Rogus in Devon, and Asltonfield in Staffordshire, the elite family were sitting apart but were still on the same level as the congregation in the nave [Figures 2. 8, 2. 20].

Although a family pew in a gallery in a parish church is an unusual construct, it is probably not unique. For example, at the west end of the very small St Winifrid's church in Branscombe, Devon, is a late sixteenth-century gallery, sporting a Tudor rose and a *fleur-de-lys*.<sup>148</sup> There appears to be no clear archival trail but it seems a reasonable supposition that the local elite family, Nicholas and Dorothy Wadham of nearby Edge Barton, built it for their family use, and accessed it by an external staircase [Figure 2. 21].<sup>149</sup>

Galleries for the family in private chapels in great houses, such as Hardwick Hall, were not uncommon.<sup>150</sup> It is possible that the Wroths were imitating this first-floor gallery arrangement in private chapels in a clever way, by using an existing space in a church which was crowded.<sup>151</sup> They had paid for the pew and they had made an agreement that it should pass to their heirs and successors. Sir Thomas had no children in 1627 and it appears that he was

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<sup>148</sup> F. Butters, *Branscombe: The Parish and the Church* (Exmouth, 1966).

<sup>149</sup> Bridget Cherry and Nikolas Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon* (London, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1989, reprinted with corrections 1991, reprinted New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2004), 486-7; Nicholas Wadham had property in Merryfield, Somerset, and was buried in the family north aisle of the parish church at Illminster; he and his widow were the founders of Wadham College, Oxford, which is referred to in chapter 4.

<sup>150</sup> For details of galleries in private chapels, see Annabel Ricketts, *The English Country House Chapel. Building a Protestant Tradition* (Reading: Spire Books, 2007), where galleries are fully indexed.

<sup>151</sup> Hardwicke Hall, Hatfield House, The Red House, Crewe Hall and Temple Newsam were examples of a family first floor gallery in a private chapel and case studies in Orlik, "Galleries."

being circumspect in formulating an agreement for the wider family's heirs to enjoy. When he died childless, his heir was Sir John Wroth, his great nephew.<sup>152</sup> The pew had been presciently secured for the heirs of the extended family. The material evidence tells a story of a radical use of an old space, taking it to a new physical and metaphorical level. The Wroths at North Petherton were displaying their elevated social status in a physical way, by sitting above the congregation, looking down upon it, in a discrete, decorated family pew, for which they had paid, and which the Churchwardens had formally agreed was theirs permanently. They were also acting as enthusiastic listening Protestants. The family pew, over the south door, was directly opposite the pulpit. Secular drivers mixed with religious aspirations. The investor was careful to avoid charges of self-glorification. At North Petherton, the woodwork was decorated with carvings of a familiar type for the period and avoided family heraldry or inscription.

While an elite family constructed an elevated family pew for themselves at North Petherton, at the prosperous fishing and trading port of Lyme Regis, a member of an elite family commissioned a gallery for his fellow parishioners. It is a large structure, spanning the whole width of the west end of the church [Figure 2. 22]. The parapet rests on oak fluted pillars and has short blank arches, common in the early seventeenth century.<sup>153</sup> It displays an inscription, which has, like the gallery, been restored:

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<sup>152</sup> Wroughton, "Wroth," *ODNB*.

<sup>153</sup> Pevsner, *Dorset*, 261; "Lyme Regis," in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, Volume 1, West*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952), 141-150. *British History Online*, accessed August 31, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/dorset/vol1/pp141-150.m>.

‘JOHN HASSARD BUILT THIS TO THE GLORIE OF ALMIGHTIE GOD IN THE  
EIGHTIETH YEARE OF HIS AGE ANO DOMINI 1611’.

The additional words ‘seven times Mayor’, on the south side were recorded by Short in 1858, but have subsequently disappeared.<sup>154</sup> In his will of 1613, when he was 82, John Hassard described himself as ‘Merchant’, and willed that he

comitt my bodye to the earthe to be buried in the lower end of churche in Lyme regis  
under the gallery which I have made.<sup>155</sup>

While the investor at Lyme Regis was clearly a rich merchant, there is no evidence to determine who sat in the gallery which he had built, except that it was far too large for one family. The gallery built represented a manifestation of social status but it also was more than that. The pious words inscribed on the gallery declared that it was built for the ‘GLORIE OF ALMIGHTIE GOD’. This could have been an attempt by a pious Protestant to avoid the charge of self-glorification, or Hassard could have wished to glorify God as well as promoting himself. The chronology is interesting: John Hassard gave the gallery in 1611, a year after he resigned as Mayor because of ill health and two years before he died in 1613. Dated and inscribed with his age, it could be seen not just as a personal memorial but as a gift to the community by a civic leader.<sup>156</sup> The mix of personal memorial, civic identity, religious piety and familial status are all on display.

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<sup>154</sup> H. Short, H. Swangy, eds., *Outline of the History and Genealogy of the Hassards and their Connections* (York: Sotheran, 1858). In 1885 restoration work removed the later south and north galleries, and it would seem likely that the three words disappeared at that time: *St Michael the Archangel: A Guide to the Parish Church, Lyme Regis, Dorset* (Lyme Regis: Lyme Regis PCC, revised and reprinted, 2007).

<sup>155</sup> TNA: PROB 11/121/285 Will of John Hassard, Merchant, Lyme Regis, Dorset, 1613.

<sup>156</sup> I am grateful to Sophie Cope for talking to me about dated objects, a study for her doctoral research. The date and his age give a dual reference to Hassard’s place in time.

At Lyme Regis, a town riven with religious differences, there is no evidence as to the precise complexion of the confessional position of John Hassard.<sup>157</sup> The text suggests that he was a pious Protestant, if his inscription ‘To the glory of God’ is to be believed. He was investing in the practical adornment of his parish church for the congregation to use.

While the gallery at North Petherton was erected by a man of high status for his family’s use, and that at Lyme Regis by a prominent merchant and Mayor for his fellow parishioners, the gallery at Puddletown, Dorset, was commissioned by the Churchwardens on behalf of the parish. At Puddletown, an agricultural parish near Dorchester, not only is the 1635 gallery extant but so is a contemporary memorandum and pew plan.<sup>158</sup>

The west gallery spans the width of the church and bears the date 1635; it is decorated with uncontroversial images of stylized leaves, and has in Latin the exhortation, ‘HUC ADES NON VIDERI SED AUDIRE ET PRECARE’, which translates as, ‘You come hither, not to be seen, but to listen and pray’. At the ends are some initials, GH ID FEF and SW, none of

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<sup>157</sup> John Fowles, *A Short History of Lyme Regis* (Boston: The Dovecote Press, 1983), 21; Lyme Regis produced the controversial Puritan, the Reverend Thomas Larkham: born in Lyme Regis in 1602, he had to leave Northam in Devon because of his radical views, and in 1640 he went to New England and had to leave there after much controversy: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~sallycox/thomaslarkham1.html> (accessed 4 January, 2016); Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, 57, n. 50; examples of the differences in the town can be found in a libel against the godly in 1606, about a Whit Sunday procession in 1609: Christopher Haigh, *The Plain Man’s Pathways to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity in Post-Reformation England, 1570-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 127, 66. For more on factions in towns, see Anthony Fletcher, “Factionalism in Town and Countryside: the Significance of Puritanism and Arminianism,” in *The Church in Town and Countryside, Studies*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1979), 291-300.

<sup>158</sup> Trevor Cooper, ‘The arrangement of post-Reformation church interiors, from contemporary plans’, Lecture to the British Society of Antiquaries, London, 23 January, 2016. It includes a discussion of Puddletown’s plan.

which has been linked to a particular individual. It is supported by plain bulbous oak columns [Figures 2. 23, 2. 24].<sup>159</sup> Understanding of the background to this parish has been enhanced by the discovery by Steven Hobbs of the 1637 pew plan in the archives of the Awdry family. The document was among the manuscripts of Henry Arnold, one of the undertakers of, and signatories to, the 1637 plan and its preceding 1634 memorandum.<sup>160</sup> The combination of the 1634 memorandum, the 1637 pew plan and the material evidence of the comprehensive scheme from 1634-7 makes Puddletown rare, if not unique.<sup>161</sup> On 10 August 1634 after evening service, the Churchwardens outlined for the parishioners their proposal for the total refitting of the interior. The starting point had been the weakness of the North pillar of the chancel arch. As an improbable solution, they wished to build 'A Scrine to divide Church from Chancel, and to strengthen the pillar and arch'.<sup>162</sup> They set out their proposals in a memorandum and a rate list.<sup>163</sup> The fourth item to be built was: 'A gallerie at the weste end to receive seates that the Church cannot supplie'.

In the gallery were the 'new cottagers' who had contributed through the rates, their wives, and also maids and menservants, segregated by sex; and in the belfry were a few of the poor of the parish.<sup>164</sup> The latter were to take 'theire plases where they shall not offend others', as the 1634

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<sup>159</sup> "Puddletown," in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, Volume 3, Central*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), 222-231. *British History Online*, accessed February 23, 2018, (accessed 8 March, 2015). The initials on carved woodwork at Alstonefield, Staffordshire are known to belong to the craftsman. At Puddletown we can only speculate.

<sup>160</sup> Steve Hobbs, "Puddletown Church Seating Plan, 1637," *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* vol. XXXV (March 2002): 110-115, 110: Henry Arnold's descendant, Reverend Henry Arnold, married Anna Awdry in 1751, which is why the plan was found in the Awdry papers, just before 2002.

<sup>161</sup> Bob Machin believes it to be unique: Machin, "Reseating of Puddletown," 171.

<sup>162</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.

<sup>163</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.

<sup>164</sup> A cottager is defined as 'One who lives in a cottage; used *esp.* of the labouring population in rural districts': *OED*; DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for allowing sittings in the new pews, 1637.

memorandum had intended.<sup>165</sup> To the gallery were assigned neither the rich, who had seats at the front of the nave, nor the poor, as has been suggested, some of whom were assigned to the belfry and many of whom were excluded because there were no seats for non-contributors.<sup>166</sup> They were distinguished from the ‘ancient cottagers’ who were placed in the north-east aisle with ‘householders and gentlemen farmers’. The hierarchy in the gallery suggests that the new cottagers were lower in status than ‘ancient cottagers’ and the others assigned to the north-east aisle, but they were contributors.<sup>167</sup>

The Vicar, William Bradish, was a godly divine, and the Churchwardens were like minded if his epitaph on the east wall of the chancel is considered; it translates from the Latin,

Here sleeps peacefully the man who for 28 years presided over this Guild with all the piety of the ages of faith, and with unfailing energy. He was unrivalled for his extensive learning and for the sweetness of his disposition. His name was William Bradish: he was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge and Professor of Theology.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.

<sup>166</sup> Steven Hindle’s general suggestion that the poor sat in galleries, is not substantiated by the evidence at Puddletown: Hindle, “A Sense of Place,” 110.

<sup>167</sup> Hindle, “A Sense of Place”; Machin, “Reseating of Puddletown.”

<sup>168</sup> Arthur Helps, *A Guide to the Ancient Church of St. Mary’s Puddletown with the Athelhampton Chantry, or Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene* (1938, reprinted Bridport: Creeds, 2015), 17; other pieces of evidence for his godly credentials are his will, and his association with John White, the godly minister of nearby Dorchester. Bradish and White were founder members of the Dorchester Company that became the Massachusetts Bay Company, the well-known company that founded Puritan settlements in New England: DHC: PE/PUD/CH/2/1 The will of William Bradish D.D. of Puddletown, 1638; David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 133, 153; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 249.

The seating scheme was locally initiated by a godly minister and Churchwardens to solve two local problems, the defects of the fabric of the church and overcrowding. The gallery was a new space to cope with overcrowding, and it was assigned not to the highest status people but to new cottagers, and maids and menservants. It gave them lines of sight that they would not have previously enjoyed from the floor of the nave, and it gave the minister a line of sight to them not previously enjoyed by him from his 'place', the desk, or from the pulpit. It was the deployment of space on a new level, when the read and preached Word was very important for a seated and listening congregation.

At Puddletown on 10 August 1634 after evening service, the Churchwardens outlined for the parishioners their proposal for the total refitting of the interior. They left their proposals in a memorandum and a rate list.<sup>169</sup> They proposed:

1. The Church to be new seated throughout.
2. A Scrine to divide Church from Chancel, and to strengthen the piller and arch.
3. A Pulpit and readinge place to be made and advanced.
4. A Communion table and a frame about it for the Communion, and a settle without that.
5. A gallarie at the weste end to receive seates that the Church cannot supplie.
6. A new cover for the fonte that is all in decaie.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.

<sup>170</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.



The recently discovered 1637 plan and statement tell of a common desire by the Churchwardens to arrange the seating by social rank and by sex, and of the difficulties that they had obviously encountered [Figure 2. 25].<sup>171</sup> The statement is headed:

Things propounded and desired by lawfull favour of Authoritie to be furthered and confirmed for the quieting of the parishioners in setlinge them in their proper places and seates in the church: Now all new altered Built and Adorned from Ende to End.<sup>172</sup>

First the Churchwardens and the undertakers laid out six principles for the seating arrangements which they then both described, and drew in a plan.<sup>173</sup> The first was financial: everyone had to pay their contribution. The poor who could not pay were to ‘take their places in the belfrie as like is in other parishes’. The servants and the poor undertenants were in the fourth principle to ‘putt themselves in their places prepared and not in the Channsell’. The second principle was that the parishioners were to sit where they are told:

That in seating the parishioners that none presume to be placed of themselves but are to be donn by the minister, the Churchwardens and undertakers or in case of opposition then by the order of the Ordinaries.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Steven Hobbs discovered just before 2002 the 1637 pew plan in the archives of the Awdry family; the document was among the manuscripts of Henry Arnold, one of the undertakers and one of the signatories to the 1637 plan and its preceding 1634 memorandum: Hobbs, “Puddletown Church Seating.” As discussed previously, Henry Arnold’s descendant, Reverend Henry Arnold, married Anna Awdry in 1751, which is why the plan was found in the Awdry papers.

<sup>172</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for pews Puddletown, 1637.

<sup>173</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines undertakers, as used early in the seventeenth century, as ‘One who undertakes to carry out work or business for another; a contractor’. Now *rare*. 1602 in F. Moryson *Itinerary* (1617) ii. 242 ‘So soone as any contract is made with the undertakers, wee send an abstract thereof unto your Lordship’: *OED*.

<sup>174</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for pews Puddletown, 1637.

The principles of hierarchy and segregation by sex were also expressed in principles three and five. Principle six forbids the renting out of any assigned pew, although pew-holders who were temporarily absent could lend their seats to neighbours or friends, but in so doing, they could not ignore the social ranking of the seating system.

The order of seating and the plan began with:

1. First for the ministers reading place and pulpit and for the communion place the fonte clarkes seat and other for the minister's use they are settled in their places and neede no more questioning.<sup>175</sup>

This implies that there had been a great deal of questioning. The two Lords of the manor, the Earl of Suffolk for Walterston, and Henry Hastings, 'Lord of all Pudletowne', were assigned the two front pews, Hastings's pew was just in front of the pulpit and south of the aisle [Figure 2. 23].<sup>176</sup> Their pews are distinguished by their extant higher sides, and open balustrade cresting, and doors with carved cresting.<sup>177</sup> The separate pews for their wives were in front of the Earl of Suffolk's pew, and, in the aisles behind the wives' pews, were their maids and the younger daughters of the two families.<sup>178</sup> Behind the manorial pews were their tenants, men first and their wives behind them. Women also sat on the north side. The

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<sup>175</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for pews Puddletown, 1637.

<sup>176</sup> Hobbs, "Puddletown Church Seating," 114-5.

<sup>177</sup> "Puddletown," *IHM Dorset*, vol. 3. The 1637 plan shows that the front pew on the south side was for Henry Hastings, Lord of the Manor of Puddletown, and the front pew in the on the north side of the aisle was for the Earl of Suffolk, Lord of the Manor of Waterson; Waterston or Waterson was just North West of Puddletown, on the River Piddle

<sup>178</sup> Machin, "Reseating of Puddletown," 178; Trevor Cooper, 'The arrangement of post-Reformation church interiors, from contemporary plans', Lecture to the British Society of Antiquaries, London, 23 January 2016, which included Puddletown's plan.

scholars' pew was in front of the minister's pew, next to the clerk's seat. On the south and west side of the chancel were to be,

mens sons of best ranke and estate and also serving men that attend there masters and also the parson and the vicars men they to be in the settle without the frame of the communion place.<sup>179</sup>

In short, the church was divided into four areas: immediately around the pulpit were the manorial lords, their women, their servants and children. Behind them were their tenants. In the gallery were the cottagers, maids and servants, and standing a few of the poor.<sup>180</sup> Whilst the inscription on the gallery may have exhorted the parishioners that they had come there 'to listen and to pray', it is difficult not to conclude that the tensions over the graduated order of seating indicate that they were just as concerned as to where they were 'seen' to be placed.

The estimated cost of the new seating was £130; the Churchwardens proposed to raise it by a levy of five shillings on each of the parishioners seated. With 240 parishioners seated this would raise £60. The remaining £70 was to be raised through five rates on the 129 households, 'five ordinarie single rates of the taxe of the parish'.<sup>181</sup> The Churchwardens made explicit the difference between those who contributed to the cost and those that did not. Those that paid:

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<sup>179</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for pews Puddletown, 1637; 'Without the frame of the communion place' indicates outside the four-sided rail around the communion table, which can clearly be seen on the plan.

<sup>180</sup> Machin, "Reseating of Puddletown," 179.

<sup>181</sup> Machin, "Reseating of Puddletown," 174; DHC, PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.

shall in their Degree and Ranke be seated and recorded, that hereafter they be not impeached by any that have not joined in the costs of this worke, and such to take their places where they shall not offend others.<sup>182</sup>

The following twenty years 1637-1657 appear to have witnessed several contests about the allocation of seats at Puddletown. The plan had not settled the matter as it has a note twenty years later, dated 6 June 1657, written by Henry Arnold, describing the difficulties of allocating the seats. Archdeacon Fitzherbert instructed the parishioners in 1657 to accept the scheme set out by the Churchwardens, with a list of endorsements.<sup>183</sup>

At Puddletown seating and the use of space was driven by parochial identity, social hierarchy and the wish to accommodate a seated listening congregation to the post-Reformation liturgy where the hearing of God's Word developed as a central part of the liturgy [Figure 2. 25]. The galleries at Puddletown, Lyme Regis and North Petherton all took the seating arrangements to a new level, and consequently radically changed the use of space.

### *Conclusion*

The exhortation on the gallery at Puddletown to the parishioners that they had not come to church 'to be seen' was conspicuously tendentious, given the lengths to which the churchwardens had gone in order to produce a seating plan, and then settle the ensuing decades-long disputes. Being seen in a 'convenient place' was as much part of church going as was listening to the Protestant sermon. The material evidence has shown that seating was about social control and hierarchical status, but it was much more than that. Unlike other

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<sup>182</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.

<sup>183</sup> Hobbs, "Puddletown Church Seating," 111.

countries, English parish churches were constrained by their medieval buildings, designed for a different liturgy, and therefore some of the changes were nuanced, where memory played a role. Building on memory at Trull and Wimborne Minster in terms of decoration, and at Chelvey in terms of the use of space, generated subtle, modified changes in seating. In contrast, radical changes in the use of space for seating occurred at Cameley and Bridgwater where the demands of the new liturgy were met in ways that exhibited attributes such as ministerial primacy, and civic power and leadership. Through an examination of decoration on seating, two geographical groups of parishes demonstrated artisan networks or parochial networks, or both. There was also radical change where seating was taken to a new level both metaphorically and literally, which the galleries of North Petherton, Lyme Regis and Puddletown demonstrated. Seating in post-Reformation churches was more complicated than just a response to overcrowding or to the demands of the Reformed liturgy. Protestants of all stripes decorated their seats and displayed a variety of attributes, such as parochial pride, familial status, and civic power. In so doing they also mediated agency for the sustaining of identities, secular and confessional, just as they did in erecting and decorating pulpits, the focus of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### PULPITS AND LINES OF SIGHT

#### ‘WOE UNTO ME IF I PREACH NOT THE GOSPEL’.<sup>1</sup>

##### *Introduction*

The previous chapter discussed how the use of space, in the context of Church seating, determined the lines of sight of the congregation. This chapter will consider three aspects of pulpits in relation to this question of lines of sight: first, how investors, churchwardens and others, went beyond compliance with the canonical requirements for pulpits, and, in so doing, displayed for the worshipping parishioners a mixture of religious and secular drivers in their investment. Second, in considering the style of pulpits, it will be argued that the Laudians did not have a monopoly on decoration, as the alignment between the decoration on view and a confessional position is not as clear cut as has often been thought.<sup>2</sup> Third it will be demonstrated that what the congregation perceived in its lines of sight meant that pulpits were not only expressions of parochial, corporate, familial and confessional identity but also agents in creating and sustaining those identities. Throughout the chapter a pattern will emerge: in considering what were the catalysts for the erection of specific pulpits, the evidence will show that local events were as significant as national ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Text on the 1630 pulpit at Brinkworth; the part of the verse inscribed on the pulpit is identical in the 1599 Geneva Bible and the King James Bible, 1611: KJB I Corinthians 9: 16, ‘For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel’. GB only has one word different in the whole verse, ‘rejoice’: ‘For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to rejoice of: for necessity is laid upon me, and woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel’.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of Laudianism, see chapter 1.

The chapters of this thesis focus on the different material features of churches, and the lines of sight, what the worshipper saw, and the layers of meaning which they viewed. How imagery or decoration was received by the viewer depended on several variables. The physical proximity of the viewer to the pulpit, screen, pew end, communion table, or wall decoration, determined the experience.<sup>3</sup> Adrienne Hood has categorised zones of proximity for viewing in general: a viewer within 6 to 18 inches can be described as within the intimate zone, 1.5 to 4 feet within a personal zone, 4 to 12 feet within a social zone, and 12 feet to the end of the visual range in the public zone.<sup>4</sup> Adopting this helpful categorisation for pulpits, only the preacher himself experienced the intimate zone. In a small church the gentry might have been within the personal zone, while, in larger churches, the high-status families would have viewed the pulpit from the social zone. In small churches, some of the congregation would have been within the social zone, and most would have been within the public zone. In larger churches, most of the congregation would have been placed within the public zone. As specific pulpits and churches will show, the zone of proximity determined the experience. A second determining factor was the type of viewing and assimilation of what was seen: different types of viewership were at work, for example gazing while sitting, glancing on the move, and viewing while listening to a sermon, or viewing while distracted by listening to the parts of the service not conducted from the pulpit.<sup>5</sup> The third factor was what Michael Baxandall famously called ‘the period eye’, a concept which suggests that ways of viewing are culturally set by social values, and conditioned by the contextual setting, which in this

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<sup>3</sup> Tara Hamling, “Visual Culture,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock, and Abigail Shinn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 132.

<sup>4</sup> Adrienne Hood, “Material Culture: The Object,” in *History Beyond the Text: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, eds. Sarah Barber and Corinna Peniston-Bird (London: Routledge, 2009), 184.

<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of different kinds of viewing, see Tara Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 266-269; and Hamling, “Visual Culture,” 90-91.

study is the setting of parish churches.<sup>6</sup> The three factors all worked to determine what the experience was for the viewer, and that viewing was different from seeing. In discussing lines of sight, it is viewership, rather than the physiology of seeing that is the key.

Whilst significant work on lines of sight has moved scholarly understanding forward, there is not much literature on the material evidence of pulpits.<sup>7</sup> Antiquarian historians often noted pulpits, for example Edmund Rack's description in the 1780s of the 1616 pulpit at Somerton, Somerset, as 'ancient but very good and exhibits some very fine carving'.<sup>8</sup> In 1916 Charles Cox described pulpits extensively in his work on church furniture.<sup>9</sup> Since then the material evidence of pulpits has largely been neglected except when they appear as part of gazetteering or a larger study.<sup>10</sup> This lacuna exists despite pulpits becoming 'the most eye stopping feature' in English churches.<sup>11</sup> The historiography of post-Reformation pulpits has lacked attention to questions of reception, viewership and lines of sight, such as the kind of detailed

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> John Craig has noted this: John Craig, "Sermon Reception", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, eds. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 178-197.

<sup>8</sup> *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, eds. Mark McDermott and Sue Berry (Padstow: Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 2011), 250.

<sup>9</sup> J. Charles Cox, *Pulpits, Lecterns and Organs in English Churches* (London: Oxford University Press, 1915).

<sup>10</sup> For example, Robert Whiting's book on parish churches covers pre-Reformation and post-Reformation interiors in such a comprehensive way, that the eight pages on pulpits is inevitably brief: Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 182-190. Because of the vast scope of his book, there are understandable errors that only local studies can address, for example, he describes the arms on the pulpit at Croscombe as the Fortescue arms: 189; there are two sets of arms on the pulpit, the diocesan arms of Bath and Wells, and the personal arms of Bishop Lake.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Wabuda, "Triple Deckers and Eagle Lecterns: Church Furniture for the Book in Late Medieval and Early Modern England," in *The Church and the Book: Papers Read at the 2000 Meeting and the 2001 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Robert Swanson (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 2004), 144-152, 151. Mary Morrissey lamented the lack of physical, liturgical and ceremonial context for sermons in her 1999 article. The lack of physical context has largely continued in the historiography: Mary Morrissey, "Interdisciplinarity and the Study of Early Modern Sermons," *The Historical Journal* vol. 42, no. 4 (1999): 1111-1123, 1123.



study Simon Roffey has undertaken for medieval chantry chapels, although lines of sight for communion tables are discussed throughout Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke's *Altars Restored*.<sup>12</sup> This chapter takes inspiration from Fincham and Tyacke's consideration of lines of sight in relation to communion tables, and in doing so, extends the scope of their study.

Pulpits do, however, receive some attention as part of the extensive scholarship on sermons and preachers, for example Arnold Hunt's *The Art of Hearing*, which focuses attention on the two-way relationship between the preacher and his congregation. This present study shows that inscriptions and decoration on pulpits added a new dimension to that two-way relationship and informs our understanding of lines of sight.<sup>13</sup> In the edited collection, *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, which significantly progresses thinking about sermons, John Craig emphasised the elevation of the pulpit and elaborate decoration that reflected both the need to project the preacher's voice, and to reflect the honour given to preachers. Height gave authority, placing the preacher between heaven and earth.<sup>14</sup> This chapter will examine how decoration of pulpits enhanced the importance of preaching.

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<sup>12</sup> Simon Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel: An Archaeology* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2007); Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*.

<sup>13</sup> The importance of aurality has been emphasised by Arnold Hunt: Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing. English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); because Hunt's work is focused on preaching and preachers, it has not concentrated on the material and spatial context of preaching. The importance of aurality has also been emphasised by emphasised by Matthew Milner: Matthew Milner, *The Senses and the English Reformation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 291.

<sup>14</sup> Craig, "Sermon Reception"; Susan Wabuda has also highlighted the authority that came from the pulpit, elevated to one who walked in the footsteps of Christ and the Apostles: Wabuda, "Triple Deckers"; the prestige associated with pulpits in some parishes has been researched by Christopher Marsh, Emma Rhatigan and Margaret Bullett who have all found a pattern of seats near the pulpit commanding a higher price to be paid: Christopher Marsh, "Sacred Space in England, 1560-1640: The View from the Pew," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 53, no. 2 (April 2002): 286-311; Emma Rhatigan, "Preaching Venues: Architecture and Auditories," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, eds. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 87-119; Rhatigan has also shown that clergy sometimes asked to be buried beneath the pulpit, 96; Margaret Bullett, "Post-Reformation Preaching in the Pennines: Space, Identity and Affectivity" (PhD Thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2016); for an analysis of how the preaching ministry developed in the reign of Elizabeth, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation, 1547-1603* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 96-98; for details of how the preaching ministry developed in Wiltshire, see Martin Ingram,

The accoutrements of preaching, including the hour glasses, the pulpit cloths and the pulpit cushions, which were itemised in Churchwardens' accounts, are almost non-extant.<sup>15</sup>

Examples of expenditure on the pulpit cloth and cushions can be found in the accounts at Cameley, Cerne Abbas, Mere, and cushions at Wimborne Minster. Hour glasses and half hour glasses are itemised at Cerne Abbas and Mere. Cox photographed the hour glass bracket at Chelvey for his publication in 1915; there is now a replica hour glass.<sup>16</sup> These all added to the theatre of preaching, which also projected an element of social control. The 1604 canons demanded that preaching took place at least once a month, which increased the previous Elizabethan requirement.<sup>17</sup> Sermons became more diverse to match the occasion, for example for fasts, weddings, funerals.<sup>18</sup> This growing diversity of types of sermons has been studied,

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*Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England 1570–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 86–91.

<sup>15</sup> Examples of itemised preaching accoutrements from the Churchwardens' accounts are: at Cameley 1621 pulpit cushion and cloth: SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Cameley, 1621; Cerne Abbas pulpit cushion, pulpit cloth and hour glass 1630: DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Cerne Abbas, 1630; at Mere 1625 pin for the pulpit to 'hang the Preachers hatt on', 1631 silk, cloth and tassels for the pulpit cushion and cloth, 1637 hour glass and 1640 half hour glass: WSHC: 2944/44 Churchwardens' accounts Mere, 1625, 1631, 1637, 1640; at Wimborne Minster 1612 pulpit cushion, 1622 fabric for pulpit cushion: DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Wimborne Minster, 1612, 1622; for the rationale of the hour glass, and parochial examples, see Cox, *Pulpits*, 147–159; in the intervening century since he published, most of the hour glasses which he showcased have disappeared.

<sup>16</sup> Cox, *Pulpits*, 157; a rare pulpit cloth survives from 1657 on the 1619 pulpit at Durnford, Wiltshire.

<sup>17</sup> The 1566 Advertisements required that a sermon be preached every three months; and the 1571 Canons demanded that when there was no sermon, a homily should be read: *The Anglican Canons 1529–1947*, Gerald Bray, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 165, 189. 1604 'Canon XLV: Beneficed Preachers being Resident upon their Livings, to Preach every Sunday. Every Beneficed Man allowed to be a Preacher, and Residing on his Benefice, having no lawful Impediment, shall in his own Cure, or in some other Church or Chapel where he may conveniently, near adjoining (where no Preacher is) preach one Sermon every Sunday of the Year, wherein he shall soberly and sincerely divide the Word of Truth to the Glory of God, and to the best Edification of the People'. 'Canon XLVI: Beneficed Men, not Preachers, to procure Monthly Sermons. Every Beneficed Man not allowed to be a Preacher, shall procure Sermons to be preached in his Cure once in every Month at the least, by Preachers lawfully Licensed, if his Living in the Judgment of the Ordinary, will be able to bear it. And upon every Sunday when there shall not be a Sermon preached in his Cure, he or his Curate shall read some one of the Homilies prescribed, or to be prescribed by Authority to the intents aforesaid': *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 333, 335.

<sup>18</sup> Craig, "Sermon Reception"; John Craig also describes three crucial developments, the employment of preachers, the regulation of sermons, and the regulation of auditories.

as has the power of the listening laity, by considering the ways in which the sermons were received by them and how that affected the preacher.<sup>19</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch has demonstrated that by the 1620s the preaching ministry had been transformed from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, into a graduate, trained cadre.<sup>20</sup> Emma Rhatigan has described the changes made to accommodate the growing focus on the pulpit, and the acoustics needed in churches which had originally been constructed for the celebration of Mass. Rhatigan has suggested that the Laudian changes of the 1630s re-orientated church interiors towards sacramental worship, and therefore away from an orientation towards pulpits, a theme to be pursued in the second part of the chapter, where it will be demonstrated that in some parishes changes were more complex than she has suggested.<sup>21</sup> In general the scholarship that has considered pulpits tends to focus on reception in terms of listening rather than viewing.

As discussed in chapter 1, material evidence has been traditionally relegated to the side-lines by historians, and seen as the preserve of art historians. The literature on sermons by necessity

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<sup>19</sup> Ian Green, "Preaching in the Parishes," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, eds. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 137-154; Ian Green demonstrated that from the 1540s to the 1580s the most common use of pulpits was for the reading of homilies; he showed that in some parishes from the 1590s, as the numbers of graduate clergy rose, sermons became more diverse to suit the occasion, for example for weddings, funerals, fast days, celebration days and consecrations. Emma Rhatigan also discusses different sermons for different occasions: Rhatigan, "Preaching Venues"; for work on consecration sermons, see Morel, "Glorious Temples". For details of sermons on Coronation Day, the anniversary of the Armada, and the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, see David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004, first published London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989); Laura Feitzinger Brown, "Slippery Listening: Anxious Clergy and Lay Listeners' Power in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* XLVII/I (2016): 3-23; until this article in 2016, John Craig was correct in his judgement that there had been a lack of scholarly interest in the reception of sermons including the physical changes to the church that the development that preaching brought: John Craig, "Sermon Reception". For more on the relationship between preaching and hearing, see Sullivan, "The Art of Listening". Margaret Bullett has examined the ways in which affective responses were encouraged in hearers of sermons in the Pennines: Bullett, "Preaching in the Pennines."

<sup>20</sup> MacCulloch, *Later Reformation*, 95-100.

<sup>21</sup> Rhatigan, "Preaching Venues."

only deals with pulpits as a means of delivering sermons. By focusing on the underused material evidence of pulpits, this chapter drives forward scholarly understanding of varied identities, religious, parochial, civic, familial, episcopal, as well as the deployment of decoration by a broad spectrum of Protestants, the ways in which pulpits both created and expressed identities, and the importance of local events in the building of pulpits, set against the broad sweep of national events.<sup>22</sup> Pulpits will be discussed in their own right, not just as they have necessarily tended to be, as side issues in the literature on preaching. In order to focus the discussion, this chapter will not address in detail reading desks. The evidence for reading desks is also more precarious, as these objects have invariably been re-worked, or are the result of pieces of other woodwork.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Beyond Compliance with the Canonical Requirements*

First the churchwardens, and then other sponsors, went beyond mere compliance with the canonical requirements. In doing so, they expressed a number of secular and religious identities, which interwove together. The 1559 Injunctions repeated the 1547 Injunctions' requirement for 'a comely and honest pulpit, to be set in a convenient place to be there seemly kept for the preaching of God's Word'.<sup>24</sup> 'The convenient place' was usually in the nave, on the north or south side. Where there are no contemporaneous plans, the exact location of the pulpit is speculative, either just to the west of the chancel or further into the nave. At

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<sup>22</sup> For an analysis of the importance of preaching in the formation of a Protestant culture, see Eamon Duffy, "The Long Reformation: Catholicism, Protestantism and the Multitude", in *England's Long Reformation 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (London: UCL, 1998), 33-70.

<sup>23</sup> The reader's desk at Swell, Somerset, has clearly been constructed from part of the 1634 pulpit; the reader's desk at Durrington, Wiltshire, has all the visible evidence of having been pieced together from something else; the material evidence of the reader's desk at Curry Mallett, Somerset, indicates that it has been significantly re-worked.

<sup>24</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation vol. III 1559-1575*, Walter Frere and William Kennedy, eds. (London: Longmans, Green, 1910), 16.

Puddletown, Dorset, the 1637 plan shows the pulpit and the reading desk stood where they stand today, on the south side immediately before the chancel. On the plan a seat for the ‘minister and his company’, (non-extant), stood between the pulpit and the chancel [Figure 2. 25].<sup>25</sup> This is a rare example of certainty of the original position of a pulpit in these three counties. The 1604 Canons modified the wording slightly to ‘a comely and decent pulpit’.<sup>26</sup> These terms, however subjective, encouraged the churchwardens to take seriously the making and mending of pulpits. For example, in 1577 the pulpit was repaired at Axbridge, Somerset, and in 1586 at Somerton.<sup>27</sup> As shown in chapter 1, in 1581 the churchwardens of Wimborne Minster, Dorset, commissioned a new pulpit, as they did at Mere, Wiltshire, in 1589 and 1625.<sup>28</sup> A traditional view that church interiors were generally neglected until the 1630s is not justified by the evidence of the Churchwardens’ accounts in these and other parishes.<sup>29</sup> Of the 174 churches visited, 91 have extant pulpits. Of these, 4 were built between 1560 and 1600, 56 between 1601 and 1630, and 23 between 1631 and 1640. The remaining 8 pulpits were built 1601-1640.<sup>30</sup> In Somerton the accounts show that there were possibly two pulpits before

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<sup>25</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for allowing sittings in the new pews, 1637; Hobbs, “Puddletown Church Seating.”

<sup>26</sup> *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377: the instruction was that, ‘The churchwardens or questmen at the common charge of the parishioners in every Church, shall provide a comely and decent Pulpit, to be set in a convenient place within the same, by the discretion of the ordinary of the place, if any question do arise, and to be there seemly kept for the preaching of God’s Word.’

<sup>27</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Axbridge, 1577; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Somerton, 1586.

<sup>28</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1581; T. H. Baker, “Notes on the History of Mere,” *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* vol. XXIX (1896-7): 224-337, 210; WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1589, 1625.

<sup>29</sup> John Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset, 1625-1662, with particular reference to the Churchwardens’ Accounts,” (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 2014); John Reeks’s study of Churchwardens’ accounts in the Diocese of Bath and Wells from 1625 is very helpful but he tentatively reiterates this traditional view based on evidence in the 1630s.

<sup>30</sup> Of the 174 churches visited, 114 were in Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire. Of the 68 extant pulpits surveyed in the three counties, 3 were built 1560-1600, 46 were built 1601-1630, 15 were built 1631-1640, and 4 between 1601 and 1640.

1616.<sup>31</sup> The fewer extant Elizabethan pulpits, compared to the large number of extant early seventeenth-century pulpits, can be interpreted as the result of pulpits in Elizabeth's reign being created quickly and crudely in order to meet the post-Reformation canonical requirements.<sup>32</sup> These were then replaced by pulpits from 1600-1640, which were constructed in a manner to last. The accession of James I and the publication in 1611 of the King James Bible encouraged long term investment as it became clear that the Protestant religious settlement would be lasting.

One such pulpit built to endure, both in its solid construction, and in its inscriptions, can be found at Minety, Wiltshire.<sup>33</sup> It is sumptuously decorated, dated 1627, and has the inscriptions 'BE INSTANT IN SEASON' and 'WG RP CHURCHWARDENES' [Figure 3. 1].<sup>34</sup> The inscription of churchwardens' names or initials on pulpits, along with the date, can be found elsewhere, for example in Somerset at Chilthorne Domer, Somerton, Thorne, and Weare.<sup>35</sup> The churchwardens were exhibiting parochial pride, as well as possibly inscribing in wood

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<sup>31</sup> SHC: D\p\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1586, 1589, 1616. In 1586 there was expenditure on mending the pulpit. One entry in 1589 refers to the 'offal' of the old pulpit, and one refers to the new pulpit.

<sup>32</sup> Three rare extant pulpits which may be of Elizabethan origin are Chedzoy, Somerset, East Quantoxhead, Somerset, and Spetisbury, Dorset: Julian Orbach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; South and West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 199, 291; John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Dorset* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin, 1972), 394-395.

<sup>33</sup> 1627 was also the date of the appointment of a new Perpetual Vicar, Bernard Waight: <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp> (accessed 24 November 2016).

<sup>34</sup> The inscription, 'Be instant in season' can also be seen on two pulpits, a few hundred yards from each other in York, All Saints Pavement and St Martin cum Gregory; the text from the King James Bible is from 2 Timothy 4: 2, 'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine'.

<sup>35</sup> The pulpit in the church of St John the Baptist, Biddisham, Somerset, has some similarities with that of Weare, although it carries no inscriptions. This similarity of both in the top row of blank arches above a row of rectangular panels is noted in the 1958 edition, but not in the 2014 edition: Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South and West Somerset* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003, first published by Penguin, 1958), 88, 332; Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West* (2014), 118, 654

the memory of their role on behalf of the parishioners, and the date to make clear the investment in the pulpit, as also detailed in their accounts.<sup>36</sup> They fastidiously linked their itemised accounts to the date of the investment through the inscription, and by so doing, also reinforced the identity of the parish. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson have brought new evidence to testify to the administrative literacy and efficiency of officials working from the semi-private spaces of their homes; such a mindset of orderliness can be also found in the way Churchwardens accounted for their income and expenditure so carefully, and in the dating of objects themselves as well as noting them in their accounts.<sup>37</sup>

The 1624 pulpit at Thorne Coffin, Somerset, is inscribed with the date and the words THOMAS MARKESS CHURCHE WARDEN [Figure 3. 2]. Thomas Markess was the only Churchwarden named in the accounts in 1624. In that year, the accounts itemised, ‘Item payd to the Joyners £1 iiis iiid’.<sup>38</sup> This was not an expensive pulpit compared to others, such as Somerton which had cost £5 1s 11d.<sup>39</sup> Thorne’s was a plain, simple pulpit, ‘comely and decent’. But even at Thorne the commissioning churchwarden went beyond the canonical requirement by adding the date and his name, expressing the parish’s investment. In the same year 1624, there were also items of payment in the Churchwardens’ accounts to a glazier, mason and a plasterer. The pulpit was part of a general scheme to improve the church.

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<sup>36</sup> I am grateful to Sophie Cope, Doctoral Research student, at the University of Birmingham, for talking to me about her work on the importance on dates on objects. For an analysis of churchwardens’ administrative duties in accounting of expenditure on church fabric and furniture, see Valerie Hitchman, “Balancing the Accounts,” in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens Accounts c. 1500-c. 1800*, eds. Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 15-45.

<sup>37</sup> Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, *A Day at Home in Early Modern England: Material Culture and Domestic Life, 1500-1700* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), 187, 269.

<sup>38</sup> SHC: D\P\th.co/4/1/2 Churchwardens’ accounts of Thorne Coffin, 1624.

<sup>39</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1615.

There are a number of clues to why this pulpit was commissioned in 1624. In 1623 John Wilkinson took up the living of Thorne. Having acquired the patronage in 1622, he presented himself.<sup>40</sup> His predecessor, John Hearne, had been Rector since 1579 and was the centre of various scandals and disputes, one about the collection of tithes in 1605, which ended in violence.<sup>41</sup> In 1606 the Rector's wife was accused of brawling. In 1608, the justices had ordered Hearne to be gaoled without bail in a paternity suit. In 1612, he was in 'process for debt and other trouble', and had been absent from the parish for several months. He promised that he would 'perform to the uttermost his duty in the parish'.<sup>42</sup> At a visitation in 1612 it was reported that the parish had not heard its usual monthly sermons because of the absence of the rector, even though he was not a pluralist. In 1614 Thomas Markess and his wife Susan petitioned the justices, supported by the signatures of twenty-four parishioners, that Susan had been falsely accused of incontinence by Mr Hearne, the parson of Thorne.<sup>43</sup> This is ten years before Thomas Markess's name appears on the pulpit as the Churchwarden. It could possibly have been him or his father who issued the petition.

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<sup>40</sup> A P Baggs, R J E Bush and Margaret Tomlinson. "Parishes: Thorne," in *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 3*, ed. R W Dunning (London: Victoria County History, 1974), 250-255. *British History Online*, accessed February 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol3/pp250-255>.

<sup>41</sup> Margaret Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory: The Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Early Seventeenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 130, 146, referencing NA C.3/272/12, 12 January 1605/6. Other examples of how a minister's behaviour over, for example, finances, affected his 'potential impact in religious affairs' can be found in Julia Merritt, "Religion and the English Parish," in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Reformation and Identity c. 1520-1662 vol. I*, ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 122-147, 131-2.

<sup>42</sup> Baggs, Bush and Tomlinson, "Parishes: Thorne," *VCH Somerset*, vol. 3; SHC: D\D/Ca/177 Diocese of Bath and Wells: Comperta-Archdeaconry of Wells, 1612.

<sup>43</sup> Baggs, Bush and Tomlinson, "Parishes: Thorne," *VCH Somerset*, vol. 3; SHC: D\D/Ca/177 Archdeaconry of Wells, 1612; <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>; SHC: Q/SR/19/135 Petition of Thomas Markes and his wife Susan of Thorne Coffin, signed by twenty-four parishioners, that his wife has been falsely accused of incontinency by Mr Hyeron, parson of Thorne, 1614.



The behaviour and absence of the Rector would have been a sufficient reason for the lack of enthusiasm to invest in the parish before 1623. In that same year there was a presentment that the old pulpit was 'much decayed', there was no Bible 'of the new translation', and the surplice was 'very insufficient'.<sup>44</sup> The investment by the Churchwarden on behalf of the parish followed in 1624. There is an elegant symmetry to the Churchwarden being Thomas Markess, speculatively either the husband or the father-in-law of Susan, falsely accused by the misbehaving previous Rector. The evidence at Thorne suggests that local drivers were as important as canonical demands in erecting the new pulpit.

The evidence from Thorne and the other parishes show that churchwardens went beyond what was ordered, and that this was occurring before the imposed drives by Laud and his fellow enthusiasts, drives that included a greater emphasis on sacramental worship. The evidence from Somerton also fits into this pattern. In 1615, the churchwardens in Somerton raised a special rate and commissioned a joiner to build a new pulpit. The rate was 'for and towards the building of the new pulpit and repayeringe of defectes about the church'.<sup>45</sup> The accounts show that the joiner was paid '£iiii xis', and that colouring was used: 'oker for the pulpit iid'.<sup>46</sup> The use of ochre would have produced a range of colours from yellow through the red range, and would have had a dramatic visual impact, capturing the viewer's attention.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Baggs, Bush and Tomlinson, "Parishes: Thorne," *VCH Somerset*, vol. 3; SHC: D\D/Ca/236 Diocese of Bath and Wells: Comperta-Archdeaconry of Wells, 1623; <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>.

<sup>45</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1615.

<sup>46</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1615.

<sup>47</sup> For details on colouring of other pulpits, see Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 63.

The pulpit is a large octagonal drum, on an octagonal plinth, and each face has a decorated cornice with a frieze of flowers and leaves [Figure 3. 3].<sup>48</sup> The frieze is interrupted on alternate faces by two figures with a shield showing the lamb and flag, a dove, a patonce cross and crossed keys [Figures 3. 4, 3. 5, and 3. 6]. These were well known images, for example the dove as a symbol of peace, and in this descending form, it refers to the Holy Ghost.<sup>49</sup> The familiar image of the keys of the kingdom was unusual at this time, save as the Biblical reference of Christ's exhortation to Peter, but it also carried a papal connotation. The Geneva Bible is annotated for this verse: 'The authoritie of the Church is from God. (The keys are) a metaphor of stewards which carie the keys: and here is set forth the power of the ministers of the Word, and that power is common to all ministers'.<sup>50</sup> The specific link between the keys and the authority of the preaching ministry is striking. The Puritan minister of St Katharine Cree, London, Stephen Denison, used the expression in a verbal row with a long-standing parish adversary, 'Thou hast not the keys, I have the keys'.<sup>51</sup> He did not consider the concept of the keys of the kingdom to have a papal connotation but rather to symbolise his ministerial

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<sup>48</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS/26 Record of church furnishings relating to the church of St Michael, Somerton, (Compiled by the National Association of Fine Arts Societies NADFAS), 1998; Cox, *Pulpits*, 135.

<sup>49</sup> For details of this image as the Holy Ghost, one of the earliest to make a come-back, see Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 9; KJB Matthew 3: 16, 'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him'. There is no annotation in the Geneva Bible for this verse. The GB's words are almost the same: 'And Jesus when he was baptized, came straight out of the water. And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and [lighting] upon him'.

<sup>50</sup> *The Geneva Bible. The Annotated New Testament 1602 Edition* ed. Gerald Sheppard, (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1989). The wording of the text is the same in the Geneva Bible as the KJB: Matthew 16: 19, 'And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'. The Geneva Bible is exactly the same words. *The Geneva Bible. The Annotated New Testament 1602 Edition* ed. Gerald Sheppard, (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1989).

<sup>51</sup> Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'Orthodoxy', 'Heterodoxy' and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart England* (Manchester, 2001: Manchester University Press), 289.

role. The patonce cross represents the Trinity through the three petals; and the total of twelve petals represents the Apostles. The Lamb and Flag was a common symbol, with the Lamb holding the red cross flag that represented the Resurrected Christ, a symbol of ‘Agnus Dei’, associated with the sacrifice of the Mass in the pre-Reformation Church.<sup>52</sup> They were images that demonstrated familiarity and therefore continuity, while just on the right side of acceptability. There were four reasons for this: because they were very small, they were associated with Scriptural text, they were presented as heraldic badges, and the context was the pulpit, dedicated to preaching. Therefore they were unlikely to act as a focus for worship.

Each panel has a decorated arch with a blind arcade.<sup>53</sup> On the drum are the words: PRAISE GOD 1615 FOR AI [Figure 3. 3].<sup>54</sup> Then there is the *fleur de lys* pattern and the initials HS IH. The initials HS IH are those of the churchwardens in 1615: Humpherie Shepperd and John Horssie.<sup>55</sup> The inscription PRAISE GOD FOR AI could mean ‘Praise God for ever’, which is the more likely, or it may be a reference to the incumbent at the time, Anthony Jeffrey (AI).<sup>56</sup> It is possible that there was an intended pun, but more likely it meant ‘ever’. The pulpit is a statement of parochial and community identity, because of the initials of the churchwardens, the possible initials of the Vicar, and the absence of familial heraldry, which would have been deployed to associate the object with a particular family or individual. The churchwardens

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<sup>52</sup> KJB John 1: 29, ‘Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world’; the image was both the ‘Lamb of God’, and the symbol of St John the Baptist; the annotation in the Geneva Bible reads: GB, ‘The bodye and trueth of all the sacrifices of the Law to make satisfaction for the sinne of the world, is in Christ.... the Lambe hath this virtue proper unto him, and for ever to take away the sinnes of the world. That is, that roote of sinne, which are commonly called in the plural, sinnes.’

<sup>53</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS/26 NADFAS Somerton survey, 1998.

<sup>54</sup> Cox, *Pulpits*, 135.

<sup>55</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1615; Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West*, 558-559.

<sup>56</sup> CCEd data base spells his name four ways: Anthony Jefferay, Jefferies, Jefferey, Jeffries. He was Vicar of Somerton 1610-1620, and Rector of Ashington and royal chaplain in 1620: <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>, (accessed 16 October 2014). I am grateful to Trevor Cooper who pointed out the possibility of a pun.

had gone beyond what the canons demanded. This was more than ‘a comely and decent pulpit’. In its size, colouring, images, and inscriptions, it was an expensive object of beauty, at the focal point of the congregation’s line of sight, standing before the chancel arch. As the worshippers looked at the preacher, they would have seen the pulpit, and they would have been able to discern the inscription from the ‘public zone’, but not the small heraldic-type shields with their images. The overall impression of the complexity of the decoration and the colouring would have been visually accessible from the nave, and the detail more accessible as they glanced at their pulpit as they moved towards the communion table, either at the east end of the nave or in the chancel, a theme to be explored in chapter 5.

Not everyone approved of such investments. When Thomas Morton was accused in 1620 of not attending church at Axbridge for religious reasons, he said, ‘if I comme thither I shall heere but a tale of a tube’.<sup>57</sup> Tub was slang for pulpit or rubbish. Morton’s evidence suggests that he was a Catholic, and was using a common pejorative term to describe a pulpit.<sup>58</sup> In Folke, as already seen in chapter 2, Rideout objected to the new seating arrangements. He also complained in 1629 that there had been no need for a new pulpit ‘the old pulpit being a very decent one’, and that it was ‘idle’ to ‘putt the parishioners to such an unnecessary chardge for

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<sup>57</sup> SHC: D\D\cd/54 Deposition Book Thomas Moorton of Axbridge for failing to attend church, 1620. A tale of a tub also means rubbish, a phrase that Ben Johnson used as the title to his play in, *A Tale of a Tub*, first performed 1633 and published in London in 1640; Jonathan Swift used it later in 1704 in his satire on religion: Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, (London, 1704); John Taylor wrote a vitriolic pamphlet about idolatry: ‘A tale in a tub, or, A tub lecture as it was delivered by my-heele Mendsoale an inspired Brownist and a most upright translator: in a meeting house neere Bedlam the one and twentieth of December, last 1641/written by JT’, (London: s.n., 1641).

<sup>58</sup> See *OED* for examples of the use of the phrase, tale of a tub *a tale of a tub*, an apocryphal tale; a ‘cock and bull’ story. *Obs.*

1546 J. Heywood *Dialogue Prouerbes Eng. Tongue* ii. ix. sig. L<sup>v</sup> A tale of a tub, your tale no truthe auowth.

1631 F. Lenton *Characterismi* sig. F9<sup>v</sup> Oft-times hee goes but to the next Tauerne, and then very discreetly brings her home a tale of a Tubbe.

1720 D. Defoe *Mem. Cavalier* 102 Having entertained the Fellow with a Tale of a Tub.

a dumbe shewe'.<sup>59</sup> By this he probably meant a needless extravagance to hear a minister, whom he reviled, preach. It is interesting that Rideout used 'decent' as a description, the same term as the 1604 canon, and therefore familiar to an educated layman.

Churchwardens were not the only builders of pulpits. Individual donors also invested in them. Although pulpits were not as commonplace before the Reformation, there is evidence of individuals investing in them then. For example, there is the fifteenth-century pulpit at Newton, Suffolk, bearing the inscription to commemorate the donors in Latin, 'Pray for the souls of Richard Mody and Laetitia his wife'.<sup>60</sup> After the Reformation the underpinning theology changed so Richard Harvey, the donor of the 1613 pulpit at Lyme Regis, did not ask for intercessory prayers, as Mody had, to assist his soul's journey after death. This post-Reformation investor had his name, Richard Harvey, inscribed, with the exhortation that 'Faith is by hearing,' a declaration based on solid Protestant theology, this inscription will be analysed later. His octagonal pulpit sported two ranges of enriched arcaded panels and a sounding board with a cornice [Figures 3. 7 and 3. 8]. Sounding boards were designed to enhance the acoustics but they also helped to frame the space for preaching, so that the preaching space was effectively bounded by the drum and the canopy.<sup>61</sup> On the lower member of the cornice was the inscription,

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<sup>59</sup> WSHC: D/5/21/3/9 Among these libels is a long letter to the rector of Folke, Dorset, attacking him for his slanderous, uncharitable behaviour, 1629; a 'dumb show' is defined by the *OED* as '(especially in English drama of the 16th and 17th centuries) a part of a play acted in mime to summarize, supplement, or comment on the main action'.

<sup>60</sup> James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Suffolk; West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015, first published by Penguin, 1961, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised by Enid Radcliffe 1974), 441; D. P. Mortlock, *The Guide to Suffolk Churches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2009), 361. The Latin inscription reads 'Orate p(ro) a(n)i(m)a Richi Modi et Leticie (consortis suae)'.

<sup>61</sup> Craig, "Sermon Reception," 187; Rhatigan, "Preaching Venues," 96; Julia Merritt uses London documentary sources to show that parishes moved pulpits and pillars to try and improve the audibility of the preacher: Julia

‘TO GOD’S GLORY RICHARD HARVEY OF LONDON, MERCER AND  
MURCHANT ADVENTURER 1613. FAITH IS BY HEARING’.

Underneath the cornice are the initials RH, which would only have been visible to a viewer in the ‘intimate’ or ‘personal’ zones [Figure 3. 9]. The decoration of the pulpit and the gilding of the tester would have been accessible to parishioners within the ‘public’ zone, the nave, and the inscription could have been read by those of high status in the front pews, or viewed by those moving towards the communion table.

Richard Harvey subsequently became Mayor of Lyme Regis three times. The decoration of the pulpit is very similar to that of Whitchurch Canonorum, Dorset, just a few miles away, which suggests a shared workshop at least, and possibly copying or competition between investors [Figure 3. 10].<sup>62</sup> It may be no coincidence that Richard Harvey’s pulpit followed so soon after John Hassard, the ‘seven times’ Mayor, of prosperous Lyme Regis, had built the gallery at the west end of the church, discussed in the previous chapter. The pulpit and its inscription may testify to donor competition between the investors of the gallery and the pulpit, but maybe something more, rooted in the local narrative. It may have been about memorialisation of, and aspiration to, the office of Mayor of the town. There are clues in the specific chronology. John Hassard gave the gallery in 1611, and died in 1613. In 1613, the

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Merritt, “Puritans, Laudians and the Phenomenon of Church-Building in Jacobean London,” *The Historical Journal* vol. 41, no. 4 (December 1998): 935-960, 946; for details of the problems of hearing sermons, see Milner, *The Senses*, 291-293, 298, 299-300.

<sup>62</sup> Pevsner describes the Whitchurch Canonorum pulpit as ‘Jacobean’: Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 458-460, 460; the church booklet at Whitchurch Canonorum suggests that the pulpit at Beaminster was also of the same pattern and style as that at Whitchurch Canonorum: G. V. Syer, *A Guide to the Church of Saint Candida and Holy Cross Whitchurch Canonorum, Dorset* (Bridport: Creeds, 2005), 12.

year of John Hassard's death, Richard Harvey gave the pulpit. In 1616 Richard Harvey served the first of his three terms as Mayor.

As discussed in chapter 2, John Hassard's gallery had proclaimed the familial and personal identity of one of the richest and most prominent families in the town as well as being dedicated to God's glory. The inscription on the pulpit suggested Protestant piety and the importance of preaching. However, it also had a strong element of self-promotion.<sup>63</sup> Richard Harvey was not content just to give his parish church a 'comely and decent' pulpit, but invested in a decorated structure that both enhanced the church and provided a pulpit, which the congregation viewed during the sermon, and also during other parts of a service. The pulpit proclaimed a tenet of the Protestant faith, which may not have been legible from the west part of the nave, but would have been known to the congregation, and seen as they moved around, and on which sermons would surely have been based. If self-advancement was in the mix of drivers, along with Protestant piety, and the manifestation of the importance of preaching, the chronology suggests a gift by Richard Harvey to proclaim himself a generous leader of the community, a possible future Mayor, and all to the 'glory of God'.

In his will of 1641, Richard Harvey described himself as a merchant, and asked, 'to be buried in some convenient place of the church of Lyme'. He then made another gift to the church, less prominent but just as significant, as part of the communion equipment,

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<sup>63</sup> In a different context, portraits, Tarnya Cooper demonstrates that patrons tried to balance self-aggrandisement with modesty and humility: Tarnya Cooper, "Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620," in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling, and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 49-63.

I give unto the church of Lyme £x for to buy a flagon pott of silver to serve at the communion table and there to remane as my guift for ever.<sup>64</sup>

Both Richard Harvey and John Hassard were investors in decorated objects, which beautified their church. The compartmentalised separation of motivations and influences, so beloved by historians, are permeable: secular motives mixed with pious ones, personal drivers mingled with civic ones, self-advancement in this life mixed with a memorial for the future. It may be that statements about status resonate ‘more sonorously when voiced within the walls of the church’, because of the symbolism of the location.<sup>65</sup> Like John Hassard, Richard Harvey had put his name and status on his gift, like Hassard, he proclaimed that the object had been built ‘for the glory of God’. Both donors were leaving a memorial for the future of their community as heads of wealthy and prominent families.<sup>66</sup> Whilst Hassard was proclaiming his past service in the now lost words ‘seven times Mayor’, Richard Harvey was making a prospectus in decorated wood for his election as a future Mayor.<sup>67</sup> The detail of the chronology is open to this proposition and suggests specific local drivers for investment.

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<sup>64</sup> TNA: PROB 11/187 Will of Richard Harvey, Lime Merchant, 1641; Fincham and Tyacke make the point that parishioners would have regarded the gift of a pulpit or communion table as being of equal worth; the same parity would have applied to a communion cup: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 106.

<sup>65</sup> This view is voiced by Christopher Marsh: Marsh, “Sacred Space,” 310.

<sup>66</sup> The use of gifts to memorialise is also described as a motive for the donors of almshouses: Angela Nicholls, *Almshouses in Early Modern England. Charitable Housing in the Mixed Economy of Welfare, 1550-1725* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), 56, 74-75.

<sup>67</sup> For details of Lyme Regis gallery, see chapter 2. The now missing words on the gallery said that John Hassard had been seven times Mayor: H. Short, H. Swangy, eds., *Outline of the History and Genealogy of the Hassards and their Connections* (York: Sotheran, 1858).



An unusual donor of a pulpit was Bishop Arthur Lake. The gift of the large and highly decorated pulpit at Croscombe, Somerset, in 1616 by the Bishop of Bath and Wells is a testimony in wood to the importance of preaching. In exceeding the canonical requirement, it is an expression of various identities. Octagonal, richly carved, with gilded Corinthian pilasters, it displays two sets of arms, the diocesan arms and the personal arms of Bishop Lake, marking himself as the donor [Figure 3. 11].<sup>68</sup> The two coats of arms are replicated on the tester. The tester is intricately carved with obelisk finials, and a golden bird pecking its breast, probably a pelican, stands on the top.<sup>69</sup> The shield on the front clearly shows the date, the implications of which will be considered later.<sup>70</sup> The pulpit was cleaned in 1920, bringing to life the colours of the escutcheons.<sup>71</sup> Around its frieze is the gilded inscription, ‘Blessed are they that heare the word of God and keepe it’ [Figure 3. 12]. The same text appears on other contemporary pulpits.<sup>72</sup> The text confirms that the pulpit is a physical declaration of the centrality of the Word preached in the liturgy. At Croscombe, it is also a magnificent display of the gift of the pulpit by Bishop Lake to a parish just a few miles from his palace at Wells. The display, both on the pulpit and on the tester, of his personal arms and the diocesan arms is

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<sup>68</sup> Edmund Rack called it ‘very richly ornamented with ancient carving, gilding and painting’: *Edmund Rack’s Survey of Somerset*, McDermott and Berry, 341.

<sup>69</sup> Keith Armstrong, *The Story of Croscombe: A Somerset Village*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Wells: St Andrew’s Press, 2007), 53; it appears to be a pelican but Edmund Rack calls it an eagle: *Edmund Rack’s Survey of Somerset*, McDermott and Berry, 341.

<sup>70</sup> Cox, *Pulpits*, 135; Cox mistook the personal arms of Lake on the pulpit for those of Fortescue, which are on the screen, described in chapter 4.

<sup>71</sup> Norman Cole, *The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Croscombe* (Croscombe: N. Cole, 1954).

<sup>72</sup> The same text from Luke 11: 28 also appears on other extant pulpits: c. 1615-30 Bathford, Somerset; 1632 Broadwas, Worcestershire; the ‘Jacobean’ pulpit in the nineteenth-century church of Suckley, Worcestershire; and the ‘Jacobean’ pulpit at Monkton Farleigh, Wiltshire; Robert Whiting, *Local Responses to the English Reformation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 189-190; Andrew Foyle and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; North and Bristol* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011, first published by Penguin, 1958), 215-216, 215; Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Worcestershire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, reprinted 1985, first published 1968), 101, 275; Nikolaus Pevsner, second edition revised by Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin in 1963, second edition 1975), 352. The same inscription on the ‘Jacobean’ pulpit at West Coker, Somerset appears to be a nineteenth-century addition.

unusual and is a clear manifestation of Lake's enthusiasm for preaching, and a visual assertion of the diocese's commitment to preaching while he held the see.<sup>73</sup> It links diocesan authority to a statement on the importance of preaching, and it is a significant visual expression of clericalism.<sup>74</sup> The congregation would have viewed the elaborate decoration, the display of personal and diocesan arms, and the bold textual assertion about the importance of preaching for the lives of the listeners. The pelican at the apex, leading the eyes to heaven, gives a message of sacrifice and salvation. The prominence of this large pulpit implies that the viewer would not only have viewed it for a prolonged period during the sermon, but that it was an inescapable sight during the rest of the service. The overall impression of elaborate decoration, the gilding, the pelican at the apex, and the heraldic devices would have been visible to anyone in the nave, the public zone, but the precise letters of the text would only have been visible to those of high status nearest to the pulpit.

There are other pulpits which were gifts of a bishop. Archbishop Abbott had paid for a new pulpit in 1619, no longer extant, for the parish church at Lambeth, which was next to his London residence.<sup>75</sup> The extant pulpit at Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire, was a gift of Bishop Andrewes of Winchester in 1626, but although decorated, it is a more restrained object, with

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<sup>73</sup> For details of the model of a preaching bishop, see Kenneth Fincham, "Episcopal Government," in *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, ed. Kenneth Fincham (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 71-91, 76-77.

<sup>74</sup> For details of the increased graduate proportion of clergy, see Rosemary O' Day, *The English Clergy: The Emergence and Consolidation of a Profession 1558-1642* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979), 2, 5, 57, 73, 127, 130-133, 137, 235; for an analysis of the link between preaching and salvation, see Patrick Collinson, "Shepherds, Sheepdogs, and Hirelings: The Pastoral Ministry in Post-Reformation England," in *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay*, eds. William Sheils and Diane Wood. Studies in Church History, vol. 26, (Oxford: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by Basil Blackwell, 1989), 185-220, 195, 198; for the increase in preachers by the early seventeenth century, see MacCulloch, *Later Reformation*, 98-100.

<sup>75</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 108.

no gilding, no text and no arms. [Figure 3. 13].<sup>76</sup> This lack of personal display may be linked to an assessment of Andrewes as ‘a man of immense scholarship and spiritual devotion, whose character was marked by charity, moral rectitude, and selflessness’.<sup>77</sup>

Bishop Lake’s commitment to preaching and to pastoral care is well documented throughout his life and during his episcopacy from 1616 to 1626.<sup>78</sup> He had been one of the translators of the New Testament, for what became the King James Bible.<sup>79</sup> Lake was a renowned preacher but his printed sermons unfortunately do not include any from Croscombe, although they do include a number from other parish churches in Somerset, and in Hampshire where he previously had a living.<sup>80</sup> In Somerset he kept close links with the clerical preaching elite, which included Richard Bernard of Batcombe, who described Lake as ‘a blessed bishop, a very man of God’.<sup>81</sup> An Oxford academic, Lake was also renowned for preaching there. The major patron for his advancement to the bench of bishops was his brother, Sir Thomas Lake, Secretary to James I.<sup>82</sup> As an energetic preacher in his Cathedral and diocese he preached ‘public penance of those found guilty of incest, schism, and other crimes, a practice

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<sup>76</sup> The elaborate tester is nineteenth century: Nikolaus Pevsner and David Lloyd, *Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), 104-105, 105.

<sup>77</sup> “Andrewes, Lancelot (1555–1626),” P. E. McCullough in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/520> (accessed March 4, 2017).

<sup>78</sup> Stieg, *Laud’s Laboratory*, 49, *passim*; Stephen Hyde Cassan, *Lives of the Bishops of Bath and Wells, from the Earliest to the Present Period* (London: C. and J. Rivington, 1829), 27.

<sup>79</sup> “Lake, Arthur (bap. 1567, d. 1626),” Kenneth Fincham in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15896> (accessed November 5, 2017).

<sup>80</sup> Arthur Lake, *Sermons with some Religious and Divine Meditations* (London, 1629); Arthur Lake, *Ten Sermons upon severall Occasions, Preached at St. Pauls Crosse and Elsewhere* (London, 1640).

<sup>81</sup> David Underdown, *Fire From Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 25. For details of Lake’s patronage of Bernard and his continuing non conformity on some issues, see Anthony Milton, “Unsettled Reformations, 1603-1662,” in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Reformation and Identity c. 1520-1662 vol. I*, ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 63-83, 65.

<sup>82</sup> Fincham, “Lake”, *ODNB*.

unparalleled amongst his fellow bishops'.<sup>83</sup> Described as a 'moderate Calvinist', he had links to the godly John White of Dorchester, Dorset, and the Massachusetts Bay Company.<sup>84</sup> As bishop he developed training for clergy in preaching, and licensed sixty preachers in a decade, while in a similar period Neile in Durham licensed eight.<sup>85</sup> In his will he described himself as 'thirty years a preacher', and left detailed instructions about what was to be done with the manuscripts of his sermons to help students.<sup>86</sup> In describing his assiduous preaching in nearby parishes, his belief in the importance of the clerical ministry, and his saintly life, Patrick Collinson mischievously dubbed him 'St. Charles Borromeo of the Mendips'.<sup>87</sup>

His gift of a highly-decorated pulpit sits with his sermon-centred approach, and with his priorities, as he made the gift in 1616, the first year of his episcopacy, and a year after William Rogers was instituted as Rector of Croscombe. Although details of William Rogers' life are scarce, it is recorded that he was made Prebendary of Dinder in Wells Cathedral in

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<sup>83</sup> Fincham, "Lake," *ODNB*; Phyllis Hembry, *The Bishops of Bath and Wells, 1540-1640* (London: Athlone Press, 1967), 215.

<sup>84</sup> "White, John (1575–1648)," Rory T. Cornish in *ODNB*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29255> (accessed December 17, 2016); Underdown, *Fire From Heaven*, 25.

<sup>85</sup> Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 211, 282; for more details of Lake's activities as Bishop of Bath and Wells, see in this publication 102, 120, 125-126, 128, 133, 137, 172, 173, 179, 182, 257. For more on the clergy of Somerset, see Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*, chapter 3 and *passim*; she emphasises the diversity of Somerset clergy, a finding which Kenneth Fincham described as 'unexceptional': Kenneth Fincham, "Personalities and Politics in Early Stuart England," review of *Charles I: The Personal Monarch*, by C. Carlton; *Charles I and the Popish Plot* by C. Hibbard; *Laud's Laboratory* by M. Stieg; *The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County* by W. Hunt; *Crime in Seventeenth-Century England: A County Study* by J. A. Sharpe; *The Godly Magistrate: The Private Philosophy and Public Life of Sir John Newdigate 1571-1610* by V. M. Larminie; *The House of Lords, 1603-1649: Structure, Procedure, and the Nature of its Business* by E. R. Foster, *The Historical Journal* vol. 28, no. 4 December 1985, 1001-1009, 1005.

<sup>86</sup> TNA: PROB 11/152/531 Will of Sir Arthur Lake, Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1627; Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset," 52, 64.

<sup>87</sup> Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, reprinted 2003), 88. I am grateful to Richard Cust for pointing out this epithet during 'Birmingham Research Day'.

1616.<sup>88</sup> It would be a reasonable speculation that the new Rector, William Rogers, while exercising his prebendal duties and rights in the cathedral, had engineered an episcopal, pastoral and preaching visit to Croscombe, just a few miles from Wells, which resulted in the gift of the pulpit. It is also plausible that the new Bishop would have preached from his gift. The gift of the Croscombe pulpit is part of the ornamentation of churches early in the seventeenth century, which this research has found in the three counties, and was often the result of local events. Croscombe is one of several parishes where the chronology of the pulpit challenges the assumption that fits material evidence into a meta-narrative, that only Laudians decorated the churches or coerced others in the 1630s into decorating them.

By decorating their pulpits with images, the investors of the 1634 Thurloxton pulpit and the neighbouring early seventeenth-century pulpit at Stoke St Gregory far exceeded requirements, and also presented the historian with a conundrum [Figures 3. 14 and 3. 15].<sup>89</sup> At Stoke St Gregory, the early seventeenth-century pulpit displays five figures on it. Two of the figures are the Theological Virtues, Faith with a staff, and Hope with her anchor [Figures 3. 15 and 3. 16]. Underneath the main image in arcades are the repeated images of the staff and the anchor. A third figure on the pulpit at Stoke St Gregory represents Peace, holding a dove [Figure 3. 17]. The image of the dove is repeated below the main image. A fourth figure on the pulpit represents Father Time, a *memento mori* image, favoured by those wishing to be reminded of their humility and mortality [Figure 3. 18].<sup>90</sup> A small image of the hour glass is

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<sup>88</sup> [www. http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp](http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp), (accessed 2 December, 2013); John Goodall, "Parish Church Treasures: King and Bishop," *Country Life* vol. 207, no. 30 (July 24 2013): 36.

<sup>89</sup> Cox calls the pulpits at Stoke St. Gregory, Thurloxton, and North Newton 'remarkable': Cox, *Pulpits*, 136.

<sup>90</sup> For more on the tradition of *memento mori* images, see Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in England in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 337-340.

repeated beneath the main image. The fifth image on the door of the pulpit at Stoke St Gregory presents us with a puzzle: The Mother and Child, the adult female holding a child to the hip, who holds an apple [Figure 3. 19]. The adult female form appears to be a crowned angel. This unusual iconography presents the viewer with some imponderables. Faith with either a staff or a shield and sword is not uncommon and the image of Faith as a female figure with both a shield and sword was displayed in Richard Daye's *Booke of Christian Prayers* in 1578.<sup>91</sup> Similarly a female figure representing Hope and carrying an anchor is also displayed by Richard Daye.<sup>92</sup>

The *momento mori* image of Father Time at Stoke St Gregory is not replicated on the pulpit at Thurloxtton. But there are similarities between the two pulpits. Both have a crowned female form holding a staff or a sword, both have a crowned female form holding an anchor [Figures 3. 15, 3. 16, 3. 20]. Both have crowned female figures holding a child to the hip, the one at Stoke St Gregory holding an apple and the one at Thurloxtton being fed with a spoon [Figures 3. 19 and 3. 21]. At Thurloxtton there is also a fourth female form in a short dress with a child [Figure 3. 22]. Both here and elsewhere Charity is shown with a child, sometimes feeding one

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<sup>91</sup> Richard Daye, *A booke of Christian prayers, collected out of the aunzie[n]t writers, and best learned in our tyme, worthy to be read with an earnest mynde of all Christians, in these daungerous and troublesome dayes, that God for Christes sake will yet still be mercyfull unto us*, (London: John Daye, 1578), 70; KJB: the shield as a symbol of faith comes from Ephesians 6: 16, 'Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked'; and the image of the anchor of Hope derives from Hebrews 6: 19, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil'; the sword is also depicted as an attribute of Justice, examples of which can be seen in Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints 1558–1625* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997): 128, figure 191, Thomas Vautrollier (publisher) title page to Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, *Cantiones, quae ab augmento sacrae vocantur*, (London, 1575); and 229, figure 381, Herman Jansz Muller, 'Temporantia and Justicia, British Museum, London; and 268, figure 455, Hans Collaert after Maarten de Vos, Justice and Prudence, two of the Virtues, Warburg Institute, London; and 284, figure 488; Adriaen Collaert after Maarten de Vos, the Task of Wordly Power, from *The Divine Charge to the Three Estates*, c. 1585-6, Kupferstichkabinett der Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden.

<sup>92</sup> Daye, *A booke of Christian prayers*, 50, 70.

child, but usually with several children, as in Richard Daye's depiction.<sup>93</sup> Charity seems the likeliest interpretation, and although unusual, a Virtue depicted with wings can be found elsewhere.<sup>94</sup> A sixteenth-century pre-Reformation bench end of the Virgin holding the Child with an apple can be seen at Yarncombe, Devon. The same image, which signifies Christ redeeming Adam's sin, was also engraved by early German artists, Albrecht Durer, and Martin Schongauer.<sup>95</sup> Such an image in a church in the early seventeenth century would be highly unusual. A possible explanation is that the mysterious female form, possibly the Virgin and Child, one at Stoke St Gregory, and one or other of the two at Thurloxton, have been part of a copying process that has somehow become corrupted.<sup>96</sup> The early Christian fathers had developed the Pauline concept of Christ as the new Adam; and Mary as the new Eve came later, but an image of the 'New Eve', Mary, seems an unlikely image in a church at this time.<sup>97</sup> At present, the image remains a conundrum. Charity was frequently shown with

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<sup>93</sup> Daye, *A booke of Christian prayers*, 52, 73.

<sup>94</sup> For an example of Virtue with wings, see Caesar Ripa, *Iconologia or Moral Emblems* (London, Printed by Benj. Motte, 1579), 79, image 315.

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/albrecht-durer-the-virgin-and-child-crowned-by-two-angels> (accessed November 16 2017); <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/martin-schongauer-virgin-and-child-with-the-apple> (accessed November 16 2017). I am grateful to Tara Hamling for pointing these out. The Pauline doctrine is summed up in 1 Corinthians 15: 45, KJB 'And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit'. Todd Gray, *Devon's Ancient Bench Ends* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2012), 147; <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-86740-church-of-st-john-the-baptist-yarcombe-de#.WCyokOR76M8> (accessed 16 November 2016); the mysterious figure does not exactly match Daye's representation of Charity.

<sup>96</sup> An example of corruption through copying has been illustrated in another form, in a plasterwork overmantle at Binham Farm, Somerset, as described by Anthony Wells-Cole and others: Wells-Cole, *Continental Prints*, 162-163; John Penoyre and Jane Penoyre, *Decorative Plasterwork in the Houses of Somerset 1500-1700: A Regional Survey* (Taunton: Somerset County Council, 1994), 68, figure 118; further corruption of the scene is illustrated by George Bankart, *The Art of the Plasterer: An Account of the Decorative Development of the Craft, chiefly in England, from the 16th to the 18th century, with chapters on the stucco of the classic period and of the Italian Renaissance, also on sgraffito, pargetting, Scottish, Irish and modern plasterwork* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1909), 78, figure 112: <https://archive.org/stream/artofplastererac00bankuoft#page/78/mode/1up>, (accessed 17 May 2015).

<sup>97</sup> GB: annotation for 1 Corinthians 15: 45: 'Christ the second Adam'.

multiple children, but on these pulpits, the female form is only portrayed with one child.<sup>98</sup> The pulpits at Thurloxtton and Stoke St Gregory demonstrate that specific local circumstances were at work here. These were significant investments for small churches. There is no discernible evidence about the confessional background to the parishes. Whichever pulpit was built first, it was then copied in the second parish. Either copying as the sincerest form of flattery was at work, or else parochial competition. What is clear is that the copying was corrupted, and the images are not identical.

<b>Stoke St Gregory pulpit</b> Pevsner dates it early 17c <i>Figures 3. 15-19.</i>	Female crowned figure with staff	Female crowned figure with anchor	Female figure crowned with dove	Female figure with crown and wings holding a child at the hip who is holding an apple. On the door.	Father Time <i>memento mori</i>
<b>Thurloxtton pulpit</b> dated 1634 <i>Figures 3. 14, 3. 20-3. 22.</i>	Crowned female figure with a shield and sword	Crowned female figure with anchor		Crowned female figure feeding a child with a spoon	Female crowned figure in short dress with child

Table 3. a Table showing the similar and different images on the pulpits, the church of St Giles, Thurloxtton, Somerset, dated 1634, and the church of St Gregory, Stoke St Gregory, Somerset, early seventeenth century.

<sup>98</sup> Examples of Netherlandish prints of Charity depicted with children: Wells-Cole, *Continental Prints*, 155, figure 245, Crispijn de Passe the elder after Marten de Vos, Charity, Rijksmuseum-Stichting, Amsterdam; and 180, figure 296 Jacob Matham after Hendrick Goltzius, Caritas, Warburg Institute, London.



To complicate the imagery on the two pulpits further, at nearby North Newton is a screen with similar images of Hope, Faith, Charity and possibly the Virgin and Child, with the Child holding an apple.<sup>99</sup> Although a comparison can be made between the imagery on the screen at North Newton, Somerset, and those on the pulpits at Stoke St Gregory and Thurloxtton, the dating of the screen as contemporaneous is speculative, and makes such a link uncertain.

It seems therefore that artisans or commissioning investors were copying, competing or cooperating, and, in the process, corrupting the images at Thurloxtton and Stoke St Gregory. The Theological Virtues were perfectly acceptable images to represent in a church setting. The focal point of the congregation's gaze was upon images, which were as visually stimulating as they were instructive. In this small church, the images of approximately fifteen to eighteen inches in height would have been accessible to the whole congregation. Specific local circumstances were at work here. There is no evidence to support or dismiss the notion that these were Laudian pulpits, a term frequently used which suggests that anything decorated must be attributed to the events of the 1630s. The lack of a neat label acts as a warning to the historian not to fall into the easy and frequent trap of assuming anything in the 1620s and 1630s which is decorated must be referenced against the notion of Laudianism, a theme to be developed in the next section.

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<sup>99</sup> For more on North Newton, see L. H. King, *A Short Account of the Church and Parish of St Peter's, North Newton* (London: W. R. Russell, 1899); Reg Price and Les Pickersgill, *North Newton—an Historical Insight* (North Newton: privately printed, 1989); A P Baggs and M C Siraut, "North Petherton: Churches," in *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 6, Andersfield, Cannington, and North Petherton Hundreds (Bridgwater and Neighbouring Parishes)*, ed. R W Dunning and C R Elrington (London: Victoria County History, 1992), 308-312. *British History Online*, accessed December 2, 2013, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol6/pp308-312>; J. C. Robins and K. C. Robins, *The Book of North Newton* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 1999); Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West* (London, 2014), 494.

In exceeding the canonical requirements, individual donors, as well as the investing churchwardens, displayed various attributes: community and parochial pride, episcopal generosity, diocesan authority, familial position, and civic status. Secular and religious drivers were mixed, and all were on show for the viewing, listening parishioners. Going beyond the requirements, diverse investors were able to express their identities as serious Protestants.

*Decoration and Confessional Alignment.*

There has been until recently an assumption that only those who shared Laud's views, or who had Laudian changes imposed upon them, decorated their churches with beautiful objects.<sup>100</sup> In chapter 1 both these aspects of what is called Laudianism were discussed. As already argued, the term Laudian, as a stylistic description, will only be used for objects of the later 1630s when Laud and his fellow episcopal enthusiasts were imposing their views, and only for improvements where the pressure of a Laudian ordinary was visible. For other objects, the term 'locally-led decoration' will be used to describe objects where local investors decorated or beautified their churches or the objects within them. These local investors included Protestants of all hues, including those who sympathised with the views of Laud and his colleagues on church interiors, but who were acting on their own initiative. As described in chapter 1, Julia Merritt's important work on church building in Jacobean London found that 'puritan' parishes were also prepared to decorate their churches.<sup>101</sup> In a recent study of places of worship in the Pennines, an analysis of the means of income and the types of expenditure

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<sup>100</sup> For an analysis of how beauty was judged, see Michael Baxandall and 'the period eye': Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*.

<sup>101</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 952.

of Churchwardens' accounts, the availability of funds, rather than confessional alignment, has been found to be the key factor in decoration and ornamentation.<sup>102</sup>

In four of the cases of pulpits described above, the dates are too early for imposed Laudian trends, 1613 in Lyme Regis, 1616 both in Somerton, and in Croscombe, and 1624 in Thorne. The size, gilding, rich carvings and decoration at Croscombe all demonstrate beautification on a grand scale. Bishop Lake's gift of a highly-decorated pulpit sits with his Calvinist credentials, especially his evident commitment to preaching. There is no evidence that either Bishop Lake at Croscombe, or Richard Harvey at Lyme Regis, shared the Laudian enthusiasts' emphasis on a sacramental liturgy and the changes in churches that followed. The overtly Word-centred texts on both pulpits appear to be exhortations on the importance of sermons, as well as a display of clericalism. Alec Ryrie described the sermon as the 'defining event of early modern Protestant worship'.<sup>103</sup> In Somerton, there is no evidence about the confessional alignment of the parishioners. Rather the building of a pulpit there seems to be part of a general programme, laid out in the accounts, to repair, improve and decorate the church.<sup>104</sup> While Thurloxtton pulpit is dated 1634, and Stoke St Gregory is early seventeenth century, there is no evidence that the confessional position of either parish was sympathetic, or not, to Laudian ideals.

The evidence from these parishes supports a revised understanding of investment in church interiors in the early seventeenth century. The picture in the South West concurs with Julia

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<sup>102</sup> Bullett, "Preaching in the Pennines," 44.

<sup>103</sup> Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 351.

<sup>104</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton.

Merritt's findings for London; the revival of church building and beautification took place well before Laud's emergence, and cannot be explained without 'reference to a range of practical and social, as well as religious, forces'.<sup>105</sup> However, the pattern of investment in the three counties develops her view that in 'more rural parishes' church decoration represented the 'vision of a single wealthy aristocrat or gentleman'.<sup>106</sup> The evidence from pulpits and other material evidence suggests that investors were more diverse than the 'single wealthy aristocrat or gentleman'.

Five other pulpits can be considered in addressing the question as to whether decoration was aligned to a confessional position: briefly Folke and Puddletown - the two parishes which were discussed in chapter 2 - and in more detail, Cerne Abbas, St Cuthbert's at Wells, and Brinkworth.

The pulpit at Folke, to which Walter Rideout objected so vociferously, was built as part of the rebuilding of the whole church in 1628 [Figure 3. 23].<sup>107</sup> In the Churchwardens' presentments of 1626, the wardens had presented that 'our Church is in decay'.<sup>108</sup> Until recently historians have deployed the material evidence in parish churches to illustrate and reinforce the accepted narrative of the history of the Church: that refurbishment and restoration was the local response to the authorities' requirements. In Folke this did not appear to happen, unless the

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<sup>105</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 936.

<sup>106</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 936, 950.

<sup>107</sup> As mentioned in chapter 2, there was a brief in May 1626 'For repairing the Church of Folke in Dorsetshire': Wyndham Anstis Bewes, *Church Briefs or Royal Warrants for Collections for Churches* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896), 123.

<sup>108</sup> WSHC: D5/28/26 The presentment for Folke, Dorset, 1626.

rebuilding of the church and its new interior in 1628 could be seen as a late response to the homily in the Second Book of Homilies, *Repairing and keeping clean, and comely adorning of Churches*.<sup>109</sup> In the Homily churchmen were urged ‘that God may have his place, and that God may have his time, duly to be honoured and served of the whole multitude in the parish’, and admonished that ‘It is a sinne and shame to see so many Churches, so ruinous, and so foully decayed, almost in every corner’.<sup>110</sup> Decades after the Homily, it is much more likely that the church was in such a bad state of repair that the churchwardens and parishioners decided to rebuild it on their own initiative. They rebuilt in 1628, a year before the 1629 proclamation calling for the repair of churches and chapels. The proclamation is often seen ‘as the first shot in the Laudian campaign for beautification’, but its origins may be in line with general interest in church restoration in James I’s reign and in response to concerns about the ‘decay of churches’ expressed in the House of Lords in February 1629.<sup>111</sup> The pulpit was part of this local initiative, and does not fit comfortably into the traditional view that only Laudians cared for churches.

As seen in chapter 2, Walter Rideout’s attack on the minister, Abraham Forrester, including his criticism of the pulpit as a ‘dumb shewe’, raised the big contemporary issues about ministerial duty, and the efficacy of beautifying churches, which were sometimes played out in local, bitter and personal antagonisms.

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<sup>109</sup> *Book of Homilies*, ed. John Griffiths (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Publishing, 2008, originally published by Oxford University Press, 1859), 273-278.

<sup>110</sup> *Book of Homilies*, Griffiths, 273-278.

<sup>111</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 237-238.

The 1634-7 pulpit at Puddletown was also part of a complete refurbishment of the church [Figure 3. 24]. Already discussed in the context of seating in chapter 2, the pulpit, like the rest of the refurbishment, was not part of a response to either an imposed Laudian drive, or a manifestation of Laudian sympathies. It was the result of local drivers in a ‘godly’ parish. One of the principal arguments in this thesis is that not everything that was made in the 1630s was a response to Laud’s coercive policy, or the work of Laudian supporters. It is pertinent to the argument that the 1634 Puddletown memorandum about the refurbishment of the church begins with a reference to the 1629 Proclamation:

The King’s most excellent Majestie Gave Commandment that Churches within this his realme should be repaired and put into form, and thereupon from the Bishop of the Diocese and others the officials a commandment given to present to the courte the faults, and their order given to Repaire and adorne this of Puddletowne within the Countie of Dorset.<sup>112</sup>

As already discussed, Fincham and Tyacke noted in *Altars Restored*, that, whilst the 1629 Proclamation calling for repairs of churches is often seen as the first move in the Laudian campaign for beautification, in fact its origins may be non-partisan, even dating back to Elizabeth’s reign. In chapter 1 the sequence of regulatory instruction from the 1559 Royal Articles to the 1629 Proclamation was outlined. The pulpit at Puddletown, like Folke’s, was the result of specific local circumstances and does not merit a Laudian label in either sense of the term.

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<sup>112</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1 From the memorandum and rate list concerning the re-seating of the Church, a new gallery and general alterations to the Church at Puddletown, 1634.

The highly-decorated oak pulpit at Cerne Abbas, Dorset, displays the date 1640 on its backboard [Figure 3. 25].<sup>113</sup> Octagonal, it has enriched rails and cornice, with two tiers of enriched arcaded panels, displaying stylised leaves, and an octagonal sounding board with a central pendant. The back board has enriched pilasters at the sides and two enriched panels, the lower with a thistle and rose design, and the upper with a shield and a date.<sup>114</sup> Although richly decorated, there is no religious imagery or symbolism. Because of its decoration and date, it has been described as Laudian.<sup>115</sup> It may well have been a response to the Laudian enthusiasms of Bishop Skinner of Bristol, who had arrived in 1637, but the earlier pulpits discussed above suggest there is no need to equate investment in this sort of decorated fixture with Laudianism *per se*, and detailed analysis of the documentary evidence suggests that the pulpit of 1640 was part of a much more protracted process of investment. This complicates the traditional assumption that beautification must stem from Laudianism.

In 1640 in the annual note about church goods in the Cerne Abbas Churchwardens' accounts, the 'old pulpit' was added to the list. In the same year, the Churchwardens itemised expenditure for 'a new pulpit & Canopy & Covering for the font and a little chest with 3 locks £9 3s 0d'.<sup>116</sup> There is little to aid an understanding of the confessional position of this parish. There are no clerical records to help. In 1633-4 the churchwardens paid to have the 'Maypole'

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<sup>113</sup> Cox, *Pulpits*, 106.

<sup>114</sup> "Cerne Abbas," in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, Volume I, West*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952), 74-85. *British History Online*, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/dorset/vol1/pp74-85>; F. P. Pitfield, *Dorset Parish Churches A-D* (Sherborne: Dorset Publishing, 1981), 157.

<sup>115</sup> Melvyn Matthews, *St Mary's Church, Cerne Abbas: The Building and its Meaning* (Dorchester: Friary Press for St Mary's PCC, 2007).

<sup>116</sup> DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas, 1640.

demolished just as maypoles were reappearing in other places after the second Book of Sports: ‘Paid Anthony Thorne & others for taking downe the Maypole & making a Towne ladder of it’.<sup>117</sup> This could mean that a Puritan group held the ascendancy then in the parish. Two significant observations emerge from the limited run of twelve years in the Churchwardens’ accounts 1628-40. It is striking that the church was subject to visitations throughout the twelve years of extant records. Normally these were by the Archdeacon and the Bishop. In 1634, The Archbishop’s metropolitan visitation is noted. In 1628, 1631, 1633, 1634, 1637 and 1640 there were two visitations in each year, discernible either by dating the visitations, or by naming different locations or by differentiating the archdeacon’s visitation from the bishop’s. The number of visitations in parishes was often twice a year, except there were wide differences in practice.<sup>118</sup> In Cameley, there were two every year in an almost unbroken run of accounts, from 1613 to 1640, except 1629 when there was one, and in 1634 when there were three.<sup>119</sup> In Somerton between 1583 and 1640 there two visitations in thirty-one of the years, especially after 1595.<sup>120</sup> Cheddar and Mere, both peculiars, experienced far fewer visitations than other parishes.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas: the year was 1633-4 but the accounts were not passed until 19 April 1635; Underdown, *Fire From Heaven*, 92. For more on the banning of maypoles, and their continued use, see Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 236.

<sup>118</sup> DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas, 1628, 1631, 1633, 1634, 1637, 1640. For details of visitations, and the expenditure involved, see Hitchman, “Balancing the Accounts,” 21-24.

<sup>119</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1613, 1614, 1618, 1619, 1622, 1624, 1627, 1628, 1630, 1631, 1633, 1634, 1635, 1636, 1639, 1640.

<sup>120</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1-2 Cwa Somerton, 1590, 1591, 1593, 1594, 1595, 1597, 1599, 1600, 1602, 1604, 1606, 1610, 1614 (3), 1615, 1616, 1617, 1621, 1622, 1624, 1625, 1628, 1630, 1631, 1632, 1634, 1635, 1636, 1637, 1638, 1639, 1640.

<sup>121</sup> SHC: DD\SAS\C/795/SE/14 Churchwardens’ accounts of Cheddar; Baker, “Mere”; WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere; for more on peculiars, see Ingram, *Church Courts*, 36-37, 44-45, 212-213.



This parish of Cerne Abbas was being held to account regularly, and before Skinner and his Laudian drive to regulate and achieve uniformity in liturgical practice. Skinner's 1637 Visitation Articles are based on the previous Bishop's, Bishop Wright's of 1631, and demand no more than the 1604 canon required, 'a comely pulpit set up in a convenient place'.<sup>122</sup> Neither of Skinner's two predecessors at Bristol, Robert Wright (1623-1632) and George Coke (1633-1636), had a reputation for supervision and regulation, so the implication is that such visitations were just part of the normal machinery of ecclesiastical monitoring.<sup>123</sup>

The second characteristic, which may be linked to the pattern of visitations at Cerne Abbas, was the conscientious regular programme of maintenance, repair and also beautification, that the accounts record.<sup>124</sup> In 1630 the churchwardens invested in the 'hower glasse, two yarges and three quarters of grene broad cloth for a Carpett for the Comunion table borde'; 'paid for a new Cushion for the Pulpett & for fringe silke tassels & other silke for the same cushions £1 7s, Item paid for the same cushion 12d', and were given 'a pulpett cloth'.<sup>125</sup> It is the regularity of maintenance and beautification before the Laudian campaign that is significant at Cerne Abbas. This was not unusual where there are extant Churchwardens' accounts in these three dioceses and counties.

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<sup>122</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. II*, Kenneth Fincham, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 62, 73-4.

<sup>123</sup> "Coke, George (1570–1646)," Ian Atherton in *ODNB*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5827> (accessed December 19, 2016); "Wright, Robert (1560–1643)," D. J. Oldridge in *ODNB*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30055> (accessed December 19, 2016).

<sup>124</sup> DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas.

<sup>125</sup> DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas, 1630.

Before they had invested in their expensive and highly decorated pulpit, an example of ‘locally-led decoration’, the churchwardens had commissioned a small, simply decorated communion table, bearing the date 1638 and the initials of the churchwardens, BK and WS, Bartholomew Kinge and William Sherringe (to be discussed further in chapter 5). The location of the inscription indicated a north-south axis, an altar-wise position. It cost a modest ‘12s’, which compares with the cost of the expensive pulpit, which was a significant part of the grouping of objects totalling over £9 [Figure 3. 26]. The communion table and the richly decorated pulpit could have been a response to the Laudian campaign to beautify and enhance churches. The pulpit could also have been an example of ‘locally-led decoration’, that is a locally inspired investment to decorate the church. These two drivers are not mutually exclusive. The churchwardens may have been complying with the Laudian drives, but it may well have suited them to beautify their church, to proclaim their parochial pride, and to emphasise those elements of worship which they felt were most important. The difference between the tall, imposing, highly decorated pulpit, proclaiming the importance of preaching, and enhancing the preacher’s authority, compared to the much cheaper, more modest communion table can hardly have been lost on those who held the pulpit in their lines of sight. The view that in the 1630s churches were re-orientated towards sacramental worship seems complicated at Cerne Abbas by a subtler narrative; but neither the table nor the pulpit stand in isolation. The story of Cerne Abbas Churchwardens’ accounts is a story of repair, regular maintenance and decoration.

Another pulpit that also provides a more nuanced assessment than simply a reorientation of the church to sacramental worship and alignment of decoration with Laudian inclination, is

the 1636 pulpit in St Cuthbert's parish church, Wells.<sup>126</sup> St Cuthbert's was the only parish in the prosperous cathedral city of Wells and the church stands just 500 yards from the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace.<sup>127</sup> A leading member of the Wells and Glastonbury Antiquarian Society, Thomas Serel, writing in 1875, described the pulpit as an afterthought in 'Additional Notes' on the last page. He said

The PULPIT has not been mentioned; and in connection with the Church, it is of a most incongruous character. It is however, a very good example of Jacobean work, carved in oak, and hexagonal in shape. There are now five panels perfect, in which are rudely represented Jacob wrestling with the Angel; Samson slaying the lion; David meeting Goliath; Jonah being delivered from the whale; and Daniel in the den of lions. [Figures 3. 27 to 3. 31].

Serel concluded

A good opportunity offers for some liberal and well-disposed person, to supply a pulpit more in keeping with, and more worthy of the Church in which it stands.<sup>128</sup>

It is fortunate for students of this period that no such person came forth. In 1875 there was no door, and his wording, 'there are now five panels perfect', could imply a missing door. The brackets of the base are represented as eagles [Figure 3. 32]. There are birds along the top frieze [Figure 3. 33]. The bottom row of cartouches contains animals, separated by fantastical

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<sup>126</sup> In 1908 Thomas Holmes described the date plate, 1636. It has not survived: Thomas Holmes, *Wells and Glastonbury: A Historical and Topographical Account* (London: Methuen, 1908), 134.

<sup>127</sup> For an analysis of tensions in cathedral cities with civic authorities, see Catherine Patterson, "Corporations, Cathedrals and the Crown: Local Dispute and Royal Interest in Early Stuart England," *History* 85 (2000): 546-571.

<sup>128</sup> Thomas Serel, *Historical Notes on the Church of Saint Cuthbert in Wells: The Priory of St. John, College of La Mountery and chapels formerly at Southover, Southway, Polsham and Chilcote* (Wells: J.M. Atkins, 'Journal' Office, and E.M. Beauchamp, 1875), 154.

female forms with their obvious symbols of fertility. While the female forms belong to the fantastical tradition which had been the subject of art for centuries, the overall composition of grotesque work, a mixed composition of humans and animals, was a novel, Renaissance import.<sup>129</sup> Other examples of grotesque work on pulpits can be seen on the 1629 pulpit at Clyffe Peppard, Wiltshire, and the Elizabethan or early seventeenth-century pulpit at Spetisbury, Dorset [Figures 3. 34 and 3. 35].<sup>130</sup> Wells' pulpit included these fashionable novel decorations.

Foyle and Pevsner call the Old Testament carved figures not 'rude' but 'naïve'. They are placed on three dimensional shields.<sup>131</sup> These remarkable, rich images demonstrate both change and continuity in the decoration of this the 'largest parish church in Somerset'.<sup>132</sup>

The creation of new religious imagery in the context of church space was unusual, especially for a focal point such as a pulpit. The five sets of carved figures were about Old Testament stories of trial, deliverance and fortitude: Jonah saved from the whale by the deliverance of God, Daniel rescued from the lion's den because he trusted in God, Samson able to kill the

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<sup>129</sup> Henry Peacham, *The Art of Drawing with the Pen* (Da Capo Press, 1606); in chapter 13 he wrote, 'Of Antique', and describes grotesque as 'an unnaturall or unorderedly composition for delight sake, of me(n) beasts, birds, fishes, flowers without (as wee say) Rime or reason'.

<sup>130</sup> Henry Burford was appointed Vicar of Clyffe Peppard in 1621, and in 1622 was licensed to preach in the diocese of Salisbury: <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp> (accessed 24 November 2016); Pevsner describes the pulpit as Elizabethan; Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 394-395; Cox describes it as part of the 'Laudian revival': Cox, *Pulpits*, 142.

<sup>131</sup> Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 692-696, 695.

<sup>132</sup> Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 692-696, 692. Felicity Heal suggests that figurative images could not be found in churches but only in domestic spaces. The evidence here, on the Bluett Pew, Holcombe Rogus, and on Somerton's communion table, for example, challenges this: Felicity Heal, "Art and Iconoclasm," in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Reformation and Identity c. 1520-1662 vol. I*, ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 186-209, 192.

attacking lion because of the spirit of the Lord, Jacob's deliverance after wrestling with an angel, and David's victory over Goliath through the work of Jehovah.<sup>133</sup> These stories were well known in their own right, and they were also typologies of the New Testament central story of Christ, put to trials and delivered by God the Father through the Resurrection.<sup>134</sup> Portrayals of these stories were produced in the medieval world and also post-Reformation, for example in the Lutheran church at Freudenstadt in Wurttemberg, and were common in post-Reformation domestic decoration.<sup>135</sup> For example, David and Goliath were once displayed in a house in Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, dated 1606; and Jonah and the Whale in a house in Hertfordshire, c. 1600.<sup>136</sup>

Their appearance on the three dimensional shields allows the viewer, familiar with the stories, to see the images efficiently and quickly. Tara Hamling has demonstrated that 'synoptic' Biblical imagery, common in post-Reformation visual culture, represents the essence of the subject, allows the viewer to see from a distance the essence, and does not encourage prolonged gazing which was associated with medieval superstitious practices.<sup>137</sup> Such ornamental work as these images had a critical role in transmitting a common visual

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<sup>133</sup> The five stories in KJB are: Jonah and the whale: Jonah chapters 1 and 2; Daniel and the lion: Daniel chapter 6; Samson and the lion: Judges 14: 5-6; Jacob and the angel: Genesis 32: 22-32; David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17: 49.

<sup>134</sup> At Freudenstadt, Jacob's fight with the angel is typology for Christ in Gethsemane, and Jonah eaten by the whale a typology for the Resurrection of Christ: Reinhard Lieske, *Protestantische Frömmigkeit im Spiegel der kirchlichen Kunst des Herzogtums Württemberg* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1973), 37-43.

<sup>135</sup> For example, at the Abbey of Vézelay, France, there are stone carvings of Samson and the lions, a violent depiction of David and Goliath, and Daniel and the lions: Francois Vogade, *Vézelay* (Vézelay: SCOP-SADAG, 1987), plates 42, 68, 69, 98; for examples of these stories in post-Reformation domestic decoration, see Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*: for Jonah and the whale 245-6; for David and Goliath 15, 182, 189, 191; for Daniel and the lion 46, 248-9; for Samson and the lion 201; for Jacob and the angel 137.

<sup>136</sup> Hamling and Richardson, *A Day at Home*, 208-210, 200.

<sup>137</sup> Hamling, "Visual Culture."

vocabulary.<sup>138</sup> Hamling's argument would be supported by the notion that the congregation were focusing on a central part of the Reformed liturgy, the sermon, and could see these synoptic images, elevated on the pulpit, and alternatively see them as they walked to the communion table. Hamling has also aligned the synoptic quality of biblical images to heraldic images, catering to the essence of the matter and the same representational visuality.<sup>139</sup> There were heraldic images in St Cuthbert's on funerary monuments and the Royal Arms dated 1631.<sup>140</sup> The use of shields on the pulpit behind the five images could strengthen the allusion to their synoptic quality, a theme developed by Claire Tilbury in assessing the heraldic symbols of the twelve patriarchs at Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire. Tilbury emphasises that heraldry offered a common visual vocabulary.<sup>141</sup> She argues that by beautifying the church in 1633 with twelve wall paintings of the patriarchs, acting as typologies for the twelve apostles, the investors chose heraldry as an iconographic invention to demonstrate continuity, to transfer social emblems into the religious context and thus apportion status to the non-armigerous parishioners. Tilbury also posited that heraldry neatly sidestepped any vestiges of distaste for figurative images. The use of heraldry on St Cuthbert's pulpit would be consistent with her argument at Burton Latimer.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Hamling, "Visual Culture."

<sup>139</sup> Hamling, "Visual Culture."

<sup>140</sup> A stone heraldic shield for Henry Clark has become separated from its 1587 monument; the 1614 standing monument of alabaster and stone with a bold heraldic shield above for Henry Llewellyn, who founded the nearby eponymous alms houses; Francis Hayes' brass memorial in 1623 has beneath it a heraldic shield.

<sup>141</sup> Clare Tilbury, "The Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes of Israel: An English Reformation Subject for Church Decoration," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 63, no. 2 (April 2012): 274-305.

<sup>142</sup> Tilbury, "Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes."

It seems from visual evidence that the carvings were applied at the time the pulpit was built in 1636, although the pulpit has been restored. They are synoptic but have sufficient detail to allow the viewer to identify immediately the subject matter. For example, David, a tiny figure compared to Goliath, is holding his famous sling [Figure 3. 29]. There is a marked lack of violence in them all, and in particular Jacob and the Angel are not struggling but stand facing each other [Figure 3. 27]. Although familiar stories, their careful selection indicates a serious, thoughtful choice. The idea of God's deliverance was congruent with the notion of salvation through God's grace alone, a basic Calvinist tenet. Fortitude in adversity was also a fundamental Calvinist theme: fortitude was considered by Calvinists to be an outward expression of their election as the saved. The investors here were displaying standard Calvinist themes. As well as continuity in the inclusion of ancient biblical stories, there is also evidence of change on the pulpit's carvings. The grotesque female forms with their obvious symbols of fertility, and the cartouches, were in keeping with fashions of the early seventeenth century. While Anthony Wells-Cole's seminal work, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, has shown that imported prints, particularly from the Netherlands, transformed art, architecture and decoration in this period, he thinks it unlikely that Elizabethan and Jacobean joiners and carvers in the country would have had direct contact with prints as potential sources of decorative ideas. The implication is that wealthy patrons had access to continental prints.<sup>143</sup> Wells was a cathedral city and Wells-Cole believes cathedral cities were 'likely to have harboured significant joiners' shops'.<sup>144</sup> There is still much to be understood about patronage, continental influences from prints, joiners' workshops and the networks of influence for parish churches outside London.

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<sup>143</sup> Wells-Cole, *Continental Prints*, 169; Wells-Cole was able to illustrate examples of prints of David and Goliath, 104-5, 189-191; Daniel, 241; Jonah, 104, 121-2, 218; Samson 239; Jacob, 27.

<sup>144</sup> Wells-Cole, *Continental Prints*, 172.

St Cuthbert's is an example of the lack of symmetry between the rich material evidence, and the paucity of archival sources, discussed in chapter 1. There are some clues about the confessional position of the parish. There is evidence that the religious affiliations were mixed, for example John Hole, a previous Mayor, and a constable, a known 'Puritan', in 1610 objected to an extravagant procession. The holders of the advowson, the Dean and Chapter, had exempted St Cuthbert's from a prohibition on church ales in order that they could hold this procession, during which 3000 people were present. John Hole was lampooned during it, and the outraged Hole took his libellers all the way to Star Chamber.<sup>145</sup> The care with which the images on the pulpit were chosen tells of serious intent, as does the tradition of endowing annual sermons at St Cuthbert's.<sup>146</sup> There is evidence of parochial tensions with the Cathedral, which centred on the use of space and trade, demarcations between the secular and ecclesiastical courts, tensions which had had a long history.<sup>147</sup> These tensions erupted when Queen Anne visited Wells in 1613, when the Mayor and Corporation, closely associated with St Cuthbert's, did not invite to the celebration the Dean and Chapter, the holders of the

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<sup>145</sup> For more details of this extravagant procession and the colourful row that ensued, see David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603 to 1660* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 55; and James Stokes, ed., *Records of Early English Drama: Somerset including Bath vol. 1* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), 261-306.

<sup>146</sup> Serel, *Church of Saint Cuthbert*, 78, 79, 80; TNA: PROB 11/141/329 The will of William Bull, Linen Draper of Wells, Somerset, 1629; SHC: DD\SG/17 Draft agreement between Elianor Bull of Wells (widow of William Bull, late one of the Masters of the said city or borough), and the Mayor, Masters and Burgesses; for the execution of a bequest in William Bull's Will for a yearly sermon to be preached in St Cuthbert's Church, Wells, 1623.

<sup>147</sup> Holmes, *Wells*, 73-6, 88-91; Carl Estabrook, "In the Midst of Ceremony: Cathedral and Community in Seventeenth-Century Wells," in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown*, eds. Susan Amussen and Mark Kishlansky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 133-161, 143.



advowson.<sup>148</sup> As the Corporation was closely associated with the church of St Cuthbert, tensions that existed between the Corporation and the Bishop would have been evident in the worshipping congregation. In 1634 Piers was offended not to receive the accustomed gift on his arrival in Wells, and later there is evidence that the Corporation refused to give him records of their meetings in 1639.<sup>149</sup> These would fit into the historic tensions between Bishop and the Parish, with which the Corporation was closely associated, but it might also indicate that the Parish in building an elaborate and decorated pulpit in 1636, just after Piers's arrival, was not falling in with Piers's enthusiasms but rather were acting on what could be called a parish-led initiative. There is no evidence to demonstrate whether the churchwardens were complying with Piers's altar policy.<sup>150</sup> It may be that in building a decorated pulpit, unusually with figures as a focal point, St Cuthbert's was expressing its independence, and its parochial pride, as well as proclaiming the importance of the Word preached. This could be interpreted as a theological and liturgical statement of independence by a parish which embodied the town's spirited independence from its Bishop, a bishop who was at this time pursuing controversial liturgical policies. Piers was meeting resistance in many parishes in his diocese, including resistance from conservatives who found the new demands expensive, upsetting their recent material changes, and resistance from the 'godly' members of the church who were liturgically and theologically opposed to Laudian innovations.<sup>151</sup> The decoration on St

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<sup>148</sup> REED: *Somerset*, 371-3; Estabrook, "In the Midst of Ceremony," 150-151; Carl Estabrook, "Ritual, Space and Authority in Seventeenth-Century English Cathedral Cities," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* vol. 32, part 4 (2002): 593-620, 607-8; Hembry, *The Bishops*, 211-212.

<sup>149</sup> These two incidents are evidenced by John Reeks: Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset," 75, ns., 116-118.

<sup>150</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of the Laudian altar policy, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, where chapter 5 'The Turning of the Tables, 1625-1640' provides the best analysis for what they describe as 'an often ambiguous and fragmentary' altar policy', 176; they refer to Wells: 202-4, 210.

<sup>151</sup> Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*; Hembry, *The Bishops*; for an example of disruption to seating, see details of the case at Leiland, Somerset: SHC DBCC, D\D/cd/72, 1637, cited by Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset", 137; for other examples of how the radical policies upset the vested interests of parishioners' seating, see Kevin Dillow, "The Social and Ecclesiastical Significance of Church Seating Arrangements and Pew Disputes, 1500-

Cuthbert's pulpit cannot, however, be aligned to either a godly parish or to the Laudian imposed drive for beautification. Although this is not a neat conclusion, it supports an important argument, that where the confessional position of a parish or investor is not known or is mixed, it should not be assumed that, because there was decoration or beautification, that in itself meant the investors were either conforming to Laudian drives, or shared the theological and liturgical stance of Laud and his adherents. Protestants of all stripes beautified and decorated their churches.

As the Mayor and Corporation, and the rest of the congregation, sat in St Cuthbert's, just 500 yards from the Cathedral and the Palace, in the late 1630s listening to the sermon and looking at the pulpit with its synoptic images of trials, deliverance and fortitude, they may well have prayed for deliverance for themselves from their present episcopal trials, and the fortitude required in their struggle.

The common vocabulary of heraldry was also deployed on the 1630 pulpit at Brinkworth, Wiltshire, but here it is not the shields displayed on St Cuthbert's pulpit, but rather the use of heraldic beasts. On either side of the backboard are the upright figures of a lion and a unicorn, both royal symbols [Figure 3. 36].<sup>152</sup> Underneath the pulpit are the carvings of three griffins and two upright lions, where it is possible to see the vestiges of colouring [Figure 3. 37]. Instantly recognisable to the congregation as familiar heraldic devices, they represented the traditional heraldic themes of status and antiquity. These creatures also fall into the fantastical

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1740," (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1990); and Catherine Wright, "The Spatial Ordering of Community in English Church Seating, c. 1550-1700," (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2002).

<sup>152</sup> Cox, *Pulpits*, 141-2.

tradition of art, which had been the subject of church decoration for centuries.<sup>153</sup> The archival evidence is thin, so who commissioned this, and the confessional position of the parish is unknown. The previous year, 1629, a new minister, Tobias Crisp, had arrived. He preached from this pulpit until his ejection in 1642. His fame was posthumous when his sermons were published in three volumes between 1643 and 1648, entitled *Christ Alone Exalted*.<sup>154</sup> Recently he has been the subject of scholarly interest.<sup>155</sup> Described and reviled as an Antinomian, he preached long and densely argued sermons.<sup>156</sup> His congregation heard him say at the end of one long sermon,

But the searching into every corner of this truth, for the sifting of it, hath brought me exceedingly back beyond my expectation. I shall have further occasion in the afternoon to speak of it.<sup>157</sup>

They at least had the solace of an unusual, decorated pulpit to view: the visually arresting, silhouetted heraldic beasts on this tall structure would have been visible to all in the nave, more visible than flat representations on a carved surface. While the confessional position of this poor, rural parish of cloth workers is unknown, Tobias Crisp was considered a Laudian

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<sup>153</sup> For examples of misericords in England, see Francis Bond, *Wood Carvings in English Churches: Misericords vol. I* (London: Oxford University Press, 1910); for examples of green man imagery, see Kathleen Basford, *The Green Man* (Ipswich: Brewer, 1978).

<sup>154</sup> “Crisp, Tobias (1600–1643),” Roger Pooley in *ODNB*, see online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6708>, (accessed 9 April, 2016); Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted* (London, 1690).

<sup>155</sup> Christopher Hill, “Dr Tobias Crisp,” in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill: Volume II Religion and Politics in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. Christopher Hill (Tiptree: Harvester Press, 1986), 141–161; David Parnham, “‘The Humbling of ‘High Presumption’: Tobias Crisp Dismantles the Puritan Ordo Salutis,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 56, no. 1 (January 2005): 50–74; Randall Pederson, *Unity in Diversity: English Puritans and the Puritan Reformation, 1603–1689* (Brill’s Series in Church History 68. Leiden: Brill, 2014).

<sup>156</sup> For more on Antinomianism, see David Como, “Radical Puritanism c. 1558 –1660,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, eds. John Coffey and Paul Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 241–258, 249.

<sup>157</sup> Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted* (London, 1690): Sermon I ‘Christ is the Way’, 14.

by some, and a Puritan by the Royalists. At Brinkworth any general attempt to align decoration and beautification to a confessional position is compounded by contemporaries' confusion about how to label Tobias Crisp's own theology, and would be unanswerable.<sup>158</sup>

*Inscriptions as Expressions of Identity and as Agents in Identity Formation*

Brinkworth's pulpit is an example of the use of inscriptions to convey expressions of identity but also to act as agents in the formation of identity. Inscriptions fall into three groups: text, dates and names or initials. On the backboard of the Brinkworth pulpit is the text and the date, 'WO BE UNTO ME IF I PREACH NOT THE GOSPEL ANNO DOMINI 1630' [Figure 3. 38].<sup>159</sup> The wording could either be from the Geneva Bible or the King James Bible, from I Corinthians 9: 16. At Brinkworth, the new incumbent, Tobias Crisp, took up his post in 1629, a year before the pulpit was built.<sup>160</sup> Above the backboard are just visible the inscribed names of the Churchwardens, who provided a new and unusually decorated pulpit for their new minister on behalf of the congregation. The warning inscribed on the back plate, 'Wo unto me if I preach not the Gospel Anno Domini 1630', could have been at Crisp's suggestion, where he could have been proclaiming to his congregation the seriousness with which he took his faithfulness to the Gospel. Alternatively the commissioning Churchwardens could have placed the text there to remind the new minister of his duty, which also reminded the listeners

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<sup>158</sup> Hill, "Dr Tobias Crisp," 142; Parnham, "Tobias Crisp," 53; Pooley, "Crisp," *ODNB*.

<sup>159</sup> KJB I Corinthians 9: 16, 'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel'; as footnoted earlier, the GB only has one word different: 'For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to rejoice of: for necessity is laid upon me, and woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel'.

<sup>160</sup> For details of his wealth, see Hill, "Dr Tobias Crisp," 142; Pooley, "Crisp," *ODNB*; for details of his status as a licensed preacher see:

<http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?PersonID=40482> (accessed 24 November 2016): preacher at Newington 1628-9, preacher throughout the diocese of Winchester 1628, preacher throughout diocese of London 1628, preacher throughout diocese of Canterbury 1628.

of their role, inviting them to be active participants in the preacher's calling.<sup>161</sup> Like other pulpits, the chronology specific to Brinkworth suggests a local story as much as a grand narrative. The same text can be found elsewhere associated with pulpits at Witnesham, Suffolk, and Wheatley, Nottinghamshire.<sup>162</sup> The date fixes the investment in the pulpit and the text, as with all Biblical texts on pulpits, emphasises the importance of preaching.<sup>163</sup> But it does more than that: it displays to the congregation before and after the preacher entered the pulpit a warning to the preacher of the consequences of any infidelity to the Gospel. The importance of the power of the listener has been much studied through late sixteenth and seventeenth-century texts on listening to sermons and it has been demonstrated that such texts depict the construction of the sermon's meaning as a cooperative endeavour where the layperson wielded significant power.<sup>164</sup> However, as these texts suggest, meaning could have a fluidity.<sup>165</sup> The Laudians were aware of this and emphasised the importance of reading desks for the reason that sermons could have a fluidity of meaning, but that the read Word was unalloyed by the preacher's interpretation. For example, at the church of St Lawrence, Ipswich, Bishop Wren's officials had the inscription over the pulpit, 'Thy Word is truth', moved to the reading desk 'for the avoidance of all other mistaking', because as a Laudian bishop he wished to distinguish between the truth of the read Scripture, and the fallible

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<sup>161</sup> Laura Feitzinger Brown argues that the listener was like a child suckling at the breast, and that listeners had very great power like a nursing child: Feitzinger Brown, "Slippery Listening," 3-5.

<sup>162</sup> George Yule found the same text on the north wall, where the pulpit was situated, in Witnesham, Suffolk: George Yule, "James VI and I: Furnishing the Churches in His Two Kingdoms," in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, eds. Anthony Fletcher, and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 182-208. 191; James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Suffolk; East* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015, first published by Penguin, 1961, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised by Enid Radcliffe 1974), 591-592, 591; Robert Whiting has also found the same text with slightly different words on a 1604 pulpit at Wheatley, Nottinghamshire, 'Woe unto me except I preach the gospel': Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 189.

<sup>163</sup> Yule, "James VI and I," 190; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 106.

<sup>164</sup> Feitzinger Brown, "Slippery Listening." For more on advice about preaching and listening to sermons, see Ceri Sullivan, "The Art of Listening in the Seventeenth Century," *Modern Philology* 104, (2006-7): 34-71.

<sup>165</sup> Feitzinger Brown, "Slippery Listening."

interpretation of it from the pulpit.<sup>166</sup> At Brinkworth the warning to the preacher is displayed in the lines of sight to the congregation, but probably not legible to those in the back pews, those at the edge of the public zone. Was the inscription there as a didactic tool for the congregation, or was it there to engage the listeners in the cooperative task of listening, as Arnold Hunt and Laura Feitzinger Brown have suggested?<sup>167</sup> Was it there to remind the preacher as he entered the intimate zone of the pulpit, of the seriousness of his duty? The obvious answer may well be that the purpose of the inscription was both to warn the preacher, and also to engage the worshippers in the cooperative business of making and hearing sermons.

In two parishes already discussed, at Brinkworth and Lyme Regis, the clergy were licensed preachers, and this provides part of the background to the investment in pulpits in those parish churches.<sup>168</sup> There are other examples of licensed preachers being in post when it is known that a new pulpit was built, either known through the inscribed date, or through the churchwardens' accounts, or both: in 1635 there was a new licensed preacher and a new pulpit at Charminster, Dorset; as already seen, the new Rector at Thorne Coffin, Somerset, described as a 'scholar', arrived a year before the new pulpit, which was built in 1624.<sup>169</sup> There are other conjunctions when the advent of a new Vicar or Rector coincided with the building of a new pulpit: Osborne, Dorset in 1639; Ashington, Somerset, in 1637; Banwell, Somerset, in 1620; Compton Dundon, Somerset in 1628; Weare, Somerset, in a new vicar in

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<sup>166</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 247; for details on contemporary debates about the differences between the Word read and the Word preached, see chapter 1 in Hunt, *Art of Hearing*.

<sup>167</sup> Hunt, *Art of Hearing*; Feitzinger Brown, "Slippery Listening."

<sup>168</sup> <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp> (accessed 1 December 2017).

<sup>169</sup> <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp> (accessed 1 December 2017): the entry says that Wilkinson was 'described as a scholar'.

1616 and a new pulpit in 1617; Boscombe, Wiltshire, the arrival of the new vicar in 1632 was followed a year later by a new pulpit; in Clyffe Peppard, Wiltshire, where a new pulpit in 1629 was preceded by the arrival of a new curate in 1628; as shown earlier in the chapter, at Minety, Wiltshire, 1627 was the year of the institution of the new Perpetual Vicar and the installation of the new pulpit.<sup>170</sup> Whilst any one parish might be a coincidence, the trend here, where the date of the pulpit is known as well as the date of the appointment of the clergy, appears more than coincidence, but rather an emerging pattern, which appears not to have been much remarked upon in this period.<sup>171</sup> It can be perceived as a manifestation of clericalism, as well as a declaration of the importance of preaching, realised in decorated wood.

This is not a quantitative study but the proportion of pulpits in the study that has the date, the names or initials of the investor, and a text is interesting. Table 3. b is not a complete picture of all extant pulpits as only churches visited for this research are included. It does indicate, despite the capricious nature of survival, that nearly a third of pulpits studied in the three counties were dated, a trend observed by Fincham and Tyacke in *Altars Restored*. Fincham and Tyacke suggest that dating was the wish ‘to memorialise the acquisition’.<sup>172</sup> In memorialising the pulpit, and displaying attributes such as familial status or parochial pride, these inscriptions also were invested with power in creating and sustaining identity. A regular attender at church would have, Sunday after Sunday, seen the date, or the names or initials or

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<sup>170</sup> <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp> (accessed 1 December 2017).

<sup>171</sup> The significance of a new incumbent was seen at Chelvey, in chapter 2; earlier in this chapter at Croscombe the link was made between the new incumbent and Bishop Lake’s investment; in Chapter 6 a link will be suggested between Quirke’s investment at Minehead and a new incumbent.

<sup>172</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 105-6.

the text, sometimes two of them, sometimes all three of them, and could not have failed to have absorbed the shorthand of identity formation. The shorthand spoke of the year in which the pulpit was erected, on a common time line, on which the worshippers' lives also stood. The names or initials, or even the episcopal arms, displayed the patrons' identity, the identity of those who had invested in this focal point on behalf of their community. The viewers were bound into that parochial community, as they were also pulled by the Biblical exhortation into a community of worshipping, participating Protestants. On twelve pulpits, the name or initials of the investor is displayed. In three cases the investor's identity, and a text is displayed as well as the date: Croscombe, Lyme Regis and Somerton.

Churches	Dorset	Somerset	Wiltshire	Other counties	Total
Number of churches surveyed with extant pulpits	14	37	17	23	91
Number where date is inscribed	4	12	3	3	22
Number where investor's name is inscribed	2	7	3*	2	14
Number where text is used	1	7	3	3	14

Table 3. b

Table showing the numbers of surveyed extant pulpits with texts, dates and names. \*3 includes episcopal arms at Croscombe



Four examples of the use of Biblical text on pulpits are worth considering. As described above, 'Faith by hearing' was the text on Richard Harvey's pulpit at Lyme Regis:

‘TO GOD’S GLORY RICHARD HARVEY OF LONDON, MERCER AND  
MURCHANT ADVENTURER 1613. FAITH IS BY HEARING’.

This inscription displays for the listener and the observer, the date, the name of the donor and his status both as a mercer and merchant, and indeed one from London, which implies a higher status [Figure 3. 8]. It glorifies God and uses the phrase familiar to contemporaries, and appropriated by Robert Wilkinson for the title page of his very popular publication on how to listen to sermons, *A Jewell for the Ear*, first published in 1593. The text taken from Romans 10: 17, 'Then faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of God', is a cornerstone in Protestant theology.<sup>173</sup> Margaret Aston in *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* put it very succinctly, 'The key to the kingdom was the word and the word was unlocked by the ear. This was the preacher's passport and the manifesto of all who believed in justification by faith.'<sup>174</sup> It is ironic that this key Protestant tenet, linking hearing the Word to faith and thus to salvation, was conveyed by visual display. As well as Protestant piety, the inscription at Lyme Regis also displays familial identity and civic intention, as demonstrated earlier. The pelican at the apex of the pulpit at Croscombe similarly linked hearing the Word symbolically to salvation. But the pulpit at Lyme Regis was also invested with power in forming community pride and Protestant identity, not just for 1613 but for the future. The idea that visual culture

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<sup>173</sup> Robert Wilkinson, *A Jewell for the Eare* (London, 1593) was reprinted at least eight times between 1593 and 1644: Feitzinger Brown, "Slippery Listening," 8; there this text, 'Faith is by hearing' has been described as a 'rallying cry' for new Protestant churches all over Europe'; Susan Wabuda suggests that the text, 'Faith by hearing' speaks of the triumphant new position of the pulpit in English churches: Wabuda, "Triple Deckers," 151.

<sup>174</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 893; Aston devotes a section to the notion of 'faith by hearing,' 890-900.

had no part to play in Word centred liturgy is challenged by the use of a text within a highly decorated new fixture to proclaim that salvation through faith came from hearing.<sup>175</sup>

As described earlier, the use of another familiar text is seen on the 1627 pulpit at Minety, ‘BE INSTANT IN SEASON’ and ‘WG RP CHURCHWARDENES’ [Figure 3.1].<sup>176</sup> Again there is the shorthand of memorialisation, and of parochial identity, where the Churchwardens’ initials form part of authorising the new fixtures, a point noted earlier in this chapter. The inscription was used elsewhere, for example on the extant pulpits a few hundred yards from each other in York, All Saints Pavement on the 1634 pulpit and St Martin cum Gregory on the 1636 pulpit. It begs the question whether it was a coincidence that these two pulpits were erected with this text a few years after Archbishop Tobie Matthew preached on II Timothy 4 in York Minster, and the adjacent parish, St Michael le Belfry the day after: ‘Preach the word: be instant, in season and out of season’.<sup>177</sup> 1607 was one year after he was elevated to York.<sup>178</sup> It may be a coincidence as this text was well-known. The 1602 Geneva Bible is annotated and explains the text

The principal and cheife of all admonitions being therefore proposed with a most earnest charge, is this: that the word of God be propounded with a certaine holy

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<sup>175</sup> For more on the link between salvation and preaching, see Collinson, “Shepherds, Sheepdogs, and Hirelings,” 195.

<sup>176</sup> The pulpit, which now stands on a concrete base, appears to have been erected as a three-decker, and the bottom panels now serve as a reader’s desk; the inlaid roof of the canopy of the tester appears to be of a piece with the backboard and the pulpit; a visual assessment of the Latin text around the cornice of the tester gives the appearance of a later inscription which appears to be the text: ‘Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God’.

<sup>177</sup> William Sheils, “An Archbishop in the Pulpit: Tobie Matthew’s Preaching Diary 1606-1622,” in *Life and Thought in the Northern Church, c. 1100-c. 1700: Essays in Honour of Claire Cross*, ed. Diana Wood (Woodbridge: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 1999), 381-405, 382.

<sup>178</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 897; for more on Tobie Matthew and his preaching, see Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, 48-51; Sheils, “An Archbishop in the Pulpit,” 384.

importunitie, as necessitie requireth: but lo, that a good and true ground of the doctrine be laied, and the vehemence be tempered with all holy meeknes.<sup>179</sup>

In early seventeenth-century literature on sermons this text was frequently the focus. For example, in 1612 William Attersoll linked the text to the ‘Pastor’s Office’.<sup>180</sup> In 1614 Thomas Adams exhorted preachers to ‘preach the word, and be instant &’; this implies that it was such a well-known text that he had no need to complete it.<sup>181</sup> An anonymous writer put an interesting interpretation on it in 1616 when he said ‘The spirit of Propheisying and preaching is sometimes given to the wicked as well as to the Godly’.<sup>182</sup> In 1618 Henry Airy explained the meaning,

that the Minister of the Gospell should at all times and in all places, publikely and privately, generally and particularly, take every occasion to profite Gods people, whether it be by teaching, by improving, by rebuking, by exhorting, or how else soever it shall seeme needfull or profitable.<sup>183</sup>

Robert Abbott exhorted preachers to adhere to it in 1623.<sup>184</sup> The text ties together preaching, faith, and living out the Gospel in the mind of the listener and observer. It both expresses

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<sup>179</sup> GB.

<sup>180</sup> William Attersoll, *A commentarie upon the epistle of Saint Paule to Philemon* (London, 1612).

<sup>181</sup> Thomas Adams, *THE Sinners Passing-Bell. Or Phisicke from Heauen. The sixt Sermon* (published by Thomas Adams, 1614).

<sup>182</sup> Anon., *G[ods] ac[re] o[f] la[nd.] Manured dressed and maintained; / by six devines [Ch: G. Will: P. M. Ro Do: Play. A. Dene. M. D.]*, (Printed at L[ondon]: [by Tho: Purfoot,] for Thom[as] Pauier, and Thomas Langley, 1616).

<sup>183</sup> Henry Airay, *Lectures upon the whole Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians, delivered in St. Peters Church in Oxford: by the reverend and faithfull seruant of Christ Henry Airay... and now published for the use of Gods Church by C.P.*, (1618).

<sup>184</sup> Robert Abbot, *A hand of fellowvship, to helpe keepe out sinne and Antichrist In certaine sermons preached upon severall occasions*, (London, 1623), 59.

Protestant identity and is invested with agency in the creation of identity. It is an instruction to the preacher but draws in the participation of the congregation as guardians of the preacher's adherence to the text. At Minety the text may indicate that the commissioning churchwardens wanted the newly arrived preacher to develop the text through his ministry, engaging with the parishioners and in the words of the next verse, preventing them from following 'false and unprofitable doctrines which the world is now so bewitched withal'. The inscription is both a message for the preacher and binds the viewing congregation into his calling to prevent any slipping back into false doctrines. In terms of viewing, like Brinkworth, the text is aimed at the preacher, yet it is the congregation who are viewing it, perhaps placed there as a didactic tool. Unlike Brinkworth, the text would have been on show throughout the sermon. The Bishop of Bristol spoke at Dorchester on his 1637 visitation, using among others this text, suggesting that in his words St Paul did, 'joyne long suffering and doctrine together'.<sup>185</sup>

The inscription on the pulpit at Somerton similarly has the date of the churchwardens' investment on behalf of their parishioners, their initials, and the text 'PRAISE GOD FOR AI', a text scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments [Figure 3. 3]. The argument applies equally to Somerton's pulpit which both displays identity and is invested with power in its formation.

At Croscombe, the pulpit displays the date, but no name as the two arms denote the donor. The text is 'BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HEARE THE WORD OF GOD AND KEEPE IT' [Figure 3. 12]. As described earlier, the same text appears on other contemporary pulpits. The

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<sup>185</sup> *Visitation Articles II*, Fincham, 184.

text confirms that the pulpit is a physical declaration of the centrality of the Word preached in the liturgy, an expression of Protestant identity, but it also has agency in its formation. The text was well-known and acted as a shorthand exhortation about living out the heard Word. The text can also be interpreted in two ways, either as orthodox Calvinist theology that the blessed keep the Word of God, or ambiguously that those who keep the Word of God would be blessed, an example of rustic Pelagianism.<sup>186</sup>

All these inscriptions were meaningful for the congregation, who knew the donors, who could recognise the date of the investment, and place it and themselves on a chronological timeline.<sup>187</sup> The Biblical texts were also visual shorthand to display the credentials of the parish of Reformed Protestants, and also to provide agency in continued formation of their Reformed identity.<sup>188</sup> In their viewership, the listening congregation could not but absorb the visual images which the inscriptions relayed while they heard the Word of God preached. Ironically the text that proclaimed the corner stone of their Reformed faith, that ‘Faith is by hearing’, was displayed visually.

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<sup>186</sup> The phrase ‘rustic Pelagianism’ was used by Patrick Collinson to suggest whatever the minister taught, salvation still came from good works: Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Cape, 1967), 37. Christopher Haigh refers to Collinson’s term: Christopher Haigh., ‘The Taming of Reformation: Preachers, Pastors and Parishioners in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England’, *History* vol. 85, no. 280 (October 2000): 572–588, 582.

<sup>187</sup> Fincham and Tyacke note the survival of increasing numbers of dated pulpits from the Jacobean period: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 106.

<sup>188</sup> For an analysis of agency in the context of time and space, see Michael Braddick, and John Walter, “Introduction,” in *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland*, eds. Michael Braddick, and John Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1–42.

## *Conclusion*

Pulpits, the primary visual focal point in Reformed parish churches, were also expressions of a wide variety of attributes, religious and secular. In their inscribed texts, their carved dating, their inscriptions of the donors' names or initials, and their decoration, they exceeded the requirements of compliance, and, in so doing, had agency in the formation of identities. Paradoxically it was their visual display in the lines of sight of the congregation that highlighted the importance of hearing, which led to faith, and faith that led to salvation, a core belief for Protestants. 'Faith by hearing' was the mantra but it was emphasised visually. Texts were not simply didactic, but were testimony to the symbiotic relationship between the preacher, and his listeners. Neither were texts always straightforward: sometimes they could be interpreted in more than one theological way, as at Croscombe.

The material evidence of pulpits, their size, their decoration, their added height through canopies, their inscriptions, sometimes their colour, all added to the theatre of preaching. The theatre of preaching was experienced by parishioners differently depending on their proximity to the pulpit and the specificity of their viewership, but all had the common experience of preaching as an outward manifestation of clericalism, and the pulpit as the new focal point of the Reformed liturgy, where all listened as a congregation, in their assigned place as the sand in the hour glass moved.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> This does not imply uniformity; for an analysis of the contested nature of time spent on preaching compared to time spent on prayer, see John Craig, "Bodies at Prayer in Early Modern England", in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Natalie Mears, and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 173-196.

Protestants of all stripes built decorated pulpits in the early seventeenth century. Decoration and imagery were not the monopoly of Laudians. Circumstances specific to the parish tell of pulpits built for local reasons as much as those that fit into the grand narrative, that only Laudians decorated their churches. Pulpits were more than platforms for preaching, they visualised messages of belonging to their community of Protestants. In so doing they materialised the formation of identities: civic, familial, diocesan, community, parochial, and confessional. In the next chapter, thresholds will be examined, and how they also materialised belonging and, in some cases, not belonging to diverse communities.

## CHAPTER 4

### THRESHOLDS AND ACCESS

#### **‘Feare God. Honour the King’<sup>1</sup>**

##### *Introduction*

This chapter considers the ways in which four types of thresholds - doors, windows, ceilings, and screens - were means of access to church space, and boundaries within that space, for the congregation both literally and metaphorically. They materialised belonging and not belonging. The four sections of the chapter are linked by the concepts of inclusion and exclusion, of access and liminality.<sup>2</sup> It will be argued that, as points of access, the four types of material evidence exhibited innovation as well as displaying characteristics that pre-dated the Reformation. The argument will demonstrate that sometimes what appears to be a continuity of purpose, for example a screen acting as a traditional boundary, separating the chancel, the most sacred part of the church from the nave, is in fact a demarcation for a new purpose, predicated on the Reformed liturgy, where there was a new focus on the pulpit in the nave, within the reformed church space. The physical purpose of these four types of thresholds will be considered in tandem with their embodiment of non-physical attributes, such as authority, heaven, the elect and the non-elect, and lineage. For clarity in this chapter the historiography will be addressed at the start of each section as it relates to the different types of material evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Feare God. Honour the King’ is the text on the screen of the Corporation Pew at Bridgwater, Somerset. The text is from KJB I Peter 2: 17, ‘Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king’ or GB, ‘Honour all men: love brotherly fellowship: fear God: honour the King.’

<sup>2</sup> As the research has been led by the material evidence, the four sections are inevitably weighted differently, because there is much less evidence in the three counties studied of extant doors and windows than there is of extant ceilings and screens.



*Doors: 'Lord, Lord, open to us.'*

Very little has been written about doors. In Robert Whiting's survey of church interiors there is no chapter on them, or even an index reference, but they are described in gazetteers such as Pevsner's *Building of England* series.<sup>3</sup> One reason may be that their survival is even more capricious than other features, as wooden external structures were exposed to the elements, and often fell into disrepair and had to be replaced. They are not specifically mentioned in the requirements issued for church buildings by successive governments except as part of the generic demands for church repairs.<sup>4</sup> David Postles's work on church porches has addressed the notion of liminality which is useful in the context of openings. He described openings as 'problematic spaces', and symbolically a point of transition from 'sacred to profane space'.<sup>5</sup> The door as a transitional locus is pertinent to this first example.

In the limited list of extant doors studied in the three counties, the door, now an internal door to the vestry, in North Newton church, Somerset, is significant [Figure 4. 1].<sup>6</sup> It is important because of its patron, its imagery, its position and because it demonstrates fluidity between decoration in a secular context, and decoration in the context of a church. Although the door is now internal, it was the West door to the church before the 1884 restoration. In a letter to

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); an example of a reference in Pevsner is South Wraxall: Nikolaus Pevsner, second edition revised by Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin in 1963, second edition 1975), 474.

<sup>4</sup> For details on the general requirements on church repairs, see chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> David Postles, *Social Geographies in England (1200-1640)*, (Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2007), 199, 200. For examples of contingencies and the use of space, see Postles, "Church space and contingency," 175-197.

<sup>6</sup> Julian Orbach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; South and West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 494. One of the limited number of extant doors is that of the church of, St John the Baptist, Biddisham, Somerset, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century [Figure 1. 1].

the Secretary of the 1879 Ecclesiastical Commission, which was essentially a survey, the description is given thus, ‘the West door is especially beautiful having the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins boldly carved in the panels’.<sup>7</sup> There is no archival evidence to show whether the carved panels were on the outside or the inside of the west door. The material evidence strongly suggests that they were on the outside: the dimensions of the present vestry door exactly match the door frame of the present west door, demonstrating that it has not been cut down; an examination of the imagery shows that it was one door; there is a strong tradition of decorating the exterior of the west door, for example, the reworked west door of St Saviour’s, Dartmouth, Devon, of 1631, has its splendid decoration on the exterior.<sup>8</sup> The final argument for its location on the exterior is that, with carvings on the exterior and the church door opening inwards as they almost all did, the carvings would have been seen both going in to the church, and leaving the church. If they had been placed on the interior, the panels would have been obscured by opening the door to enter or leave the church.

While the middle panels of the door appear to be later, the top relief panels of the parable, along with a shell motif, a frieze of vines, flowers, and a tiny dove of peace, are typical of decoration in the first part of the seventeenth century. On the left panel are the five Wise

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<sup>7</sup> SHC: D\P\new.n/8/3/1, Copy of letter to Ecclesiastical Commission relating to state of old church and proposals for rebuilding, 1879; the antiquarian, the Reverend L. H. King, noted the change of location: L. H. King, *A Short Account of the Church and Parish of St Peter’s, North Newton* (London: W. R. Russell, 1899); KJB, Matthew 25: 1-13.

<sup>8</sup> The dimensions of the extant door, now the vestry door, are 81cm across and 198cm down; these are the exact dimensions of the door opening for the present west door. The long tradition of decorating the exterior of the west door is exemplified by the decorated west door of St Michael’s Coslany, Norwich: Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *The Buildings of England: Norfolk I; Norwich and North-East* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin, 1962, second edition, 1997), 245-246, 246. The west door of St Saviour’s, Dartmouth, was pre-Reformation and then re-worked in 1631: Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon* (London, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1989, reprinted with corrections 1991, reprinted New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2004), 323, and plate 46.

Virgins, wearing crowns, and holding their prepared lamps. On the right panel are the quintet of uncrowned Foolish Virgins, with unlit lamps.<sup>9</sup> The story was associated with doors as the shut door barred the Foolish Virgins from entering the wedding with the bridegroom:

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.<sup>10</sup>

The barred Foolish Virgins represented the damned, prevented from entering the Kingdom of Heaven, while the Wise Virgins were the saved.

The synoptic quality of the two panels acted as a prompt to remind the viewer of the story which ends, ‘Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh’.<sup>11</sup> The story is an allegory for the viewer to be always prepared for the Last Judgement.<sup>12</sup> The parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins was not only deployed in churches but also in domestic settings. Spiritual preparedness was paralleled with domestic virtues of good housekeeping, having lamps prepared for lighting, and the warning against pastimes that might detract from servants’ domestic duties. The parable is carved in the alabaster

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<sup>9</sup> An image of a crown presumably refers to the ‘crown of life’: ‘be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life’: KJB Revelation 2: 10; and ‘the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him’: KJB James 1: 12.

<sup>10</sup> KJB Matthew 25: 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> KJB Matthew 25: 13. For a discussion of synoptic images, see chapter 3; and Tara Hamling, “Visual Culture,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock, and Abigail Shinn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). For the importance of buildings and their decoration as cues for memory in the medieval period, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> Tara Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 127.

overmantle at Burton Agnes Hall, East Yorkshire, built c. 1610.<sup>13</sup> The fluidity of images between domestic and church settings is highlighted in this thesis and described by Tara Hamling in her seminal study, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*.<sup>14</sup> The two panels of the parable were a highly appropriate way of representing the saved and the damned in terms of the space they occupied on a door, as a door was integral to the parable. It represented the door to the wedding feast, a metaphor for the entry to heaven for the saved, as they entered the church. Not only did the arriving congregation see the investment made in the church, consistent with embellishment to church interiors, but they also saw the synoptic image of salvation associated with the church. There was a message for those entering the church as well as for those leaving it.

The door was also a threshold between the sacred space of the church and the secular space of the world, so that, as parishioners left the church, they were prompted to continue to act in a godly way throughout the whole course of their lives.<sup>15</sup> Whilst the notion of spiritual preparedness was a priority for the godly, it was also a key aim for mainstream Protestants. Crossing this threshold, viewing this image reminded worshippers that a religious life transcended the perimeters of the church building.<sup>16</sup> The image on the door at North Newton demonstrates a sophisticated use of iconography.

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<sup>13</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*, 15, 125, 127.

<sup>14</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*.

<sup>15</sup> Suzanna Ivanic emphasises that 'historians are beginning to understand religion in the early modern period no longer as sacred versus profane': Suzanna Ivanic, "Early Modern Religious Objects and Materialities of Belief," in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 322-337, 334.

<sup>16</sup> For more on the meaning of this image, see Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*, 15, 125, 127; and Tara Hamling, "Old Robert's Girdle: Visual and Material Props for Protestant Piety in Post-Reformation England," in *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 135-163, 151-155.

The thriving print industry and the abundance of cheap wares gave people access to images, in the household, and in the alehouses. Secular and church spaces were connected by social functions, as masters, tenants and servants inhabited both spheres. For example, the images of Time and Death, familiar from woodcuts, were translated onto the walls of the parish church and the alehouse.<sup>17</sup> A number of biblical texts were found both on the walls of parish churches and on the walls of painted domestic rooms.<sup>18</sup> The fluid relationship between an image from a church and an image in a domestic context can be seen in an engraving of Moses and Aaron which was copied onto a screen in the parish church of St Mary Overy, Southwark, London, in the 1620s and then copied back onto copper plate, to be sold for domestic decoration.<sup>19</sup> The crossing of boundaries between images in the church space and the domestic space was a function of the lives of the same people who inhabited houses, served in houses, visited the alehouse, and attended church. This fluidity is evident in the accessibility of the image at North Newton by parishioners of different social backgrounds who could have seen this familiar representation in different settings, in their shared visual culture.<sup>20</sup> The images on this door illustrate the crossing of boundaries between secular and religious settings, at the liminal point of the west door, as well as the significance of the message of both spiritual readiness for the whole of the lives of the worshippers, not just when they were in church. It also acted on entering into the church, as representation of the metaphor of access to the kingdom of heaven.

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<sup>17</sup> Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 165.

<sup>18</sup> Watt, *Cheap Print*, 217-218.

<sup>19</sup> Watt, *Cheap Print*, 246, 248.

<sup>20</sup> For an analysis of a shared visual culture in the context of secular and domestic settings, and in terms of popular and elite cultures, see Hamling, "Visual Culture."

The theme of spiritual preparedness for the ‘hour when the Son of man cometh’ is well illustrated in secondary sources on domestic devotion, for example in Alec Ryrie’s magisterial book, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*.<sup>21</sup> In his recent publication on the Decalogue, Jonathan Willis shows how important it was for the process of self-examination.<sup>22</sup> Sir Edward Rodney, who will be discussed later as a donor to his local church, wrote a preparation guide for communion ‘for the use of his children’. Spiritual readiness for the day of judgement is a constant theme. For example, he urges that: ‘every one should through the whole course of his life make preparation to this examination’.<sup>23</sup>

This constant and relentless need to self-examine one’s spiritual health is clear here, as it was in Lewis Bayly’s popular guide to domestic devotion, *The Practice of Pietie*.<sup>24</sup> In the prayers he offers to the reader, Bayly used the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins three times. In the ‘Prayer for the morning’, he offered:

Hasten Thy coming, O blessed Saviour, and end these sinful days; and give me grace, that like a wise virgin I maybe prepared with oil in my lamp to meet thee, the blessed bridegroom, at thy coming, whether it be by the day of death, or of judgment; and then, Lord Jesus, come when thou wilt, even Lord Jesus come quickly.

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<sup>21</sup> Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> For an analysis of how the Decalogue was deployed for self-examination, see the section “Sin, Sacraments, and the ‘Puritan Penitential Cycle,’” in Jonathan Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue: Religious Identity and the Ten Commandments in England, c. 1485-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 233-245.

<sup>23</sup> FSL: V.a. 520, fol. 10v, 11r Sir Edward Rodney (1590-1657) and others, prayers and meditations. I am grateful to Alec Ryrie for generously sharing his knowledge of this document with me.

<sup>24</sup> Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Pietie. Directing a Christian how to walke that he may please God* (London. Printed [by T. Snodham] for John Hodges, 1613).

‘Another shorter evening prayer’ speaks to the same theme, using the parable:

Good Lord, give me grace to be one of those wise virgins, which may have my heart prepared like a lamp furnished with the oil of faith, and light of good works, to meet the Lord Jesus, the heavenly bridegroom, at his second and sudden coming in glory.

In ‘Evening prayer for a family’, Bayly again proposes a prayer in a similar vein:

In health and prosperity make us mindful of sickness, and of the evil day that is behind, that these things may not overtake us as a snare, but that we may in good measure, like wise virgins, be found prepared for the coming of Christ, the sweet bridegroom of our souls.<sup>25</sup>

Parishioners were reminded as they left the church that spiritual preparedness was not confined to a time when they were in the church building. Devotional guides, such as *The Practice of Pietie*, focused on it as a daily priority. On the title pages of several devotional guides the Virgins and their lit lamps were displayed. For example, on the title page of Bayly’s best seller, published in no less than 33 editions between 1613 and 1636, one of the Virgins is shown walking towards the light of heaven, holding her lamp.<sup>26</sup> Lamps were a central part of the story, as displayed on these title pages, as in Bayly’s prayer ‘my heart prepared like a lamp furnished with the oil of faith, and light of good works’, and as on the door panels. As the congregation moved into or out of the church and passed the door, the practical and spiritual implications of the light of the lamps would not have been lost on them.

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<sup>25</sup> Bayly, *The Practice of Pietie*, 79, 101, 110.

<sup>26</sup> Hamling, “Old Robert’s Girdle,” 153-155. Other title pages showing the Virgins with their lamps include Thomas Bentley, *Monument of Matrones: Containing Seven Severall Lamps of Virginitie, or Distinct Treatises; Whereof the First Five Concerne Praier and Meditation: the Other Two Last, Precepts and Example* (London: Thomas Dawson [and Henry Denham], 1582); and Daniel Featley, *Ancilla pietatis, or, The Handmaid to Private Devotion* (London, 1626).

Throughout both the Old and New Testaments the metaphor of light was a strong theme, from Isaiah 'a light to the Gentiles', repeated in Luke 'a light to lighten the Gentiles', or Acts 'I have sent thee to be a light of the Gentiles.'<sup>27</sup> They would have been familiar with the metaphor as they left the church and went to their houses, where prepared lamps or candles were essential if they were to function after dusk, or arrived for winter evening service where candles were essential.

The commissioning patron of the door was Sir Thomas Wroth of nearby Petherton Park who, between 1635 and 1637, rebuilt North Newton chapel, which had been unused since the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>28</sup> The chapel, built by a Puritan, was consecrated by the Laudian Bishop of Bath and Wells, Bishop Piers in 1637; and Sir Thomas' chaplain, Thomas Batt, acted as the minister there from 1637. He shared Sir Thomas' confessional views and after the Restoration was a Presbyterian.<sup>29</sup>

North Petherton, where Sir Thomas was a leading parishioner, North Newton, where he rebuilt the chapel, and Petherton Park, his seat, stand in a triangle, each less than a mile and a half distant from each other. Sir Thomas had built a gallery for his family in North Petherton church, discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis. As shown in chapter 2, it is socially significant

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<sup>27</sup> KJB Isaiah 49: 6; also, Isaiah 42: 6 and Isaiah 60: 3; Luke 2:32; Acts 13: 47.

<sup>28</sup> A P Baggs and M C Siraut. "North Petherton: Churches," in *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 6, Andersfield, Cannington, and North Petherton Hundreds (Bridgwater and Neighbouring Parishes)*, ed. R W Dunning and C R Elrington (London: Victoria County History, 1992), 308-312; Julian Orbach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England. Somerset: South and West* (London, 2014), 494.

<sup>29</sup> King, *North Newton*; Price, *North Newton*; Baggs and Siraut, "North Petherton: Churches," *VCH Somerset*, vol. 6; J. C. Robins and K. C. Robins, *The Book of North Newton: In Celebration of a Somerset Parish* (Tiverton: Halsgrove, 1999); Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset: South and West*, 494.



that Sir Thomas Wroth, a leading member of the Somerset gentry, purchased Petherton Park in 1614, following his knighting in 1613.<sup>30</sup>

As previously demonstrated, the confessional affiliations of Sir Thomas Wroth cannot be in doubt, evidenced by his will, and his specific demands on burial. His will of that year gives a clear view of his Puritan position.<sup>31</sup> He requested that he should be buried ‘in the Chancell of my Chappell of Newton Placey in the aforesaid county toward night and in a private manner’ without any ‘Pompe or Ceremony’. Newton Placey was an alternative name for North Newton.<sup>32</sup> Sir Thomas specifically said he did not want any ‘attendants or use of any heralds, scutchions or banners’, that the coffin was to be covered in a ‘decent black cloth’ and that not to be velvet, and there was to be no sermon or preaching. Such modest ceremonies were in line with, and further evidence of, his Puritan sympathies.<sup>33</sup> His religious affiliations were not divorced from self-interest: as a purchaser of church lands, it is estimated that he enjoyed an income of between £500 and £1000 per annum by 1648.<sup>34</sup> A door with Biblical images from 1635-7 could easily be mistaken for Laudian decoration, but all the evidence supports the view that Sir Thomas Wroth was a Puritan, which was evidenced in chapter 2. As discussed in the previous two chapters, here again is authority that Calvinists of all stripes decorated their

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<sup>30</sup> “Wroth, Sir Thomas (1584–1672),” John Wroughton in *ODNB*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30085> (accessed November 15, 2017). His father, another Sir Thomas Wroth, had bought the chantry lands in 1592, from which the advowson had been excepted: Baggs and Siraut, “North Petherton: Churches,” *VCH Somerset*, vol. 6. As noted in chapter 2, Sir Thomas Wroth was a Justice of the Peace, Recorder of Bridgwater, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Sheriff, and a Member of Parliament for Bridgwater in 1628, and in the Long Parliament in 1640: Thomas Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640: A County's Government During the 'Personal Rule'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 207, 232.

<sup>31</sup> TNA: PROB 11 339/530 Will of Sir Thomas Wroth of Petherton Park North Petherton Somerset, 1672.

<sup>32</sup> TNA: PROB 11 339/530 Will Wroth, 1672. Newton Placey was an alternative name for North Newton: SHC: DD\TRANS/1/52 Notes on North Newton, 1957. For scholarship on the preambles to wills, see chapter 2.

<sup>33</sup> TNA: PROB 11 339/530 Will Wroth, 1672. Night-time burials were of themselves insufficient evidence to suggest Puritanism, but are additional evidence to add to the other evidence: Anne Duffin, *Faction and Faith: Politics and Religion of the Cornish Gentry Before the Civil War* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 47.

<sup>34</sup> Wroughton, “Wroth,” *ODNB*.

churches. The image of the Wise and Foolish Virgins was also used in a nearby church, Stoke St Gregory. Parts of original panels displaying them, dated late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, can be seen on an internal panel [Figure 4. 2].<sup>35</sup> Their original location can only be a cause of speculation, but it is possible that they too were on a door.

This particular image with its well-known message of spiritual preparedness, along with its specific location on the west door at North Newton, reinforced to the departing congregation the importance of leading a holy life everyday wherever they were, not just achieving holiness within the boundaries of the church. The eschatological message had a godly reading of the saved and the damned, as well as a meaning familiar to all mainstream Protestants as they moved out of the church and crossed this liminal place of transition, reminding them of the whole nature of their spiritual lives. As they arrived the iconography would have reminded them of the door accessing the wedding feast, aware that the iconography on the door was a statement about entering the church space as the route to salvation, to the kingdom of heaven. It was an image that had meanings whether the parishioner was entering or leaving the church.

*Windows: 'the brightness of the Gospel'.*

There is a significant literature on the destruction, survival and creation of glass.<sup>36</sup> Fragments of pre-Reformation glass, and the very few extant examples of coloured glass from the early

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<sup>35</sup>At St Stoke St Gregory, the extant panels only display the Wise Virgins with their lit lamps.

<sup>36</sup> Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts vol. 1: Laws against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); including "Puritans and Iconoclasts 1560-1660," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 92-121; Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 145-148; Watt, *Cheap Print*; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For a description of

seventeenth century suggest that the pattern described by Margaret Aston in her two magisterial books can be found in this area.<sup>37</sup> Aston showed that the fate of much imagery was determined by the confusing instructions at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, first the famous Injunction XXIII of 1559 to remove all superstitious images, including those in glass, followed by Elizabeth's prohibition a year later stopping the breaking of any church glass without the permission of the Ordinary. So there was both destruction and survival of glass in Elizabeth's reign.<sup>38</sup> By the beginning of James I's reign, Aston found evidence of the installation of new glass, but emphasised that the picture is unclear because so little survives, and she encouraged further research. Aston warned that there should be no assumption that the re-glazing included images that were armorial, ornamental or even religious.<sup>39</sup> Whilst there are some extant fragments of heraldic glass, at Ibberton, Dorset, the glass in the newly built church of Folke in 1628 was clear.<sup>40</sup> Although Margaret Aston has shown that 'there was no neat confessional divide on the desirability of light or dark churches', some of the godly, such as John Bruen of Cheshire, identified clear glass with the 'brightness of the Gospell'.<sup>41</sup>

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the survival of figurative medieval glass, see Sarah Brown, "Repackaging the Past: The Survival, Preservation and Reinterpretation of the Medieval Windows of Saint Mary's, Fairford, Gloucestershire," in *Art, Piety and Destruction in the Christian West, 1570-1700*, ed. Virginia Chieffo (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 91-112. For a tabulation of extant glass by century and by county, see Painton Cowen, *A Guide to Stained Glass in Britain* (London: Michael Joseph, 1985).

<sup>37</sup> Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*; Aston, *Broken Idols*.

<sup>38</sup> *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, Henry Gee and William Hardy, eds. (London: Macmillan, 1896), 417-442; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 314-317.

<sup>39</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 656.

<sup>40</sup> John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Dorset* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin, 1972), 236, 206. The heraldic glass at Cerne Abbey appears to have been imported from a fifteenth-century window in the Abbey: Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset* 133; Brendan Lehane, *Dorset's Best Churches* (Wimborne Minster: Dovecote Press, 2006), 40. For an analysis of the difference between pre-Reformation and post-Reformation church glass, see Richard Marks, *Stained Glass during the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 698; William Hinde, *A Faithfull remonstrance of the holy life and happy death of John Bruen of Bruen-Stapleford, the county of Chester, Esquire* (London: Printed by R. B. for Philemon Stephens and Christopher Meredith, 1641), 78-79: 'Mr. Bruen with the love of truth, there arose out of this heat such a flame of holy zeal against lying vanities, and for promoting the true worship and glory of God, that, finding in his own chapel, being a part of Tarvin church, many superstitious images, and idolatrous pictures painted on the

The 1630 glass at the east end of Lydiard Tregoze, Wiltshire, provides a rare survival of figurative glass of the two St Johns alongside the St John family arms. This glass survives in what was ostensibly a parish church but was in purpose a family chapel.<sup>42</sup> As a vast and complex area, a full discussion of glass in these three counties requires a separate study.

Windows, as opposed to glass, are noted in gazetteers. There are two patterns in the windows of the churches studied which add to the debate: the evidence of the Churchwardens' accounts on repairs, and the clustering of new style windows. The evidence of the Churchwardens' accounts testifies to frequent expenditure on glazing, and mending the windows.<sup>43</sup> For example, the accounts of Somerton, Somerset, from 1581 until the end of this study, 1640, a sixty year period, note 'glazing the church windows', or 'mending the church windows' at least once a year for all but five of those years, and for two of those five years there are pages missing in the accounts.<sup>44</sup> The accounts of Axbridge, Somerset, show that from 1600 to 1640, where the accounts of 37 years survive, there was expenditure on windows in 31 of the 37 years. In Dorset, Wimborne Minster accounts record that in the years 1565 to 1636, a run of

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windows, insomuch that scarce the breadth of a groat of white glass could be seen, he warrantably and peaceably took down the same, and reglazed the windows with white and bright glass, at his own cost;.....well knowing that these painted puppets and dumb images obscured the light of the Gospell, as well as darkened the church, however they might be considered by some as Laymen's books'.

<sup>42</sup> Pevsner and Cherry, *Wiltshire*, 316-318, 317; Aston, *Broken Idols*, 652.

<sup>43</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1-2 Churchwardens' accounts of Somerton, 1581-1640, 1640-1747; DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Cerne Abbas, 1628-1641; also, Baker, "Mere," 224-337, for the years 1563-1617; WSHC: 2944/44 Churchwardens' Accounts of Mere, 1618-1640.

<sup>44</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1-2 Cwa Somerton, 1591-1640, 1640-1747 (the missing accounts are for the years 1589 and 1592) the years when glass is not itemised are 1599, 1601, 1631; SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Axbridge, 1600-1640 (the years when glass is not itemised are 1600, 1601, 1604, 1610, 1611, 1613). For details of the usefulness of Churchwardens' accounts, see chapter 1. For an analysis of expenditure by Churchwardens on the fabric and interiors of parish churches, see Valerie Hitchman, "Balancing the Parish Accounts," in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens Accounts c. 1500–c. 1800*, eds. Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 15-45.

72 years, glass or windows were itemised for 53 of those 72 years.<sup>45</sup> The expenditure involved varied from modest sums to significant amounts in the three sets of accounts. The evidence from the Churchwardens' accounts does challenge the traditional view that churches were neglected and in a bad state of repair, and resonates with what has been found in studies in and around London. Both Julia Merritt and Valerie Hitchman have demonstrated similar regular care and maintenance of glass and of other aspects of the church fabric.<sup>46</sup> Valerie Hitchman found, for example, that at Waltham Holy Cross the accounts recorded payments to the glazier in 33 of the 45 years of surviving accounts; and the accounts of Aylesford in Kent itemised payment to the glazier in 38 of the 61 years of surviving accounts.<sup>47</sup> The evidence of annual expenditure on windows and glass at Somerton and elsewhere does not explain whether this routine care was sufficient. It can, however, give testimony to regular care and maintenance throughout the period, and not just when the Laudians came to rescue the supposedly neglected churches.

The material evidence also shows that new windows were pushing out the metaphorical boundaries of fashion by deploying new styles. In geographical proximity in north-west Dorset, the churches of Folke, Minterne Magna, Ryme Intrinsessa, and the chapel of

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<sup>45</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Wimborne Minster. There is a gap in the accounts from 1636-1640.

<sup>46</sup> For an outline of the historiography of this view, see chapter 1. A Laudian writer, Foulke Robarts, wrote that the churches 'were so ruinous and sordid', a view that has been adopted as a traditional perspective: Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour: The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 28. Julia Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and the Phenomenon of Church-Building in Jacobean London," *The Historical Journal* vol. 41, no. 4 (December 1998): 935-960; Hitchman, "Balancing the Accounts," 26-36; Valerie Hitchman, "*Omnia Bene* or *Ruinosa*? The Condition of the Parish Churches in and around London and Westminster c. 1603-1677," (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Hitchman, "Balancing the Accounts," 29, n. 46.

Leweston have similar windows in a new style that has been described as ‘Gothic’.<sup>48</sup> The symmetry and the uncusped depressed arches have a resonance with domestic windows.<sup>49</sup> In the new church of 1628 at Folke there are triplet windows, the middle one taller, the heads with uncusped depressed arches, and hood moulding [Figure 4. 3].<sup>50</sup> They are exactly the same as those in the chapel built in 1616 by Sir John Fitzjames at Leweston [Figure 4. 4].<sup>51</sup> At neighbouring Minterne Magna in the north chapel, built c. 1615-20, is a window of the same style but with five lights [Figure 4. 5].<sup>52</sup> At nearby Ryme Intrinseca, a church built in the thirteenth century, and altered in the early seventeenth century, there are early seventeenth-century windows in the same style with five lights and three lights [Figure 4. 6].<sup>53</sup> Pevsner described this style as ‘Gothic’, and traditionally this style has been associated with a Laudian regression to the style of a medieval church.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, Maurice Howard has argued that the style of windows, a localised design, is not a hearkening back to ‘medieval style but to current continental Baroque, or rather to a northern European version of it’. Maurice Howard summed up his challenge to the old assumption,

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<sup>48</sup> Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 206. Newman and Pevsner describe Folke as ‘Gothic’, and then compared the windows to Leweston. They then compared Leweston to Minterne Magna, and Ryme Intrinseca to Leweston, Minterne Magna and Leweston: 252, 295, 357.

<sup>49</sup> The windows are also described as ‘Gothic’ by Timothy Mowl: Timothy Mowl, “‘The Wrong Things at the Wrong Time’: Seventeenth-Century Gothic Churches,” in *Gothic Architecture and its Meanings 1550-1830*, ed. Michael Hall (Reading: Spire Books, 2002), 71-96, 80-81. In the latter two sources the authors finesse ‘Gothic’, as does Maurice Howard.

<sup>50</sup> Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 206.

<sup>51</sup> Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 252-253, 252.

<sup>52</sup> Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 295.

<sup>53</sup> Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 357-358, 357.

<sup>54</sup> Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 206; Maurice Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 70.

Thus any simple equation of new High Church practices with ‘Gothic’ would be misplaced....The new Gothic of this time can therefore be seen as something creative, replenishing an old tradition.<sup>55</sup>

He continues the argument: that the incidence of Gothic in certain areas of local church building in the early seventeenth century could be explained by the survival of local craft traditions, suggesting some continuity with a pre-Reformation past.<sup>56</sup> This view of both parallel continuation and innovation is persuasive. This was not regression but the evolving of tradition. In pushing out the boundaries of style, the commissioners of these new windows were not the precursors of the Laudian enthusiasts returning to a hankered-after past, but motivated by a more subtle dynamic. In their replenishing of an old tradition, and in merging a domestic style with an ecclesiastical style, they appear to be engaging in a common trend, or possibly employing the same craftsmen, or both.

*Ceilings: ‘Glory to God in the highest.’*

There is little written on ceilings apart from in gazetteers. There was no specific canonical requirement about them. They fall under the general requirement to keep the church in good repair, begun in the Royal Articles and repeated through the years, as in Visitation Articles.<sup>57</sup> The need to keep the roof and ceiling in good repair was critical to keeping the overall condition of the church dry and proof against birds.

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<sup>55</sup> Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, 70-71.

<sup>56</sup> Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, 71.

<sup>57</sup> For details of requirements to maintain the church see chapter 1. For an example, a Visitation Article, Fincham, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. I*, Kenneth Fincham, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), 10-11: Archbishop Bancroft’s articles for his Metropolitan Visitation of Ten Dioceses in 1605, including Bristol and Bath and Wells, included a question about the repair of the church ‘belonging in good reparations, and decently and comely kept,...the seats well maintained...and if not, then through whose default and what defects are?’

Just as the windows at Folke, Leweston, Minterne Magna and Ryme Intrinseca, have been described as ‘Gothic’, so has the ceiling at Axbridge, Somerset. Pevsner described it as ‘a romantic piece of Jacobean Gothicism’.<sup>58</sup> As already discussed in the context of windows, the impetus was more likely to be a subtle replenishing of an old tradition, rather than just ‘an astonishing nostalgia for the medieval.’<sup>59</sup> Pevsner describes the nave roof as ‘thin straight and curved ribs [which] form a dense lacy pattern of squares, lozenges and interlocked quatrefoils, with bosses or large pendants at strategic junctions’ [Figure 4. 7].<sup>60</sup> The ceiling now appears as blue and white, but the original colour is not known, although ‘two books of gold and other paynting stuffe’, costing 13s 10d were itemised in the block of items of expenditure for the ceiling in 1636.<sup>61</sup> The use of gold had been problematic since before the Reformation, but it was not unacceptable even for the godly, as symbolising pure spirituality, the splendour of the divine world.<sup>62</sup> The ceiling bears the date 1636. The Churchwardens’ accounts do not itemise any expenditure on the renewal of the roof, as opposed to the ceiling. There is no clear evidence to show whether the chancel roof was plastered. The chancel was not the responsibility of the Churchwardens so it would not necessarily have appeared in the accounts, as the nave, the ‘middle aisle’, did.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Andrew Foyle and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; North and Bristol* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011, first published by Penguin, 1958), 81-83.

<sup>59</sup> Mowl, “Seventeenth-Century Gothic Churches,” 86-87.

<sup>60</sup> Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 81-83, 82.

<sup>61</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1636.

<sup>62</sup> For a detailed analysis of the use of gold see the chapter, ‘Gold and Images,’ by Margaret Aston: Margaret Aston, *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion 1350-1600* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 219-229.

<sup>63</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1636. Mowl asserts with no apparent evidence that the chancel was also decorated in the same way as the nave: Mowl, “Seventeenth-Century Gothic Churches,” 86. The 1878 faculty is inconclusive on whether there was a similar plastered chancel: SHC: D\P\ax/6/1/1 Faculty for restoration, 1878.



In 1636-7 the Churchwardens of Axbridge raised an extra rate of £12 6s 0d, on top of the first rate of £24 10s 6d, to cover the cost of the ceiling and other investment projects, new windows, new glass, a gallery, 'setting up the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, eight sentences', painting the cross aisles and colouring the belfry. These projects were in excess of the routine items of conscientious maintenance that had been an annual feature of their accounts since 1571.<sup>64</sup> The Churchwardens employed George Drayton to plaster the ceiling. This was a substantial project with a journey to Bristol: 'Item spent at Bristoll when we went to take a pattern of the fret work 1s'. The entry is ambiguous: either they, the Churchwardens, or the craftsmen were purchasing a print from Bristol or they were taking a pattern to Bristol. In the accounts the following items are listed together detailing the expenditure on the ceiling, with a marginal note, 'Middle Ile'. Along with 'the two books of gold and other paynting stuffe', mentioned above, George Drayton was paid for

seeling

The middle isle of the Church with fret worke] £10 10s 0d

Item to Robert Stoudley for the timber]

Worke of the pendants] 7s 6d

Item for the timber to beare the couples 1s

Item for his help to get up the scaffholde 10d

Item for two Crampes and for nayles 1s 10d

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<sup>64</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1571-1640.

Item for the iron worke about the pendants 6s 10d

Item more for paynting stuffe 2s.<sup>65</sup>

George Drayton's work alone for the ceiling, without the cost of the materials and other craftsmen's wages, amounted to five sixths of the second rate raised. Claire Gapper has shown that, whilst in London a plasterer would have enjoyed a discrete status, in rural parishes a plasterer would have also been a painter.<sup>66</sup> George Drayton fulfilled both these roles as he is paid in the same year for 'whiting the Church, setting up the Lords prayer, the creed, 8 sentences, and for colouring the belfry, paynting the cross-iles and some of the work thereabout £3 10s 00d'.<sup>67</sup> The Churchwardens were commissioning the whiting of the Church as a positive act, not as a destructive one.<sup>68</sup> They were using colour on the ceiling and in the belfry and they were putting up wall texts, as required by the 1604 canons.<sup>69</sup> Lime is noted three times in 1636, and laths twice. The paint and the gold are itemised in the same year as the work and the lime, although it would not have been possible to have applied them until a year later.<sup>70</sup> At the end of the accounts for this year is the note: 'George Drayton is to have from the parish when he hath sett up the ten commandments, the summe of ten shillings:

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<sup>65</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1636.

<sup>66</sup> <http://clairegapper.info> (accessed 11 June, 2016). Claire Gapper has summarised her PhD on her website. For an overview of plasterwork, see Conor Lucey, "Introduction," in *Decorative Plasterwork in Ireland and Europe: Ornament and the Early Modern Interior*, eds. Christine Casey, and Conor Lucey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 21–35; Michael Snodin and Maurice Howard, *Ornament: A Social History Since 1450* (London: The Tate Gallery, 1996).

<sup>67</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1636.

<sup>68</sup> Mia Mochizuki, *The Netherlandish Image After Iconoclasm, 1566-1672: Material Religion in the Dutch Golden Age* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Mochizuki demonstrates that in St. Bavo Church in Harlem they were already whitewashing its walls 140 years before iconoclasm erupted as part of the regular maintenance of the church, and whitewashing had hygienic purposes.

<sup>69</sup> See chapter 6 on wall texts. For the importance of colour in early modern society, and its symbolism, see Tara Hamling, "The Appreciation of Religious Images in Plasterwork in the Protestant Domestic Interior," in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 147-163, 155-163.

<sup>70</sup> <http://clairegapper.info> (accessed 11 June 2016).

it was condicioned in his former bargaine'.<sup>71</sup> The negotiated bargain implies that the careful churchwardens had made a thought through, harmonious, planned scheme not only to beautify the church, but also for edification. As Elizabeth had written in 1561 to Archbishop Parker instructing him:

to order that the tables of the commandments may be comely set or hung up in the end of the chancel, to be not only read for edification, but also to give some comely ornament and demonstration the same is a place of religion and prayer.<sup>72</sup>

Beautification and edification were not mutually exclusive; but also, in parallel, parochial pride was displayed. As described in chapter 1, beautification and edification were present in the Elizabethan Church from the beginning of the reign.<sup>73</sup>

It is possible that the same George Drayton was also responsible in 1637 for the plaster nave ceiling at East Brent, some six miles away [Figure 4. 8].<sup>74</sup> Orbach and Pevsner describe East Brent's plasterwork: 'Panels of typical Jacobean plasterwork, thin-rib shapes with three

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<sup>71</sup> SHC: D\Pa\4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1638. In the 1638 accounts it notes, 'Payd to George Drayton upon last yeares accompt 10s'. It also notes in 1638 'Item to George Drayton allowed on the yeares Accompt 3s'. All of this indicates a skilled workman who had a continuing relationship with the commissioning Churchwardens of Axbridge.

<sup>72</sup> *Correspondence of Matthew Parker D. D., Archbishop of Canterbury, Comprising Letters Written By and To Him from A. D. 1535, to His Death, A. D. 1575*, John Bruce and Thomas Perowne, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853). This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

<sup>73</sup> For an analysis of how music was also valued from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, by for example, Jewell, Parker and Whitgift, see Jonathan Willis, *Church Music and Protestantism in Post-Reformation England: Discourses, Sites and Identities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 58, 61, 66, 69, *passim*.

<sup>74</sup> There are no Churchwardens' accounts at East Brent until 1677 but the gallery of 1635 (the date is inscribed on it, along with the names of the churchwardens) and the pulpit of 1634 all suggest a beautification programme, of which the nave ceiling was part.

pendants, but these standard elements richly cusped to make them Gothic'.<sup>75</sup> There are no Churchwardens' accounts for East Brent until 1677 but the material evidence shows that there are sufficient similarities between the two roofs with the same thin rib shapes and pendants to make this connection.<sup>76</sup> It is also possible that George Drayton plastered the ceiling over the stairs at Barrow Gurney Court, just ten miles away from Axbridge c. 1620-1640. Over the staircase there is a similar thin ribbed plasterwork ceiling with a bulbous pendant.<sup>77</sup> George Drayton's name also appears in the Churchwardens' accounts of Cheddar, just three miles from Axbridge, when he was paid for white lining and painting the church in 1631.<sup>78</sup> George Drayton is an example of a craftsman using the skills and traditions of his craft being employed by several churches in the area.<sup>79</sup> His work in a local cluster of churches tells a story of networking, where he was available and able to influence trends, and where he was employed because one parish wished to replicate his work already displayed in another.

Sitting and worshipping beneath the ingeniously decorated church ceiling in Axbridge church, in which they had invested heavily, would have changed the experience for the congregation. The decorated roof of the nave, or maybe the chancel and the nave, gave a new spatial unity to the church. Sitting beneath the fine plasterwork, with its gold decoration and its pendants, gave the viewer a sense of a church of high status, as the ceiling would not have looked out of

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<sup>75</sup> Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West*, 280-282, 281.

<sup>76</sup> Mowl, "Seventeenth-Century Gothic Churches," 87. Margaret Aston assumes that Philip Malet, vicar at East Brent 1622-1661, was a Laudian, but this is only an assumption: Aston, *Broken Idols*, 319.

<sup>77</sup> Mowl, "Seventeenth-Century Gothic Churches," 87; Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 93; John Penoyre and Jane Penoyre, *Decorative Plasterwork in the Houses of Somerset 1500-1700: A Regional Survey* (Taunton: Somerset County Council, 1994), 18, 55.

<sup>78</sup> SHC: DD\SAS\C/795/SE/14 Churchwardens' accounts of Cheddar, 1631.

<sup>79</sup> For more on local craftsmen's surviving traditions, see Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England*, 70-71.

place in a wealthy person's contemporary house.<sup>80</sup> In the context of Axbridge church, the ornamentation conveyed a sense of sanctity, that the ceiling was a metaphor for the beauty of heaven. The adornment of the church was there to be enjoyed, but assuming it was driven by Laudian sympathies is too easy. As already discussed, 'the beauty of holiness', which the ceiling exemplified, was a strap line adopted by Laudians, but Protestants of different complexions invested in schemes of beautification. As already emphasised, the traditional view that ornamentation was the monopoly of the Laudians has been challenged by George Yule and Julia Merritt. There were both Laudians and Protestants of other stripes investing in ornamentation. It is important, where we cannot find evidence about the religious stance of the donors, as we cannot in the parishioners of Axbridge, to leave the question open rather than to fall into the simple traditional Laudian formula. The ceiling, a metaphorical access to heaven, was a glimpse of another celestial world, decorated for the whole congregation, and worthy of a town that aspired to the prestige that came from the wealth of the sheep farmed on the adjacent Mendips, and the resulting cloth industry. The ceiling was a display of parochial pride and community identity, going far beyond the demands of Bishop Piers's railed altar policy, to which they appear to have conformed in 1634-5.<sup>81</sup> There is no clear evidence that can lead to a description of the confessional composition of the town. Lodovico Steevens was instituted as Rector in 1617, and served until 1639, or maybe even 1660. Nothing is known of his confessional position. In 1640, the parish was still enjoying perambulation, a rite which Puritans disliked because of its superstitious undertones.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> For examples of domestic ceiling patterns, see Penoyre, *Decorative Plasterwork*, 54.

<sup>81</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1634-1635.

<sup>82</sup> David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603 to 1660* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 81.

In contrast to the substantial parochial investment at Axbridge, the decorated ceiling at Abbotsbury, Dorset, was commissioned by Sir John Strangways in 1638, and was a display of family pride and status. In one way, it was like Axbridge, as a metaphorical point of access to heaven. The ceiling at Abbotsbury is unusual for its location in the chancel combined with its iconography. Despite the paucity of archival sources, it is clear that Sir John Strangways paid for the tunnel-vaulted ceiling, decorated with white plasterwork [Figure 4. 9].<sup>83</sup> A new door had been inserted into a south doorway for the south aisle in 1636 but who commissioned this is unknown.<sup>84</sup>

Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke point out that ‘Whilst the contemporary position and the decoration of the communion table are not known,’ the location of the ceiling in the chancel is significant.<sup>85</sup> The chancel was a space of importance, especially in 1638 when the Laudian altar policy was being driven by the newly arrived Bishop Skinner of Bristol, a Laudian enthusiast. On the west face of this ceiling between the chancel and the nave roofs are six cartouches in white plaster of the Strangways alliances [Diagram 4. a].<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 71-72, 72. A tunnel vault is also known as a barrel vault: *Pevsner's Architectural Glossary* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 129.

<sup>84</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 338, n. 226. Pevsner speculates that the whole south wall with unusual round windows belongs to that date: Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 72.

<sup>85</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 256.

<sup>86</sup> For the alliances, see "Abbotsbury," in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, Volume 1, West*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952), 1-11. *British History Online*, accessed February 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/dorset/vol1/pp1-11>; the alliances were with the ‘Trenchard, Stafford, Edwards, Arundell, Orrel (?) and Talboys families.’

East

Heraldic arms 4 →	Cherub  →	Angel with banner <i>and on earth peace</i> ←	Heraldic arms 1  ←
Heraldic arms 5 →	Angel with banner <i>Glory to God in the highest</i> →	Cherub  ←	Heraldic arms 2  ←
Heraldic arms 6 →	Cherub  →	Angel with banner <i>Goodwill towards men</i>	Heraldic arms 3  ←

*The arrow indicates the alignment of the image. The heraldic arms are listed below.*<sup>87</sup>

Diagram 4. a Diagram of the twelve main images of the ceiling, the church of St Nicholas, Abbotsbury, Dorset, dated 1638.

<sup>87</sup> The arms are: [1] Gyles Strangways and Susanna Edwards, [2] Sir John Strangways and Grace Trenchard with the date 1638, [3] John Strangways and Dorothy Thynne, [4] Gyles Strangways and Joan Mordant, [5] Henry Strangways and Margaret Manners, [6] Sir Gyles Strangways and Joan Wadham. The arrangement of the heraldic arms is described by both Hutchins and Moule: John Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset vol. I*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (London, 1774), 539-540; Walter Moule, *Church of St. Nicholas, Abbotsbury. A Brief Descriptive and Historical Account* (Sherborne: J. C. and A. T. Saltwell, 1927), 5-6.

Sir Stephen Glynne in 1830 described the ceiling as having ‘Italian panelling’, a description which carries some ambiguity.<sup>88</sup> If Glynne was referring to Italian design, the images on this ceiling do not appear to match the designs described by John and Jane Penoyre as ‘Italian’.<sup>89</sup> He might be alluding to a common misconception that decorated plasterwork of this period must have been produced by Italian craftsmen. Tara Hamling has demonstrated that there was an ‘abundance of plasterwork in the counties of the West Country’. Hamling indicates, that from the wide date span, and the considerable variations in style and quality across the region, it seems clear that a number of separate workshops and craftsmen were active in various parts of the West Country during the late sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>90</sup> This supports the modern view that Italian craftsmen were not the makers of West Country plasterwork. The adoption of white for the plasterwork was symbolically important, as white was associated with the virtues of simplicity and purity, and with the divine light; also, as its brightness of white could offend the eye, it therefore discouraged prolonged gazing.<sup>91</sup>

Distributed in the corners of the chancel ceiling are conventional leaves, leaves with human faces and tortoises.<sup>92</sup> The twelve panels include six heraldic arms of the Strangways family which are the outer panels on the North and South side of the chancel. The donor’s own arms with his wife’s are the middle armorial panel on the south side, and carry the date of the gift,

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<sup>88</sup> Stephen Glynne, “Notes on Some Dorset Churches (continued),” *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* vol. 45 (1924): 12-74, 13.

<sup>89</sup> Penoyre, *Decorative Plasterwork*, 9.

<sup>90</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*, 17-18; Hamling, “Religious Images in Plasterwork,” 149.

<sup>91</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*, 17-18; Hamling, “Religious Images in Plasterwork,” 157, 159.

<sup>92</sup> “Abbotsbury,” *IHM Dorset*, vol. 1, 1-11; Lehane, *Dorset’s Best Churches*, 13.



1638.<sup>93</sup> The six panels of arms and the six inner panels are all aligned to the centre of the vaulted ceiling. The six inner panels display three six-winged seraphim and three angels holding banners. The banners of each of the three angels display the text from Luke 2: 14, 'Glory to God in the highest,' 'on earth peace', and 'good will toward men'.<sup>94</sup>

The text is interesting as it was in the telling of Christ's Nativity that Luke described 'the multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' The wording is from the King James Bible. The angels and the six-winged seraphim were clearly representing the 'multitude of the heavenly host.'<sup>95</sup> The scheme is an example of the use of typology in these images and texts. The six-winged seraphim were described in Isaiah. The conjunction of Old and New Testament stories was a common practice at the beginning of the seventeenth century. A form of biblical interpretation, typology was the means by which New Testament people or stories (antitypes) were expressed through the prefiguration of Old Testament people or stories (types). Typology is based on the assumption that God located prefigurations of Christ throughout the Old Testament.<sup>96</sup> For example the attempted sacrifice of Isaac by his father, Abraham,

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<sup>93</sup> The roof of the south aisle at Tisbury, Wiltshire, has an unusual inscription, denoting both the Churchwardens and Lord Arundell as the investors in 1616.

<sup>94</sup> KJB Luke 2: 14.

<sup>95</sup> Luke 2: 8-14, as told in the King James Bible, narrates the story of the shepherds: 'And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'

<sup>96</sup> For more on typology, types and antitypes, see Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*, 231-248; and Susan Hardman Moore, "For the Mind's Eye Only: Puritans, Images and the 'Golden Mines of Scripture,'" *Scottish Journal of Theology* vol. 59, issue 3 (August 2006): 281-296, 285-287.

prefigured the sacrifice of Jesus by God the Father. On this ceiling at Abbotsbury, the Old Testament seraphim cried out to the Lord upon his throne, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.’<sup>97</sup> Typologically, in the New Testament, the ‘multitude of the heavenly host’ on seeing the new born Christ child said, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ These were images and texts from the New and the Old Testaments that were not only appropriate and relevant to a Protestant congregation, but they also demonstrated that God had placed foreknowledge of Christ throughout the Old Testament. The Old and New Testaments were in harmony. These images and texts had been chosen with care.

Laura Sangha has demonstrated that angels were acceptable to Reformed worshippers. Sangha has shown in her work *Angels and Belief in England* that she agrees with Alexandra Walsham’s view that there is much to suggest that angels were used in the evolving programme to restore the beauty of holiness. They were natural allies in the aesthetic refurbishment of churches that became synonymous with the style of church worship promoted by Laud in the 1630s, notwithstanding that angels were ambiguous and were used as imagery by Protestants of all stripes. The Laudians successfully adopted them as their own but the evidence shows that they had no exclusive rights to angels.<sup>98</sup> Angels had long decorated ceilings, as the survival of almost 170 Pre-Reformation angel roofs testify, mainly

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<sup>97</sup> KJB Isaiah 6: 1-3, ‘In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.’

<sup>98</sup> Laura Sangha, *Angels and Belief in England, 1480–1700* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), 100; Alexandra Walsham, “Angels and Idols in England’s Long Reformation,” in *Angels in the Early Modern World*, eds. Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 134-167; Margaret Aston describes angels in parish churches as ‘ubiquitous’: Aston, *Broken Idols*, 335.

in East Anglia but including one at Long Sutton, Somerset.<sup>99</sup> Long Sutton was just a few miles from Muchelney, where the ceiling was painted colourfully c. 1600 with twenty-four panels of angels, stars and clouds [Figure 4. 10].<sup>100</sup> The angels carry banners with texts such as ‘Peace on earth’, ‘Glory to God on high’.<sup>101</sup> Angels were associated with heaven, and a ceiling was a representation of the threshold between heaven and earth. The symbolism of heaven was a continuing feature on ceilings after the Reformation, although the theology underpinning access to heaven had changed.<sup>102</sup> Angels were also perceived as a protective presence, before and after the Reformation.<sup>103</sup> Sangha has demonstrated that Calvin, Foxe, and Perkins had all held that God had given mankind angels ‘to be our keepers and defenders’.<sup>104</sup> Prayers for the protection of angels were constant, for example in the ‘Psalm of Thanksgiving’, following the defeat of the Armada, said of the Spanish, ‘the Angel of the

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<sup>99</sup> Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West*, 403-404, 404; Michael Rimmer, *The Angel Roofs of East Anglia: Unseen Masterpieces of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2015); for examples in Somerset, see 3, 116.

<sup>100</sup> Pat Hughes describes the use of colouring in the domestic context, and her appendices show how painters were using colouring in parish churches in Worcester: Pat Hughes, “Buildings and the Building Trade in Worcester 1540-1650” (PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1990), 298, 302, 305, 306, 308. These accounts note colouring on a frame 1623, gilding 1628, a beam 1630, windows 1633, gilding 1636. The churches in Worcester are not specified.

<sup>101</sup> Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West*, 474-476, 475. The texts at Muchelney read as follows although the order may not be as the creator intended: ‘Peace on earth/ Glory to God on high/ To the setting of the sun/ From the rising of the somme/ Flye to be merry/ Com up Brother/ Praise the Lord’s name/ All the nations in the world/ Wee praise the o God/ Goodwill towards men’.

<sup>102</sup> For example stars and clouds were painted on the ceiling of the family pew at Rycote chapel, Oxfordshire, when the family pew was probably built in 1625: Alan Brooks and Jennifer Sherwood, *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire; North and West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017, first published by Penguin, 1974), 580-584, 581; the Peamore aisle in Exminster parish church has a plaster ceiling with angels and stars as part of the decoration: Cherry and Pevsner, *Devon*, 442; <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101334270-church-of-st-martin-exminster#.WOEXzYWcGUk> (accessed 9 May 2015); the Spencer chapel built in 1611 at Yarnton parish church has stars on the ceiling: Brooks and Sherwood, *Oxfordshire; North and West*, 580-584; Alison Adcock, *The Spencers at Yarnton, 1584-1714* (Private publisher: n. p., 1981, reprinted 2007), 5.

<sup>103</sup> For examples of the protection of pre-Reformation angels, see Sangha, *Angels and Belief*, 21, 27, 34.

<sup>104</sup> For examples of Calvin’s, Foxe’s and Perkins’s belief in the protective quality of angels, see Sangha, *Angels and Belief*, 63, 64, 80; the quote is from Foxe who asked his readers to ‘give thanks unto god, which hath given us his Angels to be our keepers and defenders’: John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of these latter and perilous dayes* (London, 1563), 442.

Lord persecuted them, brought them into dangerous, dark and slippery places'.<sup>105</sup> At Abbotsbury also they could have been perceived as a protective presence.

At Abbotsbury, the juxtaposition of acceptable, if 'ambiguous', images of three angels, supported by three six-winged seraphim, and other members of the heavenly host, along with six panels of elaborate heraldic arms is an unusual example of the fusion of familial display and religious imagery on a chancel ceiling.<sup>106</sup> The permeability of the boundaries between religious identity and secular has been demonstrated in the material evidence of other parishes, for example the frequent deployment of heraldic imagery on funeral monuments, or the inclusion of the Royal Arms, a symbol that was both religious and secular, as the secular monarch was appointed by God, and was also head of the Church.<sup>107</sup> The Decalogue was also a display that crossed religious and secular boundaries: God-given commandments, but also the laws that were the foundation of civil society, ordered by the Head of the State and the Church to be displayed at the east end of the chancel.<sup>108</sup> In the chancel space there would probably have been the Ten Commandments, and possibly the Royal Arms, both of which would have augmented the fusion of religious and secular imagery. It may be that these

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<sup>105</sup> Sangha, *Angels and Belief*, 76, where she quotes: 'The Angel of the Lord persecuted them, brought them into dangerous, dark and slippery places, where they wandering to and fro, were consumed with hunger, thirst, cold and sickness': *Liturgical services: Liturgies and occasional forms of prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* ed. W. K. Clay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1847), 619.

<sup>106</sup> 'Ambiguous' is used as Laura Sangha used it: Sangha, *Angels and Belief*, for example 9, 95, 96, 103.

<sup>107</sup> For example, the funeral monument at Edington to Sir Edward Lewys and his wife, dated 1630, has heraldic shields and an angel offering a crown to the recumbent effigies: Pevsner and Cherry, *Wiltshire*, 234-238, 238; the tympanum at Tivetshall, Norfolk, displays the Royal Arms and the Decalogue: Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *The Buildings of England: Norfolk 2; North-West and South* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first edition published by Penguin, 1962, second edition, 1999), 735-736, 735.

<sup>108</sup> In a letter from Elizabeth in 1560 she said that 'the tables of the commandments may be 'comlye set, or hung in the east end of the chauncell'. This was confirmed in the Royal Order of 1561 where it was to be 'fixed upon the wall over the said Communion board'. The Canons of 1604 required that 'the Ten Commandments be set up upon the East-end of every church and chapel where the people may 'best see and read the same': see chapter 1.

images on the ceiling were not meant to be closely observed. Certainly, the detail cannot be seen from a sitting position in the nave. If we presume that the communion table had been turned altar wise by 1638 in the diocese of Bristol, which is a reasonable assumption, but not a certainty, the communicants coming to the altar for Holy Communion were hardly in any position to observe the detail of the ceiling. It may be that what Tara Hamling described in a domestic context was also at work here: she exemplified two decorated ceilings, one at Lanhydrock House, Cornwall, and the other at the Butterwalk, Dartmouth, Devon, to suggest that the detail of the decoration was beyond comfortable viewing range, and so the engagement with the iconographical content was secondary to the effect created by the physical presence of the decoration. The agency was still powerful; in this church the parishioners could experience the beautiful ceiling that told of the continuity of God's glory in the world, alongside the unashamed display of the Strangways family status, and their lineage, even if they could not see the detail.<sup>109</sup> This combination of imagery could also have been the result of finding new ways to express familiar ideas about social standing and family. There is no suggestion that such work was Laudian in any respect. These images on the ceiling, that the donor, Strangways, deemed appropriate and fitting for a public space in a parish church, contrast with the image of the Crucifixion that Strangways had commissioned in 1622 for the window at the east end of Wadham College, Oxford, signed by Bernard van Linge. Strangways had chosen something different for the semi-private educated audience in the space of a college chapel.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Tara Hamling, "To See or Not to See? The Presence of Religious Imagery in the Protestant Household," *Art History* vol. 30, no. 2 (2007): 170-197; for an analysis of the material manifestation of lineage in households and churches, see Richard Cust, "The Material Culture of Lineage in Late Tudor and Early Stuart England," in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 247-274.

<sup>110</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 256; for more details on the window at Wadham College, see Aston, *Broken Idols*, 959; the Wadhams are referred to in chapter 2: Wadham College was founded in 1610 by Dorothy

The Strangways' family link to Abbotsbury is clear from the fifteenth century.<sup>111</sup> Sir John Strangways inherited the site of dissolved Abbotsbury Abbey. David Underdown described him as 'the most powerful of the county magnates'.<sup>112</sup> The house was besieged and largely destroyed in 1644 by the Parliamentary party.<sup>113</sup> Sir John held many offices in Dorset, and was M.P. nine times. He had at first opposed Charles I, when he was involved in the Duke of Buckingham's impeachment, and suffering imprisonment when he opposed the Forced Loan.<sup>114</sup> Publicly he had not endorsed Laudian reforms, and in the Short Parliament he had expressed reservations about the recent relocation of communion tables and their description as altars. Fincham and Tyacke think that his reservations may have been that, as a lawyer, he was concerned that there was no canon explicitly authorising such changes.<sup>115</sup> So his religious views cannot be reduced to the polarised terms so beloved of historians before revisionism. It is worth noting that while he had earlier opposed Charles, in 1641 he changed sides, along with Lord Digby, and supported the king.<sup>116</sup> In 1645, he gave himself up to the Parliamentary

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Wadham, the widow of Nicholas Wadham, whose religious inclinations generated suspicion of Catholicism, although neither was ever convicted of recusancy: "Wadham, Nicholas (1531/2–1609)," C. S. L. Davies in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28387> (accessed November 5, 2017).

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/strangways-sir-john-1585-1666>, (Accessed 24 February 2016).

<sup>112</sup> David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 188.

<sup>113</sup> "Abbotsbury," *IHM Dorset*, vol. 1, 1-11; Lehané, *Dorset's Best Churches*, 11; E. H. Tindal, "Some Abbotsbury Records," *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* vol. 48 (1927): 70-85, 74; <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/strangways-sir-john-1585-1666>.

<sup>114</sup> Underdown, *Fire From Heaven*, 183-184. For an analysis of the Forced Loan, see Richard Cust, *The Forced Loan and English Politics 1626-1628* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 189; Smith, David L. "Strangways, Sir John (1584–1666), politician." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 1 May. 2018. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-39725>.

<sup>115</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 256.

<sup>116</sup> Smith, "Strangways," *ODNB*; Cust, *Forced Loan*, 335.

commander in South Wales and then he and his son were imprisoned until they paid £10,000 for their 'delinquency' in 1648.<sup>117</sup> When he died in 1666, he left money in his will to the poor of six parishes, including £50 to the poor of Abbotsbury. He wished to be buried where his parents were in Melbury Sampford, with 'no pompous ceremony'. From the six parishes, Abbotsbury was singled out for 'Dole to be distributed shortly after my decease the sume of five pounds to Forty of the poorest old people of Abbotsbury'. The other five parishes were to receive 40s for twenty of the most aged. We can only speculate whether this was because of the size of Abbotsbury, or because it had proportionately more poor people than the other parishes, or alternatively that Abbotsbury had a special significance for Strangways. The preamble to his will in 1664 is a study in ambiguity:

I am fully resolved to dye in the true faith of Jesus Christ professed in the Church of England in which by God's good blessing and assurance I have always lived.<sup>118</sup>

Perhaps this was a statement of satisfaction that the Church of England had been restored to its rightful place, perhaps he was thoroughly confessionalised, or maybe he was safeguarding his reputation. Whichever Church of England he meant, he hoped for a 'joyful resurrection among the just'. His sense of lineage, seen in the armorial images on the ceiling at Abbotsbury, is manifest again in the will. He left tankards to many members of his extended family and every tankard was to be inscribed as a gift from him, for example on those for his great grandchildren the words, 'The gift of John Strangways Knight, my Great Grandfather.'<sup>119</sup> His display of lineage was expressed both on the ceiling and in small inscribed legacies.

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<sup>117</sup> <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/strangways-sir-john-1585-1666>.

<sup>118</sup> TNA: PROB 11/323/237 Will of Sir John Strangways of Melbury Sandford, Dorset, 1667. The will was written 25th November 1664, and the codicil 10 March 1665.

<sup>119</sup> TNA: PROB 11/323/237 Will Strangways, 1667.

With little evidence, apart from the material evidence, the ceiling can still demonstrate the significance of the iconography, of identity and as a threshold. In terms of iconography, decorating the chancel ceiling was ‘symbolising the holy aura of the space in which communion was celebrated’; for that reason Fincham and Tyacke have characterised the Abbotsbury ceiling as ‘Laudian’.<sup>120</sup> There are, however, some possible distinctions: first Sir John may possibly have been inspired by the vaulted and decorated ceiling with moulded ribs of the nearby fourteenth-century St Catherine’s Chapel, 700 yards from the church.<sup>121</sup> Second, thematically the plasterwork is plain compared to the richness of the exactly contemporary plasterwork in the chancel at East Knoyle, Wiltshire.<sup>122</sup> Thirdly the overall impression rather than the detail may have been at work here. Fourthly, as we have seen these images were acceptable in the context of a parish church, both in the typology of the Old and New Testaments, and the theologically neutral, if confessionally ambiguous, use of angels. Not for a parish church was the risky portrayal of the Crucifixion that Sir John Strangways had donated in the stained-glass window at the east end of Wadham College, in the early 1620s.<sup>123</sup> Not for him either was the potentially controversial imagery, depicted in the 1633 plasterwork ceiling of the semi-private space of the family chapel of the Tothill family in St Martin’s Church, Exminster, Devon. That elaborate decoration displays Apostles, Evangelists, and even scenes of Christ’s Passion.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 256.

<sup>121</sup> "Abbotsbury," *IHM Dorset*, vol. 1, 1-11.

<sup>122</sup> Louise Durning and Clare Tilbury, "'Looking unto Jesus': Image and Belief in a Seventeenth-Century Chancel," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 60, no. 3 (2009): 490-513, 513, n. 50.

<sup>123</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 256.

<sup>124</sup> For details of the imagery, see Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*, 55-57.



The Abbotsbury ceiling is an obvious display of lineage. It is also an expression of Reformed identity that was thought acceptable. The fusion of religious and familial expressions of identity on the ceiling of the chancel is unusual, although high status families had traditionally been buried in the chancel with the appropriate secular and religious images and words. As a literal and metaphorical threshold, it was significant. The sitting, standing, listening congregation in the nave could see the decorated ceiling in the chancel and engage with the power of Reformed textual and visual messages, and its symbolism as a gateway to heaven, as well as the unabashed display of familial status, even if they could not see the detail. It was an adornment project, as was the ceiling at Axbridge. However, it was different from the contemporary decorated plaster ceiling in the nave of Axbridge [Figure 4. 7]. The differences are stark: at Axbridge no text or images for the Reformed congregation, no armorial bearings to display the status of the investing donor, and a ceiling which was part of a larger renovation project by the investing parishioners.

*Screens: 'Feare God. Honour the King'.*

Chancel screens have often been considered as part of a paradigm which presented them as Laudian, as part of the drive to emphasise and elevate the chancel by Laudian enthusiasts or their spiritual predecessors. Following Frances Bond's gazetteer in 1908, Charles Cox positioned screens as part of a revival of chancels in James I's reign.<sup>125</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells linked the building of screens to Laudians, even calling the famous screen of 1618-22 in Cartmel Priory 'Laudian' [Figure 4. 11].<sup>126</sup> Graham Parry saw the revival of the Jacobean and Caroline chancel screens as evidence of how 'Laudian values were becoming broadly

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<sup>125</sup> Francis Bond, *Screens and Galleries in English Churches* (London: Henry Frowde, 1908); J. Charles Cox, *English Church Fittings, Furniture and Accessories* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1923).

<sup>126</sup> George Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943).

influential'.<sup>127</sup> This binary view, that only Laudians decorated their churches, while the rest kept them bare, has led to many screens being called Laudian, which they were not, a misjudgement challenged by both Diarmaid MacCulloch and Trevor Cooper.<sup>128</sup> Whilst Robert Whiting's analysis of screens concentrates on those before the Reformation, Fincham and Tyacke finesse the traditional view of screens by showing that the Laudians themselves had varied views on screens. Laud condemned 'severed chancels', those sealed off from the nave by high or solid partitions. Neile promoted screens and preferred the sort of design on display in St John's Leeds, which he consecrated in 1634. This was a screen with open work panels that allowed the congregation to hear and see the minister in the chancel.<sup>129</sup> This section will build on this literature and challenge the assumption that screens built in the first forty years of the seventeenth century were built by either those with Laudian sentiments or their spiritual predecessors. It will also be argued that while some screens appear to have had a deceptive, traditional function, separating and emphasising the most sacred part of the church, the chancel, from the nave, their function was in fact different. They acted as a literal and metaphorical boundary to enclose the nave and the pulpit, placing the focus there, rather than on the chancel, which was redundant for most of the time. In appearing traditional in purpose, they were providing a different novel usage, bespoke to the Reformed liturgy. They were much more complicated in intent and function than the pre-Reformation chancel partitions, and raise a number of issues around exclusion, inclusion, and access.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Parry, *Glory, Laud*, 91.

<sup>128</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, "The Myth of the English Reformation," *Journal of British Studies* vol. 30, no. 1 (1991): 1-19; 14; Trevor Cooper, "'Wise as serpents': The Form and Setting of Public Worship at Little Gidding in the 1630s," in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 197-219, 215.

<sup>129</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 3-20; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 243.

<sup>130</sup> For more on the less frequent use of the chancel, see Emma Rhatigan, "Preaching Venues: Architecture and Auditories," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, eds. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 87-119.

As already seen, the 1559 Injunctions required a partition between the chancel and the nave. The Royal Order of 1561 required the removal of the rood loft while retaining or rebuilding of the chancel screen up to the height of the beam, ‘putting some convenient crest upon the said beam towards the church’. The Order required ‘a comely partition between the chancel and the church’.<sup>131</sup> The Canons of 1604 did not mention screens and there is little reference in visitation articles to screens for decades. In the 1630s the provision of a ‘decent and comely’ screen was a feature in the York diocese of Neile’s campaign.<sup>132</sup> Bishop Juxon’s London visitation of 1640 had a firm requirement for a ‘comely partition betwixt your chancel and the body of the church and chapel as is required by law’.<sup>133</sup>

This section focuses on chancel screens, but first a brief preface on two other types of screens is necessary. There are examples of west screens, which acted as a boundary to the belfry in the west tower. The west screens that stood between the nave and the belfry were frequently simple and undecorated, for example the early seventeenth-century screen at Ibberton, Dorset [Figure 4. 12]. In other examples, they went beyond plain utilitarianism and displayed decoration, such as the early seventeenth-century screen at Broad Blunsdon, Wiltshire

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<sup>131</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 31, 37; Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 5, 205; for more on reactions to screens, see Margaret Aston, “Public Worship and Iconoclasm,” in *The Archaeology of the Reformation, 1480-1580*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2003), 9-28, 18, 23. The Canons of 1571 demanded that all lofts ‘in which wooden crosses stood, and relics of superstition be clean taken away’: *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Gerald Bray, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 193.

<sup>132</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 243; Ronald Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York, 1560-1642* (Harlow: Longmans, 1960), 61.

<sup>133</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. II*, Kenneth Fincham, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 225; Bishop Montagu of Norwich had also asked in 1638, ‘Is your chancel divided from the nave or body of your church, with a partition of stone, boards, wainscot, grates, or otherwise?’, 192.

[Figures 4. 13 and 4. 14]. The decoration of this screen is typical of the period with strapwork above it, and possibly faces of angels and a green man. The west screen at Bruton, Somerset, is highly decorated with rich foliage, scrolls and beasts, possibly sea monsters, and a green man in the grotesque tradition. It may be an amalgam of early seventeenth-century work with reused lower medieval panels [Figures 4. 15 and 4. 16]. It has a panel fixed to it, inscribed 'JOHN SAMPSON HI CHURCHWDI 1620'. It has the appearance of a hall screen designed to exclude draughts. The church booklet notes that the pediments look like woodwork in the nearby alms-house, Sexey's Hospital.<sup>134</sup> The inscription might suggest a gift from one of the churchwardens but there is no archival evidence to help unlock its mysteries.

Parclose screens, which separated pre-Reformation chantry chapels from the rest of the church, continued post-Reformation as boundaries for family chapels, which functioned as discrete seating areas for high status families or as places where those families placed their funeral monuments, or both. At Melcombe Horsey, Dorset, there is a screen which rails off the chapel in the south aisle, inscribed with the initials 'STF' and the date '1619' [Figures 4. 17 and 14. 7a]. Decorated on both sides in a simple pattern style typical of the period, with early seventeenth-century balusters, this oak parclose screen retains its traditional function of marking a discrete area for an elite family, in this case that of Sir Thomas Freke. Freke had extended the family house, Higher Melcombe, one and a half miles away, and reused materials from a dissolved chapel to build a large chapel onto the house. Freke's memorial inscription at Irwene Courtney, just a few miles away, reads 'Hee always presented orthodox

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<sup>134</sup> John Bishton, *St Mary The Virgin, Bruton* (Frome: Butler, Tanner and Denis, 2011), 46-47. An example of a hall screen is the lower wooden section of the oak and plaster hall screen at Burton Agnes, East Yorkshire: Burton Agnes Hall, *Burton Agnes Hall and Gardens* (Peterborough: Jarrold Publishing), 3, 14-15.

men to his ten churches FREELY.’ A great church patron, the concept of ‘orthodox’ when his monument was erected in 1654 is a slippery one, since orthodox meant something different in 1654, compared with 1634, or even 1624.<sup>135</sup> The theology that underpinned exclusive areas, separated by parclose screens, changed after the Reformation from areas for intercessory activities, to areas where the family sat to worship in the Reformed way, and where their members were buried. However, the exclusion of others by erecting a screen remained a constant. In their drive to achieve uniformity of seating in height and orientation, Laudians were no more keen on these discrete seating areas than they were on elaborate family pews.

Chancel screens are much more complex in their post-Reformation purpose than parclose screens. Using the evidence of four chancel screens, it will be argued that decorated screens did not belong to any one group of Protestants, and that enthusiasm for investment in decoration was shared by Protestants of many hues. It will also be argued that what appears as a traditional boundary, separating the chancel as the most sacred part of the church from the nave, was in some instances a radically new type of threshold, acting in an innovative way to both include and exclude.

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<sup>135</sup> Heal and Holmes describe Freke as a great church patron: Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994, reprinted Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 330; Annabel Ricketts, *The English Country House Chapel. Building a Protestant Tradition* (Reading: Spire Books, 2007), 111; for more on the re-use of dissolved sites, see Maurice Howard, “Afterword. Art Re-Formed: Spiritual Revolution, Spatial Re-Location,” in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling and Richard Williams, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 267-271, 269; and Maurice Howard, “Recycling the Monastic Fabric: Beyond the Act of Dissolution,” in *The Archaeology of the Reformation*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2003), 221-234.

First at Rodney Stoke, Somerset, the highly-decorated screen inscribed with the date 1625 and the initials, 'ER', was erected by Sir Edward Rodney, not as in parclose screens, to act as a boundary for a discrete family space, but as a gift to the parish church. The '16' is separated from the '25' by vines and winged beasts, which are part of the extravagant carved decoration on the five-tiered cornice [Figures 4. 18 and 4. 19]. Beneath the cornice are bays and a gated opening, which stretch across the width of the nave. This beautiful piece of woodwork indicates investment well before anything that could be called Laudian, although Pevsner casually calls it 'superb Laudian woodwork'.<sup>136</sup> He describes it as built on the principle of Perpendicular screens, 'with big one-light sections with strapwork arches'.<sup>137</sup> Above the cornice, in the position of what would have been the pre-Reformation rood loft, there is a gallery of turned balusters and little arches. One observer believes this carried a music gallery until c. 1856.<sup>138</sup> The incohesive nature of the elements of the screen poses a conundrum about its installation. The carving of the gallery, which is now shallow and just the façade, is different from the sophisticated carving and imagery of the five-tiered cornice below. Although typical of the geometrical patterns of the period, it is plainer. With a lack of documentary evidence, no Churchwardens' accounts and no Victorian faculties, only conjecture is possible. It is not clear if the gallery and the screen were erected at the same time, and not obvious what the purpose of the gallery was. In 1639, in Minehead, the Churchwardens mended the rood loft and put seats in it, so a loft above the screen at Rodney Stoke would not have been unique.<sup>139</sup> There is a difference between Minehead and Rodney

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<sup>136</sup> Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 593-594, 593.

<sup>137</sup> Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 593.

<sup>138</sup> Alan Rowntree, *Rodney Stoke* (Cheddar: privately printed, 1985) quoting Reverend C. G. Chitty, *A History without Tears* (1950), 59.

<sup>139</sup> Francis Eeles, *The Parish Church of Saint Michael, Minehead: A Short History and Description* (Taunton: Barnicott and Pearce, 1926), 7: he says the loft was repaired and in use 1630. This may be an error as the Churchwardens' accounts state that the loft was repaired and seats were placed in it in 1639; Francis Eeles commented on the plain panelling in front of the rood loft that is evident in the pre-1883 photograph; Orbach and

Stoke; at Minehead they were repairing an existing rood loft. At Rodney Stoke, the structure above the screen was new, and it appears an odd confection, as if it has been added later. However, the chancel screen of 1625 with its extravagant carvings is not in doubt as a beautifully decorated screen to separate the chancel from the nave. Its function, whether to enhance the sanctity of the chancel, to render the chancel redundant, or to frame and emphasise the pulpit and the nave, is the subject of speculation. It could be providing both functions, inclusion within the nave, and exclusion from the chancel, but whether exclusion rendered the chancel more sacred, or redundant for most of the time, remains a conundrum, both of the donor's intention, and of the consequential practice.

Commentators all agree that the modestly carved initials to the north of the date on the cornice of the screen belonged to Sir Edward Rodney, confirming his gift to the church. The Rodney seat was Manor Farm, Rodney Stoke.<sup>140</sup> The Rodneys were well established and had, since before the Reformation, invested in the church, for example the Rodney chapel, on the north side of the chancel.<sup>141</sup> Sir Edward had sat in more than five Parliaments from 1597 as the member for Wells. A Justice of the Peace since 1616, one of ten Deputy Lord Lieutenants since 1625, he commanded a foot regiment as part of the Somerset militia in 1637.<sup>142</sup> He supported Pym in 1640, and cast his vote to condemn to death the Earl of Strafford. In the end, he, like the eight other living Deputy Lieutenants, took up the royalist cause.<sup>143</sup> That a

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Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West*, 448-449, 449; SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Minehead, 1639.

<sup>140</sup> The Rodneys' seat, Manor Farm, was re-built c. 1800: Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 594.

<sup>141</sup> Barnes, *Somerset*, 18; Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 593.

<sup>142</sup> For details of Sir Edward Stoke's attitude to the Forced Loan, see Cust, *Forced Loan*, 154, 160-161, 214-215.

<sup>143</sup> Barnes, *Somerset*, 30, 60, 103, 116, 309, n. 12; the tenth Deputy Lieutenant had died in 1638, Sir Robert Phelps; Cust, *Forced Loan*, 335.

leading member of Somerset's gentry would wish to invest in the decoration and enhancement of the church where the Rodneys had their well-established seat, is entirely plausible. Whether he was the investor for all the objects, or whether the Churchwardens were also investing, we can only surmise.

The investment was locally initiated and undertaken before the description 'Laudian' could be appropriately used. The screen was part of a larger scheme to decorate the church. Not only does the date make it untenable to call the screen 'Laudian', but also Sir Edward Rodney's devotional guide 'for the use of his Children', suggests only mainstream Calvinist theology, a belief in predestination, and serious spiritual exercises for himself and his family.<sup>144</sup> As Alec Ryrie has demonstrated in his study, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, labels are not helpful but zeal for piety was the common seedbed for all Protestants; 'the key difference among British Protestants was not doctrine, but ardour'.<sup>145</sup> Sir Edward's devotional exercises include long preparation for Holy Communion. To prepare to receive the sacrament, he required 'a strict Examination to be made of our actions past and purposes for the future: goe on ackording to my booke of Examination.' An examination of self through meditation on the Decalogue included a section on the second commandment:

Thou shalt not make to thy selfe any graven image This Law doth settle the outward forms of Gods worship as hee hath prescribed it in his word by preaching praying receiving the sacraments and the like.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> FSL: V.a. 520 fol. 4r Rodney prayers. I am grateful to Alec Ryrie for generously sharing his knowledge of this document with me, so that I could transcribe it.

<sup>145</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 472.

<sup>146</sup> FSL: V.a. 520 fol. 10r Rodney prayers.



The devotional guideline demonstrates that he was a serious, zealous Protestant.<sup>147</sup>

The pulpit at Rodney Stoke is undated but appears to be of the same period, or maybe earlier, although the geometrical designs on it do not match those on the rood loft, or any of the other woodwork in the church. There is also a decorated font cover which appears to be of the same period as the screen, an elaborate 1630 Rodney family funeral monument, a communion table of 1634, and undated altar rails which appear to be of the 1630s.<sup>148</sup> This 1634 table appears to be part of a wholesale investment in the church, which included the pulpit, font cover, and screen - which was locally-led decoration - and prior to Piers's coercive campaign. The rails, with their turned balusters, although they appear to be of the 1630s, have no precise date. They could be part of the same locally initiated investment scheme, as the other objects were, or they could have been a response to the coercive campaign of Laud's standard bearer, Piers, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, appointed in 1632. Piers was one of the first bishops to enforce an altar policy from early 1634.<sup>149</sup> Generalising about all the woodwork as 'Laudian' is not sustainable. Apart from the funeral monument and the chancel screen, it is not clear who paid for the font, the pulpit, the communion table and the rails. There are no clues to whether Sir Edward paid for them all, or whether the Churchwardens paid for some of these objects. The dating of these objects implies either a single investor pursuing an adornment project, or a joint venture between Sir Edward and the Churchwardens on behalf of the parish.

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<sup>147</sup> For an analyses of self-examination through the Decalogue, see Jonathan Willis's recent book: Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue*, 233-245, 256, 262-265.

<sup>148</sup> The font, communion rails and communion table at Rodney Stoke will all be discussed in chapter 5.

<sup>149</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 107, 201; for details on the altar policy, see chapter 5.

The second example, the 1628 screen at Folke, Dorset, was erected as part of the new interior for the re-built church, which Pevsner described as ‘want(ing) to appear Gothic’.<sup>150</sup> As discussed earlier in the section in this chapter on Folke’s windows, it is argued that the term ‘Gothic’ is insufficiently nuanced. The chancel screen is decorated on both sides in relief patterns typical of the decade, and eschewing images [Figure 4. 20 and 4. 21]. The oaken screen is three arched, and divided by fluted ionic pillars with a scrolled large centrepiece. The flamboyant centrepiece is flanked by two pinnacles and two flat finials. There is also a similar part of a screen leading to the north aisle, but its original position is not known and its mysteries distract from a focus on the chancel arch [Figure 4. 22]. The chancel arch has gates beneath it which are considered to be later.<sup>151</sup> Both the present gates and dados of the screen appear to have been higher than they now are.<sup>152</sup> The implication of this is that there was not a clear line of vision into the chancel, which suggests that, outside of the service of Holy Communion, there was no need to see into the chancel, as the liturgy was taking place in the nave, with the pulpit as a focal point. The screen therefore was providing a boundary for the chancel, a space redundant for most of the time for the congregation, but dedicated to select people and to the service of Holy Communion. As discussed in chapter 2, the Order for seating in 1629 for Folke said:

It is ordered that the Chancell shall be onely for the use of the Parson and his family and friends that shall come as Strangers unless it be at the tyme of the Administering of the Sacrament of the Lords supper and then for that use.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 206.

<sup>151</sup> "Abbotsbury," *IHM Dorset*, vol. 1, 1-11.

<sup>152</sup> I am grateful to Trevor Cooper who shared his measurements and detailed observations of the dados and the gates of the chancel screen at Folke.

<sup>153</sup> DHC: PE/FOL/RE/1/1 At the back of the register order for allotting seats to parishioners after the rebuilding of the church, 1629.

In this way, there was ambivalence: the nave became the liturgical focus and liturgically the chancel was only used on the occasions of Holy Communion. Yet the continuation from the pre-Reformation of including the sitting elite in the chancel with the minister, and therefore excluding the majority from a high status space demonstrates a contradiction of the purpose of the screen. This is both continuity and discontinuity of purpose, continuity that it provided the same function as the pre-Reformation rood screen, allowing access only to the clergy and the elite, but discontinuity as it served as a boundary of inclusion for the nave and the Word-based liturgy that took place there. There was also discontinuity of usage as the congregation after 1628 walked through the chancel screen gates to receive the sacrament. With this mixture of innovation and tradition, the elaborate scroll above the screen acts as a visual focal point, taking the place of where the Rood would have stood before the Reformation, thus materialising innovation and tradition again. Along with the newly re-built church and all the interior features, such substantial investment was locally driven, and both a display of, and an agent for, sustaining parochial identity.

The third chancel screen, at Croscombe, was probably erected at the same time as the 1616 pulpit, discussed in chapter 3 [Figure 3. 11]. The chancel screen, to which the readers' desks are attached, is as extravagant and bold as the pulpit [Figure 3. 11]. It was originally further westwards and was moved one bay eastwards in 1831.<sup>154</sup> Originally it spanned the whole width of the church, 38 feet, but in 1831, when it was moved eastwards, the side screens were swung back to form parclose choir screens.<sup>155</sup> Edmund Rack described it,

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<sup>154</sup> Norman Cole, *The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Croscombe* (Croscombe: N. Cole, 1954).

<sup>155</sup> Keith Armstrong, *The Story of Croscombe: A Somerset Village*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Wells: St Andrew's Press, 2007), 69.

The nave is parted from chancel by a very grand open work screen 18 ft high and consisting of three stories. The uppermost storey is superbly ornamented with carvings, gilding, painting etc and supported by five very elegant small fluted pillars of the Ionic order, which rest on the lower storey. On the top is a rich cornice terminated with pyramids, scrolls and pinnacles curiously carved; and in the centre, are the royal arms. The cornice bears two coats of arms.<sup>156</sup>

Pevsner has dated it c. 1616 and believes it was probably constructed by John Bolton, who made a similar, though smaller screen, at Wadham College 1612-3 [Figure 4. 23].<sup>157</sup> There was a possible connection through Philip Bisse, who died in 1613, a member of the well-known Bisse family of Croscombe, who was both Archdeacon of Taunton in the Diocese of Bath and Wells and a benefactor to Wadham.<sup>158</sup> The Croscombe screen is very tall, almost appearing to touch the roof, with two tiers of two light openings on fine Ionic columns [Figure 3. 11]. Each pair of arches joins in a pendant and there are many obelisks both on top as well as within the upper arches.<sup>159</sup> The extravagant and sophisticated fretwork on the top of

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<sup>156</sup> *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, McDermott and Berry, *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, eds. Mark McDermott and Sue Berry (Padstow: Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 2011), 341; it quotes Collinson: John Collinson, *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset volume III* (Bath: R. Crutwell, 1791), 469-470; Jennifer Sherwood and Nikolaus Pevsner *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (London: Penguin, 1990, first edition, 1974, reprinted 1974, 1979, 1990), 216; as noted earlier, Wadham College was founded in 1610 by Dorothy Wadham, the widow of Nicholas Wadham, whose religious inclinations generated suspicion of Catholicism, although neither was ever convicted of recusancy: Davies, "Wadham" *ODNB*.

<sup>157</sup> Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 481-483, 482.

<sup>158</sup> Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 482; for details of Philip Bisse's Puritan activities, see Margaret Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory: The Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Early Seventeenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 36, 107; for details of the Bisse family funeral monuments in Croscombe, see Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 483. The full epitaphs of the Bisse monuments can be found in John East, *The Village or Christian Lessons: Drawn from the Circumstances of A Country Parish*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Bristol: J. Chilcott, 1834), 84-87. Pevsner is not quite right when he says a relative of Philip Bisse was Rector of Croscombe, implying it was contemporaneous. In fact Jacob Bisse was instituted as Rector of Croscombe in 1623.

<sup>159</sup> Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 482.

both the screen and the pulpit would suggest a nearby fretwork workshop, a possibility made more likely by Croscombe's proximity to the cathedral city of Wells. The arms of James I stand on the top, surmounted by strapwork.

This elaborate screen was given by Sir Hugh Fortescue, and the Fortescue arms stand proudly beneath those of his sovereign, as well as the Rolle arms, belonging to the family of Mary Rolle, his wife [Figure 4. 24]. The flamboyant display appears visually at first like a rood screen with the arms of James replacing the pre-Reformation rood. But it is very different from the rood screen in purpose. The lines of sight are drawn to it as it acts as an enclosure for the pulpit, shifting the emphasis on to the space dedicated to the preaching of the Word, and almost cutting off the chancel area. It is also a display of the authority of the sovereign, the head of the Church, and of the power and status of the Lord of the Manor, Hugh Fortescue, whose generosity to this parish is matched by his familial display. Hugh Fortescue had positioned himself visually beneath the authority of his sovereign but also as part of the hierarchy of the authority of God, the monarch, and himself. Robert Tittler's suggestion that heraldic devices on individual portraits of civic figures presented an element of familial continuity to the viewer could also apply to the heraldic devices on the Abbotsbury ceiling and the Croscombe screen.<sup>160</sup> In the parish church of the family seat at Weare Giffard in Devon, Fortescue was an enthusiastic displayer of lineage and status.<sup>161</sup> It is not possible to know if this was a replacement screen at Croscombe, or even when the old rood screen had been taken down. This rich display of familial and manorial power, and regal authority, was

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<sup>160</sup> Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Public in Provincial England, 1540 to 1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 33.

<sup>161</sup> Cherry and Pevsner, *Devon*, 247, 891.

also part of a grand project of decoration, which preceded anything that can be called a Laudian investment.

The Parish or Hugh Fortescue invested in the pews and the readers' desks at the same time. The whole renovation project was a result of the gifts of the Lord of the Manor and the Bishop, as well probably of the churchwardens representing the parochial congregation, who were driven by parochial pride and identity. Croscombe and St John's, Leeds, have been described as 'treasure houses of Jacobean woodwork'.<sup>162</sup> St John's was an entirely new and similarly ornate church, built in 1634 by a wealthy woollen merchant John Harrisson.<sup>163</sup> Pevsner describes the screen at St John's, Leeds, as 'sumptuous'.<sup>164</sup> When Pevsner used 'sumptuous', he was hinting at 'Laudian' or 'proto-Laudian'. The large, highly decorated screen, with both James I's and Prince Charles' arms, dominates the church of St John's, Leeds [Figure 4. 25].<sup>165</sup> It also has an ornate ceiling, 'an equally sumptuous pulpit' and an early seventeenth-century communion table.<sup>166</sup> Like St John's, Leeds, the interior of Croscombe has been described as Laudian because of its highly-decorated woodwork. The historiography, often determined by Laudian apologists, as Julia Merritt demonstrates, is now seen as the hijacking of religiously neutral building campaigns.<sup>167</sup> Laudian is not an

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<sup>162</sup> Bond, *Screens and Galleries*, 99.

<sup>163</sup> For details of the row that ensued after the consecration service at St John's Leeds, see Yule, "James VI and I," 202.

<sup>164</sup> Peter Leach and Nikolaus Pevsner *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire West Riding; Leeds Bradford and the North* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009, first edition published by Penguin, 1959), 402-405.

<sup>165</sup> For details of the context of the arms, constructed in 1620, and made as part of Harrisson's claim in a Star Chamber case, and brought into the church in 1634, see Margaret Bullett, "Post-Reformation Preaching in the Pennines: Space, Identity and Affectivity" (PhD Thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2016), 123-124, 150-151, 219.

<sup>166</sup> Leach and Pevsner, *Yorkshire West Riding; Leeds Bradford and the North*, 402-405.

<sup>167</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 959.

appropriate label for either church, in terms of the drivers demonstrated by the investors, or in Croscombe in terms of dates. A recent case study of St John's Leeds described Harrison, the builder of St John's, as a 'progressive Protestant', who disputed with other progressive Protestants, or those often labelled as Puritan.<sup>168</sup> As seen in chapter 3, Julia Merritt's work on church building in Jacobean London argued that the revival of church building and of decoration took place well before Laud's emergence, and was a more complicated process than just the result of a confessional drive.<sup>169</sup>

Croscombe does not enjoy the documentary evidence that Julia Merritt found in London. The material evidence, however, is rich in Croscombe and supports her view; as in London, so in a small village in rural Somerset, an ornate and beautiful interior was being created in 1616 for a range of reasons, but it was not created as a result of a 'coercively driven campaign'.<sup>170</sup> Along with the Episcopal generosity, and commitment to preaching, exhibited by the pulpit, as discussed in chapter 3, the screen is a display of authority, of manorial and familial status and patronal generosity.<sup>171</sup> The screen appeared deceptively to act as a traditional boundary between the chancel and the nave, but was more like an enclosure cutting off the chancel and emphasising the importance of the pulpit within the nave. The screen was also a metaphorical exhibition of the boundaries of civil power which were linked to the authority of the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, displaying social hierarchies as much as religious identities.

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<sup>168</sup> Bullett, "Preaching in the Pennines," 125.

<sup>169</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 936.

<sup>170</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 942.

<sup>171</sup> <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/DisplayAppointment.jsp?CDBAppRedID=97053> (accessed 20 February 2016).

The fourth screen is the early seventeenth-century screen in front of the Corporation seats at Bridgwater, jointly called the Corporation Pew. In chapter 2 the seats were discussed, along with the supporting archival evidence, the godly persuasion of the minister and the Corporation, and the high status of the Corporation, both as the civic leaders of this strategically important Borough, and as the possessors of the rectorial rights.

In its original position, in front of the chancel arch, the screen deceived the viewer as it appeared as a traditional chancel screen, but its function was more complex [Figure 4. 26]. As discussed in detail in chapter 2, the Corporation screen was built standing in front of the chancel arch, facing the congregation, on a north-south axis, with Corporation pews behind it, east of it [Figure 2. 14]. The original position of the screen in front of the chancel arch seems to have been rare, and that unusual arrangement provides the focus for this analysis. The Corporation pews were enclosed by the screen to their west and a fifteenth-century rood screen to their east. The screen and pews were moved to the south aisle between 1848 and 1857 from their original position, and the original double opening to the screen was divided and became two discrete openings separated by the eight bays [Figure 2. 14].<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> For more details of the restoration programme, see Tony Woolrich, *Saint Mary's Church Bridgwater*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Bridgwater: St Mary's PCC, 2004), 10, 17; A P Baggs and M C Siraut, "Bridgwater: Churches," in *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 6, Andersfield, Cannington, and North Petherton Hundreds (Bridgwater and Neighbouring Parishes)*, ed. R W Dunning and C R Elrington (London: Victoria County History, 1992), 230-235. *British History Online*, accessed February 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol6/pp230-235>; Jo Cox, "Machine Carving of Victorian Pew Ends: Some Initial Findings," in *Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present*, eds. Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown (London: The Ecclesiological Society, 2011), 323-332, 323-327; the double opening is evident from a lithograph, to be discussed later.



The front of the corporation seats, a magnificent wood screen, is a large structure, 9.3 metres in length with 16 bays, of which two are openings. The bays are arranged as eight central bays, with an opening at each end and another three bays on either side of the opening [Figures 4. 26 and 4. 27]. Each bay is 60cm wide; the two openings are not exactly the same width: the left one is 69cm while the right is 64cm. There are four parts to the screen. The front of the screen has an inscription, and two rows of superimposed arches with a frieze of grotesque masks and beasts with fish tails above the arches [Figures 4. 28 and 4. 29].<sup>173</sup> The bays are separated by carved columns, described by Orbach and Pevsner as ‘rusticated’ [Figure 4. 30].<sup>174</sup> Second, above the bays is a delicate arcade with pierced spandrels [Figure 4. 31]. The third part is a cornice which sits above the arcade with common Jacobean carvings on the back. On the front, there are fish-tailed creatures separated by troll-like creatures [Figures 4. 32 and 4. 33]. Fourthly the screen is crested with strapwork and thin ornamental obelisks [Figure 4. 34]. These obelisks were common symbols on funeral monuments representing wisdom and eternity. They also appear, for example, on the screen at Croscombe, Somerset [Figure 3. 11].<sup>175</sup> As described in chapter 2, behind the screen on either side of the openings, were three rows of pews for the Mayor, Aldermen and Corporation. On the front of the screen is the text ‘Feare God. Honour the King’ [Figure 4. 28].<sup>176</sup>

The screen created an enclosed space, which made the Corporation discrete from the congregation, visible, prominent, and, as already discussed, near the pulpit for practical as

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<sup>173</sup> Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West*, 133-136, 135.

<sup>174</sup> Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West*, 135.

<sup>175</sup> The screen at Croscombe is dated by Pevsner as c. 1616; Pevsner describes the communion rail at Edington as ‘Jacobean’: Foyle and Pevsner, *Somerset; North and Bristol*, 482; and Pevsner and Cherry, *Wiltshire*, 237.

<sup>176</sup> KJB I Peter 2: 17, ‘Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King’.

well as symbolic reasons. The lines of sight for the congregation would have been unusual and challenging. Behind the Corporation Pew screen, they would have seen the Mayor and Corporation, then the rood screen, and behind that the communion table. On the front of the screen was a reminder of tripartite authority: the biblical text 'Feare God. Honour the King'. The congregation were urged to fear God, and honour the King who took his royal and religious headship from God. By obvious implication authority was triangulated, as it was at Croscombe, as through the screen the local civic authority was on view to the congregation throughout the service, who should also be obeyed in this hierarchy of authority [Figure 4. 24].<sup>177</sup> The inscription was common in domestic contexts.<sup>178</sup> For example, a Metropolitan slipware jug dated 1630, on view in the Museum of London, carries the same text: 'FEARE GOD AND/HONNOR THE KING 1630'. A bold representation of the text can be seen on the overmantle in Lower Hall, Norland, West Yorkshire, where it is displayed alongside the Carolean arms in the house built in 1634 for George Taylor.<sup>179</sup> This is a Biblical text which comes from the New Testament (1 Peter 2: 17). The same text can also be seen on the Royal Arms on the 1622 gallery in Old Woking Church, Surrey and in a surviving fragment of wall text above the chancel arch at Boscombe, Wiltshire [Figures 4. 35 and 4. 35a].

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<sup>177</sup> The Geneva Bible's wording for the text is identical, and almost identical for the whole verse: GB 'Honour all men: love brotherly fellowship: fear God: honour the King.' The annotation to the Geneva Bible for this verse gives an interesting gloss: 'Hee presenteth a cavill which is made by some, that say they will obey Kings and the higher Magistrates, and yet contemnem their ministers as though their ministers were not armed with their authority which sent them.'

<sup>178</sup> Museum of London catalogue number 74.33, catalogue description: 'Metropolitan slipware rounded jug decorated with trailed white slip asterisks and the inscription 'FEARE GOD AND/HONNOR THE KING 1630'. Metropolitan slipware vessels were made in Harlow, Essex and were so-called because London quickly became their prime market.' I am grateful to Sophie Cope for showing me this example.

<sup>179</sup> [http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-339289-lower-old-hall-and-lower-old-hall-cottag#.WK\\_1-SmmM8](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-339289-lower-old-hall-and-lower-old-hall-cottag#.WK_1-SmmM8) (accessed 24 February 2017).

The Corporation invested in a highly-decorated screen, not just to enhance their civic status, but also to enhance their church. This locally-led investment represented a mixture of secular and religious drivers. The Corporation's financial power through its rectorial rights, and its elegant linking of the authority of God and the King to its own are made material through the magnificence of the woodwork, the fashionable imagery and the inscription. This was civic pride and aldermanic status on a bold scale. John Devenish's Puritan leanings were in keeping with the liturgical stance of the Corporation, a Corporation who used the screen not only to demonstrate their place in a hierarchy of authority, but also to act as a boundary. The boundary also stood to enclose the nave and the pulpit, as a statement about their primary activity in church, to hear the Word of God read and preached, a view that would have been entirely congruent with the vicar's. By re-orientating the space, the screen also stood to create an exclusive area for the burgesses of Bridgwater.

The screen and its seats present a question, upon which speculation is the only option. What happened to the Corporation at the time of Holy Communion? As described in chapter 2, the evidence from the 1631-4 pew dispute locates the communion table east of the rood screen. This prompts the question, did the Corporation remain in the Corporation pew as the rest of the congregation moved east towards the communion table, through the decorated chancel screen, through or around the burgesses' pews, and through the rood screen; or did the Mayor and Aldermen move into the upper end of the nave to join the queuing congregation and then walk back through their own seats towards the communion table. The latter seems clumsy, unwieldy and unlikely. If the first possibility is considered, the implication is that the Corporation were administered communion first, returned to their seats, and the rest of the congregation walked around them to receive communion. A third possibility is that the

burgesses received communion in their privileged seats and remained there as the congregation moved through the chancel screen, past them to the table beyond the rood screen. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the reception of communion was varied and ambivalent in its regulation and practice. In Bridgwater, speculation is the only course available, but whatever the movements, no member of the congregation could fail to be impressed by the magnificence of the screen through which they walked towards the communion table, and at which they looked during services.

### *Conclusion*

The four types of material evidence provide further evidence that the traditional binary paradigm, Laudian and non-Laudian, is too simple for the history of church maintenance and refurbishment, for the intentions of the donors, for the realities of function, and for the complexities of the imagery displayed. The local cluster of newly designed windows in Dorset, where a seemingly old ‘Gothic’ style has been shown to be the new replenishment of an old tradition, has resonance with the apparently old style of decorated ceiling at Axbridge. There, and in the cluster of Dorset windows, this replenishing of an old tradition is also matched by deploying styles which would not have seemed out of place in a domestic context. The door at North Newton had two interpretations, one as the worshippers entered, and another as they left. It showed not only the use of imagery which was common in contexts outside church buildings, but more than that, it displayed an image on the place of transition, of liminality, that spoke to the totality of the life of Reformed Protestants as they left the church, and represented the door to the kingdom of heaven of the parable as they entered. The parochial donors at Axbridge, and the familial donor at Abbotsbury both continued an old tradition of representing heaven on ceilings, although the underpinning theology of access to heaven had profoundly changed after the Reformation. The screens studied are deceptive.

They can easily appear to provide the traditional boundaries between the chancel and the nave. Their purpose and function were, however, more complicated, acting as a radical boundary, and framing the pulpit and the nave, effecting the chancel's redundancy for most of the time. At Bridgwater, the screen achieved in intention and purpose more than that: it achieved an inclusive space for the Mayor and Aldermen, which excluded the rest of the congregation. None of the four screens could be described as 'Laudian'. In the imagery and the texts displayed on the door, the windows, the ceilings and the screens - the literal and metaphorical points of access - not only were layered identities expressed, but the images were sometimes sophisticated, often deployed typology, were derived from a shared visual culture, and were always appropriate for their context. This polarised construct of 'Laudian' and 'non-Laudian' also comes into sharp focus when approaching the theme of the next chapter, sacramental fittings and furniture.

## CHAPTER 5

### FONTS, COMMUNION RAILS, AND COMMUNION TABLES: SACRAMENTAL FURNITURE AND FITTINGS.



Figure 5. 1 Detail of the communion table, the church of St Michael, Somerton, Somerset, dated 1626: a leg with the synoptic images of cuffed hands, a communion cup, a Bible and an hourglass on its side.

#### *Introduction*

After the break with Rome, the *Book of Common Prayer* reduced the seven sacraments of the Church to two: Baptism and Holy Communion. This chapter focuses on the furniture and fittings of those two sacraments, the fonts, the communion rails, and the communion tables.<sup>1</sup>

Arnold Hunt has shown that the old assumptions that simply associated Puritanism with preaching, and Laudianism with the sacraments, were fundamentally mistaken. He demonstrated that an attachment to the sacraments could co-exist with a commitment to

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<sup>1</sup> As the research has been led by the material evidence, the three sections are inevitably weighted differently, because there is much less evidence in the three counties studied of fonts than there is of extant communion tables.

preaching, and that the secondary literature has created a false division. The same point was made by Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke in *Altars Restored*.<sup>2</sup> The first section on fonts provides an examination of whether or not the material evidence presents a local picture that is congruent with the general pattern. The second section on rails explores the traditional assumption that they were identified with the Laudian emphasis on communion tables, and finds the situation to be more complex than that. This chapter then develops the questions and findings around rails with a focus on communion tables. This third section on communion tables will carry forward Fincham and Tyacke's wish that their work in *Altars Restored* be continued by using parochial evidence to provide local contexts, and to address what they call the 'vexed question' of the orientation and of the location of the tables.<sup>3</sup> It will also focus consideration on the neglected aspect of the design and decoration of extant material evidence. In the final part of this chapter, there will be a close examination of the significance of a rare set of images on the communion table at Somerton, Somerset. By deploying an object based analysis in a regional context, the chapter offers an original approach to extend and enrich existing scholarship that has not, to date, given due consideration to the evidence provided by surviving fixtures and fittings. It will argue that local responses in the 1630s to episcopal demands are more finely gradated than had been assumed, and that apparent conformity to those demands may conceal parallel parochial priorities.

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<sup>2</sup> Arnold Hunt, "The Lord's Supper in Early Modern England," *Past and Present* no.161 (1998): 39-83, 75-79; Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 109; for details on music and sermons, see Peter McCullough, "Music Reconciled to Preaching: A Jacobean Moment?" in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 109-129.

<sup>3</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 355.

*Fonts: 'ancient usual places.'*

Post-Reformation fonts and the sacrament of post-Reformation baptism have received insufficient attention. The font became a site of controversy because of the difficulties of the Reformation theology underpinning baptism. Alec Ryrie's synopsis describes the dilemma of 'the vital social glue' of universal infant baptism for those who saw its benefits as belonging exclusively to the elect.<sup>4</sup> If baptism was not a prerequisite for salvation, as Reformed Protestants believed, then what was its purpose?<sup>5</sup> Ryrie shows that they perceived it as a seal of the Holy Spirit on a Christian, a New Testament concept, albeit never used Biblically in the context of baptism. The benefit of baptism, like the Eucharist, was seen by Calvinists to apply to the unconditionally elect. Given the conflicting theological framework underlying baptism, it is not surprising that controversies developed around baptismal ritual behaviour. These focused upon the roles of the godparents, the efficacy of infant baptism, and the use of the sign of the cross during the rite of baptism.<sup>6</sup> Anna French has outlined the inherent contradictions between original sin, predestination and child salvation, which meant that the tensions between pastoral concerns for infants and their parents, and a 'theologically consistent resolution' were not clarified by the liturgy.<sup>7</sup> This poses questions about what such inconsistencies meant for the treatment of fixtures and new investment.

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<sup>4</sup> Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 329-335, 330.

<sup>5</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 329-330.

<sup>6</sup> Hannah Cleugh, "Teaching in Praying Words? Worship and Theology in the Early Modern English Parish," in *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 11-30, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25; Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 35, 52; for more on eligibility of godparents, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 224; Martin Ingram describes how neglect of baptism sometimes ended as prosecution in the courts: Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2; for more on controversies surrounding baptismal ritual behaviour, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 42, 44, 45, 223, 224, 267.

<sup>7</sup> Anna French, "Disputed Words and Disputed Meanings: The Reformation of Baptism, Infant Limbo and Child Salvation in Early Modern England," in *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England*, ed. Jonathan Willis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 157-172, 170; French also describes the notion of 'Protestant limbo,' 167-170.



Frances Bond, who concentrated mainly on medieval fonts, found that there were few new fonts from 1559 to 1640, and the material evidence in these three counties aligns with his generalisation.<sup>8</sup> There are particular reasons for this, discussed below. Bond did find, however, and the local evidence supports him, that there were new font covers in the period. When Charles Cox described the new font covers, he asserted that they were Laudian, a general description repeated by Graham Parry, which this analysis of the local evidence will challenge.<sup>9</sup> Fincham and Tyacke have also questioned this generalisation, and finessed it by showing that fonts were voluntarily given greater prominence in some churches in a non-partisan way, a theme to be developed.<sup>10</sup> Robert Whiting has drawn attention to the perception that traditional stone fonts were tainted by medieval superstitious rites, and the consequential development in the South and East of basins near to, or attached to, the pulpit, a phenomenon seen also in Scotland.<sup>11</sup> There is no evidence, either from the Churchwardens' accounts, or the extant material evidence, that basins were installed in these three counties; old fonts were never proscribed, quite the contrary, and most remained *in situ*. There is only one piece of evidence in this area, at Edington, Wiltshire, that rails were installed around a font where Bishop Davenant gave specific instructions in 1634 for the rails, although Margaret Aston and Fincham and Tyacke have found them elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> Rails, like covers, are described by Aston

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<sup>8</sup> Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908), 25.

<sup>9</sup> J. Charles Cox, *English Church Fittings, Furniture and Accessories* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1923), 99; Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour: The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 88-89.

<sup>10</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 63, 108.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 48; Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 27, 12; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 40, 50-51.

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 599, and n. 188.

as strategies to ensure cleanliness and to ensure sanctity.<sup>13</sup> The image of a dove was also about sanctity through a well-known representative image. Aston found that doves, as images on fonts and their covers, were deployed before Laud, but became suspect by association.<sup>14</sup> Few survived the Civil War, but there is one extant cover with a dove, at the church of St John's, Bristol, which will be discussed briefly.<sup>15</sup>

It is worth rehearsing the clear requirements for fonts, noted in chapter 1: the Royal Order of 1561 required that

the Font be not removed from the accustomed place; and that in parish churches the curates take not upon them to confer Baptism in basins but in the Font customably used.<sup>16</sup>

The Canons of 1571 demanded 'a holy fount, not a basin.'<sup>17</sup> In the early 1570s, the proscribed practice led to controversies between its advocates and Archbishop Parker. Those who believed that baptism should be linked to a sermon wanted to move fonts to a location near the pulpit.<sup>18</sup> The 1604 Canons required 'a font of stone in every church and chapel where baptism is to be ministered; the same to be set in the ancient usual places; in which only font the minister shall baptize publicly,' which, it commented, 'had been 'too much neglected in

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<sup>13</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 597-599; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 245, 258.

<sup>14</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 599-604.

<sup>15</sup> The dove is the finial of the wooden font cover at St John the Baptist, Bristol.

<sup>16</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation vol. III 1559-1575*, Walter Frere and William Kennedy, eds. (London: Longmans, Green, 1910) 109; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 40.

<sup>17</sup> *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Gerald Bray, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 193.

<sup>18</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 40.

many places'.<sup>19</sup> By this phrase, Fincham and Tyacke suggest that the Canon is referring to the location of the font adjacent to the pulpit, in side aisles or under the belfry.<sup>20</sup>

Archbishop Bancroft's articles for his Metropolitan Visitation for the southern province in 1605 included 'whether you have a font of stone set up in the ancient usuall place', echoing the words of the 1561 Order and the 1604 Canon 81.<sup>21</sup> Many churches in the diocese of York were ordered to provide font covers during Neile's time, but Bishop Piers of Bath and Wells, in his 1636 Visitation Articles, only enquired, 'Whether have you in your Church or Chappell a Font of Stone, set up in the ancient usuall place.'<sup>22</sup> Similarly, in 1637, another Laudian enthusiast, Bishop Skinner of Bristol, adopted the 1631 formula of one of his predecessors, Bishop Wright, 'Whether you have in your church and chapel a font of stone, set up in the ancient usual place, as the 81 Canon requireth.'<sup>23</sup> The words, the 'ancient usual place,' are a significant reference to continuity and custom, but this meant different things to different people: for some it signified the comfort of tradition, whilst for others it was tainted with a suspicion of historic superstitious practices.

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<sup>19</sup> George Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 64; *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 375; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 138.

<sup>20</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 245.

<sup>21</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. I*, Kenneth Fincham, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), 19.

<sup>22</sup> For details of visitations see chapter 1, and chapter 3; for the lack of Archdeacons' Visitation Articles in Somerset, and for a detailed analysis of Piers's wording in his articles, compared to his wishes for tables and rails, see John Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset, 1625-1662, with particular reference to the Churchwardens' Accounts," (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 2014), 8, 116-137; for details of Bishop Curl's Visitation Articles, see Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset," 55.

<sup>23</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church vol. II*, Kenneth Fincham, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 61, 73.

This section will first focus on what the material and archival evidence reveals about fonts, their covers, the type of decoration, and their alignment to a confessional position. The material evidence shows that the old stone fonts were being used, that the requirements from 1561 were being met; and it supports the observation that there were few new fonts. The new plain constructs were primarily in newly built churches, Easton Royal in 1591, Folke in 1628, and, as examples outside the three counties, Risely, Derbyshire in 1593, and Arthuret, Cumbria, in 1609 [Figures 5. 2, 5. 3, and 5. 4].<sup>24</sup> The new, plain font at South Barrow, Somerset, was erected in 1584 in the medieval church, and has the date inscribed on its stonework with the initials of the donors, RM SM [Figure 5. 5]. Although this is a functional, simple font, the donors' initials are so disproportionately large, as to be self-aggrandising. The large octagonal bowl of 1584 stands on a Purbeck marble stem of the twelfth or thirteenth century. This probably indicates that Richard de Morice and his wife were the donors, as the nearby funerary monument is an acrostic in brass to him.<sup>25</sup> The brass was noted by Edmund

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<sup>24</sup> Folke was discussed in chapters 2, 3, and 4.

<sup>25</sup> The acrostic brass reads:

'Read and beholde my present state which showeth the fatall dome.  
I stood as yow and yow as I to dust shall shortly come.  
Cast of therefore this wretched worlde, his pleasant baites defie  
His flowers are cutt and withered, in the twinklinge of an eie.  
And when we die most certainly with ioyes or endless paine,  
Rewarded of a dreadfull Judge our sowles shall still remaine.  
Death is the dongeon of our sinnes Jerusalem above  
Ease, comfort, glory hathe for those, whome God doth deerly love  
My sowle therefore in body weake desired thee to embrace,  
O father deer and now she lies before they throne of grace.  
Refuse I did this worlde alive and now in dodd of claye  
I leave this precept to my frendes which yet in earth do staie.  
Care for the ioyes celestiall which can not find their peeres,  
Ever saie in hart, this life shall last alas but twenty yeeres.'

Pevsner links the sixteenth-century funerary brass to the initials on the font and dates the acrostic 1584, but the acrostic itself bears no date: Julian Orbach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; South and West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 563;

<https://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101258889-church-of-st-peter-south-barrow#.WPUIIwGuk> (accessed 17 April 2017).

Rack in the 1780s as being on the floor; it is now on the wall of the church.<sup>26</sup> The font bowl was therefore a gift to the church, memorialising the donors, and meeting the 1561 Royal Order. The font at Risely bears the heraldic arms of the builder of the new church, Michael Willoughby, and the date 1593.<sup>27</sup> In the extant material evidence, memorialising the donor on a font by either inscription or heraldic arms was not common, and only occurs in three instances of fonts examined, South Barrow, Risely, and on the cover at Ryme Intrinseca, Dorset.<sup>28</sup>

There were font covers before the Reformation, sometimes highly decorated.<sup>29</sup> After the Reformation, covers were not mentioned in the 1561 order or the 1604 Canons, but were mentioned in some Visitation Articles which even asked if the fonts were ‘whole and cleane’, or had a ‘cover to keepe it from dust and soyle’.<sup>30</sup> Their practical purpose was primarily one of cleanliness, and this concern pre-dates the Reformation. Covers prevented dirt from infiltrating the water and ensured hygiene. The cover, and sometimes the lock and the door, were a means to prevent the misuse of the font or its water. This too continued a strategy

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<sup>26</sup> Edmund Rack’s *Survey of Somerset*, Mark McDermott and Sue Berry, eds. (Padstow: Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 2011), 100.

<sup>27</sup> Clare Hartwell, Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Derbyshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016, first published by Penguin, 1953, second edition 1978, reprinted with corrections and addenda 1986), 573-575, 573.

<sup>28</sup> Ryme Intrinseca was discussed in chapter 4.

<sup>29</sup> For pre-Reformation font covers, see Bond, *Fonts*; Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 39; for examples of highly decorated pre-Reformation covers, see Ufford, Suffolk, c. 1450: James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Suffolk; East* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015, first published by Penguin, 1961, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised by Enid Radcliffe 1974), 556-557, 557, and Plate 19; and the ‘Perpendicular’ cover at St Dunstan’s, Canterbury, Kent: John Newman, *The Buildings of England: North-East and East Kent* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013, first published 1969 by Penguin, second edition 1976, third edition 1983), 236-238, 238; and the fifteenth-century cover at St Mary’s, Nottingham: Nikolaus Pevsner, revised by Elizabeth Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Nottinghamshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003, first published by Penguin, 1951, second edition 1979, reprinted with corrections, 1997), 219-223, 222.

<sup>30</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 597-598.

which addressed a long held anxiety.<sup>31</sup> Examples of the misuse of font water before the Reformation are described by Eamon Duffy and also Frances Bond, for example the taking of the holy water for magical rites.<sup>32</sup> Misuse after the Reformation may not always have been as bizarre as the bringing of a horse's head to the church at Launceston, Cornwall, for baptism.<sup>33</sup> But even plain covers installed for the prevention of such misuse could present a problem for some Reformed Protestants, who associated them with popish practices.<sup>34</sup>

Of the extant 17 font covers examined, only one font cover bears the inscription of the donor. At Ryme Intrinseca, the simple cone cover bears the words, 'The Gift of Anne Purde who died Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 1637' [Figure 5. 6].<sup>35</sup> The remaining 16 covers bear no inscriptions, unlike the pulpits where, as shown in chapter 3, the Churchwardens were often keen to display their investment on behalf of the parish as well as the date. It is only at Cameley that the Churchwardens' accounts of 1634 note the investment in the extant scrolled cover,

Paid to the Welshman joyner for his worke about the cover of the font & rayless about the communion table xxxiiis iiid.<sup>36</sup> [Figure 5. 7]

There are several examples from Churchwardens' accounts of investment in new font covers; in none of those parishes has the font cover survived. In 1596 and 1599 payment was made at

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<sup>31</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 39.

<sup>32</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400-c. 1580*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Yale University Press, 2005), 280; Bond, *Fonts*, 281.

<sup>33</sup> Anne Duffin, *Faction and Faith: Politics and Religion of the Cornish Gentry Before the Civil War* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 57.

<sup>34</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 598.

<sup>35</sup> Although the inscription is visible to the eye, it is not able to be reproduced through photography.

<sup>36</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Cameley, 1634. In the next section of this chapter will be a discussion of the communion rails at Cameley, referred to in this item of expenditure. Cameley was discussed in chapters 2, and 3.

Somerton for ‘filling the font’; the context of this item in the accounts with other items of regular maintenance, such as ‘sweeping the church’ in 1596, and ‘making cleane the church’ in 1599, might imply that it may have been covered and that water was left in it safely protected. The Axbridge accounts note the mending of the lock of the font in 1620; in 1633 the accounts at Durston itemise a font cover; in 1633 the Churchwardens at Thorne paid 2s 6d for ‘a cover for the font’; at Cerne Abbas in 1639 the cover was part of a group of items, ‘Item paid for a new pulpit & Canopy & Covering for the font and a little chest with 3 locks £9 3s 0d’; at Mere in 1639 the Churchwardens itemised the ‘varnishing of the font’, which might imply a wooden cover, and a ‘plug for the font’. The accounts at Wimborne Minster display a sequence of expenditure which suggests regular renewal and repair of the cover: in 1569 the Churchwardens paid for a ‘lock for the font’, in 1572 for mending the cover of the font’, in 1578 ‘a board and making the cover for the font’, and ‘iron work about the font’, in 1582 a ‘lock for the font’, in 1613 ‘making a cover for the font’ and 1616 ‘iron staples for the cover for the font’.<sup>37</sup>

The material evidence of the extant fonts show that a few covers were suspended, for example at Edington, and Wyke Champflower [Figures 5. 8 and 5. 9].<sup>38</sup> Suspended covers eased the lifting of heavy covers and secured better the cleanliness of the water. The covers range from plain cones, such as at Ryme Intrinseca [Figure 5. 6], to the highly decorated cones at Rodney

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<sup>37</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Somerton SHC, 1596, 1599; SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Axbridge, 1620; SHC: D\P\durn/4/1/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Durston, 1633; SHC: D\P\th.co/4/1/2 Churchwardens’ accounts of Thorne Coffin, 1633; DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Cerne Abbas, 1639; WSHC: 2944/44 Churchwardens’ accounts Mere, 1639; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Wimborne Minster, 1569, 1572, 1578, 1582, 1613, 1616. Somerton was discussed in chapter 3, and will be discussed later in this chapter; Axbridge was discussed in chapter 4; Thorne, and Cerne Abbas were discussed in chapter 3; Mere and Wimborne Minster were discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>38</sup> Bond, *Fonts*, 298.

Stoke and All Cannings [Figures 5. 10 and 5. 11].<sup>39</sup> The cones sometimes had doors, and locks, as the Churchwardens' accounts showed at Wimborne Minster. The material evidence shows this also with the cone-shaped covers at Pawlett with its door and lock, found lying in the vestry [Figure 5. 12]. This demonstrates a care for the cleanliness of the water and security, and a strategy for accessing the font without having to lift the cover.

As Bond showed, as well as covers that were cones, there were those that were simply flat, and those with scrolls.<sup>40</sup> The scroll type of covers is dated in this sample from 1600 to 1630, at Cameley, Maiden Bradley and Sherrington [Figures 5. 7, 5. 13, and 5. 14].<sup>41</sup> These scroll decorations, along with the decorated cones were constructed by Protestants of all hues. Whilst the cone at Puddletown was plain and part of a wholesale investment by the godly parish between 1634 to 1637, the decorated cone at Rodney Stoke was one element in the decoration of many aspects of the church, as discussed in chapter 4, and probably part of Sir Edward Rodney's investment, who was a committed mainstream Calvinist.<sup>42</sup> The dating of the covers from those studied in these three counties shows that 9 were from 1603 to 1625, one from 1630, and 4 from the 1630s. Despite the capricious nature of survival, it would not be sustainable to align decorated covers with the Laudian drive to decorate churches. Most of the extant font covers pre-date the 'Laudian' years and, of the four from the 1630s, one is exceptionally plain, at Ryme Intrinseca, and the 1634-7 one is at Puddletown, where its credentials as a godly parish are unimpeachable.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Rodney Stoke was discussed in chapter 4.

<sup>40</sup> Bond, *Fonts*, 281-313.

<sup>41</sup> Maiden Bradley was discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>42</sup> See chapters 2 and 3 for Puddletown.

<sup>43</sup> See chapter 2.



One specific example of decoration on font covers, that of an image of a dove, representing the Holy Ghost's role in the sacrament of baptism, was not uncommon in the early seventeenth century, but such was the opposition to such an image that there are few extant examples because of destruction after 1640.<sup>44</sup> Dowsing's campaign in East Anglia in the 1640s provides an example of breaking down in 1643 'a dove for the high loft of the font' in St Giles, Cambridge.<sup>45</sup> There is one extant example from St John's, Bristol, which although strictly was not part of Somerset, was part of the Diocese of Bristol [Figure 5. 15]. The 1624 font is an unusual cruciform, has scrolled legs, cherubs' heads and rosettes on a square body. The flat cover has scrolls, which arrive at the dove finial. This is a rare survival representing many examples, which have not survived, linking the image of the dove to the spiritually important baptismal sacrament, illustrating the descent of the spirit of God, as the Gospels narrate.<sup>46</sup> The image had become controversial in the sixteenth century because it depicted one of the three aspects of the Godhead, which, according to most commentaries on the Second Commandment, could not be depicted in any bodily form.<sup>47</sup> As Aston has said, not even the most thorough research could discover all the early seventeenth-century fonts decorated with carved wooden doves, because they have mostly been destroyed. The earlier suggestion that most of the extant font covers pre-dated the Laudian years and were not *per se* aligned to Laudianism seems justified, but it would be disingenuous to suggest, given the widespread destruction of font covers with that image, that extant evidence is the whole story

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<sup>44</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 596.

<sup>45</sup> *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia during the English Civil War*, Trevor Cooper, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press in association with the Ecclesiological Society, 2001), 192.

<sup>46</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 595-604, 598.

<sup>47</sup> Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 50-51.

of the adornment of font covers. The material and archival evidence show that the pattern in the three counties is in line with the general pattern for fonts and font covers. These sacramental furniture and fittings showed practical expediency, were compliant with requirements, but were also part of the decoration of churches. The response by the parishioner to a traditional font, and even a plain cover, was determined by their confessional position. It was also determined by their attitudes to the credentials of the authorities, which, if questioned, could lead to the font becoming a focus of contention. For some it gave the succour of representing an ancient rite, for others it smacked of those superstitious practices which the more zealous abhorred. Most parishioners would have wanted their children baptised, and would have been comforted by the presence of the font in its 'usual place', near the entrance to the church, signifying the child's entry into the Christian community.<sup>48</sup>

*Communion Rails: 'repaire unto the rayless'.*

The practicalities of excluding dogs were part of the reason for the erection of communion rails. John Craig has described the prevalence of dogs in parish churches and the unwillingness of the Tudor and Stuart ecclesiastical authorities to ban them.<sup>49</sup> However, in the 1630s rails became inextricably associated with the so-called Laudian altar policy, and they provoked fierce opposition for their symbolic link to the most controversial part of the Laudian drives, an emphasis on sacramental worship, the separation of the officiating minister, and the consequent changes to the east end of the church.<sup>50</sup> This section of the chapter will first discuss the significance of rails before the 1630s, then analyse the story of

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<sup>48</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 334-335; French, "Disputed Words," 166-171.

<sup>49</sup> John Craig, "Psalms, Groans and Dogwhippers: The Soundscape of Worship in the English Parish Church, 1547-1642," in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 104-123, 119, 120.

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of the historiography of 'Laudianism', see chapter 1.

rails in the 1630s, suggesting that the local evidence allows a narrative that is more nuanced than has been traditionally thought, that rails simply defined a ‘holy’ space.

The secondary literature is substantial, and often polemical, on rails as part of the scholarship on communion tables. For example, Kevin Sharpe maintains that the altar controversy has been misunderstood by historians, attacking Nicholas Tyacke’s important book, *Anti Calvinists*, and positing that it was the King, not Laud, who was driving the religious policy of the 1630s.<sup>51</sup> As early as 1923, Charles Cox recognised that the Laudians did not invent communion rails.<sup>52</sup> Robert Whiting has described how rails were unnecessary before the Reformation as the rood screen protected the chancel as a sanctified area described in the 1540s as a space ‘where poor men durst not presume to come’. The chancel had been the protected space for the clergy to celebrate the Mass, and where sometimes the patron was permitted.<sup>53</sup> Whiting’s view that rails were uncommon in the reigns of Elizabeth and James is difficult either to substantiate or challenge.<sup>54</sup> A trawl through all the volumes of Pevsner in

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<sup>51</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 333 and chapter 6; Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1650* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). For a succinct synopsis of the debate on the link between Arminian theology and Laudian policy, the second revisionary wave, and also the role of the King, see Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480-1642*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 221-223; and Peter Lake who has helpfully detailed the historiography: Peter Lake, “Introduction: Puritanism, Arminianism and Nicholas Tyacke,” in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, eds. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> Cox, *English Church Fittings, Furniture*, 250.

<sup>53</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 3, 31. The quotation comes from a supplication to Henry VIII in 1546, quoted by Whiting: Christopher Anderson, *The Annals of the English Bible vol. II* (New York, 1845), 209; Francis Bond, *The Chancels of English Churches: The Altar, Reredos, Lenten Veil, Communion Table, Altar Rails, Houseling Cloth, Piscina, Credence, Sedilia, Aumbry, Sacrament House, Easter Sepulchre, Squint etc.*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1916). For details of the responsibility of the rector for the chancel, see Peter Smith, “The Advowson: The History and Development of a Most Peculiar Property,” *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* vol. 5, no. 26 (2000): 320-339.

<sup>54</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 31. Fincham and Tyacke contended that Churchwardens’ accounts reveal that the railing of communion tables during Elizabeth’s reign was less common than previously thought, and

the *Buildings of England* series notes 111 extant communion rails from either the reign of Elizabeth, or the early seventeenth century.<sup>55</sup> Compared to the estimated number of extant pulpits for the early seventeenth century of 1000, rails are far fewer.<sup>56</sup> This offers some support for Whiting's view but many rails would have been destroyed in the mid seventeenth century because they had become associated with the controversial Laudian policy, as Margaret Aston has pointed out.<sup>57</sup> In September 1641 the House of Commons ordered that rails be taken away.<sup>58</sup> As Dowsing's *Journal* of destruction in East Anglia testifies, their survival was a matter of caprice.<sup>59</sup> Fincham and Tyacke provide the most detailed history of rails as part of their work on communion tables, highlighting the innovative nature of the changes by Laudians. Fincham and Tyacke show that these pre-1630 rails were not controversial, and, following the removal of some rood screens, were associated with the need to keep dogs away from the table.<sup>60</sup> The Churchwardens' accounts of Cheddar, Durston, and Wimborne Minster all indicate the dogs were a problem by itemising expenditure on 'whipping dogs'.<sup>61</sup> Both Aston and Fincham and Tyacke relate events of dogs who 'pise(d)' against the table, and one who jumped on the table and ran off with the consecrated bread on

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where it did occur, it had the effect of placing the table in the eucharistic position: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 52.

<sup>55</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner *et al.* *The Buildings of England*. Pevsner's dating is not infallible, which could reduce the number of extant rails; examples of Elizabethan rails can be found in Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 53.

<sup>56</sup> George Yule, "James VI and I: Furnishing the Churches in His Two Kingdoms," in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, eds. Anthony Fletcher, and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 182-208, 189.

<sup>57</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 99.

<sup>58</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 276.

<sup>59</sup> *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia during the English Civil War*, Trevor Cooper, ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer in association with the Ecclesiological Society, 2001), 191, 207, 210, 220, 227, 260, 292, 305.

<sup>60</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 54, 109; for details on the presence of dogs in parish churches, see Craig, "Psalms, Groans and Dogwhippers."

<sup>61</sup> SHC: DD\SAS\C/795/SE/14 Churchwardens' accounts of Cheddar, 1616; SHC: D\P\durn/4/1/1 Cwa Durston, 1640; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1584. For more examples of Churchwardens employing dogwhippers, see Craig, "Psalms, Groans and Dogwhippers," 113.

Christmas Day at Tadlow, Cambridgeshire.<sup>62</sup> Archbishop Abbott in his Metropolitan Visitation Articles in 1612 was not just concerned about dogs, when he asked whether the communion table ‘is so used out of time of divine service as is not agreeable to the holy use of it, as by sitting on it, throwing hats on it, writing on it, or is it abused to other prophaner uses’.<sup>63</sup> The change from rails, that did not offend, but were rather seen as practical, to rails that were associated with Laudianism, and its contentious policies for the table and the east end, is described in meticulous detail by Fincham and Tyacke.<sup>64</sup> Fincham and Tyacke identify the sources of opposition as the cost of erecting rails, objections by local congregations to outside interference in their parochial arrangements, lack of canonical legality, fear of popery and also a fear of sacerdotalism that the policy engendered.<sup>65</sup> Bishop Piers of Bath and Wells receives particular attention by them because he was ahead of his fellow enthusiasts in pursuing the railed policy after the St Gregory’s test case, although the wording in his 1636 Articles is guarded, and the word ‘rail’ was not deployed.<sup>66</sup> The row about the repositioning of the communion table in the City of London parish, St Gregory’s, had ended in a hearing

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<sup>62</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 304; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 219. Another example of misuse of the communion table comes from Wilton, Wiltshire, ‘that divers young men and youths have pressed and intruded into the Chauncell and there sitt or leane upon the Communion Table without any Reverence or respect thereunto’: WSHC: 1242/8 Rate levied for the erection and furnishing of a gallery in the Wilton Church, Wiltshire, with details of the receipts and expenses incurred in carrying out the works and faculty from the Chancellor of the Diocese of Salisbury granting permission to build, dated 1632.

<sup>63</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 109.

<sup>64</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, chapter 5.

<sup>65</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 222.

<sup>66</sup> In Bath and Wells, Piers introduced the railed altar policy on his own authority following the test case of St Gregory’s: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 198-199, 201-202; for more detail on Piers, see Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 122; I am grateful to John Reeks for discussing with me Piers’s view on rails; in his thesis, John Reeks emphasises the care with which Piers approached the issue of railed altars, using the phrase in the 1636 Articles ‘And is there in your Chancell... a decent Communion Table for the Administration of the Lords Supper with a Carpet of Silk. Stuff, or fine Woollen cloth, and another covering of white and pure linen and spread thereupon...; and whether is the same Table placed in such convenient sort as is ordered and appointed in that behalf; and whether it is to be used out of time of Divine Service as is not agreeable to the holy use of it, as by sitting on it, throwing Hats on it, writing on it, or is it abused to other prophane uses’: Article 3 Concerning the Church. Drawing on Piers’s writing, John Reeks maintains that this was code for railing.

before the King and Council in November 1633, which determined that the ordinary had the right to determine the position of the table.<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Fincham describes the care that Laud and others, such as Piers, took in the wording of their Articles because of their caution over the lack of canonical authority for railing east end altars.<sup>68</sup> Even earlier than Piers was Samuel Clark, who issued the Visitation Articles for the Archdeaconry of Derby in the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield in 1630, where he asked if the communion table ‘was set at the east end of the chancel, and cancelled in from prophane use’, an instruction which appears not to have been acted upon.<sup>69</sup>

The importance of the type of sources used in understanding the success of the policy to impose communion rails is highlighted by Margaret Stieg’s conclusion that in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the Laudian success was ‘superficial’. However, Andrew Foster has shown that by using the Churchwardens’ accounts in Somerset, which Margaret Stieg had not, that evidence suggests that the Laudian campaign was ‘pretty successful’.<sup>70</sup> In this section of the chapter, the material evidence and the evidence of some accounts will be examined to interrogate Stieg’s view, which was based on her work on the records of the consistory court of Bath and Wells.

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<sup>67</sup> For more details of St Gregory’s test case, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 191-196; and for an analysis of the interplay between the King and Laud over it, see Cust, *Charles I*, 137-138.

<sup>68</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 107, 173, 201. For more detail on Piers, see Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 122.

<sup>69</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 186.

<sup>70</sup> Stieg, *Laud’s Laboratory*, 306; Andrew Foster, “Churchwardens’ Accounts of Early Modern England and Wales: Some Problems to Note but Much to be Gained,” in *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, eds. Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, and Beat Kumin, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 74-93, 90-91; for more on sources and rails in Somerset, see Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 129.

Kenneth Fincham in his edited collection of Visitation Articles demonstrates that in seeking to understand new policies, such as railing, Visitation Articles are not sufficient, and that the Bishop's injunctions and his private orders to his Vicar-General in each diocese need to be taken into account.<sup>71</sup> Archbishop Laud's Articles for his 20 dioceses 1634 to 1637 ignored the issue of a railed altar.<sup>72</sup> The chronology is important: Laud became Archbishop in 1633. His Metropolitan Visitation began in the spring of 1634 when his commissioners visited seven dioceses in his province. Unlike Neile, the Archbishop of York, Laud held back on imposing railed altars until the remaining thirteen dioceses were visited from April 1635. Fincham and Tyacke suggest that Laud held back in the hope of obtaining a royal declaration on the altar. The three dioceses, in which our case studies are located, Bristol, Bath and Wells, and Salisbury were subject to the visitation in 1634 and therefore railed altars were not required.<sup>73</sup> One of the many problems associated with railing in the 1630s was the lack of any firm ruling by the Metropolitans about where Communion should be administered, and the consequent diversity of practice about its reception.<sup>74</sup> Fincham and Tyacke believe that rails had been introduced in most parishes by 1640, ironically the date when they first became a canonical requirement.<sup>75</sup> By then some described them as the 'tools of Anti-Christ'.<sup>76</sup> Robert Woodford, whose detailed diaries provide an insight into the spiritual journey of one of the godly of

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<sup>71</sup> *Visitation Articles II*, Fincham, xx-xxi. For examples of injunctions and railing see 106-112; and specifically, railing in Gloucester, injunctions 1635, 108; railing in Chichester, injunctions 1635, 108; and for railing in London, injunctions 1637, 109.

<sup>72</sup> In Bath and Wells, Piers introduced the railed altar policy on his own authority following the test case of St Gregory's: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 198-199, 201-202.

<sup>73</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 198-199, 201-202.

<sup>74</sup> Fincham, and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 210-211; Kenneth Fincham, "The Restoration of Altars in the 1630s," *The Historical Journal* vol. 44, no. 4 (2001): 919-940, 936, 939.

<sup>75</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 173: the 1640 Canon 7 said that the communion table was to be 'decently served with rails'; for more on Piers's enforcement, see 201-202, 210, 219. For details of the litigation which ensued from the Laudian policies, see Martin Ingram, "Puritans and the Church Courts 1560-1640," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 58-91.

<sup>76</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 165 and n. 130.

Northampton, considered them so heinous as to be ‘promoters of superstition and idolatry.’<sup>77</sup>

At the end of *Altars Restored*, the authors invite more research on the parishes in order to better understand the events of Laudian policy in the 1630s. This chapter will respond to their invitation, and consider how an analysis of the local material and archival evidence can add to their perspective.<sup>78</sup>

The rails constructed before the 1630s appear simple and plain, compared to some of the screens described in chapter 4. The extant material evidence shows that many of the rails of the years 1600-1625 in the three counties are utilitarian, designed for their practical use to exclude dogs from the space. Where the balustrades were sufficiently close, and the horizontal rail was reasonably high, they were fit for their purpose, as the material evidence of those at Puxton, Somerset, and Obone, Dorset, would suggest.<sup>79</sup> Some have no pattern at all on them, whilst others have simple patterns, consistent in style with these dates, for example those at Puxton, at Obone, and at Sherrington, Wiltshire [Figures 5. 16, 5. 17, and 5. 18]. Archival evidence of early rails is thin: the Churchwardens’ accounts at Wimborne Minster note expenditure on mending rails in 1583; in 1602 Gawpin was paid 5s ‘for fotestoles in the quire

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<sup>77</sup> *Robert Woodford’s Diary 1637-1641*, John Fielding, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for The Royal Historical Society, 2012), 307: 16 May 1640; and other examples of his outrage are: ‘The Churchwardens this day sent for before [*crossed out*: Mr] dr Clarke&& there injoynd to rayle in & fix the table at the East end of the Channcell; but they both refused and answered him boldly, blessed be the Lord oh Lord give them courage & the confidence of fayth & wisdom for the Lords sake 16 dec 1637, 152; and ‘The Com[munio]n Tables raylinge in to the top of the Chancell & the seates there pulled downe. O Lord destroy sup[er]stit[i]on. 16 march 1637/8’, 189.

<sup>78</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 355-356.

<sup>79</sup> In 1638 Bishop Montagu of Norwich enquired whether the balustrades were close enough for their purpose by asking whether the Communion table ‘were enclosed and ranged about with a rail of joyners and turners work, close enough to keep out dogs and going in and profaning that holy place, from pissing against it or worse’: Craig, “Psalms, Groans and Dogwhippers,” 118; other examples of close balustrades and reasonably high rails can be seen at Cameley and Catcott, Somerset, and Berwick St James, Wiltshire.



about the Communion Table'.<sup>80</sup> The provision of footstools may imply, as did expenditure on mats, kneeling at the rails to receive Communion.<sup>81</sup> Before the imposed policy, the installation of rails may have been a practical response to the problem of dogs, although the rails changed the worshippers' experience: kneeling, standing or sitting at rails was physically a different experience from an immediate proximity to the table. If the rails were on a north-south axis, rather than on four sides, that too changed the kinaesthetic experience: instead of moving around the table, communicants lined up at the rail in sequential groups. The intention of the imposed drive for rails was to attempt to achieve kneeling at reception of the sacrament, and it was this intention, with all its association with unreformed practice, that Woodford and others found unacceptable, perceiving them as 'promoters of superstition and idolatry'.<sup>82</sup>

The archival evidence for rails is richer from 1634 onwards, which reflects the Laudian drive. In Somerset, where Piers led the way in the southern province, the Churchwardens' accounts of Axbridge note expenditure of £1 15s on rails in 1634, as in the same year do those at Somerton, Thorne and Cameley.<sup>83</sup> Of these rails noted in the Churchwardens' accounts, only those at Cameley are extant. They can technically be called 'Laudian' because of the evident intervention of the Ordinary; but the story of the rails at Cameley is more complicated than this epithet suggests, which will be considered later. In the 1635 accounts for Durston, there

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<sup>80</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1583, 1602.

<sup>81</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 217.

<sup>82</sup> For more on pre-Reformation kneeling at Mass, see Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 117.

<sup>83</sup> At Axbridge, the accounts show, 'Item to Robert Stoudley for raylinge In of the Communion table £1 15s 00d': SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1634; the Churchwardens' accounts for Somerton note, 'Item Mr Squier for the rayless in Chancell and for a little peece of timber £2 10s 2d': SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1634; in the same year at Thorne, 1634, they expended 1s 8d on 'matts for the communion table', and a 'boulte for rayling': SHC: D\P\th.co/4/1/2 Cwa Thorne Coffin, 1634; the accounts at Cameley itemised, 'Paid to the Welshman joyner for his worke about the cover of the font & rayless about the communion table xxxiiis iiid': SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1634.

are two entries, first for ‘laid out for our orders about the church’, and then ‘for communion table with railes £2 2s 6d’. The accounts are tantalizingly vague about the nature of the orders, and only allow speculation as to whether the orders and the expenditure on railing were linked. In the same year, there was expenditure on mats, which, as described above implies kneeling at the rails.<sup>84</sup> In 1638, three years later, expenditure is itemised at Durston for ‘laid out timber for rayless and for makinge of the Church hatch 15s 8d’, which might suggest an alteration to the rails.

Cheddar ‘paid for a mat and a tut -[a cushion]- for the Communion table 4s’, in 1638. A single mat might imply that it was for the minister, or for the kneeling parishioners, or for the communion table itself. These accounts do not note any rails being constructed in the 1630s, but in 1636 the Churchwardens paid 17d for ‘dismissinge the Courte aboute the orgaines and the Channcell’, which might suggest a refusal to follow episcopal instructions. ‘Dismissing the court’ was a term used where the Churchwardens were challenging the legal justification for what they were being asked to do.<sup>85</sup> The accounts for 1643 includes four pence for setting up rails around the table.<sup>86</sup> Other accounts, such as Axbridge, show that new rails were significantly more expensive than 4d, so the implication is that their pre-existing rails were being altered.<sup>87</sup> Piers had a more difficult time with some parishes than others.<sup>88</sup> A slow parish to comply was Minehead St Martin, where the wardens recorded paying the Apparitor

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<sup>84</sup> SHC: D\P\durn/4/1/1 Cwa Durston, 1635.

<sup>85</sup> Fincham and Tyacke emphasise that by their nature, Churchwardens’ accounts are difficult to interpret on tables: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 52; Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 124.

<sup>86</sup> SHC: DD\SAS\C/795/SE/14 Cwa Cheddar, 1636, 1638, 1643.

<sup>87</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1634; Reeks also notes that the new rails at Ilminster cost £2 6s in 1636: Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 124.

<sup>88</sup> Details of the speed to comply in Somerset parishes can be found in Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 123-129; and Stieg, *Laud’s Laboratory*, 297.

2s 6d in 1639 for bringing an order for the removal of seats in the chancel, and where there is no record of payments for labour in railing the table or mats for kneeling, until late 1640.<sup>89</sup>

Cerne Abbas, Dorset, has some not entirely clear entries for 1635. First the Churchwardens noted that they had been cited at Blandford ‘about the chancel’, then in the same year, under a sub-heading of ‘disbursements about the chancel’, they itemised expenditure on ‘work about the chancel’, ‘clamps’, ‘timber’, and ‘two dayes work about seats in the chancel’. There was work being undertaken that might be related to rails, and could therefore be a response to their citation. In 1641, a list of church goods included ‘some Rayles taken from about the communion table’. Rails are not noted elsewhere in the accounts from 1635-1641. It might be that rails at Cerne Abbas were erected in 1635, and the accounts show that they were taken down in 1641.<sup>90</sup> The rails at Cerne Abbas cannot be identified visually as belonging to the 1630s. This is part of a larger story, which was referred to in chapter 3 on pulpits, and which will emerge again in the last section of this chapter, a story where parochial priorities were demonstrated in parallel with the episcopal demands being made.

There are just a few instances of extant rails with extant tables of the same period.<sup>91</sup> For example, Sherrington, Wiltshire, where the 1624 dated communion table also has rails that

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<sup>89</sup> The Minehead accounts note that they ‘paid to the aparator for delivering in a Certificatt of all the particulars of the church being required by the bishop’, in 1639 and in the same year another certificate was ‘paid to the Apparator’. In 1640 after 5 November ‘Item paid to John Stronge for the worke in raylinge the Communion table £2 2s’: SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Churchwardens’ accounts of Minehead, 1638, 1640; there is no record in the accounts of payment for the seats to be removed from the chancel.

<sup>90</sup> DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas, 1635, 1641. This fits with the order made by the House of Commons in 1641, described above.

<sup>91</sup> None of these is supported by the archival evidence of Churchwardens’ accounts. Whilst the table and the rails at Wimborne Minster are non-extant, the Churchwardens’ accounts of 1638 itemise the expenditure on a new

appear visually to date from the 1620s; at Folke, Dorset, both the table and the rails appear congruent with the date of the new church, 1628; at Rodney Stoke, Somerset, the inscribed 1634 communion table appears to have rails from the 1630s; and at Melcombe Horsey, Dorset, both the rails and the communion table appear to date from the 1630s. Pilton, Devon, provides an example outside the three counties of Elizabethan rails -which are decorated - and an Elizabethan communion table [Figures 5. 19].<sup>92</sup> None of these parishes has surviving Churchwardens' accounts that help to clarify the chronological relationship between rails and tables.

There are, however, two parishes where the rails do assist in that endeavour. The row that erupted in Cameley in 1630 over the Puritan preacher's seating arrangements was discussed in chapter 2. As described in the previous section, the accounts show that rails were built in 1634; they itemised, 'Welshman joyner for his worke about The cover of the font & rayles about the communion table xxxiiis iiid'. In the same year, the churchwardens were called several times to Wells regarding 'wyne', 'terrier', 'glebe', and the 'boundes'.<sup>93</sup> No mention is made of being called about the rails. Whatever the driver for the 1634 rails, Piers was not satisfied, and in 1635 the Churchwardens recorded paying 5s 'several times' for being called before 'my Lord about hood, churchyard fence and turning the table', that is turning the table altarwise on a north-south axis. Even by 1637, they appear not to have complied when they

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communion table for '12s', and in 1639 for 'new rail and posts' for the table: DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas, 1638, 1639.

<sup>92</sup> Abbey Dore, Herefordshire has not been included as Viscount Scudamore reclaimed and re-erected the medieval altar: Alan Brooks and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012, first published by Penguin, 1963), 71-78, 76.

<sup>93</sup> The Churchwardens of Cameley were called to Wells on diocesan matters, eight times in 1633, an indication of the new Bishop's activities: SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1633-4.

paid 2s 6d for another order for turning the table. Later that year they did expend 5s for altering the newly installed rails, all of which implies eventual compliance.<sup>94</sup> ‘Turning the table’ does not appear as an expense in Churchwardens’ accounts, because it involved no cost. There is more than one explanation for the events of 1634: the Churchwardens may have been erecting rails on their own initiative, as had been done for decades for reasons of hygiene; or they may have been responding very early to Piers’s first round of demands. In a study of the churches and chapels of the Pennines it has been suggested that compliance by some parishes with a Laudian programme was an attempt to win a more important battle, such as the retention of a preacher.<sup>95</sup> The most likely explanation at Cameley was that the Churchwardens responded early to Piers’s demand for railing, that the rails were part of a strategy to be compliant over something that was not a priority, in the hope of achieving other aims. If one of those was to retain the table on an east-west axis, they were to be disappointed with the events of 1637. Cameley is an example that rails *per se* did not indicate the turning of the table altarwise.

Cameley shows that railing and turning the table altarwise were not the same thing, although they have often been conflated, not unreasonably because Laud’s Metropolitan Visitation in 1635 linked them.<sup>96</sup> The arrangements at Puddletown demonstrated that railing in the 1630s

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<sup>94</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1634, 1635, 1637.

<sup>95</sup> Bullett, “Preaching in the Pennines,” 27.

<sup>96</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 203: Laud’s Vicar General, Brent, required the churchwardens ‘to place the communion table in their severall churches under the east wall of the chauncell and the table of tenne commandments be sett over it and the same to rayle in, in comely sort’; examples of railed tables not at the east end can be found at Chipley, and West Grinstead, West Sussex, Amersham, Buckinghamshire: Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 339; Valerie Hitchman refers to rails on all four sides of the table long before Laud at St Giles Cripplegate, and All Hallows, Barking-by-the Tower, both in London: Valerie Hitchman, “*Omnia Bene or Ruinosa?*: The Condition of the Parish Churches in and around London and Westminster c. 1603-1677,” (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2008), 89; Hitchman also referred to Edmund Udall in 1640, who said that

and Laudianism were not synonymous. In chapter 2 the events that led up to the refurbishment of Puddletown between 1634 and 1637 were discussed. As noted there, Puddletown has that rare combination of an almost total extant interior scheme and a rare seating plan of 1637.

## PUDDLETOWN

### *The parish church of St. Mary*

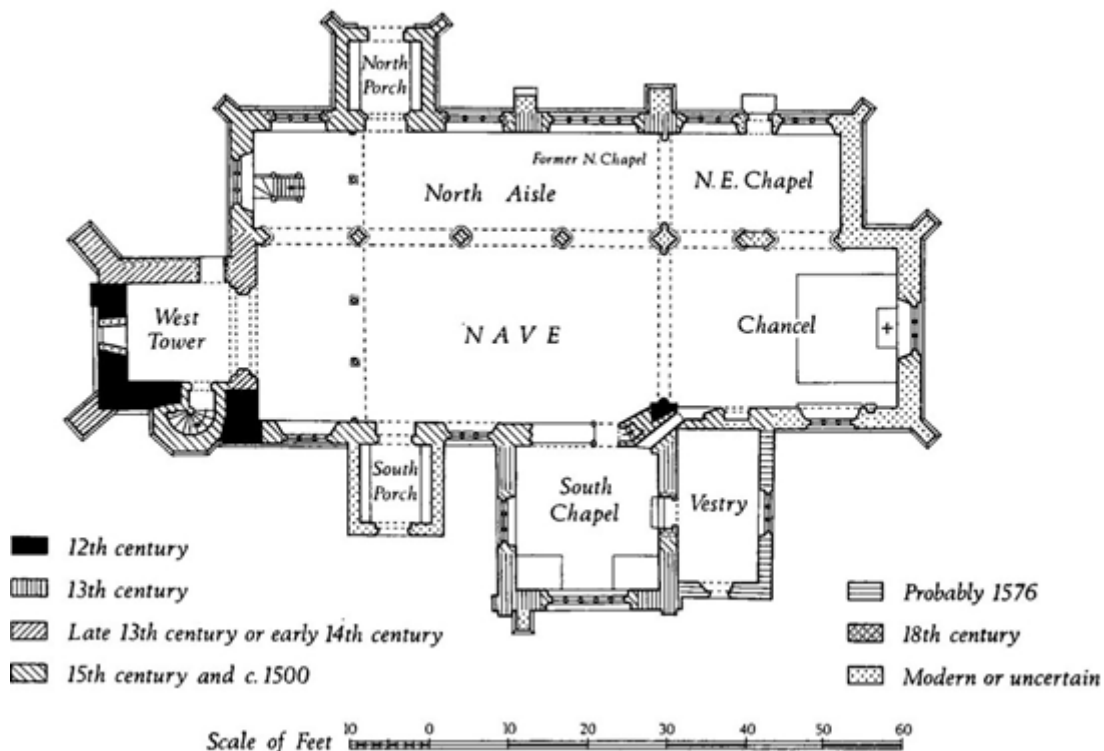


Diagram 5. a Plan of the present church of St Mary, Puddletown, Dorset.<sup>97</sup>

The only non-extant items of the total refurbishment are the screen and the fourth side of the communion rails, which can be clearly seen on the 1637 plan [Figure 5. 20]. From the modern plan [Diagram 5. a] the rails can be seen to have just three sides, and the table has been moved to the east end. In the 1637 plan the four sides are clearly visible around the 'Chancell',

communion rails had 'been the custom, in many churches, town and country, beyond the memory of many people of sixty or eighty years old': 89, n. 86.

<sup>97</sup> "Puddletown," in *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, Volume 3, Central*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), 222-231. *British History Online*, accessed February 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/dorset/vol3/pp222-231>.

although no table is drawn. The modern plan shows that the chancel would have been big enough to accommodate a four-sided rail, nearer the middle of the chancel. There is no extant table but the 1634-7 rails remain, although the controversial 1910 chancel rebuilding changed the rails, which now stop short of the east wall [Figure 5. 21].<sup>98</sup> Both the 1634 and the 1637 documents refer to the ‘settle without the frame of the communion table.’<sup>99</sup> The 1634 memorandum describes

a communion table and a frame about it for the communion and a settle without that.<sup>100</sup>

The 1637 scheme orderered that,

For mens sons of best Ranke and estate and also serving men that attend there masters and also the parson and the vicars men they to be in the settle without the frame of the communion place.<sup>101</sup>

This implies seating outside the rails, and on a settle, a bench, for the identified group of men.<sup>102</sup> The plan shows seating to the north of the chancel, but not to the east and south where

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<sup>98</sup> Bob Machin, “‘To take their plases where they shall not offend others’: the 1635 Reseating of Puddletown Church, Dorset,” in *Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present*, eds. Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown (London: Ecclesiological Society, 2011), 171-182, 171, 182 n. 1; in describing the 1910 controversy about the rebuilding of the chancel, Machin refers to Claudius J. P. Beatty, “Thomas Hardy: conservation architect-his work for the SPAB,” (1995): 42-49; DHC: PE/PUD/CW/4/1 Faculty for the enlargement of the chancel, 1910.

<sup>99</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for allowing sittings in the new pews, 1637. The 1679 seating plan also shows the four-sided arrangement: DHC: PE/PUD/CW/5/3 Seating plan for the new pews, 1679; DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, From the memorandum and rate list concerning the re-seating of the Church, a new gallery and general alterations to the Church at Puddletown dated 1634.

<sup>100</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.

<sup>101</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for pews Puddletown, 1637.

<sup>102</sup> For a similar but not identical example, see Deerhurst, Gloucestershire: David Verey and Alan Brooks, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire; The Vale and the Forest of Dean* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009, first published by Penguin, 1970, second edition 1976, third edition, 2002), 329-333, 333; for a definition of settle, as opposed to a high settle, see *OED* ‘Something to sit upon; a chair, bench, stool, or the like.’

the wall is immediately adjacent. The rails have turned balusters with turned posts with ball-finials, and are consistent with the 1630s.<sup>103</sup> In 1943 Addleshaw and Etchells described them as ‘Laudian communion rails,’ a description which both the material and the archival evidence challenges.<sup>104</sup> Because the table was railed and at the east end, it was described as ‘Laudian’, but the four-sided rails, the seats to the north, the evidence of the nature of the parish and its minister, as well as the archival evidence described below, all suggest this arrangement was anything but Laudian, although dating from 1634-1637.

As noted earlier, whilst the 1629 Proclamation calling for repairs of churches is often seen as the first move in the Laudian campaign for beautification, whilst in fact its origins may be non-partisan.<sup>105</sup> It is part of the argument of this thesis that churchwardens had been restoring their churches from the 1590s of their own initiative, or because they were required to do so, or both: the 1604 Canon (85) ordered archdeacons to undertake regular inspections of the fabric and furnishings of their churches and ensure that the churchwardens addressed the deficiencies.<sup>106</sup> The Puddletown 1634 memorandum appears to fall into a trend of the previous decades, both of locally initiated improvement and of local responses to centrally

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<sup>103</sup> "Puddletown," *IHM Dorset*, vol. 3, 222-231; Pevsner describes them as ‘vertically symmetrical balusters’: Newman and Pevsner, *Dorset*, 349-350, 350.

<sup>104</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 170; Arthur Helps, *A Guide to the Ancient Church of St. Mary's Puddletown with the Athelhampton Chantry, or Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene* (1938, reprinted Bridport: Creeds, 2015), 10.

<sup>105</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 237; Fincham and Tyacke note that the royal instructions, which were issued two months after the Proclamation, identified the control of preaching and the moratorium on discussing predestination, but made no mention of the Proclamation or the neglect of church fabric: 238.

<sup>106</sup> I am grateful to Kenneth Fincham for giving me permission to use his lecture, which he kindly sent me: Kenneth Fincham, ‘The “Beauty of Holiness” in Caroline England: Puddletown’s Refurbishment in the 1630s,’ Lecture on Church Monuments Study Day, 11 May 2013.



demanded improvement, by specifically referencing at the beginning the 1629 proclamation, as demonstrated in chapter 3.<sup>107</sup>

It is easy to see how the refitting of Puddletown could have been labelled Laudian. At first glance, it is a beautification programme, it occurs between 1634 and 1637; and the new Archbishop held his Metropolitan Visitation in 1634. There are four reasons why it is not an appropriate label. First the four-sided communion rail, and also the gallery, discussed in chapter 2, would have been anathema to Laud. It was not acceptable to Laud to have seats alongside the communion table on the north side, as the 1637 plan clearly shows.<sup>108</sup>

Neile and Laud both called such an arrangement sitting ‘above God Almighty in his own house’.<sup>109</sup> The idea of communicants sitting around a table was a very different model from the Laudian ideal of the table placed against the east wall, where the pre-Reformation stone altar had stood.<sup>110</sup> We cannot tell from the 1637 plan if the communion table was positioned longways, ‘tablewise’, that is on an east-west axis, or ‘altarwise’, on a north-south axis.<sup>111</sup>

Kenneth Fincham believes that it probably stood ‘tablewise’.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/1, Memorandum Puddletown 1634.

<sup>108</sup> DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for pews Puddletown, 1637.

<sup>109</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 187-188, n. 52.

<sup>110</sup> Andrew Spicer demonstrates the same differentiation between medieval altars and communion tables in Europe and England. He notes that post-Reformation communion tables resemble domestic furniture: Andrew Spicer, “The Material Culture of early Modern Churches,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster, (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 82-97, 86.

<sup>111</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Fincham, ‘Puddletown’s Refurbishment in the 1630s’; he does not give any evidence for this suggestion; R. H. Murray wrote about the ‘communion room’, where communicants sat around the communion table, for example at Hailes, Gloucestershire; his article contained a photograph of Branscombe, now Devon, but

Second, the memorandum of the 10 August 1634 parish meeting refers specially to the non-partisan 1629 Royal Proclamation. Thirdly, as described earlier, railed altars were not required in the articles of the first seven dioceses visited in 1634 during the Metropolitan Visitation, including the diocese of Bristol, which included Puddletown.<sup>113</sup> Laud's campaign to put altars at the east end did not begin until 1635, and in Bristol not until Bishop Skinner arrived as Bishop of Bristol with his Laudian enthusiasms in 1637.<sup>114</sup> George Coke, the Bishop of Bristol until 1637 and Archdeacon Fitzherbert were not Laudian enthusiasts. At the visitation meeting for clergy in Dorchester in July 1634, the Vicar General urged them to observe the liturgy and the Canons, and to catechise diligently, but apparently said nothing about the fabric or the furnishings and fittings of the churches. In short, the 1634 scheme for Puddletown in the diocese of Bristol is too early to be a response to Laud's coercive campaign.<sup>115</sup>

Fourthly the churchwardens who commissioned the scheme were not Laudian in inclination. This is supported by the plan of the church showing four sided rails, and this may be why it survived the destructive elements of the next two decades.<sup>116</sup> The labelling as Laudian is an example of making the material evidence fit the meta-narrative. In fact, the material evidence and the archival evidence in Puddletown challenge the long-held view that, if it is a communion rail, and if it was installed between 1633 and 1640, it must be Laudian. This was a scheme devised in 1634 because of problems with the chancel arch which, like many

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previously Dorset, which had four sided rails dated 1627, which are non-extant: R. H. Murray, "The Evolution of Church Chancels," *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society* 31 (1905): 67-93. Murray, 85.

<sup>113</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 198-199, 201-202.

<sup>114</sup> Fincham, 'Puddletown's Refurbishment in the 1630s.'

<sup>115</sup> Fincham, 'Puddletown's Refurbishment in the 1630s.'

<sup>116</sup> Fincham, 'Puddletown's Refurbishment in the 1630s.'

building projects grew beyond its original catalyst, as described in chapter 2. William Bradish was a godly divine, also described in chapter 2, an associate of the famous godly minister at nearby Dorchester, John White. The churchwardens were like minded as his epitaph illustrates.<sup>117</sup>

The four-sided communion rail with the ‘settle without the frame of the communion table’ inside the chancel screen, separating the chancel from the nave, tells of what Murray called a communion room.<sup>118</sup> It was of a very different model from the Laudian ideal and adheres to a godly view of the sacrament of the Lords’ Supper. The godly view emphasised that the table should be made of wood, and was the site of a memorial of the Last Supper. The Laudian ideal stressed that it was an altar and the site of a sacrificial sacrament, where the clergy had exclusive access. As the 1637 plan shows, there were designated seats at Puddletown to the north and to the south of the chancel rail, behind the pulpit, which also indicate a model very different from the Laudian ideal. The evidence is clear: the scheme was locally initiated because of material decay in the interior, and because of overcrowding; it grew beyond its starting point, and it referenced itself against the 1629 Proclamation. In its intention, in its chronology, and in its realisation, this was not a Laudian scheme, contrary to what Addleshaw and Etchells have suggested, and repeated by Helps and Lehane.<sup>119</sup> This was a scheme devised by a godly minister and the churchwardens and undertakers, and the communion rails framed their ideal setting for the Lord’s Supper.

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<sup>117</sup> Bradish was discussed in chapter 2, and his epitaph transcribed; DHC: PE/PUD/CH/2/1 The will of William Bradish D.D. of Puddletown, 1638; David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 133, 153.

<sup>118</sup> Murray, “Chancels.”

<sup>119</sup> Helps, *Puddletown*, 10; Brendan Lehane, *Dorset’s Best Churches* (Wimborne Minster: Dovecote Press, 2006), 105-106.

The communicants' experience in terms of movement and access to the table was changed by the installation of communion rails. The perceived intention of the investors determined the way in which the rails were judged by parishioners. Context was all: at Puddletown the east end rail was an arrangement designed by and for a godly congregation and its minister, while at Cameley an east end rail was enforced by Piers for his own Laudian ends. Analysis of these and other parishes reveal a more subtle story of communion rails than has been previously rehearsed. Whilst there were communion rails and tables that could warrant the epithet 'Laudian' by virtue of a parish's sympathies, none of the extant rails and tables studied can be linked to such specific, parochial inclinations because there is an absence of archival evidence.

*Communion Tables: Orientation, Location, and Symbolism.*

The secondary literature on communion tables is substantially the same as that for communion rails. Some of the material evidence has been gazetteered by both Bond and Cox.<sup>120</sup> Alec Ryrie describes the intense preparation that the more zealous Protestants undertook to prepare themselves for the sacrament.<sup>121</sup> Not all historians agree with the views of Fincham and Tyacke in *Altars Restored* that there was a coercive policy, led by Neile, Laud and their fellow enthusiasts, such as Piers, to move the tables to the east end, rail them in, and clear the chancels of seating.<sup>122</sup> George Bernard, Julian Davies and Kevin Sharpe, who

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<sup>120</sup> Because of the wide scope of Whiting's survey, he devotes a page and a half to post-Reformation tables: Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 31-32.

<sup>121</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 336-351; one example was referred to in chapter 4: Sir Edward Rodney's devotional guide to his children to prepare for Holy Communion for a whole week: FSL: V.a. 520 Sir Edward Rodney (1590-1657) and others, prayers and meditations.

<sup>122</sup> For more details on Piers and tables, see Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset", 97, 100, 102, 116-119, 122-126, 128-129, 134-135, 137-138; for more on the early turning of tables in a non-coercive way, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 177.

are also confusingly called revisionists, challenged their views.<sup>123</sup> This second revisionist wave maintained that it was the King, not Laud, who was the prime mover behind the ceremonial changes of the 1630s. They also argued that Laudianism was not innovative, and that there had always been those within the Church who wanted greater ceremonial, and uniformity, and who wanted to emphasise more the eucharistic element in worship.<sup>124</sup> Whilst Tyacke and Lake have portrayed Laudianism as radical and innovative, Bernard and Sharpe have stressed continuity. Bernard and Sharpe trace back to the Elizabethan settlement those who aspired to a discrete space, dedicated to the administration and reception of the Eucharist, a holy space, different from the rest of the church, and reserved for the clergy. In that they argue that the Laudians were continuing a long tradition of parishioners who valued ceremonialism, a theme which both Judith Maltby and Alexandra Walsham have developed. Maltby has shown that loyal ‘Prayer Book Protestants’ were enthusiasts for liturgical ceremonialism; and Walsham has suggested that some strands of Laudianism drew from their parochial roots in terms of corporate liturgy.<sup>125</sup> The hijacking of the mainstream phrase, ‘the

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<sup>122</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 176.

<sup>123</sup> As noted before, for a succinct summary of the second wave of revisionists, see Marshall, *Reformation in England*, 221-223; and Peter Lake has helpfully detailed the historiography: Lake, “Tyacke.”

<sup>124</sup> George Bernard concluded that churchmen with views like Laud and Neile had been promoted before 1625 and regarded the policy of Laud and Neile as a direct continuation from Whitgift: George Bernard, “The Church of England, c. 1529-c. 1642,” *History* 75 (1990), 183-206; this is cited by Marshall, *Reformation in England*, 221. Kevin Sharpe propositioned that it was the King, not Laud, who was the prime mover behind the ceremonial changes: Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, particularly chapter 6; Julian Davies insisted on the role of the King: Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Richard Cust has concluded that the King and Laud basically shared the same basic aims and assumptions; for an analysis of the subtleties of the relationship between the King and Laud with regard to religious change, see: Richard Cust, *Charles I* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005), 133-138; for Fincham and Tyacke’s views on the relationship between Laud and the King on this issue, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 189, 198.

<sup>125</sup> Sharpe has argued that the Laudian altar policy has been misrepresented and misunderstood by historians: Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 333, 339-345; for a summary of their radical thesis, see also Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 1, 4-5; Nicholas Tyacke, “Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution,” in *The Origins of the English Civil War*, ed. Conrad Russell, (London, 1973, reprinted 1978), 119-143; Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*; Lake, “Tyacke,” 10; Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, 232-233; Alexandra Walsham, “The Parochial Roots of

beauty of holiness', by the Laudians was particularly significant for the table in the chancel, a space to which they were determined to ascribe specific sanctity.<sup>126</sup>

Historians have laboured to understand a Laudian altar policy that was complicated.<sup>127</sup> The material evidence in the three counties indicates the speed of the changes between 1634 and 1640; the very complexity of the different episcopal drivers and the consequent changes suggest that the idea of a single and coherent policy is reductionist. Various policies, including an erroneous conflation of rails and of tables, diocesan differences in demands, and in monitoring, cannot be oversimplified into one policy. Until the revisionists, Laudianism was perceived as a consistent and coherent policy. Addleshaw and Etchells referred to the 'Laudian party', as if it were homogenous.<sup>128</sup> Scholars have progressed from this one-dimensional view. For example, Anthony Milton has emphasised that the overall coherence of the Laudian ideal can be exaggerated, and Lake and Questier have argued that Laudian policies in general lacked coherence.<sup>129</sup> Fincham and Tyacke describe the formulation and imposition of the Laudian altar policy as 'often fragmentary and ambiguous'; and the various methods of reception of the sacrament by the communicants as demonstrating 'a more

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Laudianism Revisited: Catholics, Anti-Calvinists and 'Parish Anglicans' in Early Stuart England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 49, no. 4 (October 1998): 620-651.

<sup>126</sup> See chapters 1, 4 and 6 on 'the beauty of holiness'; see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored* on 'the beauty of holiness' and altars, 220; for examples of contemporary Laudian thinking on the altar, see Eleazar Duncan's oration in 1634, and also the names Laudians gave the altar, for example, 'god's peculiar seat,' 'his cheifest place of presence,' 'the greatest place of God's residence upon earth,' 147-148.

<sup>127</sup> Bernard, "The Church of England," 204; Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 333.

<sup>128</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *Anglican Worship*, 120; see chapter 1 on Laudianism.

<sup>129</sup> Anthony Milton, "'The Creation of Laudianism': A New Approach," in *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell*, eds. Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust and Peter Lake (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 162-184, 164; Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Introduction," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church c. 1560-1660*, eds. Peter Lake and Michael Questier, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), i-xx.

dramatic lack of unity'.<sup>130</sup> These differences mattered very much for the internal arrangements of the parish churches in the 1630s. The complexity of where and how Communion was received, sitting, standing, kneeling, in pews, at rails, not at rails, has been described by Fincham and Tyacke.<sup>131</sup> Apart from itemised rails, described in the previous section, which imply receiving at the rails, whether standing or kneeling, the Churchwardens' accounts occasionally give clues: for example, in 1602, as already discussed, the Wimborne Minster accounts note that Gawpin was paid 5s 'for fotestoles in the quire about the Communion Table', and in 1634 the Churchwardens at Mere expended 1s 8d on 'matts for the communion table'.<sup>132</sup> Both might suggest kneeling at reception.

Fincham and Tyacke provide the most comprehensive account of the changes in central policy from the doomed peripatetic strategy of Elizabeth to the implications of the 'Laudian' altar, as well as describing locally initiated changes.<sup>133</sup> Their 'Turning of the Tables' chapter details the labyrinthine events of the 1630s.<sup>134</sup> The change between location in the nave or in the chancel was a theological matter, as Fincham and Tyacke show, but it was also about hearing

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<sup>130</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 176-218, 176, 210; Fincham, "The Restoration of Altars"; in this article, he says that the controversy over reception became a new device to tackle the long-standing dispute over kneeling at communion; and that the diversity over practice arose because neither Metropolitan had determined it. For the godly, such as Robert Woodford, the altar policy was an evil; in his Diary he wrote in August 1637, 'There is a gen[er]all visitacon of Churches in this diocesse by some of the worser sorte of divines & by [ap]p[ar]iters & to observe the standinge of the tables whether altarwise or not & to set them so; oh Lord looke uppon us in m[er]cy it is an evill time': *Robert Woodford's Diary*, Fielding, 95-403, 104; for details on exclusion from communion, and also the refusal to take communion, see Christopher Haigh, "Communion and Community: Exclusion from Communion in Post-Reformation England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 51, no. 4 (October 2000): 721-740.

<sup>131</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 210-211, 217-218, 355; Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset," 101.

<sup>132</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1602; WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1634. See chapter 2 on the new seating at Mere.

<sup>133</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, particularly chapters 2 and 5, and 147-148, 177-181.

<sup>134</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, chapter 5.

the minister, a theme that Aston pursues.<sup>135</sup> Such a change altered the worshipping experience in the viewing of the table during the service, in the physicality of approaching it for the reception of communion, and in the received implied message of the sanctity of the chancel. The Laudian drives to put the table at the east end met with different parochial responses, including widespread opposition for a variety of reasons as Fincham and Tyacke have demonstrated.<sup>136</sup> Puritans like Peter Smart, and Robert Woodford, strongly disagreed that the east end should become a specifically sacred space, with all the overtones of pre-Reformation liturgy and sacerdotalism.<sup>137</sup> Dowsing a few years later acted out his violent theological opposition in his destruction of the accessories to Laudian ‘altars’ in East Anglia.<sup>138</sup> Others, even conservatives, objected because of the new expenditure involved, because the new arrangements upset local custom, and because vested interests, usually seats, were dislocated in the rearrangements in the nave and chancel.<sup>139</sup> Others gave into pressure, such as Bishop

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<sup>135</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 250; Aston, *Broken Idols*, 97; the continuation from before the Reformation of high status families wishing to be buried near the east end has been documented by both Harding and Schofield: Schofield, “Some Aspects,” 315; Schofield shows that Sir Walter Mildmay, a radical reformer, chose to follow the medieval practice of having his grave as close as possible to the high altar, unable to free himself of the traditional attitude to space; Vanessa Harding, “Choices and Changes: Death, Burial and the English Reformation,” in *The Archaeology of the Reformation*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2003), 386-398, 389; for the monument, see Simon Bradley and Nikolas Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 1; The City of London*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first published by Penguin, 1997, reprinted with corrections, 1998 and 1999), 196-203, 202; for details of Mildmay see: “Mildmay, Sir Walter (1520/21–1589),” L. L. Ford in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18696> (accessed November 5, 2017).

<sup>136</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 218-219.

<sup>137</sup> Robert Woodford’s *Diary*, Fielding, 105, 107, 126, 136, 152, 158, 167, 189, 265, 299, 302; John Fielding, “Opposition to the Personal Rule of Charles I: The Diary of Robert Woodford, 1637-1641,” *The Historical Journal* vol. 31, (December 1988): 769-788 ; for details on Peter Smart’s opposition to the changes, see Aston, *Broken Idols*, 97-99; and Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 117-118.

<sup>138</sup> Examples of Dowsing’s destruction include altar steps, which are described as too numerous to be indexed: *The Journal of William Dowsing*, Cooper; see also 193 and 206 for examples of what opponents disliked about Laudian altars.

<sup>139</sup> For vested interests see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 222; Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 97, 102, 127, 132, 135, 137, 138; David Cressy, *Agnes Bowker’s Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 198.



Davenant of Salisbury, or wanted to court favour.<sup>140</sup> Margaret Stieg's view that it was the cloth making areas that showed most resistance in Somerset, is difficult to substantiate. The Churchwardens' accounts of both Axbridge and Somerton show that these clothing towns were early conformists to Piers's drive for rails, both parishes railing their tables in 1634. However, as seen in the last section, this evidence is not conclusive regarding the reasons for conformity.<sup>141</sup> Of the twenty-one surviving Churchwardens' accounts in the diocese of Bath and Wells for the 1630s, John Reeks has shown that nineteen demonstrate that they were complying with Piers's demands from 1633.<sup>142</sup> Of these only Cameley's rails are extant. In the surviving Churchwardens' accounts in Dorset and Wiltshire, where rails are itemised, for example at Wimborne Minster, and Cerne Abbas, there are no extant rails that match the date of expenditure.

This third section of the chapter will use the material evidence, and some archival sources, to respond to the conclusion of Fincham and Tyacke in *Altars Restored*, that there should be more parish studies which use surviving material evidence to look at changes to the communion table, specifically at the 'vexed' question of orientation and of location.<sup>143</sup> It will end with a parochial case study at Somerton, which sheds some light on both.

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<sup>140</sup> In the famous case at Aldbourne, Wiltshire, the King ordered the Calvinist defender of doctrine, Bishop Davenant of Salisbury, to settle a dispute about the location of the table in accordance with the Elizabethan injunction and Canon 82 of 1604: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 205-206; for more on Davenant's theological position, see *Visitation Articles vol. I*, Fincham, xx-xxi; some may have agreed to comply with the Laudian altar policy in order to curry favour at Court, as Duffin suggests that the Mohuns did, by giving the church at Lanteglos-by-Fowey a new communion table in 1634: Duffin, *Cornish Gentry*, 63; Reeks suggests that Puritan ministers such as Samuel Croke complied because they wanted to win more important battles: Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset," 100.

<sup>141</sup> Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*, 305; SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1634; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1634.

<sup>142</sup> Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset," 123-125.

<sup>143</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 355.

The 1559 Prayer Book used the same words as the 1552 Prayer Book that the ‘table shall stand in the body of the church, or in the chauncell, where morning prayer and evenyng prayer be appointed to be sayd’. The Royal Injunctions of 1559 contradicted this and required that

the holy table in every church be decently made, and set in the place where the altar stood...and so to stand, saving when the communion of the sacrament is to be distributed, at which time, the same shall be so placed in good sort within the chancel, as whereby the minister may be more conveniently heard of the communicants in his prayer and ministration, ...And after communion done, from time to time the same Holy Table to be placed where it stood before.

This peripatetic policy varied in practice. The Royal Order of 1561 ordered that the communion table was to be covered by ‘silk, buckram or other such like’.<sup>144</sup> It also ordered that remaining altar steps should be preserved, ‘not stirred nor altered’.<sup>145</sup> In 1565 one investigator wrote despairingly of the variations of practice:

The table standeth in the body of the church in some places, in others hit standeth in the chauncell; in some places the table standeth altarlyke, distant from the walle a yarde, in some others in the midst of the chancellors and south; in some places the table is joined, in others hit standeth upon trestells.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> In 1565 Bishop Bentham of Coventry and Lichfield was concerned for ‘comeliness’, when he ordered that he ordered that the communion table be ‘covered with a fair carpet and a fine linen table cloth upon it, in as beautiful a manner as it was being upon the altar’: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 47.

<sup>145</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 40.

<sup>146</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 45, citing BL Lansdowne MS 8, fo. 16.

From early in Elizabeth's reign, the peripatetic principle was being flouted.

During the *Admonition* controversy of 1577, a polemical debate about ritual behaviour, between radical ministers, supported by Thomas Cartwright, a leading theologian at Cambridge, and the bishops, defended by another leading Cambridge theologian, Whitgift, communion tables were not mentioned. This suggests that the peripatetic principle had been tacitly abandoned.<sup>147</sup> The 1604 Canon said that communion was to be 'within the Church or Chancel,' and omits all reference to the communion table standing at the east end.<sup>148</sup> It specified that the communion table 'shall be placed in so good sort within the Church or Chancel, as thereby the minister may be more conveniently heard of the communicants in his Prayer and Administration'. It also reiterated that it should be 'covered in Divine Service with a Carpet of Silk and other decent Stuff.... and with a fair linen cloth at the Time of the Ministration'.<sup>149</sup> Archbishop Bancroft's articles for his Metropolitan Visitation of Ten Dioceses in 1605, including Bristol and Bath and Wells, included

whether you have...a convenient communion table...and whether is the same table then placed in such convenient sort within the chauncell or church, as the minister be best hearde in his prayer and administration, and that the greater number may communicate.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> For a summary of the *Admonition* controversy, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 48-49; and John Craig, "The Growth of English Puritanism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, eds. John Coffey and Paul Lim, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 34-47, 39-40.

<sup>148</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 33; *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377.

<sup>149</sup> *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377.

<sup>150</sup> *Visitation Articles vol. I*, Fincham, 10; Bishop Cotton of Salisbury in 1614 made minor changes to Bancroft's Articles, for example before 'communion table, he inserted 'and decent'.

In the 1630s the directions of Neile and Laud were to place the table at the east end and to rail it.<sup>151</sup> This was carried out in variable ways by different Bishops.<sup>152</sup> As previously described, Visitation Articles do not provide the complete picture of episcopal demands, which the Visitation Articles of both the Laudian enthusiasts, Piers and Skinner, demonstrate.<sup>153</sup> The ‘fragmentary and ambiguous policy’ was intended to be ended by the clear requirement of the Canons of 1640 which required communion tables to be permanently positioned at the tops of chancels, standing altarwise, and railed.<sup>154</sup> This gave clarity as well as retrospective authority to the episcopal demands since 1634.<sup>155</sup> The more zealous Laudian bishops, Wren, Montagu and Lamb, had required in the 1630s that new steps to the altar should be constructed as well.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, xx-xxi; Ronald Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York, 1560-1642* (Harlow: Longmans, 1960), 56.

<sup>152</sup> The complexities of the policy to rail altars are described in detail in Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, where chapter 5 ‘The Turning of the Tables, 1625-1640’ provides the best analysis; Fincham and Tyacke believe that Laud initiated a drive to create railed altars in his metropolitan visitation 1634-7: 201-204; as suggested earlier, the three dioceses, in which the case studies are located, Bristol, Bath and Wells, and Salisbury were subject to the first wave of the metropolitan visitation and railed altars were not required in the 1634 articles for these dioceses; railed altars were enforced in the second wave from 1635; Bishop Piers ‘testified that by January 1636, only 140 out of 469 parishes had erected the railed altar. Piers had introduced the railed altar policy on his own authority following the test case of St Gregory’s. By 1638 the remainder in Bath and Wells, including the notorious objectors at Beckington, had fallen into line and cases disappear from the court books,’ 210; *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, xix-xx; Piers gave seven reasons for railing the table: it was legal, convenient, more audible because there would be more space, fitting, expedient and decent, and parish churches should imitate cathedral churches: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 188, 219-220.

<sup>153</sup> For more on Piers and the altar policy see Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 135-137. In a conversation with John Reeks he pointed out that, although Piers only specifies in the Visitation Articles that the table be appropriately furnished and ‘in such convenient sort as is ordered and appointed’, the subtext is clearly ‘railed and located in the east’, 135-7; and see 122-125 for the different approaches by the Bishop for railing and turning the tables; for details on Bishop Skinner of Bristol, see *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, 61, 73-4.

<sup>154</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 176.

<sup>155</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 176.

<sup>156</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 242.

The orientation and the location of the table profoundly changed the communicants' experience in terms of movement to, from and around the table, as well as changing what they saw while sitting in their pews during services. Their orientation and location also determined the way in which the underpinning theology of the sacrament was understood, either emphasising it as a place for a memorial service of the Lord's Supper, or more as a holy site for a sacrificial means of grace. Whether communicants sat, or knelt, or stood to receive communion also affected this understanding of the theological implications - with kneeling being associated by some with the sacrament as a sacrificial rite.<sup>157</sup>

The differences in the practice of the reception of communion were manifested by Archbishop Neile's preference in the northern province of seats in the lower chancel, facing each other; by Bishop Wren's requirement that the communicants kneel in batches; and by Bishop Montagu's rudeness about chancel stalls, and his requirement that everyone should stand, sit or kneel near the rails, behind the shut chancel door.<sup>158</sup> When the Laudian Bishop Montagu of Norwich succeeded the Laudian Bishop Wren, he was surprised that Wren had insisted that communicants were to receive at the new east end rails. In his 1639 directions to the Diocesan synod, Montagu modified this to allow for standing, sitting or kneeling within the enclosed chancel. Although the complaint 74 years earlier was about inconsistency of the location of

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<sup>157</sup> For examples of parochial controversy surrounding kneeling, see *Robert Woodford's Diary 1637-1641*, 105, 107, 136, 148, 153, 189, 245, 286. The official instruction in the 1559 *BCP* was that the people should kneel when receiving communion. The so called Black Rubric in the 1552 Edwardian Prayer Book, which had said explicitly that kneeling did not mean adoration, was omitted from the 1559 *BCP*. For the text of the Black Rubric, see *The Book of Common Prayer*, ed. Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 667. For more detail on the Black Rubric, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 23, 24, 33. For more on the variety of parochial practice at reception, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 41-42, 43, 48, 58, 59, 107, 211.

<sup>158</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 238; Fincham, *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, 159, 218-9.

the table, Montagu's directions began with a long complaint, reminiscent of the earlier concern, about a lack of uniformity, in this instance, about reception,

I doe not understand whither all at once that intend to communicate, doe together come upp out of the church into the chauncell and being their disposed sitting or standing, doe in course repaire unto the rayless, and return from thence, or whither onely soe many doe together come upp out of the church as can kneel at the rayless the other remaining in the church behind, until their course come to goe upp.<sup>159</sup>

There was no episcopal consistency on the reception of the sacrament, as there was also a lack of agreement on other aspects of the so called Laudian policy. An added difficulty is that Visitation Articles do not provide the whole story of episcopal demands.

From 1561, there had been a requirement to cover the table decently. Visitation articles enquired about this requirement.<sup>160</sup> The Churchwardens' accounts in Somerset of Axbridge in 1599, 1607, 1634, Cheddar in 1638, Minehead in 1637 and 1640, Somerton 1583, 1586, Thorne 1633, in Dorset of Cerne Abbas 1630, Wimborne Minster in 1573, 1580, 1583, 1599, 1607, and in Wiltshire of Mere in 1579, 1585, and 1636 all itemise expenditure in cloth related items for the communion table.<sup>161</sup> With the exception of Minehead, the accounts of

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<sup>159</sup> *Visitation Articles vol. II*, Fincham, 218-9.

<sup>160</sup> For example, see Bishop Curle's Visitation Articles of 1630, collated in *Visitation Articles vol. I*, Fincham, 18-22. The table was to be 'covered in a fine linen cloth' and be set upon 'a Carpet of Silke or some other decent Stuffe'; in his Visitation Articles of 1636, Piers enquired in the way his predecessor had, whether the table was decorated with 'a Carpet of Silke or some other decent Stuffe': William Piers, *Articles to be Enquired of, in the second Triennial Visitation, of the Right Reverend Father in God, William, Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells Holden in the Year of Our Lord God, 1636*, (London, 1636): Articles concerning the Church, Article 4.

<sup>161</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1599, 1607, 1634; SHC: DD\SAS\C/795/SE/14 Cwa Cheddar, 1638; SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Cwa Minehead, 1637, 1640; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1583, 1586; SHC: D\P\th.co/4/1/2 Cwa Thorne Coffin, 1633; DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas, 1630; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1573, 1580, 1583, 1599, 1607; WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1579, 1585, 1636.

these parishes exhibit a compliance over the table covering before the campaign for uniformity began in the 1630s. They had been complying with the requirement since the 1559 Injunctions, which instructed that ‘the holy table in every church be decently made, ...and there commonly covered.’<sup>162</sup> The possible implications of covering the table will be discussed later.

The material evidence testifies to the complexity of the arrangements for the communion table. Some evidence is clear, for example the simply decorated, early seventeenth-century table at Ryme Intrinseca has back legs which were designed with the rear side flat, to stand against a wall, and which are different from the front round legs [Figure 5. 22].<sup>163</sup> This suggests that the table was placed against the wall of the chancel in the altarwise position, in the position the altar had been in before the Reformation. The position at Ryme Intrinseca both changed the kinaesthetic experience for the communicants in approaching the table and receiving communion, and also implied a theological emphasis on the nature of the sacrament as one of sacrificial grace. The 1634 table at Rodney Stoke, with its date inscribed on the long end of the table, indicates it was placed altarwise [Figure 5. 23]. It has a simple frieze around the table and plain, bulbous legs. Given the layout of the church, discussed in chapter 4, the table was probably placed in the chancel, but the four identical legs do not provide evidence as to whether the table was placed against the east end wall or not.<sup>164</sup> Similarly the four bulbous legs of the early seventeenth-century ornate table at Minehead do not explain its

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<sup>162</sup> *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, Henry Gee and William Hardy, eds. (London: Macmillan, 1896), 258.

<sup>163</sup> The altar table at Ryme Intrinseca is probably early seventeenth century. I am very grateful to Ian Green for allowing me to use his photograph, which is of a better quality than mine.

<sup>164</sup> See chapter 4.

exact location, although it would be possible to argue that an altarwise position gave the congregation the greatest exposure to the decorative features, for example its elaborate frieze [Figure 5. 24].<sup>165</sup> As the 1634 Decalogue, Creed and Lord's Prayer were on boards on the east end wall at Minehead, to be discussed in chapter 6, it is probable that the table stood underneath them.<sup>166</sup> The Churchwardens' accounts note that seats were ordered to be removed from the chancel in 1638, but there were no mats itemised until 1640 when the table was railed, which was very late compared to other Somerset churches.<sup>167</sup>

Whilst the undecorated 1632 extant table at East Knoyle may be too small to have acted as a communion table, the evidence from the chancel scheme, and the layout of the chancel, to be discussed in chapter 6, suggests an altarwise table set under the east end window against the east wall [Figure 5. 25]. At Cameley, discussed earlier in this chapter, the Churchwardens' accounts describe how the non-extant table was first railed in the table position in the chancel in 1634, and then the Churchwardens were coerced into turning it in 1637, and reconfiguring the rails the same year.

The 1637 plan for Puddletown demonstrates in a diagrammatic form that a table in the chancel was railed on all four sides, but the table is not drawn; there is no evidence as to its orientation, although the configuration of the plan might suggest a north-south axis. [Figure 5.

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<sup>165</sup> A visual examination shows that there is a new stretcher, and that the angels have been added later. Although the table is extant and its style is congruent with the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the Churchwardens' accounts only survive after 1637, so triangulation is not possible.

<sup>166</sup> See chapter 6.

<sup>167</sup> SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Cwa Minehead, 1638-1640.



20].<sup>168</sup> The confessional position of the minister and the parish, along with the seats on some sides, however, might suggest a tablewise position.<sup>169</sup> As seen in chapter 2, and above in this chapter, the complete scheme in Puddletown was not Laudian, and the rails on four sides of the table in the chancel and the seats around the rails, anathema to the Laudians. The experience of the worshippers at Puddletown would have been consistent with the confessional position of a godly parish, and would have provided a different physical experience for worshippers compared to worshippers, for example, at Ryme Intrinseca, both in viewing the table while sitting in their pews, in approaching the table at the time of administration, and in receiving communion.

There are a number of tables where their location in the chancel is fairly clear, (as opposed to the nave) but where exactly they stood in the chancel, and the orientation of the table in the chancel are unclear. There is no evidence at present in the three counties during these years, as there was in Naseby, Northamptonshire, that tables were removed from beyond the rails and placed in the body of the chancel at communion time.<sup>170</sup> Tables thought to have been located in the chancel could have been in the body of the chancel or, as, at Ryme Intrinseca, against the east end wall. The 1626 table at Somerton was probably located in the chancel. The late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century table at Bridgwater was located in the chancel [Figure 5. 26]. The evidence for this comes from the pew dispute, described in chapter 2,

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<sup>168</sup> Fincham, 'Puddletown's refurbishment in the 1630s'; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 249.

<sup>169</sup> I am grateful to Trevor Cooper for allowing me to use his lecture at Deerhurst on the chancel arrangements at Deerhurst, 'The Deerhurst Annual Lecture', 12 September 2015; Fincham and Tyacke suggest seats at Puddletown on the north, south and east sides, but the plan does not support that: Steve Hobbs, "Puddletown Church Seating Plan, 1637," *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* vol. XXXV (March 2002): 110-115; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 249.

<sup>170</sup> *Robert Woodford's Diary*, Fielding, 126.

where two witnesses in 1634 confirmed that the communion table was in the chancel at the east end:

this respondent verylie believeth that the seate in question... standeth aboute some twentie paces from the west end of the said chauncell..., and some 26 paces or thereabouts from the communion table wherefore itt now standeth in the chauncell.<sup>171</sup>

The use of ‘now’ could imply that it had been placed at the upper end of the nave before the screen was installed c. 1620. This places it by 1634 east of the Corporation Pew, and east of the rood screen, but its orientation, based on its decoration, as altarwise, is conjecture. The communion table at Bridgwater is a fine example of woodwork with its bulbous legs and images of angels with wide wings in the spandrels. Undated, its locally-led decoration is consistent with either the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, locally driven in this godly parish.

The table at Wimborne Minster is non-extant but the accounts show that in 1602 it was in the ‘quire’.<sup>172</sup> The table at Folke with its plain, turned legs and moulded edge may be from 1628. The turned legs and the pattern on the table are compatible with the date, but only Lehane asserts they are of the same period as the rest of the interior.<sup>173</sup> The evidence for locating the simply decorated communion table in the chancel at Folke is only premised on the layout of the church [Figure 5. 27]. Speculation leads to the tentative conclusion, also based on the layout of the church, that the 1630s table at Thurloxton, with its four intricately decorated

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<sup>171</sup> SHC: D\D\cd/71 Deposition book, 1631-4.

<sup>172</sup> In chapter 1, it was shown that a communion table at Wimborne Minster was repaired in 1568: DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1568

<sup>173</sup> Lehane, *Dorset's Best Churches*, 64.

bulbous legs and carved frieze, was placed in the chancel [Figure 5. 28]. The orientation at Folke and Thurloxton is not at present known.<sup>174</sup> In terms of extant tables in the chancel, the evidence shows five possibilities:

1. -placed altarwise against the east end wall, of which we can be certain of one example,
2. -in a position of which the Laudians approved, placed in the chancel altarwise but not against the east end wall, probably but not certainly six examples,
3. -placed in the chancel tablewise, of which there are no certain examples,
4. -placed in the chancel but whose orientation is unknown, of which there are four possible examples,
5. -those tables that were probably in the chancel but whose orientation is unknown, of which there are four examples.<sup>175</sup>

There are five tables where neither the location nor the orientation can be established: that of Elizabethan Dorchester, late sixteenth or early-seventeenth century Keynsham, early seventeenth-century Weare, early seventeenth-century Longburton, and that of 1630s Melcombe Horsey.<sup>176</sup>

Within the three counties, there are no tables where the position in the nave can be established. At Pilton, Devon, the Elizabethan table, with decorated bulbous legs and frieze -

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<sup>174</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Wimborne Minster, 1602.

<sup>175</sup> Of the six examples where the table was in the chancel and placed altarwise, one was Cameley, where the table was tablewise until it was turned altarwise by episcopal demand.

<sup>176</sup> On examination, the table at Weare appears to be a domestic-type cupboard.

orientated table wise - was possibly located in the nave because its sliding extensions would have been more useful in the nave, where there was more space than in the chancel, but this is supposition [Figure 5. 29]. The table would have been extended during Communion, and the Lord's Supper administered to the surrounding parishioners. However, the communion rails, which appear to be late Elizabethan or early seventeenth century, may have subsequently altered that location [Figure 5. 19].

The 1624 table at Sherrington was probably placed tablewise, although its location is not clear [Figure 5. 30]. It displays a simple and typical frieze on all four sides with the date inscribed on its short end along with the initials of the Rector, HG, which may suggest that the table was placed tablewise, with the initials and date facing the west and the congregation. The initials of the Rector, Henry Gregory, may also suggest that it was his gift to the church on its rebuilding in 1624. On this and the other inscribed communion tables, the date or initials suggests the wish to memorialise the investment, as was seen with pulpits.<sup>177</sup> Henry Gregory's inventory describes a house which was comfortably furnished; he had crops stored, crops in the fields and animals and farming kit. His will and its codicil indicate complicated property arrangements in Wiltshire and Somerset, where he had been born.<sup>178</sup> This was a Rector who could have afforded to have bought the communion table and to have his name inscribed upon it. Although its location cannot be established in 1624, the wall paintings either side of the east window, dated 1630, are entirely appropriate as adjacent texts to the

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<sup>177</sup> For memorialisation of tables, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 105-106, and for memorialisation of pulpits, see chapter 3.

<sup>178</sup> WSHC: P1/G/188 Inventory. Will of Henry Gregory, 1634.

Communion table. It is possible to consider that these wall paintings imply that, at least by 1630 the table was in the chancel, and may always have been there, a theme to be explored in the next chapter where the scheme of Sherrington's wall paintings is analysed. For the congregation, the tablewise orientation, along with the date, and the donor's initials, if exposed, would have provided a different experience both physically and kinaesthetically from other tables. They would have knelt, stood, or sat around it at Communion. Out of Communion, they would have placed themselves on the common time line of the inscribed date, and seen the Rector's gift to his parish on the rebuilding of the church.

The table at Brinkworth presents a puzzle. Its detailed decoration and form indicate that it could have been either orientated altarwise or tablewise, but the inscribed date of 1633 on its short end with its table top in a different wood leaves only a hypothesis that it was placed tablewise [Figure 5. 31]. There remain three tables that can be confidently identified as altarwise, although their exact location, probably in the chancel, is not certain. The 1635 table at Durston, decorated simply with lozenges, has the date inscribed on the long side in large numerals. As already shown, the accounts itemise £2 2s 6d for the table and the rails in 1635, and then three years later more expenditure on the rails. The 1631 table at Cheddar, itemised in the Churchwardens' accounts, with its bulbous legs and frieze, also has the date inscribed on the long side, and this might indicate an altarwise position to provide the maximum exposure of its decorative features [Figure 5. 32].<sup>179</sup> Four years later, the accounts of Cheddar itemise in 1635 payments for seats in the chancel,

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<sup>179</sup> SHC: DD\SAS\C/795/SE/14 Cwa Cheddar, 1631. The angels are a later addition to the table at Cheddar.

Received of Valintin Chick and William Combe for seat in the north ile of the Chauncell adjoyning to a seate of henry Gorges to be holden by them during their lives vs.<sup>180</sup>

The material evidence of the date on the long side would indicate that the Churchwardens of Cheddar had voluntarily placed their new table altarwise in 1631, long before the coercive campaign; and that the accounts demonstrate that the vested interests of seats remained strong, despite the coercive campaign, which was well underway by Piers in 1635, and which included clearing seats out of the chancel.

In chapter 3 the 1640 ornate and expensive pulpit at Cerne Abbas was compared to the modest, and less expensive 1638 communion table [Figure 5. 33]. The small, simply decorated communion table bore the date 1638 and the initials of the churchwardens, BK and WS, Bartholomew Kinge and William Sherringe, as well as a simple frieze [Figure 5. 33a]. The location of the inscriptions indicated a north-south axis, an altarwise position, but its location cannot be identified. It cost a modest ‘12s’, compared with the cost of the expensive pulpit, a significant part of a grouping of objects in the accounts totalling over £9 [Figure 3. 26]. As the evidence showed, the table and the pulpit could have been a response to the Laudian campaign to enhance churches.<sup>181</sup> As shown in chapter 3, the difference between the expensive, highly decorated pulpit, compared to the much cheaper, more modest communion table can hardly have been lost on the worshipping congregation. The priorities of the Churchwardens, representing their fellow parishioners, could not have been clearer: while

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<sup>180</sup> SHC: DD\SAS\C/795/SE/14 Cwa Cheddar, 1631, 1635.

<sup>181</sup> DHC: PE-CEA/CW/1 Cwa Cerne Abbas, 1638-1640.

meeting the demands of the Laudian campaign, they also managed to fulfil their parochial priorities in investing in a more expensive, and grander pulpit.

The directions to cover the table at all times, discussed earlier, poses three possibilities for the viewing of dates, and decoration on the friezes and legs of the tables. If a cloth was there all the time, it would have obscured the dated inscriptions and decorative features, which seems unlikely. The investors would have wanted these to be on show, so that raises the possibility that the requirement was only met during the service of Holy Communion. The third possibility is that a cloth was used that just covered the top and left the friezes and legs exposed. Whatever the strategy was, it would have affected the viewing experience of the worshippers. The most likely scenario is that the investment in decorated inscriptions, friezes and legs was on display outside the time of Holy Communion, which is what the 1604 canon suggests was by then common practice.<sup>182</sup>

The evidence shows that many permutations of orientation and location existed, altarwise, tablewise, in the chancel against the wall, in the chancel but not against the wall, in the nave, and all combinations of those, as well as those tables where one of the characteristics, orientation or location, cannot be determined, or even in some instances neither. The sources also show that tables were moved, turned, and railed, although not necessarily in that order, and not always because of imposed requirements. The material evidence shows the

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<sup>182</sup> There is a unique depiction of the English communion service by Richard Day, where a cloth on the table is clearly visible during the service. Communicants are kneeling around an unrailed table: Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 337, who referenced Richard Daye, *A Booke of Christian Prayers* (1578: RSTC 6429), sig. M1v. The Canon of 1604 said that the tables should be ‘covered in time of divine service with a carpet of silk or other decent stuff’: *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377.

complexity of the arrangements, and the subtleties of the location and orientation, as at Puddletown. All this indicates the changes, some resistance to the coercive campaign, and some adept responses, where compliance also demonstrated specific parochial priorities, as at Cerne Abbas.<sup>183</sup> As with Puddletown, context was all in the way the worshipping congregation perceived these new pieces of furniture.

One table deserves particular attention, the unusual 1626 table of Somerton [Figure 5. 34]. Earlier in Somerton in 1620, the Churchwardens had paid ‘unto the joyner for fowre feete of timber to reare upp heyer the communion table xiid’.<sup>184</sup> Their care for the Communion Table, and their wish for it to be elevated, therefore predated both their commissioning of their new table and the later Laudian drive. Although its elevation could have been for practical purposes, to accommodate more comfortably the new Vicar, it is possible that it was to make the table more prominent.<sup>185</sup> As shown in chapter 1, there had been probably two previous communion tables constructed at Somerton in the reign of Elizabeth.<sup>186</sup> Unlike 1615, when the Churchwardens commissioned the pulpit, which was discussed in chapter 3, and raised a special rate to fund it, in 1626 the Churchwardens had sufficient funds to pay for the new communion table from their annual income.<sup>187</sup> The accounts of 1627 record, ‘Item for caridge

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<sup>183</sup> Alexandra Johnston and Sally-Beth MacLean show in a different regional study post-Reformation that until 1600 resistance and compliance at parish level was constantly influenced by the coincidence of official policy and local power: Alexandra Johnston and Sally-Beth MacLean, “Reformation and Resistance in Thames/Severn Parishes: the Dramatic Witness,” in *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, eds. Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, and Beat Kumin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 178-200, 196, *passim*.

<sup>184</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1630.

<sup>185</sup> 1620 was the date of the change of Vicar. Anthony Jefferay had become Rector of Ashington and John Seward had been appointed to Somerton : <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?PersonID=57523>, accessed 16 October 2014; the only evidence found on John Seward is his presentment for the unrepaired vicarage of Somerton in 1629: Stieg, *Laud's Laboratory*, 198.

<sup>186</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1583, 1588, 1590.

<sup>187</sup> See chapter 3.



of the Communion table from Langport iis'. Also, in 1627 the accounts record, 'Item to Nicholas Biggs for raising of the way going into the channcell and for laying of the stones under the vicar's pew iis'.<sup>188</sup> In the same year George Glover is recorded as paying ten shillings for the old communion table. The joiner received payment in the following year in the 1628 accounts: 'Item to the joyner for the new Communion Table £iii'.<sup>189</sup> In 1628 the church was painted, 'Item to the Paynter for paynting of the church £iii xis'.<sup>190</sup> The painting of the church in 1628, costing a little more than the joiner received, would indicate, (along with alterations to the chancel in 1627, and the building of a gallery in 1628, which has not survived), a wholesale improvement project.<sup>191</sup> It is also a cause for speculation why such an elaborate communion table should have cost less than the pulpit eleven years earlier, possibly because of the pulpit's more complicated shape. The accounts note £3 to the joiner for the table, compared to £4 11s to the joiner for the pulpit eleven years earlier.<sup>192</sup> It is possible that a wealthy donor contributed towards such an elaborate table, and his contribution did not pass through the Churchwardens' accounts, but there is no evidence at present to support it. The evidence does suggest, however, that the parochial community wanted to enhance the decoration of the whole church before Piers's coercive campaign began.

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<sup>188</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1627.

<sup>189</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1628. This might mean April rather than March, or it might mean he was paid many months later.

<sup>190</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1628.

<sup>191</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1628. In 1630, the Churchwardens were cited at Wells for the lack of repairs, which they excused as 'for want of money'; they had spent money on the table, painting the church and the gallery, and were being instructed to pay more; Julia Merritt discusses the tension between local initiatives and forced requirements in London: Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building."

<sup>192</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1615, 1626; the pulpit also cost another 13s 3d in associated materials in 1615; in 1626 there is no mention of a carver for the table, which implies that the joiner either sub-contracted the carving to a carver, or as in many rural areas, acted as a carver and a joiner.

The Communion Table is rare. A large table of oak, it has a hinged, locked, hidden storage space for vestments or liturgical paraphernalia in the top [Figure 5. 35].<sup>193</sup> On the frieze around the top are luxuriant black leaves and gold fruit [Figure 5. 36]. In the centre of the front and back of the table frieze is a crowned head of an angel, painted gold, with a shield carrying the date 1626 [Figures 5. 37 and 5. 38].<sup>194</sup> The freshness of the paint on the frieze poses problems as there is no evidence to suggest what were the original applied colours. The accounts show that the lock next to the front angel was added later in 1630, to secure the storage space [Figure 5. 35].<sup>195</sup> On the sides of the frieze are carved heads placed centrally [Figure 5. 39].<sup>196</sup> Like many tables of this period, already discussed, it has bulbous legs, but the images on these carved legs are very unusual.<sup>197</sup> The four legs have pomegranate plants towards the inside of the table; pomegranates are the symbol of fertility and life, appropriate images for a table where the administered sacrament was the outward sign of eternal life [Figure 5. 40].

On the outside of each leg are four images: Adam and a long-haired Eve holding the apple with an aggressive serpent seeming to leer out of the Tree of Knowledge, laden with fruit

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<sup>193</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS/26 Record of church furnishings relating to the church of St Michael, Somerton, (Compiled by the National Association of Fine Arts Societies NADFAS), 1998; the dimensions of the table are 92 (h) x 149 (w) x 87(d) cm; it was not possible to open the storage space, but the NADFAS survey has a photograph of the opened table: photograph 300.

<sup>194</sup> Although the gold paint of the angel looks too fresh to be of 1626, other painted parts look much older, such as the images on the legs.

<sup>195</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1630.

<sup>196</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS/26 NADFAS Somerton survey, 1998; while the church notes link these faces to Sir Edward Hext and his widow, the more likely explanation appears to be that they were anonymous representative faces; for details of the Hext almshouses, see M. J. Taylor, ed., *The Story of Somerton* (Somerton: Somerton Women's Institute, n.d.).

<sup>197</sup> Orbach and Pevsner, *Somerset; South and West*, 558-559, 558; Orbach and Pevsner describe the legs as 'charmingly carved'; Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition, A History of Early Furniture in the British Isles and New England* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1979), 289; Thurloxtton, Rodney Stoke, Minehead, Bridgwater and Cheddar all have communion tables with bulbous legs.

[Figure 5. 41]. Adam has a leaf to cover himself and Eve's hair performs that function for her.<sup>198</sup> The second leg has a figure of a man ploughing a field that appears to be Adam toiling after the Expulsion; the bearded man is dressed in Jacobean coat and breeches [Figure 5. 42]. He ploughs the field with his left hand, while his right hand guides an ox goad, an implement which can be used either to scrape away clods of earth on the ploughshare, or as a hook to goad the oxen. The third image is a ship builder who is probably Noah building the Ark; he is bearded and moustached and holds a piece of wood which he splits on a block. The boat in the background is a three-masted ship which appears to be of clinker construction [Figure 5. 43].

Figurative images on a communion table at this time are unusual. However, the image of Adam and Eve is not an uncommon image elsewhere, neither is that of Adam toiling after the Expulsion; for example, there are depictions from the beginning of the seventeenth century of both of these scenes in the medallions above the Bluett pew in Holcombe Rogus, Devon [Figure 5. 44]. Both the images of Adam toiling after the Expulsion, and of Noah building the ark are included in the series of 39 images from Genesis on the 1636 decorated ceiling of the long gallery at Lanhydrock, Cornwall, which is presumed to have followed an available printed source, not yet identifiable.<sup>199</sup>

Of all the four legs, the fourth is the most unusual with its rare images. It has the symbolic images of hands, displaying early seventeenth-century cuffs, holding a chalice, or communion

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<sup>198</sup> Whilst Adam's face is clear with hair and moustache, Eve's face has been damaged.

<sup>199</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*, 182-188; the flood was to be found on the large-scale decoration in the church at Freudenstadt, Baden-Wurtemberg, Germany, 1599-1608: Reinhard Lieske, *Protestantische Frommigkeit im Spiegel der kirchlichen Kunst des Herzogtums Wurttemberg* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1973), 37-43.

cup, which stands on an unlocked Bible which in turn is set on an hourglass on its side [Figure 5. 45]. These images on the fourth leg represent the sacrament of Holy Communion by the cup, the Word of God read by the unlocked Bible, and the Word of God preached in the pulpit, by the ubiquitous hour glass normally attached to a pulpit.<sup>200</sup> The unlocked Bible was a reference not only to the Word read, but also to the unlocking of sealed books, which represented the end of time, a metaphor to be found in Daniel and the Book of Revelation.<sup>201</sup> The hourglass was associated with timing of the sermon; Nehemiah Wallington, the well-known seventeenth-century diarist and Puritan, confessed that he had ‘wished many times when bee gone...look[ed] on the hour glasse wishing it were runne out... and many times slept at Church hearing God’s word’.<sup>202</sup> There is another interpretation of the hour glass on its side: while an upright hourglass symbolises time passing and therefore often employed as a *memento mori*, an hour glass on its side indicates time still and eternity, that the cup, symbolising communion, and the Bible representing God’s Word, have transcended time, have been victorious over time, over mortality, have brought salvation. This image was in

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<sup>200</sup> For details of hour glasses see chapter 3; and Emma Rhatigan, “Preaching Venues: Architecture and Auditories,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, eds. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 87-119, 93-95.

<sup>201</sup> KJB Daniel 12: 4, ‘But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end’. KJB Revelation 6: 1, ‘And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.’

3 ‘And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.’

5 ‘And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.’

7 ‘And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.’

9 ‘And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:’

12 ‘And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.’

<sup>202</sup> Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing. English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 71; *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington 1618-1654: A Selection*, David Booy, ed. (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2007); for details of Wallington, see: “Wallington, Nehemiah (1598–1658),” P. S. Seaver in *ODNB*, eee online ed., ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28567> (accessed November 5, 2017).

circulation in a meditative text; the woodcut on the first leaf of John Preston's *A Preparation to the Lords Supper* has three of the four elements of the Somerton image: the sealed book, the hour glass, and the communion cup, standing one on top of each other [Figure 5. 46].<sup>203</sup> It does not have the cuffed hands of Somerton, but on either side of the cup, the hour glass and the book, are two *momento mori* representations of death.<sup>204</sup>

The images appear deliberately chosen for the table and the space. The hands holding the communion cup, and the theme of salvation were entirely appropriate for a communion table. Three of the legs displayed images which were all from narratives of the Old Testament, The Fall, Adam Toiling after the Expulsion, and God's Salvation of Noah, all representing Man's Fall. The fourth leg with its symbolic images could represent God's salvation of Man. The unlocked seals of the Bible, symbolising both the Word read and the end of time, the hour glass symbolising the Word preached and, on its side, eternity, and the chalice or cup, symbolising the sacrament of Holy Communion, indicate God's salvation through the New Testament, and victory over time. In this way, the hourglass has a double significance.

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<sup>203</sup> John Preston, *A Preparation to the Lords Supper; Preached in three Sermons by the late famous preacher, John Preston, Doctor of Divinity, chaplain ordinarie to his Majestie; master of Emmanuel College, and sometimes preacher of Lincolnes Inne* (London: printed by John Dawson for Michael Sparke, 1638, originally published in 1631 as *Three Sermons upon the sacrament of the Lords Supper*). Preston died in 1628, and his text was published posthumously. For details of Preston, described as a Puritan, see Moore, Jonathan D. "Preston, John (1587–1628), Church of England clergyman." *ODNB*. 4 May. 2018. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-22727>.

<sup>204</sup> I am grateful to Hannah Yip, Doctoral research student at the University of Birmingham, who found this woodcut. Around the image in Preston's publication are the words: 'The glasse doth Runne, and Time doth Go. Death has his End, I have not so. Study me in thy Prime. Bury Death and weary Time'.

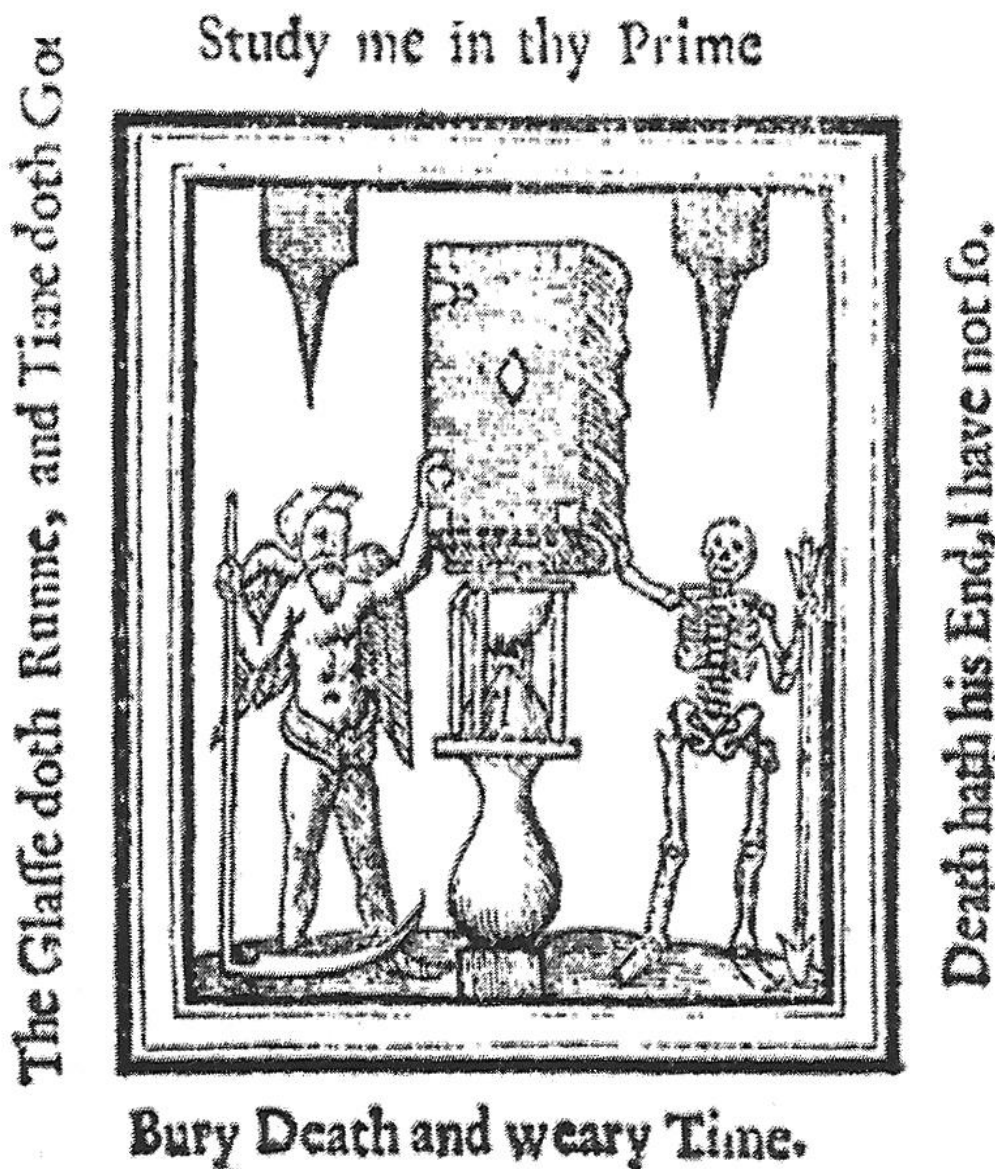


Figure 5. 46 Woodcut on the first leaf of John Preston, *A Preparation to the Lords Supper* (London, 1638), © British Library Board C.194.a.1247(2). By kind permission of the British Library.

This clearly thought out scheme is a synoptic representation of salvation, that after Man's sin, salvation can be achieved through the Word of God and the sacrament of Holy Communion.

It does pose the question of the viewing order of the legs. The present position of the table shows the leg with the synoptic images facing west, as well as the image of Noah at the front [Diagram 5. b]. It seems likely that the most significant image would have faced the

congregation, but it is possible that the image of first narrative, the Fall, was also at the front so that the Fall, and the synoptic image of salvation were both the most visible to the worshippers. Such a position would have placed the table tablewise, and argues against an earlier discussion that the investor of a decorated table would have wished for the maximum exposure to the decoration and placed it altar wise, where the date would also have been on show. Speculation only is possible.

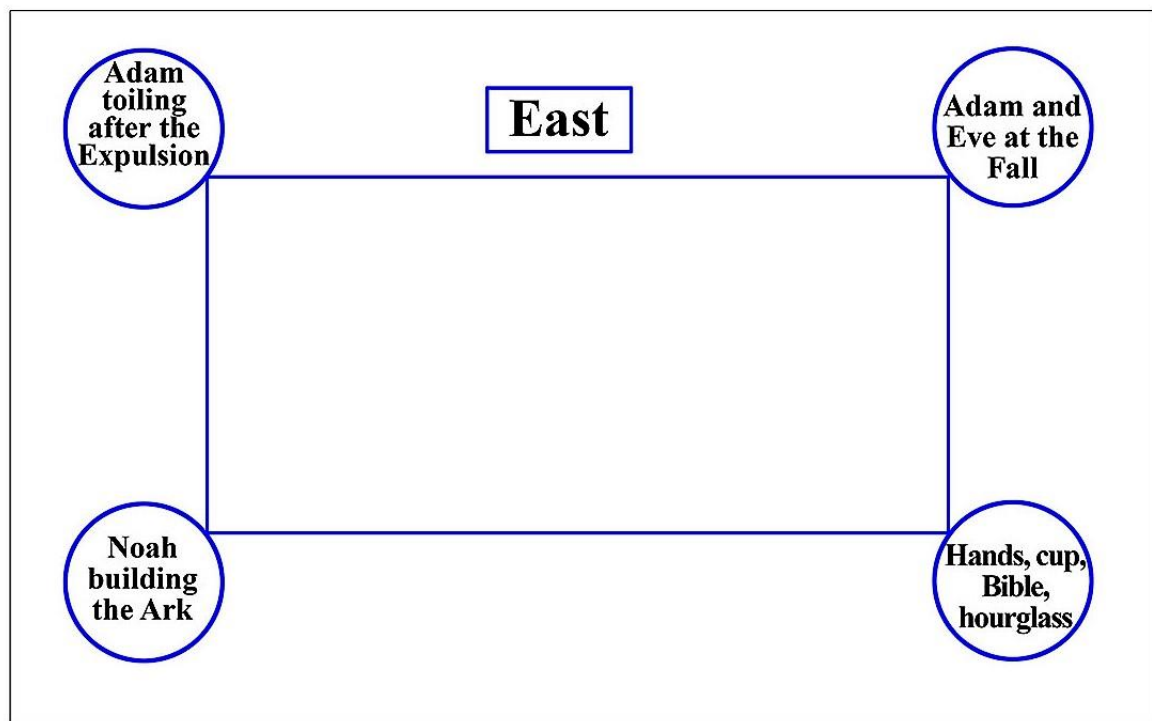


Diagram 5. b

Diagram of the present orientation of the 1626 communion table, the church of St Michael, Somerton, Somerset.

This Communion Table exceeded all requirements. It was part of a much larger improvement project to decorate the church. It was also an expression of parochial pride and investment, built on a community identity. In expressing their pride and parochial and community identity, the parishioners went far beyond what was required of them in the 1620s or what was to be required of them in the following decade by Laud and his standard bearer, Piers. They invested in a decorated Communion Table with a set of images which were rare on a Communion Table. Some of the images would have been familiar: the symbolic pomegranates, and the three very familiar Old Testament stories. The combination of imagery on the fourth leg, with the hands, the chalice, the Bible and the hour glass was unusual for a communion table, but the individual motifs would have been familiar ones, referencing worship, *momento mori* and the sealed book. As seen earlier, the combination of these images was in printed circulation. The schematic link between the symbolism on this fourth leg to the three Old Testament images would not have been lost on the parishioners. The parishioners of Somerton had embraced the visual while taking deliberate care in the choice of images.<sup>205</sup> As a prompt for meditation upon salvation, as a pedagogical tool for a preacher, they could hardly have been more relevant. Both during the service, and particularly during the administration of Holy Communion, the images provided rich sources for contemplation for the parishioners, on the Fall of Man, and of God's salvation. Only a dull preacher would have failed to use them as illustrations of theological arguments. Parishioners could hardly have avoided reflection on their own sin, and salvation. These images were designed to aid meditation and ministerial pedagogy; the description locally-led decoration is apposite for Somerton's table. The materiality of the table profoundly changed the worshippers' viewing

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<sup>205</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 10.



experience while sitting in their pews during the service, as well as the experience of receiving communion in such close proximity to the table laden with imagery.

There are clues in the accounts that the table was in the chancel: the 1627 accounts record, 'Item to Nicholas Biggs for raising of the way going into the channcell', which suggests that the new table was being raised so that it would be more visible.<sup>206</sup> As seen earlier, Somerton did not rail the table until 1634.<sup>207</sup> The elaborate imagery on all four legs suggests that the parishioners stood, sat or knelt around all four sides. It does not make sense for the decoration of the sides, the back, and the back legs not to be visible to the worshippers.<sup>208</sup>

In 1626, the same year as the new communion table was purchased, the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of Somerton made a petition, recorded in the session rolls, requesting assistance with the large numbers of the poor in the parish. 1626 was also the foundation date of the Hext almshouses. This Communion Table was an expression of parochial pride and investment, built on a community identity that was in 1626 possibly feeling vulnerable to the apparent influx of 'the poore'. The parish may have wished to demonstrate their prosperity, despite the increase in the arrival of poor people.<sup>209</sup> In expressing their pride and parochial

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<sup>206</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1627. Earlier, in 1620, there were concerns about the visibility of the previous table when the Churchwardens paid 'unto the joyner for fowre feete of timber to reare upp heyer the communion table xiid': SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1620.

<sup>207</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1634.

<sup>208</sup> Robert Whiting makes this point about a four-sided decorated table at Ombersley c. 1572: Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 30.

<sup>209</sup> For details of the influx of the poor, see A P Baggs, R J E Bush and Margaret Tomlinson. "Parishes: Somerton," in *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 3*, ed. R W Dunning (London: Victoria County History, 1974), 129-153. *British History Online*, accessed February 24, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol3/pp129-153>, 9.

and community identity, the parishioners went far beyond what was required of them in the 1620s or what was to be required of them in the following decade.

### *Conclusion*

Sacramental furniture and fittings, such as font covers and communion rails, were sometimes uncontroversial, practical responses to issues of cleanliness and hygiene. They became contentious in the 1630s when they were associated with the radical changes that Laudian bishops were imposing. The pattern of new fonts and new font covers in Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire corresponds to the general pattern in the country. As the rails at Cameley and Puddletown show, the story of rails erected after 1634 is subtler than the traditional narrative, which conflated communion rails and turning the tables at the east end into a single coherent Laudian policy. The local material and archival evidence portrays the complexity and variety of the orientation and location of the communion tables, and the consequent permutations. It has been demonstrated here that the parochial responses to episcopal coercion were more finely calibrated than had been assumed. Somerton's 1626 table, with its rare images, is an example of investment which again refutes the old claim that the Laudians had a monopoly on decoration. The material evidence of sacramental fittings and furniture in the three counties has finessed the existing narrative, suggesting that context is a vital factor in understanding what the furniture and fittings were intended to achieve. Interestingly, this includes apparent conformity to radical episcopal demands, which may obscure other particular parochial priorities, fulfilled by these significant investments. Rails and tables changed the ways in which communicants moved, and the various orientations, and locations of the tables, changed both the worshipping experience, the lines of sight, but also the worshippers'

perceptions of the emphasis of the meaning of the sacramental liturgy. The experience of worshipping was also changed by what was displayed on the church walls, the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### WALLS: 'EDIFICATION', 'COMELY ORNAMENT AND DEMONSTRATION.'<sup>1</sup>

#### *Introduction*

*worship the Lord in the  
beauty of holiness  
I Chron Chap XVI  
Verse 29*<sup>2</sup>

The experience of worshippers changed in Edward VI's reign and at the start of Elizabeth's reign. The pre-Reformation decoration on church walls was covered up pursuant to the requirements of the royal injunctions of 1547 and 1559. The decoration on the same walls in 1640 was very different.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will argue that in the intervening 81 years, there was repair and renewal, but there was also innovation in the nature and content of the visual displays, and of the weekly worshipping experience. It will also maintain that there was no clear alignment between the confessional position of the investors in these enhancements to the interior perimeters of their buildings, and the decoration itself. Anyone over 80 who was still alive in 1640 may have had an infant's memory of what had been, but, for most people

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<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of Matthew Parker D. D., Archbishop of Canterbury, Comprising Letters Written By and To Him from A. D. 1535, to His Death, A. D. 1575*, John Bruce and Thomas Perowne, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853).

<sup>2</sup> Text on the north wall from part of the scheme of decoration on the walls of the church of Sherrington, Wiltshire. The painter had used both Roman and Arabic numerals. The full text is discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>3</sup> For details of the 1547 and 1559 Injunctions, see chapter 1.

the hidden paintings had passed into oral history. Fragments of what had been might still possibly have been visible when the whitewash flaked off before they were covered up again.<sup>4</sup> Most parishioners only saw the present decorations, although they were palimpsests, with the medieval imagery having been overlaid with other images, texts, and royal arms.<sup>5</sup> Visual messages were still significant for a reformed Protestant community, a result of a new order, the re-imagining of the visual, and of complying with Elizabeth's demand in a letter to Archbishop Parker in 1561 'for comely decoration', whose purpose was also for 'edification'.<sup>6</sup> John Coolidge has examined contemporary definitions of edification; for example, Archbishop Parker asserted that,

The first discourse here is of edifying or building the Church of Christ, which all faithful Ministers do acknowledge to be their bounden duty and service.<sup>7</sup>

In comparison, contemporary Puritans saw edification as the means of creating order in the Church, citing St Paul's exhortation to 'edifie or build up the Church of Christ' by its members, the living stones, in order to achieve a completely reformed Church.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Maurice Howard, "Afterword. Art Re-Formed: Spiritual Revolution, Spatial Re-Location," in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling and Richard Williams, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 267-271, 271; for a discussion on what was still visible by the 1640s in East Anglia, see *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia during the English Civil War*, Trevor Cooper, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press in association with the Ecclesiological Society, 2001), 25, 237, 260, 265, 272, 276, 287, 294.

<sup>5</sup> Howard, "Afterword," 271; Clive Rouse, "Post-Reformation Wall Paintings," *The Lincolnshire Historian* no. 1 (Summer 1947): 8-14, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth had written in 1561 to Archbishop Parker instructing him: 'to order that the tables of the commandments may be comely set or hung up in the end of the chancel, to be not only read for edification, but also to give some comely ornament and demonstration the same is a place of religion and prayer': *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, Bruce and Perowne.

<sup>7</sup> John Coolidge, *The Pauline Renaissance in England: Puritanism and the Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 44-45; for more on contemporaries' definitions of edification, see Coolidge's chapter 'Christian Liberty and Edification,' 23-54.

<sup>8</sup> Coolidge, *Pauline Renaissance*, 26-27.

In chapter 1, the traditional view of church interiors where ‘the entire medieval artistic heritage of England’ had been ‘reduced to literal rubble’ was viewed as outdated by modern scholarship.<sup>9</sup> This chapter will consider first what the ‘whiting’ of the church meant; second it will briefly analyse the extant material evidence for royal arms on walls; third it will reflect on the material evidence of the Decalogue; and lastly it will consider other types of visual messages, ending with two case studies, a complete plasterwork scheme on the walls of East Knoyle, and a comprehensive scheme of painted texts at Sherrington, both in Wiltshire. Analysing the extant wall displays through the material evidence will provide an original approach, which interrogates how the walls changed the worshipping experience, both for ‘comely ornament’, for ‘edification’, and also, as Elizabeth had demanded, for ‘demonstration that the same (the church) is a place of religion and prayer’.<sup>10</sup>

*‘Whitelyning’ the Church: practical expediency?*

Covering walls with a thick white lime was used to deface medieval imagery; but whitewashing walls for purposes other than destruction was not new. Cox describes whitewashing or white lining in pre-Reformation churchwardens’ accounts in England, whilst in pre-Reformation Netherlands, white lining was part of regular church maintenance.<sup>11</sup> There is significant evidence that white lining was also used after the iconoclastic activity at the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign for reasons of hygiene and comeliness, as lime contained

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<sup>9</sup> John Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535-1660* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1973) 1, 206; an exception to this traditional assumption was Clive Rouse who wrote in 1947 that post-Reformation paintings on church walls had been neglected because historians believed they ceased with the Reformation: Rouse, “Wall Paintings,” 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, Bruce and Perowne.

<sup>11</sup> J. Charles Cox, *Churchwardens’ Accounts from the Fourteenth Century to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1913), 255-256: St Michael, Bath in 1482-3, St Edmund, Sarum in 1482-3, and St Dunstan, Canterbury in 1490. Mia Mochizuki has found in a European context that white lining walls was replicated in pre-Reformation Netherlands, where, in St Bavo church, Harlem, it was undertaken as part of regular maintenance ‘140 years before iconoclasm erupted’: Mia Mochizuki, *The Netherlandish Image After Iconoclasm, 1566-1672: Material Religion in the Dutch Golden Age* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 1.

properties that helped reduce mould on walls. For example the Churchwardens' accounts of Axbridge record such expenditure in 1610, 1620, 1623, and 1632.<sup>12</sup> The accounts of Cameley note expenditure for 'whiting' or 'whitelyning' the church in 1623, 1630 and 1634.<sup>13</sup> The accounts of Cheddar note white lining for similar reasons in 1631 and 1635, and those of Mere in 1630.<sup>14</sup> The absence in the examined accounts of white lining later in Elizabeth's reign may indicate that the lime wash, applied early in her reign under her directions, did not need to be repeated until the seventeenth century.<sup>15</sup>

Earlier whitewashing of the church would have been in response to the 1559 Elizabethan Injunctions which ordered the clergy to,

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<sup>12</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Axbridge, 1610, 1620, 1623, 1632. In 1610 the accounts note that Thomas Spencer was paid for 'washing of the seats of the church after whitlyninge is vid'; in 1620 they recorded 'to Samuel Croaker for whitlyninge and Collorynge of the Church £1 10s, To Toby Mattocke for washing of the seates after whitlyninge 2s' and payment for lime; in 1623 they noted 'Item to John Morgan for 3 bushells of lime, To Thomas Drayton whitelining the church porch against the Bishops coming'; in 1623 they recorded 'making cleane of the church after whiting'. Whitelining is the expression used in three of the four years and it appears that the context of the use of the word 'whiting' in 1632 is simply a casual slip to mean whitelining. Although lime is purchased in 1636, the context indicates it was being used as a component for paving the church. Why there should be frequent whitelining at Axbridge, four times in 22 years, is a cause of speculation: particularly damp weather conditions, or bird droppings through where birds have entered the church through an aperture are just two possible explanations.

<sup>13</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Cameley, 1623, 1630, 1634. As at Axbridge, 'whitelining' is the term used in 1623 and 1630, whilst in 1634 'whiting' is used in a context that also indicates whitelining.

<sup>14</sup> SHC: DD/SAS/C795/SE/14 Churchwardens' accounts of Cheddar, 1623, 1631, 1635. In 1623 three and a half bushels of lime are purchased which may suggest whitelining although this is not specifically itemised. In all years 1631 and 1635 'whitelining' is the term deployed three times. In 1631 it is George Drayton who is paid twice for 'painting and white lyninge of the Church', the second time 'in full satisfaction'; WSHC: 2944/44 Churchwardens' accounts Mere, 1630. The term used at Mere is 'whiting' in 1530 but the context implies white lining. In 1635 he is paid for 'whitelining part of the church'; for other examples of whitewashing of walls, see Hitchman, "Balancing the Parish Accounts," 31.

<sup>15</sup> For example, WSHC: 2944/44 Churchwardens' accounts Mere, 1563-1600; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Wimborne Minster, 1564-1600; and SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Somerton, 1581-1600. The pattern of white lining can present unanswerable questions: why was it applied three times in 12 years at Axbridge, and three times in eleven years at Cameley. At Cheddar it appears that the three payments in two years between 1631 and 1634 was a result of the work being undertaken in stages. The weather, the accuracy of the terminology, and the issue of regular maintenance are all unanswerable questions raised by the entries in these four sets of accounts.

take away, utterly extinct, and destroy all shrines, ...pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of...idolatry, and superstition, so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass windows, or elsewhere within their churches...preserving nevertheless, or repairing both the walls and glass windows.<sup>16</sup>

This was reinforced by the Canons of 1571, which required that,

the walls of the churches be new whited, and decked with chosen sentences of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>17</sup>

Whitewashing the walls was first to comply with the requirement to avoid superstition and idolatry, which was discussed in Chapter 1, and then later whitelining was for reasons of hygiene and maintenance, an activity which preceded the Reformation.<sup>18</sup> There is no material extant evidence of covering over walls, except where restoration work reveals the pre-Reformation images which the whiting had intended to hide. An example of these can be found in the paintings uncovered in 1955 in the Guild Chapel of Stratford upon Avon, which had been famously lime washed over by John Shakespeare in 1563.<sup>19</sup> For some the hiding of familiar comforting images would have been distressing, even disorientating, but for others the newly whitewashed walls would have symbolised purity, and a reformed new order, demonstrated in providing a new visual environment. However brutal and disconcerting the hiding of the familiar wall paintings might have been for congregations, nevertheless it was not the intention of the Government that the walls should remain totally blank, as the phrase

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<sup>16</sup> Injunctions quoted from *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, Henry Gee and William Hardy, eds. (London: Macmillan, 1896), 417-442. For details of the earlier state sponsored iconoclasm in the reign of Edward VI, see Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts vol. 1: Laws against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 299-302.

<sup>17</sup> *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Gerald Bray, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 193.

<sup>18</sup> Chapter 1.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.guildchapel.org.uk/the-wall-paintings/>, (accessed 13 June 2017). John Shakespeare was the father of William Shakespeare, and was acting in his capacity as Chamberlain of the Corporation of Stratford.



from the 1571 canon, ‘and decked with chosen sentences of the Holy Scriptures’, demonstrates. Before discussing the implications of that directive, a brief discussion of the Royal Arms is needed.

*Royal Arms: ‘Let every soule be subject unto higher power’.*

The historiography on the Royal Arms is sparse. In 1934 Cautley wrote *Royal Arms and Commandments in Our Churches*.<sup>20</sup> Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke mention an early set, placed in 1547 in St Martin Ironmonger Lane, in London, controversially where the crucifix had been.<sup>21</sup> Robert Whiting devotes two pages to them, citing early installations in 1541-2, and 1547.<sup>22</sup> There was only one directive relevant to the Royal Arms, in the Royal Order of 1561, where churchwardens were ordered to remove rood lofts, but retain the chancel screen up to the height of the beam, ‘putting some convenient crest upon the said beam towards the church’.<sup>23</sup> Royal Arms were installed to symbolise the new headship of the Church determined by the Act of Supremacy in 1534, by which Henry VIII was made the Supreme Head of the Church and the Pope was removed from that position. Often the arms were positioned over the chancel screen, where previously there had been the rood figures. An

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<sup>20</sup> Munro Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments in Our Churches* (Ipswich: Norman Adlard, 1934).

<sup>21</sup> For details of the controversy, see Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 9; Cautley notes that there are Henrician arms at Rushbrooke, Suffolk, on the tympanum with a dragon and greyhound supports, a portcullis and a Tudor rose: Munro Cautley, *Suffolk Churches and Their Treasures* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1937), 17-19, and cited by James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Suffolk; West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015, first published by Penguin, 1961, 1974), 475-476. Bettley and Pevsner suggest these Henrician arms may have been imported into the church later than Henry’s reign.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 126-7; Whiting also claims that they were not unknown before 1534 but offers no examples; Cautley gives a rare example from Edward VI’s reign, Westerham, Kent: Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 25; it is also noted in John Newman, *Buildings of England: Kent, West and the Weald* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012, first published by Penguin 1969, second edition 1976, reprinted 1980), 637-638, 638.

<sup>23</sup> George Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 31.

example of this is in a new church, Wyke Champflower, built in 1624, where there were three arms installed in that year on a wooden tympanum, that marks off the chancel. In the centre are the arms of James I, on the left side are the arms of the consecrating diocesan bishop, Bishop Lake, and on the right of the royal arms are those of Archbishop Abbott [Figure 6. 1].<sup>24</sup> Sometimes the arms were accompanied by appropriate painted inscriptions, examples of which will be discussed later.<sup>25</sup>

There is some archival evidence relating to arms, which unfortunately does not match up with the extant material evidence. The Churchwardens' accounts of Wimborne Minster note payment for the painting of the Queen's Arms in 1573, and 1577, and for the King's Arms in 1613.<sup>26</sup> At Axbridge the churchwardens paid Henry Hole in 1606 for the old arms to be washed out, and in the same year 16d for him to set up the King's Arms.<sup>27</sup> The accounts at Somerton record expenditure on the King's Arms in 1607 and 1612.<sup>28</sup> In 1625 at Mere payment was made for 'setting upp the kings armes and for certain sentences of Scripture on the walles'.<sup>29</sup> In 1638 the accounts at Minehead show that the King's Arms were 'newly placed'.<sup>30</sup> The investments seem to indicate changing the arms for the new Head or Governor of the Church, and to indicate that the work at Mere, at least, was linked to other decoration on the walls.

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<sup>24</sup> Julian Orbach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; South and West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 714.

<sup>25</sup> For examples of painted inscriptions out of the three counties, see Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 127; and Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 28-61.

<sup>26</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1573, 1577, 1613.

<sup>27</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1606.

<sup>28</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1607, 1612.

<sup>29</sup> WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1625.

<sup>30</sup> SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Churchwardens' accounts of Minehead, 1638; Hilary Binding and Douglas Stevens, *Minehead: A New History* (Minehead, 1977), 124.

The extant material evidence in the three counties dates from the reigns of Elizabeth, James I and Charles I. Royal Arms were carved in wood, painted on cloths, or painted on walls.<sup>31</sup> It is the last upon which this section focuses. This category divides into two types: those that were directly painted onto walls, and those painted on boards, where the visual evidence suggests the boards were then placed on walls. There are two examples of those painted on boards for a wall. The large 1639 painted set of Royal Arms at Edington is unlikely to have been propped up on a bookcase, as it is now, but its original location is unknown [Figure 6. 2].<sup>32</sup> Its date leads to speculation that a new curate, John Allanbridge, appointed in 1639, after the previous curate, William Tillandam, ended his thirteen years in post, persuaded the churchwardens to make the investment fourteen years after Charles I had succeeded to the throne.

The 1609 set of arms at Winsford has the feet of the heraldic beasts holding strapwork which encloses two texts from Ecclesiastics:

I advertise thee to observe the mouth of the king, and, that, for the word of the oathe of God.

Above it, written in small letters, almost as an afterthought, is ‘Ecclesiasticus:

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<sup>31</sup> Examples of Royal Arms carved in wood above the chancel screen can be found at Leeds St John, Langley Marish, Berkshire, and Croscombe, Somerset; for a description of the former, see Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 58; for more details of the latter, see chapter 4; for the anomaly of the Arms for James I and Prince Charles installed in the church of Leeds St John, built after James’s reign, see Margaret Bullett, “Post-Reformation Preaching in the Pennines: Space, Identity and Affectivity” (PhD Thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2016), 123-4, 150-1, 219; the 1631 Royal Arms at St Cuthbert’s, Wells, appear to be a three-dimensional structure appropriate for a screen.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101364257-church-of-st-mary-st-katherine-and-all-saints-edington#.WUKbgoWcGUk> (accessed 14 August, 2013); Pevsner does not note them.

8 .2' [Figure 6. 3]. The text is derived from the Geneva Bible, rather than the Bishop's Bible.<sup>33</sup> Beneath the first text is the second,

Curse not the king nor not in thy thought, neither curse the rich in thie bed-chamber,  
for the fowle of heaven that cary the voice and that which hath wings shall declare the  
matter.<sup>34</sup>

Before the second text is the reference 'Ecclesiasticus. 10. 20', written in the same size script of the text, and clearly not an afterthought. In the first text, the observer is exhorted to obey the King, and this is linked to an oath to God. In the second text, duty to the king is linked to a secular power structure, the rich, and again divine authority is invoked: that evil will be known by heaven. The painted arms and the accompanying texts, that require duty and obedience, linked to the threat that heaven will know of a lack of duty, are perfect visual partners in symbolising the authority of the king as head of the state, and as head of the Church. The arms and the texts are linked spatially and conceptually.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The KJB text for Ecclesiasticus 8: 2 is, 'I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God'. The GB text is: 'I advertise thee to take heed to the mouth of the king, and to the word of the oath of God'.

<sup>34</sup> The KJB text for Ecclesiasticus 10: 20 is, 'Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter'. The GB text is, 'Curse not the king, no not in thy thought, neither curse the rich in thy bed chamber: for the fowl of the heaven shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings, shall declare the matter'.

<sup>35</sup> For other examples of appropriate texts to accompany the Royal Arms, see Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 127; Jonathan Willis also spoke about this during a lecture at the Shakespeare Institute, 'Picturing the Ten Commandments in post-Reformation English Churches', 16 October 2014; and Jonathan Willis, *The Reformation of the Decalogue: Religious Identity and the Ten Commandments in England, c. 1485-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 306, 314, 316, 317-319; Willis also links the Decalogue and the Royal Arms spatially and textually: Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*, 317, 330; Cautley says of Winsford, 'By far the most magnificent painted panel of this (James I) reign is at Winsford': Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 50-51.

While the Bishops' Bible was the large volume used in churches on lecterns, the Geneva Bible was the smaller volume used in the household. The reference from the Geneva Bible at Winsford and elsewhere is an indication of a deliberate and significant choice by the churchwardens. These commissioning church officers, committed Protestants, were using the text familiar to them in their domestic context, indicating that there was no clear demarcation between private and public space, a point developed in chapter 4. The Geneva Bible was annotated, and its reading by the commissioning patrons informed by the annotations. The use of biblical sentences in churches coincides with the simultaneous domestic fashion for adorning household walls with them.<sup>36</sup>

There are examples of images of the royal arms being linked to the Decalogue, such as Tivetshall, Norfolk, and one has been discovered in the three counties, at Wareham.<sup>37</sup> Wareham is one of several examples of royal arms painted directly onto the wall. Over the eleventh-century chancel arch, there is a palimpsest, where, beneath the dominant arms of Queen Anne in 1713, can be discerned those of Elizabeth, which were discovered during restoration work in 1940 [Figure 6. 4].<sup>38</sup> To either side of the royal arms are panels of the Ten Commandments, where the script is consistent with the end of the sixteenth century. The words over the arch, and beneath the royal arms, read:

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<sup>36</sup> For details of this domestic fashion, see Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 106-111; and Tara Hamling, "Living with the Bible in Post-Reformation England: The Materiality of Text, Image and Object in Domestic Life," in *Religion and the Household: Papers Read at the 2012 Summer Meeting and the 2013 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, eds. John Doran, Charlotte Methuen, and Alexandra Walsham (Woodbridge: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 2014), 211-239.

<sup>37</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 127; Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *The Buildings of England: Norfolk 2; North-West and South* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, first edition published by Penguin, 1962, second edition, 1999), 735-736, 735.

<sup>38</sup> Maurice Howard, "Afterword," 271.

Let every soule be subject unto higher power. For there is no power but of God.<sup>39</sup>

The juxtaposition of the text referring to God's supreme power, the image of the two panels of the Ten Commandments, which he gave to man, and the royal arms, representing headship of secular and ecclesiastical authority and power are linked inextricably, both visually, and notionally.

Over the south door at Puddletown are the damaged arms of Elizabeth, painted on the wall [Figure 6. 5].<sup>40</sup> At Little Somerford the 1602 distinctive arms of Elizabeth, with a green dragon as one of the heraldic beasts, are now placed over the door at the west end following restoration in 1983 [Figure 6. 6]. A church notice, dating from 1933, described the Royal Arms as being over the chancel arch, and it appears that the Royal Arms were juxtaposed with the Decalogue until restoration work in 1983 [Figure 6. 7].<sup>41</sup> It is another example of linking the law handed down by God, to the authority of the Head of the Church, and the nation. The green dragon of Elizabeth's arms can also be found on the painted Elizabethan arms at St Martin's, Salisbury, and in a domestic context on the wall of the Forge, Much Haddenham, Herefordshire c. 1575-80.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Romans 13: 1. Both the King James Bible and the Geneva Bible use the same words: 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God'. This text is also displayed with the Decalogue at Tivetshall, Norfolk.

<sup>40</sup> I am grateful to Ursula Pomeroy whose photograph of the damaged Royal Arms is much better than mine. The damage was thought to be caused by a funerary monument being removed from where it covered the Arms.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101300525-church-of-st-john-the-baptist-little-somerford#.WUjzI-RK2Uk> (accessed 20 June, 2017).

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101259041-church-of-st-martin-salisbury#.WU465oWcGUk> (accessed 24 June, 2017); Cautley notes that the church of St Thomas, Salisbury also has Elizabethan Arms but neither the BLB nor Pevsner notes them: Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 35; Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household*, 101.

On the south wall at Cameley, are the arms of James I, which are obscured by the gallery. The thigh of the lion and the thistle of Scotland are visible, as well as DIEU ET MON DROI(T) [Figure 6. 8].<sup>43</sup> It is probable that the arms were whitewashed over when the arms of Charles I were erected. These are now fixed to the west gallery facing east. They are in a wooden frame painted on canvas [Figure 6. 9]. This could have occurred in 1630, when the Churchwardens' accounts note expenditure on whiting the walls, soon after the accession of a new King.<sup>44</sup>

Painted on perimeter walls, or on the wall above the chancel arch, the Royal Arms were of a very different type of image from the pre-Reformation designs, now hidden beneath white lining. Instead of painted figures of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints, here were the highly politicised symbols of the indivisible authority of Church and state for the post-Reformation congregation to see. The concept was reinforced in some churches by the juxtaposition of the Decalogue or of texts which linked God's authority to the authority of the Sovereign.

*The Decalogue: 'For there is no power but of God'.*

Although Cautley wrote a chapter on the Ten Commandments in his *Royal Arms and Commandments in Our Churches* in 1934, study of the Decalogue has generally been neglected until recently.<sup>45</sup> Whiting mentions it briefly as part of two pages on 'texts', and Fincham and Tyacke consider it in relation to the location of the communion table.<sup>46</sup> Jonathan

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<sup>43</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS/37 Record of church furnishings relating to the church of St James, Cameley, (Compiled by the National Association of Fine Arts Societies NADFAS), 2006.

<sup>44</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1630.

<sup>45</sup> Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 109-130.

<sup>46</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 131-132; Whiting does not index the Decalogue; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 46, 57.

Willis has ended this lacuna with three chapters in multi-disciplinary books, and in his recent important monograph, *The Reformation of the Decalogue*.<sup>47</sup> As Jonathan Willis said, his work does not focus on the parochial contexts; in this chapter there will be significant examples in the parochial context of previously unrecognised material.<sup>48</sup>

In chapter 6 of his monograph Jonathan Willis analyses the material evidence comprehensively for the c. 30 extant Commandments boards, demonstrating the six different types of boards, the variety of responses to the Elizabethan requirements, and the link, already discussed earlier, between displays of royal authority and the Decalogue. In this section, the five examined, extant examples of the Decalogue in the three counties will offer some other local examples, and, in two instances, will be able to triangulate the archival evidence with the material evidence in demonstrating the significance of the parochial context.

As described in the introduction to this chapter, Elizabeth's letter to Archbishop Parker and others in 1561, ordered,

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<sup>47</sup> Jonathan Willis, "Repurposing the Decalogue in Reformation England," in *The Influence of the Decalogue: Historical, Theological and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Dominik Markl (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 190-204; Jonathan Willis, "The Decalogue, Patriarchy and Domestic Religious Education in Reformation England," in *Religion and the Household: Papers Read at the 2012 Summer Meeting and the 2013 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, eds. John Doran, Charlotte Methuen and Alexandra Walsham (Woodbridge: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 2014), 199-209; Jonathan Willis, "'Moral Arithmetic', or 'Creative Accounting?' (Re-)defining Sin through the Ten Commandments," in *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England*, ed. Jonathan Willis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 69-87; Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*.

<sup>48</sup> Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*, 303-331.



That the tables of the commandments may be comely set, or hung up in the east end of the chauncell, to be not only read for edification, but also to give some comelye ornament and demonstration, that the same is a place of religion and prayer.<sup>49</sup>

Nine months later the Royal Orders of 1561 demanded that the Ten Commandments be,

fixed upon the wall over the said Communion board the Tables of God's precepts imprinted for the said purpose.<sup>50</sup>

The Canons of 1604 reinforced the earlier orders, requiring that,

the Ten Commandments be set up upon the East-end of every church and chapel where the people may best see and read the same, and other chosen sentences written upon the walls of the said churches and chapels in places convenient.<sup>51</sup>

Visitation articles give testimony to the reinforcement of central demands by diocesan requirements.<sup>52</sup> For example, Archbishop Bancroft's articles for his Metropolitan Visitation of Ten Dioceses in 1605, including Bristol and Bath and Wells, included 'whether there are tenne commaundments set upon the east ende of your church or chapel, where the people may best see and reade them and other sentences of holy scripture written on walles likewise for that purpose ?'.<sup>53</sup> The 'other sentences' may have been a vague allusion to the two other texts

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<sup>49</sup> *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, Bruce and Perowne.

<sup>50</sup> Elizabeth I, *Orders taken the x. day of October in the thirde yere of the raigne of our Sovereigne Ladye, Elizabeth Quene of Englande, Fraunce and Irelande, defender of the faith* (1561), STC2: 9186, sigs. Aiv-Air, referenced by Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*, chapter 6 n. 57; Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*, 298.

<sup>51</sup> *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377; Fincham and Tyacke make the point that the 1604 canon does not link the location of the Decalogue with the location of the communion table, as did the Elizabethan Injunction: Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 73.

<sup>52</sup> Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*, 298-299.

<sup>53</sup> *Visitation Articles I*, Fincham, 10.

of the three texts of the catechism, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, but these, although common, were not prescribed.<sup>54</sup>

Some Churchwardens' accounts show that there was a ready response, although these accounts have no mimetic extant examples of the Decalogue. Some parishes quickly put up printed versions, as they did in Mere, 'item for a Table printed with tenne commandments'.<sup>55</sup> Such printed versions are non-extant, and were replaced by more permanent tables. In 1567 the Churchwardens at Wimborne Minster paid 'for the Ten Commandments in Collers.' Later new tables were made in 1612, and in 1634 new tables were part of a larger scheme that included 'the Lord's Prayer, the Creede, & diverse sentences of Scripture'.<sup>56</sup> In 1584 at Somerton the painter was paid 'for writing the Ten Commandments'; in 1607 the painters were rewarded with 22d for 'painting the ten Commandments and the Kings Armes', and 'nails' and board' was bought for the 'Ten Commandments'. The painters were also paid 'viiid' in the same year 'for writing certain sentences commanded by his Majesties channons'.<sup>57</sup>

In the three counties, the examined material evidence can be categorised into those Commandments which were applied directly to the wall, and those that were placed on boards and fixed to the wall. Some in both categories were part of a multi-text scheme.<sup>58</sup> As

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<sup>54</sup> Ian Green's seminal monograph on catechisms analyses its components: Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechism and Catechizing in England, c. 1530-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 279-299, 280.

<sup>55</sup> WSHC: 2944/44 Cwa Mere, 1563.

<sup>56</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1567, 1612, 1634.

<sup>57</sup> SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1584, 1607.

<sup>58</sup> For a more detailed categorisation of the extant 30 tables, see Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*, 305-331; for details of Commandment boards extant in 1934, see Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 109-130.

described earlier, at Wareham, the Decalogue was painted in two panels on the wall, either side of the Royal Arms, and above the chancel arch, which carried the text, ‘Let every soule be subject unto higher power. For there is no power but of God’ [Figure 6. 4]. This link between the law of God, and the authority of the Sovereign, both Head of the state and Head of the Church, is a powerful proximity of messages.<sup>59</sup> At Boscombe, Wiltshire, there is only an extant fragment of the Ten Commandments painted onto the north wall, in lettering consistent with the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century [Figure 6. 10]. The frame, the first two commandments and the last, painted in two panels, are discernible.

The history of the Decalogue at Little Somerford, Wiltshire, is an example of the type of palimpsest that Maurice Howard talks about.<sup>60</sup> As described in the previous section, the Elizabethan Royal Arms were probably near the Decalogue until they were removed in 1983 from the tympanum, and placed on the west wall [Figure 6. 6].<sup>61</sup> The wooden boarded fifteenth-century tympanum now displays the first five commandments, although the last part of the fifth commandment is missing.<sup>62</sup> The commandments VI-X were shorter in length than the first five, and could have been placed next to the first five. The shorter second half would have been placed below the first five, down to the screen, but this would not have preserved the distinction in many churches between the two tables, the first table concerned duties to God, while the second concerned obligations to fellow men. The position of the Decalogue

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<sup>59</sup> Cautley notes generally that the two are frequently positioned together: Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 109.

<sup>60</sup> Howard, “Afterword,” 271.

<sup>61</sup> Cautley notes generally that the ‘tympanic filling above the screen.. was here the commandments, and sometimes the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed.... and generally in company with the Royal Arms’: Cautley, *Royal Arms and Commandments*, 42.

<sup>62</sup> I am grateful to Trevor Cooper for a discussion about his views of the Decalogue and tympanum at Little Somerford.

could possibly have been a replacement for the rood.<sup>63</sup> Either side of the frame are two censuring angels, with a profusion of feathery wings. Although angels were common images supporting the Decalogue, their censuring action, indicating a medieval rite, dates them as pre-Reformation, and they would probably have been whitewashed out when the Decalogue was painted on the tympanum. The tympanum is a palimpsest, for the rood, with censuring angels as part of the imagery, then the post Reformation Decalogue, and the 1602 Elizabethan arms. At Little Somerford compliance with different requirements competed for space, at a focal point of the church, the tympanum, which marked off the chancel. The date of the Royal Arms can only lead to conjecture without archival evidence: there was no change of Rector, which might have stimulated investment, there may have been a pre-existing set that had become damaged, or the parish may have been responding to Archbishop Whitgift's requirement in 1602 that all diocesans were to send in reports on the state of their churches.<sup>64</sup>

The two panels of the Ten Commandments at Cameley, painted directly onto the wall, over the chancel arch, were also at a focal point for the worshipping congregation [Figure 6. 11]. It is arguable that placing the Decalogue where the idolatrous rood or doom would have been was a deliberate statement about the Reformed faith.<sup>65</sup> The Churchwardens' accounts note that in 1623 the Ten Commandments were painted over the chancel arch: 'For writing the Ten Commandments and other works in the church 10s'.<sup>66</sup> Pevsner and Tricker call the Ten

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101300525-church-of-st-john-the-baptist-little-somerford#.WUjzI-RK2Uk> (accessed 20 June, 2017).

<sup>64</sup> For more on this survey, see Julia Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and the Phenomenon of Church-Building in Jacobean London," *The Historical Journal* vol. 41, no. 4 (December 1998): 935-960, 943.

<sup>65</sup> Margaret Aston argues has suggested that when some diocesan orders required them to be hung over the altar, this was also a deliberate statement of the Reformed faith, placing them over what had been the most sacred site in the pre-Reformation church: Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 367.

<sup>66</sup> SHC: D\P\cmly/4/1/1 Cwa Cameley, 1623.

Commandments early seventeenth century, which would fit both stylistically and with the accounts.<sup>67</sup> The painting of the Ten Commandments occurs in the same accounts year as the ‘whitelyning’ of the church, which would make sense. They are painted in two cartouches, one with ‘EXODUS’ at the top, and the other with ‘CHAP: XX’. They imitate the stone tablets which were given to Moses. In both these aspects and their location there are similarities with the Decalogue at Burton, West Sussex [Figures 6. 12 and 6. 12a]. Whilst Commandments I and II are bold and well-spaced, III appears cramped. The heading V is missing; the lettering on the right-hand frame is well spaced. Each frame has foliated decoration with unusual chubby cherubs at each corner and central to the sides, peeking around the frame.<sup>68</sup> The cherubs have wings, folded material and feathers around their shoulders, all in the colour of amber. The writing is in black Roman letters on a yellowish background. Above the wall painting of the Commandments is the faint image of a sunburst, a symbol of God.<sup>69</sup> The parishioners had been accustomed to rich decoration, the red scroll designs dating from the 1200s on the chancel arch jambs, and the images where a rood would probably have been.<sup>70</sup> There was continuity in the tradition of painted decoration, but also change. The Ten Commandments were given an enhanced place in the reformed church, as

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<sup>67</sup> Andrew Foyle and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset; North and Bristol* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011, first published by Penguin, 1958), 434-435, 435; Roy Tricker, *Church of Saint James, Cameley, Somerset* (London: The Churches Conservation Trust, 2007); H. Bryant Salmon and John Betjeman, *Cameley Old Church* (Wells: St Andrew’s Press, 1960); Salmon and Betjeman wrote that Mr Fearce had been paid 18 guineas in 1808 to write the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments; they give no reference for this assertion; other commentators and the visual evidence would support the view of the early seventeenth century for the painting of the Ten Commandments; for examples of Ten Commandments and their lettering in a domestic context, see Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*, 107-108.

<sup>68</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS/37 NADFAS Cameley survey, 2006.

<sup>69</sup> For another example of this image, see St Mary’s, Preston, Suffolk: Willis, *Reformation of the Decalogue*, 316, figure 6. 10.

<sup>70</sup> SHC: DD\X\NDS/37 NADFAS Cameley survey, 2006.

Elizabeth's 1559 Injunction reiterated the duty of the 1538 Injunction to instruct the congregation in the Ten Commandments,

V. Item, that every holy-day through the year, when they have no sermon, they shall immediately after the Gospel openly and plainly recite to their parishioners in the pulpit the Pater noster, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, in English, to the intent that the people may learn the same by heart; exhorting all parents and house holders to teach their children and servants the same, as they are bound by the law of God and conscience to do.<sup>71</sup>

At Cameley is the powerful manifestation that the Decalogue was for 'edification', a didactic tool, as had been required in the Injunction; as a 'comely ornament' as the material evidence shows; and as 'demonstration the same is a place of religion and prayer.' At a focal point visually, the combination of the three royal intentions could hardly have been lost on this remote, rural congregation.

The 1634 Decalogue at Minehead, Somerset, was also a response to these three royal intentions, but ornament was more important than edification, as the lines of sight made it difficult to read the texts. It was more than that, it was a manifestation of familial status. It was also different in location and type from that at Cameley. The wooden panels were placed behind the communion table by Robert Quirke, where they served as the reredos. They were moved to the north wall of the church sometime after 1883, near the west end of the nave,

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<sup>71</sup> *Documents*, Gee and Hardy, 276, 420.

where there are now six wooden panels.<sup>72</sup> The middle two of the six round headed panels are larger than the other four, and display the Ten Commandments in gold lettering [Figure 6. 13]. On these two larger panels, the lettering of the first four Commandments on the left-hand middle panel is cramped. On the right hand middle panel, the lettering is more comfortably spaced with room for the donor's attribution,

ROBERT QUIRCKE THE YOUNGER MARINER SONNE OF JAMES QUIRCKE  
GAVE THIS TO THE CHURCH ANNO DMI 1634.<sup>73</sup>

The year that Robert Quirke installed the two panels of the Decalogue had particular significance for the parishioners of Minehead. The vicar, Nicholas Browse, who had been the incumbent since 1585, died that year at 83.<sup>74</sup> This is a striking coincidence. We may hypothesise that the death of the Vicar allowed for renewal and opened the way for new decoration of the church, although an earlier Decalogue probably existed before 1634 in an unknown location.

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<sup>72</sup> SHC: D\P\m.st.m/6/1/1 Faculty for improvement of St Michael's Church (1883) with plans of details 1883, 1888: in 1883 the faculty allowed for the total restoration of the church; this faculty did not mention specifically the eight panels of the reredos.

<sup>73</sup> The name Quirke is spelt contemporaneously in a number of ways: Quirke, Quirk, Quirck, Quircke. I have used the spelling of Quirke, except when I am using an original source where I adhere to the writer's spelling. The 'Younger' is probably a reference to his grandfather, Robert Quirke: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/minehead>, (accessed 23 March 2015).

<sup>74</sup> <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>, (accessed 23 March 2015); Peter Marshall, *Mother Leakey and the Bishop: A Ghost Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 12.

To the left of the two central panels are two smaller panels displaying in gold lettering the Creed. At the bottom of their right-hand panel is the attribution, in lower case,

Robert Quircke the Sonne of James Quircke Gave this to the church ANNO 1637.

To the right of the two central panels are two smaller panels displaying also in gold lettering the Lord's Prayer with the same attribution at the bottom of the right-hand panel. The four panels to the left and right of the 1634 central panels of the Ten Commandments were added just three years later in 1637. The Lord's Prayer is divided by numbering each sentence, as is the Creed and, as usual, the Ten Commandments.

On either side of the six panels are two paintings: on the left is a bearded Moses in a flowing red drape over a black robe [Figure 6. 14]. In his right hand is a staff and his left hand is pointing towards the panels to which he is looking. The gesture represents dialogue, debate and exposition where Moses is proclaiming the Ten Commandments. On the far right panel is a painting of Aaron, looking to his right towards the panels of the Decalogue [Figure 6. 15].<sup>75</sup> His priestly vestments are in contrast to his brother's: on his bearded head is a turban; he carries in his left hand a rod and a covered cup.<sup>76</sup> The cup or chalice is an image appropriate for the space of the communion table, and it symbolises the Levitical priesthood. Aaron's right hand is held flat against his jewelled breastplate and he wears an elaborate embroidered belted gown of red and gold. These panels have clearly been restored. It is not clear whether

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<sup>75</sup> In the photographs [Figures 6. 14 and 6. 15], the six text panels are separated from the panels of the images of Aaron and Moses because the latter had been temporarily moved to an exhibition in the Bishop's Palace at Wells, titled 'Created in Somerset'.

<sup>76</sup> The artefact that he holds in his left hand could be the famous rod, or it could be a knife. It does not appear to be a scroll. Aaron is often portrayed with a flowering rod and a scroll. None of these three traditional artefacts associated with Aaron fits exactly with what has been painted.



the paintings of Moses and Aaron, the caretakers of the Ten Commandments, were installed in the 1630s or later. There are some early examples of images of Moses and Aaron in ecclesiastical buildings, for example at Whitgift's chapel in Croydon in 1599, and those on the Helliar reredos at Exeter Cathedral in 1639, and at All Hallows, London, in 1637-9.<sup>77</sup> The perceived Laudian installation of the elaborate reredos of Moses and Aaron at Exeter Cathedral would account for its removal during the Civil War.<sup>78</sup> At Minehead, they may well have been painted later, but if they were contemporaneous to the panels, the capricious nature of damage during the Civil War may account for their survival.<sup>79</sup>

Whilst the images may have been painted by an unsophisticated craftsman, these two magnificent painted panels do not deserve the disparaging description that Edmund Rack gave them in the 1780s, 'The altarpiece contains Decalogue, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, with

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<sup>77</sup> Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 9, 334; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 89-90, 108, 256, n. 153, 267; Cautley cites an 'early' example of the images of Moses and Aaron at Stokesay, Shropshire, dating from the Commonwealth period: Cautley, *Royal Arms*, 119; for Moses and Aaron as 'types' for the relationship between monarch and clergy, see Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 168; from Edmund Rack we know that the figures of Moses and Aaron holding the Decalogue were on view in the 1780s in North Petherton, and Thurloxtton, but the date of their installation is not known: *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, eds. Mark McDermott and Sue Berry (Padstow: Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 2011), 235, 237; the parish church of Osbournby, Lincolnshire, has extant undated but post-Reformation paintings of Aaron and Moses, apparently from a former reredos: Nikolaus Pevsner and John Harris, revised by Nicholas Antram, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), first published by Penguin, 1964, second edition 1989), 596; Rouse, "Wall Paintings," 11.

<sup>78</sup> Stoye spells the Archdeacon's name Helliard, but in other publications his name is spelt Helyer; for details of the pillaging of the Cathedral in 1643, and for images of the mutilated faces of Moses and Aaron, see Mark Stoye, *Loyalty and Locality: Popular Allegiance in Devon during the English Civil War* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1994), 100, Plates 5a and 5b; I am grateful to Peter Thomas, the Librarian of Exeter Cathedral, who sent me details of the remaining extant panels of the reredos, of the mutilated faces of Moses and Aaron, which flanked the Decalogue, and which the Cathedral now has in storage: Vyvyan Hope and John Lloyd, revised and extended by Audrey Erskine, *Exeter Cathedral: A Short History and Description* (Exeter: Exeter Cathedral, 1988), 56, 58, 79; an image of the 1791 engraving of the reredos can be found in Vyvyan Hope, "The Five Reredoses," in *Friends of Exeter Cathedral: Thirty-Sixth Annual Report (To 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1966)*, 20-22.

<sup>79</sup> Margaret Aston refers to other factors that account for their survival 'the durability of the materials, the remoteness of the location or the variable ardour of the diocesan authorities': Aston, *Broken Idols*, 999.

two miserable daubings of Moses and Aaron'.<sup>80</sup> As the congregation faced east towards the altar, they could see the two paintings and the six text panels, and would have been familiar with the significance of Moses the lawgiver and the part his brother Aaron played as his spokesman.<sup>81</sup> Significantly the title page of the Authorised Version of 1611 has the two figures placed in an architectural setting similar to an altar [Figure 6. 16].

An 1883 pre-restoration photograph gives us an idea of what the parishioners would have seen [Figure 6. 17].<sup>82</sup> They would have looked at the panels, the reredos, through the arches of the chancel screen. In this church the medieval rood screen continued in use as the chancel screen. The congregation would not have been able to read the texts from their seats in the nave, but only see them closely as they moved to take communion. The implications of these lines of sight are that the purpose of the Decalogue at Minehead, compared to Cameley, was not so much for 'edification', but more for ornament. Francis Eeles in 1926 commented that the c. 1500 extant rood screen was in use with its later rood loft until 1886.<sup>83</sup> Some commentators have thought that the panels were made and painted locally from the ship which broke up in a storm and on which Robert Quirke had made his vow, which will be

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<sup>80</sup> *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, McDermott and Berry, 85.

<sup>81</sup> KJB Exodus 4 tells the story of the appointment of Aaron as the spokesman, Exodus 17 describes the flowering rod, and Exodus 20 narrates the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses.

<sup>82</sup> Francis Eeles, *The Parish Church of Saint Michael, Minehead: A Short History and Description* (Taunton: Barnicott and Pearce, 1926).

<sup>83</sup> Eeles, *Minehead*; in 1883 a faculty allowed for the total restoration of the church: SHC D\P\m.st.m/6/1/1 Faculty Minehead, 1883, 1888. For churches where the chancel was separated from the nave by a screen, the congregation's view of texts at the east end was impaired; in such churches, like Minehead, ornament topped edification; edification was better achieved when the Decalogue was on the tympanum or the chancel arch, as at Wyke Champflower and Cameley.

discussed later. There is no material or archival evidence to support such a charming local story.<sup>84</sup>

These wooden panels of the Decalogue, comply with the 1604 canon:

the Ten Commandments be set up upon the East-end of every church and chapel where the people may best see and read the same.<sup>85</sup>

They did more than comply, they were painted in gold lettering on wood; and the donor was at pains to inscribe his name, his father's name and the date. As described in chapters 2 and 3, Richard Harvey and John Hassard wanted to memorialise their gifts of a pulpit and a gallery to the church of Lyme Regis by inscribing their gifts with their names and their dates. This display of familial identity at Minehead is a powerful statement about Robert Quirke's lineage, his aspiration as a merchant to achieve the status of a gentleman.<sup>86</sup> In case his gift of the Decalogue, and his aspirational inscription on it had not been fully appreciated, when he gave the panels of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in 1637, he also inscribed them both with identical words,

Robert Quircke the Sonne of James Quircke Gave this to the church ANNO 1637.

Robert Quirke's gifts stood within a wider context of the parishioners of Minehead in the 1630s enhancing their church. Along with some archival evidence of non-extant works, for example the Royal Arms and seating, and the extant panels, the early seventeenth-century

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<sup>84</sup> Valerie Pitt, *Painted Panels (Moses and Aaron)* (Wells, 2014): leaflet for the exhibition, 'Created in Somerset', at the Bishop's Palace, Wells, 2014, where the Minehead paintings of Moses and Aaron were on temporary display; I am grateful to Valerie Pitt, Research Coordinator for the exhibition, who discussed her findings with me.

<sup>85</sup> *The Anglican Canons*, Bray, 377.

<sup>86</sup> Robert Quirke's will does not refer to him as a gentleman: TNA: PROB 11/207/1 Will of Robert Quirke, 1648.

pulpit and the Communion table, all indicate a congregation that wished to beautify the church.<sup>87</sup> It is in that context that Robert Quirke's three donations made in 1634 and 1637 sit. The confessional position of Minehead is not clear. As discussed in chapter 5, the parish was slow to comply with both clearing the chancel of seating, and of erecting railing.<sup>88</sup> It was decorating the church while resisting episcopal priorities.

Quirke's mercantile wealth and aspirations to high status is a familiar story, similar to the merchants of Lyme Regis.<sup>89</sup> It is worth noting his story within the context of a port, which was both prosperous and vulnerable. Robert Quirke was a leading parishioner and a significant member of the Minehead community.<sup>90</sup> The Quirkes were a well-known family: Robert's father, James, had been a man of substance and was one of the Members of Parliament for Minehead in 1593.<sup>91</sup> The evidence of his status is clear because of his burial in the chancel and because of the inscription on his funeral stone, which testified to his

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<sup>87</sup> For details of the Communion table at Minehead, see chapter 5; Minehead was a relatively wealthy parish; for example, the Churchwardens' accounts record the total receipts for 1637 £100 16s 10d, and the total disbursements for the same year as £51 5s 6½d; in 1639 the total receipts were £107 16s 9½d and the total disbursements £102 8s 11½d; this compares to the wealthy cloth town of Somerton where in 1637 the total receipts were £37 19s 2d and the total disbursements were £37 15s 5d, and in 1639 the total receipts were £38 15s 02d and the total disbursements £36 00 00: SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Cwa Minehead, 1637, 1639; SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1637, 1639.

<sup>88</sup> The Minehead accounts note that they 'paid to the aparator for delivering in a Certificatt of all the particulars of the church being required by the bishop', in 1638 and in the same year another certificate was 'paid to the Apparator'; in 1640 after 5 November 'Item paid to John Stronge for the worke in raylinge the Communion table': SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Cwa Minehead, 1638, 1640.

<sup>89</sup> See chapters 2 and 3, for the merchants who invested in Lyme Regis church.

<sup>90</sup> Frederick Hancock, *Minehead in the County of Somerset: A History of the Parish, the Manor and the Port* (Taunton: Barnicott and Pearce, 1903), 61; for example, the 1637 churchwarden accounts have a note about the charges for payment for seats and burials which bears his signature: SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Cwa Minehead, 1637.

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/minehead>, (accessed 23 March 2105); Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 173: 'From the late 15<sup>th</sup> century to the Restoration of Charles II they (the Quirke family) were generally to be found in the forefront of affairs of Minehead'.

position.<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, neither James, nor Robert actually claimed gentlemanly status, although it was their entitlement after James was elected a MP.<sup>93</sup> It was in the chancel that his son, Robert Quirke, possibly beneath the gazes of Moses and Aaron, had his own body laid, where his flat stone said

Here rested the body of Robert Quirck, the sone of James Quirk, he dyed 18<sup>th</sup> of  
March 1648.<sup>94</sup>

Robert had achieved his wish, expressed in his will,

I commend my body unto the earth from whence it come to be buried in my father's  
grave in the Chauncell of Minehead.<sup>95</sup>

The chancel was the most prestigious area in the church, the focus of the parishioners' lines of sight, the place to be buried for the highest status parishioners, and a source of tension over the right to have a seat there.<sup>96</sup> David Cressy has argued that Elizabethan gentle folk sought the 'comfort and security of familiar routines' in where they continued to choose to be buried as well as in other funerary customs. He emphasised that 'there was no spiritual advantage to be obtained from interment close to the altar, but such a placement...would demonstrate to posterity one's position in the world'.<sup>97</sup> It was here on the wall above the altar that Robert

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<sup>92</sup> 'Here resteth the body of James Quirke, mariner, who deceased Feb. 20 1613, who purchased the fee farm of the moytee of this rectori': John Collinson, *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset volume II* (Bath: R. Crutwell, 1791), 32.

<sup>93</sup> For example, it is the label of 'mariner' that Robert uses on the three panels, and in his will; neither did he use the term gentleman on the plaque for his almshouse.

<sup>94</sup> Collinson, *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset II*, 32.

<sup>95</sup> TNA: PROB 11/207/1 Will Quirke, 1648.

<sup>96</sup> For details of the row that erupted on Easter Day over seating in the chancel, see Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 122; and SHC: D\D/cd/62 Deposition Book, c. 1628.

<sup>97</sup> David Cressy, "Death and the Social Order: The Funerary Preferences of Elizabethan Gentlemen," *Continuity and Change* vol. 5, issue 1 (May 1990): 99-119 99, 102, 103, 104, 110, 111, 115; for more on the continuation of burial in the chancel, see David Hickman, "From Catholic to Protestant: the Changing Meaning of Testamentary Religious Provision in Elizabethan London," in *England's Long Reformation 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (London: UCL Press, 1998), 117-138, 121-122.

Quirke placed his six panels, and the juxtaposition of this memorialised beneficence with his grave is striking. It appears to act as a prompt to give thanks to the deceased for his generosity.

Robert Quirke presents as an ambiguous character: the evidence of two disputes demonstrate this. In 1624 two constables were on the quay at Minehead when Robert Quirke and Arthur Webber JP had an argument about Webber's brother-in-law's business dealings with Robert Quirke. Arthur Webber 'shook' Robert Quirke 'in the mowth with his fyste' and Robert Quirke fell to the ground. As Robert rose from the ground, Arthur Webber first attempted to assault him again and then turned on the constables, who intervened to keep the peace, which, ironically, the JP was breaching. A witness, Edward Duggan, reported that Robert Quirke had done nothing.<sup>98</sup>

The second dispute refers to one of Robert Quirke's apprentices. In his will of 1648 Robert left to each of his apprentices 20 shillings apiece and the wages due unto them.<sup>99</sup> But relations with one of his apprentices had not always been that magnanimous if the petition of Hugh Davis is to be believed.<sup>100</sup> Davis claimed that while Robert Quirke had trained him in the art of navigation for four years, he had treated him harshly and often beaten him 'without just cause'.<sup>101</sup> We do not know if his request for discharge from Robert Quirke's service was granted.

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<sup>98</sup> SHC: Q/SR/48/35 Examination of Robert Quicke of Minehead, mariner and information, 1624.

<sup>99</sup> TNA: PROB 11/207/1 Will Quirke, 1648.

<sup>100</sup> SHC: Q/SR/56/57 Petition of Hugh Davis, 1626.

<sup>101</sup> SHC: Q/SR/56/57 Petition Davis, 1626.

A significant leader and man of business from a leading family of shipowners and merchants, Robert Quirke's religious affiliations can only be guessed at.<sup>102</sup> Despite all the well-known difficulties about deducing religious affiliations from the preambles of wills, Robert Quirke's will seems to tell of a reformed Protestant without any of the wording associated with the 'hotter sort'.<sup>103</sup> Robert Quirke is most well-known for the foundation of his eponymous alms houses. In 1630 he built 11 houses for the poor on waste ground east of the cross beside the market place.<sup>104</sup> By his will of 1648, Robert Quirke gave to the church of Minehead 40 shillings and 'unto the poor the towne of Minehead 40 shillings to be distributed amongst them'.<sup>105</sup> He left the ordering of the alms houses that he had built to his son, also named Robert, 'and to the name of the Quirkes forever'.<sup>106</sup> Like the six inscribed panels, this is another example of memorialising and establishing his lineage.

There was also as late as the 1920s a brass plate with his initials on the alms houses and the words 'God's Providence is my inheritance. R. Q.', which has a splendid double meaning,

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<sup>102</sup> Pitt, *Painted Panels*.

<sup>103</sup> The will's preamble was unexceptional: 'I commend my soule into the hands of god my maker hoping assuredly through the only merits of Jesus Christ my saviour to bee made partaker of life everlasting': TNA: PROB 11/207/1 Will Quirke, 1648; as described in chapter 2, the preambles of wills on their own are notoriously dangerous gauges of the confessional position of the testator; Robert Quirke was elected churchwarden in 1643 when the church was about to expel its royalist vicar; he also laid information against Lewis Lashbrook, a royalist sympathiser: Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 174.

<sup>104</sup> W. H. Kille, "An Almshouse Romance," *The Courier*, September 1 1920; Pitt, *Painted Panels*: Pitt says that Robert Quirke bought the land from Francis Luttrell.

<sup>105</sup> TNA: PROB 11/207/1 Will Quirke, 1648; Pitt, *Painted Panels*.

<sup>106</sup> TNA: PROB 11/207/1 Will Quirke, 1648: 'I give unto my said almshouses £200 to be bestowed in land for the better relief and reparation of them. I doe give unto my said Almshouses my two inner Sellers at the key of Mynehead aforesaid to bee let out for rent to him that will give most for them And the sellars and the Almshouses being repaired my will is that the money which remaineth shall be equally divided among the poore people dwelling in the said Almshouses twice a year'; the Churchwardens accounts noted a 'bushell of coal to Mr Quirke's almshouses', in 1639: SHC: D\P\m.st.m/4/1/1 Cwa Minehead, 1639.

God's providence to Robert, and Robert's gift to the poor through God's Providence.<sup>107</sup> Both John Collinson and Edmund Rack noted the brass plate.<sup>108</sup> The material and archival evidence of their origins is clear. The legend of the vow that Robert Quirke made in a storm at sea to build the alms houses if God delivered him from the tempest has no documentary base. The story is repeated even into the twenty and twenty first centuries.<sup>109</sup> The story reveals the greater truth: the dangers to property and life for the men who earned their living by the sea, the reliance on God's providence, and the philanthropy of a prosperous merchant and mariner.<sup>110</sup>

Quirke's wealth was linked to the prosperity of Minehead.<sup>111</sup> The background of the town helps to contextualise Robert Quirke's patronage of the parish church. The port's economic well-being was mainly dependent upon the seamen. It was the growing prosperity of the town that allowed the churchwardens on behalf of the parishioners to build the pulpit, commission the building of the expensive organ, maintain the bells and repair the porch loft.<sup>112</sup> It was the

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<sup>107</sup> Collinson, *History and Antiquities of Somerset II*, 31-32.

<sup>108</sup> Collinson, *History and Antiquities of Somerset II*, 31-32; Edmund Rack's *Survey of Somerset*, McDermott and Berry, 85; Rack also found a longer inscription 'Robert Quirck sone of James Quirke built this House anno 1630, and doth give it to the use of the poore of this parish forever. And for better maintenance I do give my two inner sellers at the inner end of the key, and cursed be the man that shall convert it to any other use than the use of the poore 1630'; this inscription was cited by *The Courier*, 1 September, 1920, and in "Famous Minehead Bequest," *The Western Morning News and Mercury*, 3 February, 1927. For an analysis of contemporaries' understanding of providence, see Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>109</sup> Pitt, *Painted Panels*; *The Courier*, 1 September 1920; "Famous Minehead Bequest," *The Western Morning News and Mercury*, 3 February 1927.

<sup>110</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 35: A Minehead importer of wool, John Walter, claimed to have lost property to the value of £800, thanks to the 'unmerciful violence of storms and tempest at sea', resulting in him being 'miserably impoverished and utterly decayed in his estate'.

<sup>111</sup> David Underdown has estimated that there were 1050 inhabitants in 1642, an estimate derived from the Protestation return: David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603 to 1660* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 294, n. 7.

<sup>112</sup> Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 124; SHC D/P/m.st.m/4/1/1 Cwa Minehead, 1637-40.



growing prosperity of Robert Quirke, one of the town's leading members, that allowed the installation of the six panels in 1634 and 1637.<sup>113</sup> The town had been incorporated and enfranchised by Queen Elizabeth and an earlier Robert Quirke was one of the 12 burgesses elected in the first year of her reign.<sup>114</sup> James Quirke, Robert's father was Member of Parliament for Minehead in 1593 and chosen for the junior seat in 1601, but not returned.<sup>115</sup>

George Luttrell, the Lord of the Manor, founded and built the quay in 1616; as a result of this, trade and prosperity increased.<sup>116</sup> The Irish trade dominated at Minehead, although trade with the Mediterranean and Bristol played their part.<sup>117</sup> Wool, coal, stone and herrings were among the cargoes.<sup>118</sup> Minehead benefited from the growing trade with Ireland but it was also the port from where the English authorities deported the apparently growing number of Irish rogues and vagabonds.<sup>119</sup> Throughout 1620s there was a regular complaint that this obligation placed intolerable charges on the constables of Minehead.<sup>120</sup> Prosperity rose alongside

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<sup>113</sup> For more details of Minehead's economy, see a 1600 publication: Thomas Gerard, *The Particular Description of the County of Somerset*, ed. E. H. Bates (London: printed for subscribers only, Somerset Record Society, 1900), 12. He described the port 'under the Towne lyes a harbour for ordinary Barkes, much frequented by such as pas to and from Ireland as being most fitt for the leading and lading and unladinge of such commodities as are transported to and from that Kingdome new'.

<sup>114</sup> W. H. Kille, "The Quirkes of Minehead," *Somerset County Herald*, 3 September 1938; *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, McDermott and Berry, 83; Collinson, *History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset II*, 27-33.

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/constituencies/minehead>, (accessed 23 March 2105).

<sup>116</sup> *Edmund Rack's Survey of Somerset*, McDermott and Berry, 83.

<sup>117</sup> Pitt, *Painted Panels*.

<sup>118</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 16; Pitt, *Painted Panels*.

<sup>119</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 26; Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 147-8; Thomas Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640: A County's Government During the 'Personal Rule'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 94 n. 110.

<sup>120</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 26; Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640*, 182.

constant fears of the Barbary pirates and a new threat of the Spanish attack led the authorities in the summer of 1626 to order Minehead to fortify itself.<sup>121</sup>

Although far from other population centres, Minehead was a significant port which connected to the outside world in a number of ways.<sup>122</sup> An extraordinary event occurred in the church in 1627. Minehead had reason to be fearful of Turkish ‘pyrates’.<sup>123</sup> A young lad had been taken at sea by such pirates, sold into slavery in Algiers and compelled to convert to Islam.<sup>124</sup> After the hapless youth had his ship seized by an English man-of-war, he was returned to Minehead. He was made to stand in the centre of St Michael’s Church during Sunday morning service, attired in a Turkish costume, while Dr Byam, rector of Luccombe, and a well-known preacher, called upon him at great length to repent of his apostasy and the lack of loyalty to the faith of his ancestors; and also for his ‘Turkish guise’ of shaven head and turban.<sup>125</sup> Mr Byam completed his long sermon with a warning to the men of Minehead who ‘do go down to the sea in ships’ to remember that ‘the grave is always open before your face’. He finished with the reminder that a ‘mischief from the land may overtake you’, and that there

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<sup>121</sup> Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640*, 247. In her monograph of Cornwall before the Civil War, Anne Duffin describes the orders to West Country areas to take measures against the perceived threat in the years from 1625: Anne Duffin, *Faction and Faith: Politics and Religion of the Cornish Gentry Before the Civil War* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 39, 119-120; Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 97.

<sup>122</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 33.

<sup>123</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 33; Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 98. Two barques making from Minehead to Ireland in 1634 were taken by Barbary Corsairs, and at the same time Islamic raiders seized captives near Weston-Super-Mare.

<sup>124</sup> Hancock, *Minehead*, 23.

<sup>125</sup> Hancock, *Minehead*, 23-24; Dr Edward Kellett of Bagborough also gave an interminable sermon on the same Sunday, making much of the fact that his captors had dressed the lad in Turkish clothing: Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 99.

was no other remedy for misfortune, but to fall back on ‘your first love, the God of love, your blessed Saviour’.<sup>126</sup>

Minehead was a town of paradoxes: a prosperous town but with an increasing number of poor, some of whom were Irish; a town dependent on trade and yet vulnerable to Turkish, and the perceived threat of Spanish attack; a town with religious tensions and differences. There are obvious hints that the Vicar, Nicholas Browse, was ‘anti-Calvinist’: he first started his ministry in Minehead in 1585 in a town in the far reaches of a county notorious for its inaccessible roads.<sup>127</sup> His idiosyncrasies could have flourished in such a remote place. In 1617 he was accused of papistry by a parishioner calling him a ‘papisticall nave, asse and dunce’.<sup>128</sup> In 1618 he gave a provocative sermon complaining that there were too many Welshmen in the town and conflating their nationality with their supposed religion. He called them ‘Calvins’.<sup>129</sup> Fear of Puritans was matched by presumed fear of recusants, evidence of whom can be found in the town.<sup>130</sup> It was probably with difficulty that Nicholas Browse read out in September 1632 the judge’s prohibition forbidding revels on the patronal day 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1632.<sup>131</sup> This appears not to be the first order. In 1627 there had been an order from the Quarter Sessions suppressing church ales and revels with a note to Mr Browse to

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<sup>126</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 33-34; Hancock, *Minehead*, 23-24.

<sup>127</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 26.

<sup>128</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 27; Margaret Stieg, *Laud’s Laboratory: The Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Early Seventeenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 234.

<sup>129</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 27.

<sup>130</sup> For example, Richard Sturd, a Minehead man and servant of John Trevelyan, was presented as a recusant in the Archdeacon’s court in June 1623: Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 123-124.

<sup>131</sup> Marshall, *Mother Leakey*, 33.

publish it.<sup>132</sup> It is interesting but probably not at all unusual to find a port encompassing Puritans, Catholics and all the gradations of mainstream reformed Protestants.

The wooden panels at Minehead are different from those at Cameley, in form, location and the source of the investment. Unlike the investors at Cameley, at Minehead Quirke's repetition of his name on the panels, his inscribed link to his father and his occupation, testify to a display of familial identity, even aspirational self-promotion. His vulnerability socially as a mariner, a man whose wealth has come by trade, and his aspirations, were matched by the paradoxical prosperity of his town and its fears of maritime attacks, influxes of Irish and the poor. For the worshipping congregation, the panels exceeded canonical requirements through the generosity and familial memorialisation of the donor. Their view of the panels was hindered to some extent by the arches of the old rood screen now the chancel screen, and would have been clearer when moving into the chancel to receive Communion. As a result, the worshippers' experience at Minehead was visually different from that of Cameley. The significance of the panels in the chancel, along with the Quirkes' funeral stones, and the conflicts over seating in the chancel, underlined the prestige of the space.<sup>133</sup>

*Other Wall Texts and Images: 'the beauty of holiness'.*

The Decalogue was not, however, the only text to deck the walls. Both the 1571 canon and the 1604 required 'chosen sentences' to adorn the walls. As discussed in the previous section, this could include the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, which were sometimes juxtaposed with

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<sup>132</sup> SHC: D\P\m.st.m/2/9/1 Copy of Quarter Session order suppressing Ales and Revels with note to Mr. Browse (vicar) to publish it (with transcript), 1627.

<sup>133</sup> As noted earlier, for details of the row that erupted on Easter Day over seating in the chancel, see Binding and Stevens, *Minehead*, 122; and SHC: D\D/cd/62 Deposition Book, c. 1628.

the Decalogue. These three texts were highlighted by the Injunctions and formed part of the catechism.<sup>134</sup> Other sentences were also chosen by investors. In this section, the material evidence of those texts will be briefly considered before focusing upon two complete and contrasting wall schemes.

Although wall texts and images are mentioned in the literature of the post-Reformation period, and there are some specific studies, there is not a large body of work. Tara Hamling has emphasised the post-Reformation representation of Old Testament figures in churches, which was unlikely to prompt the proscribed worship of images, and demonstrates the Protestant interest in Old Testament history as well as Scriptural fidelity.<sup>135</sup> Robert Whiting claims that ‘Protestants sought not only to purge the church of painted pictures, but also to replace them with painted scriptural texts’.<sup>136</sup> A main argument here is that the evidence presents a richer and more complex pattern than this. Fincham and Tyacke ascribe the ‘voluntary’ adornment of the interiors of parish churches, including pictures on walls in the 1630s, to ‘parochial Laudianism,’ or ‘the parochial avant-garde’, a concept which this thesis has attempted to challenge.<sup>137</sup> There were, however, decorated wall schemes by investors who could be called ‘Laudians’, and these are described at Passenham, Northamptonshire, and Glenfield, Leicestershire, by Fincham and Tyacke.<sup>138</sup> Claire Tilbury’s study of the 1633 wall paintings at Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire, presents a more nuanced interpretation than simply characterising it as ‘Laudian’. Tilbury persuasively argues that the heraldic

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<sup>134</sup> *Documents*, Gee and Hardy, 276, 420; Green, *The Christian’s ABC*, 279-299.

<sup>135</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*, 47, 49, 54-5.

<sup>136</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 131-134; he does refer to replacement sometimes by ‘scriptural figures’, but only obliquely and gives no examples.

<sup>137</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 253.

<sup>138</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 259-262.

representation of the twelve patriarchs of Israel, provides a ‘distinctive iconographic invention of post-Reformation England’. The patriarchs were presented as the lineal, spiritual ancestors of the true church.<sup>139</sup> There is some work currently being undertaken on post-Reformation wall paintings in churches, the results of whose publication are eagerly awaited.<sup>140</sup>

As already described, the requirements with regards to walls were proscriptive. In spite of the general destructive nature of the Elizabethan Injunctions of 1558, they were at pains to demand that ‘there remain no memory in walls...; preserving nevertheless, or repairing both the walls and the glass windows’.<sup>141</sup> The texts and decorations on the walls went beyond repair, and established a new visual environment on the walls that surrounded the worshipping congregation.

In the previous section, archival evidence showed that ‘sentences’ were painted on the walls. As already seen, the Churchwardens’ accounts at Wimborne Minster noted payment for more than the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed.<sup>142</sup> At Axbridge the Churchwardens’ accounts indicate that the texts were also more than the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed. In 1636 they recorded,

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<sup>139</sup> Clare Tilbury, “The Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes of Israel: An English Reformation Subject for Church Decoration,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 63, no. 2 (April 2012): 274-305.

<sup>140</sup> <https://postreformationwallpaintingproject.wordpress.com/> (accessed 25 June 2017). The website describes the project in three stages:

**‘Stage One** involves cataloguing the post-Reformation wall paintings. We are currently half way through this phase. We are also looking to deliver academic talks and to promote the project on Twitter and social media. **Stage Two** involves researching the subject-matter using primary and secondary source material. We will also publish some initial research articles.

**Stage Three** involves producing an academic book on the subject, focusing on the content and context of the wall paintings’.

<sup>141</sup> Injunctions quoted from *Documents*, Gee and Hardy, 417-442.

<sup>142</sup> DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1634.

Item granted to George Drayton for certaine parcelles of work done in the Church ile  
and for foure sentences to Be sett up in the Burgesses ile.<sup>143</sup>

In the same year, George Drayton was also paid £3 10s 00d for

whiting The Church, setting up the Lords prayer, Creed 8 sentences, and for colouring  
the belfry, paynting the cross-iles and some of the worke thereabout.<sup>144</sup>

While there are no extant wall texts from either parish, there are extant examples of ‘diverse sentences’ in other parishes, which demonstrate the variety of choice of Biblical texts which the investing Churchwardens made. At Chelvey, discussed in Chapter 2 for its seating, there is a solitary text on the south wall, just to the east of the door,

Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to  
give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Eccl 5.1. [Figures 6.  
18 and 6. 18a].

The lettering is consistent with the early seventeenth century. The words ‘after fools’ and the Biblical attribution are badly damaged. As the wording is from the King James Bible, this dates it post 1611. ‘The sacrifice of fools’ would suggest a religious driver, anti-Arminian or anti-Catholic. Edward Tynte was a generous donor to the church c. 1620, as described in chapter 2.<sup>145</sup> His religious persuasion and that of the parish are unknown, but the implications of the donor’s confessional position are clear from the text.

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<sup>143</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1636.

<sup>144</sup> SHC: D\P\ax/4/1/1 Cwa Axbridge, 1636.

<sup>145</sup> Chapter 2.

As mentioned in chapter 4, at Boscombe, Wiltshire, there is the familiar text on the chancel arch, 'Feare god and honor the king' [Figure 4. 35].<sup>146</sup> Inglesham church is a palimpsest of confusing mural texts, where much more expert work is needed to determine what texts are underneath the barely legible overlying texts, and from what dates.<sup>147</sup> The text at the east end could be the words of administration of Holy Communion, as the phrase 'as oft as you drink it', is discernible [Figure 6. 19]. Near to William Morris's home, Kelmscott, and thanks to him, the church has escaped Victorian 'restoration'.<sup>148</sup>

The famous wall painting and text at Puddletown cannot be accurately dated [Figure 6. 20]. It is seventeenth century, and there is a possibility it was painted at the time of the total refurbishment of the church, 1634-7, already described in chapters 2, 3 and 5. The painting and text are appropriate for a godly parish and its evangelical minister, William Bradish.<sup>149</sup> On the south wall, east of the south door, are painted hands holding out the Bible to receiving hands.<sup>150</sup> The *Royal Commission of Historical Monuments* describes it as 'black-letter, 17<sup>th</sup> century, restored'. It is clearly earlier than the text of the Lord's Prayer on the north wall which looks late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The open Bible has a passage from Revelations xxii: 18, and 19; above the open Bible is a text from 2 Timothy iii: 15, and beneath the open Bible is part of Psalm 119.<sup>151</sup> The Bible has open seals on it, the image of

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<sup>146</sup> Chapter 4.

<sup>147</sup> The church at Inglesham is cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust; at the time of the visit, there was no church guide.

<sup>148</sup> Aston, *Broken Idols*, 921-922.

<sup>149</sup> See chapter 2, chapter 3, and chapter 5.

<sup>150</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 249.

<sup>151</sup> KJB Revelation 22: 18, 19, 'I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall adde unto these things, God shall adde unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book; 2 Timothy 3: 15, 'The holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus'; Psalm 119 is



which was analysed in chapter 5.<sup>152</sup> The texts are post-1611 since they are taken from the King James Bible. This is iconography for a godly congregation, where the Bible is the focus, and provides the texts on which to meditate. There was radical change in the encompassing visual environment for the Reformed Protestants, but also continuity in the long pre-Reformation tradition of painting walls with prompts to piety.

The complete scheme at East Knoyle, Wiltshire, is a design for the chancel only. It had one known donor who was the designer, the Rector, Christopher Wren.<sup>153</sup> It is of plasterwork with some figurative images, as well as text, and it has been the subject of scholarly interest, unlike most of the material evidence in this thesis.<sup>154</sup> It was a thought out, planned scheme, upon which the congregation was invited to reflect and meditate. From the plan of 1632, the chancel was a space that was more enclosed than the present chancel, as the chancel arch was widened in the 1840s [Figure 6. 21].<sup>155</sup> Louise Durning and Clare Tilbury have thoroughly analysed what they describe as a “communion room”, set apart from the body of the church

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paraphrased: ‘Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart’; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 249.

<sup>152</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>153</sup> “Wren, Christopher (1589–1658),” Nicholas W. S. Cranfield in *ODNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. David Cannadine, September 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/62221> (accessed August 7, 2017). He was the father of Christopher Wren, the architect, and the brother of Bishop Matthew Wren.

<sup>154</sup> Graham Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour: The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 92; Aston, *Broken Idols*, 335-338; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 262-264; Tilbury, “Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes”; Richard Colt Hoare, a nineteenth-century antiquarian, described the chancel decoration as ‘The whole is a strange and quaint performance’: Richard Colt Hoare, *The History of Modern Wiltshire* vols. I-VI (London, 1822-1844), vol. I, 182-183; Nikolaus Pevsner, second edition revised by Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002 first published by Penguin in 1963, second edition 1975), 231-232, 231.

<sup>155</sup> WSHC: 536/18/1-4 Plan of East Knoyle church, 1632. Details on the widening of the arch are explored by Louise Durning and Clare Tilbury, “‘Looking unto Jesus’: Image and Belief in a Seventeenth-Century Chancel,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 60, no. 3 (2009): 490-513, 493-4, n. 12.

both physically and visually'.<sup>156</sup> The whiteness of the plasterwork added to the sense of holiness for the communion room.<sup>157</sup> Their detailed work does not need repetition, but their conclusions, which are different from Fincham and Tyacke's, are significant.

Completed in 1639, the design in plain white plaster is dominated by the images and texts at the east end, [S], [T], [U] and [V], and the images, now mutilated, on the west side of the chancel over the arch [Figure 6. 22] and [Diagram 6. a] [P].<sup>158</sup> Over the chancel arch, [P], are the discernible figures of two groups looking above them, and two angels. Above them would have been the figure of the ascending Christ and the twelve apostles, which have been damaged, but when and by whom is unknown [Figure 6. 22].<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Communion room is used here in the sense that George Yule uses it, a space for the administration of Communion: George Yule, "James VI and I: Furnishing the Churches in His Two Kingdoms," in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, eds. Anthony Fletcher, and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 182-208, 192-195.

<sup>157</sup> For an analysis of the deployment of white, see Tara Hamling, "The Appreciation of Religious Images in Plasterwork in the Protestant Domestic Interior," in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, eds. Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 147-163, 155-159.

<sup>158</sup> The simplified appended Diagram 6. a shows the pairing arrangements clearly; in terms of iconography, this was a more elaborate scheme than the plasterwork of the contemporary 1638 chancel ceiling at Abbotsbury, Dorset, described in chapter 4; for details of West Country plasterwork, the development of figural images, and workshops, see Hamling, "Religious Images in Plasterwork," 149.

<sup>159</sup> Anthony Claydon, *A Guide to East Knoyle Church* (East Knoyle, 2012), 6: he says that Parliamentary forces harmed the figures; Durning and Tilbury carefully say there is no evidence as to who did the damage: Durning and Tilbury, "Looking unto Jesus," 495-7; Colt Hoare described four Latin inscriptions on the pillars of the arch before the enlargement of the arch: on the south pillar there are two phrases, on the east side SIC PROESIS UT PROSIS and on the inside of the pillar AMA ORA; the literal translation is 'So as to benefit process', and 'Love and pray'; on the north pillar on the east side was UNUM NECESSARIUM and on the inner side of the north pillar A DEO OPTA APTA, which literally translates as 'One need' and 'God desired fit'; In what sequence, if any, these inscriptions were to be read is open to speculation: Colt Hoare, *Wiltshire*, vol. I, 182-183.

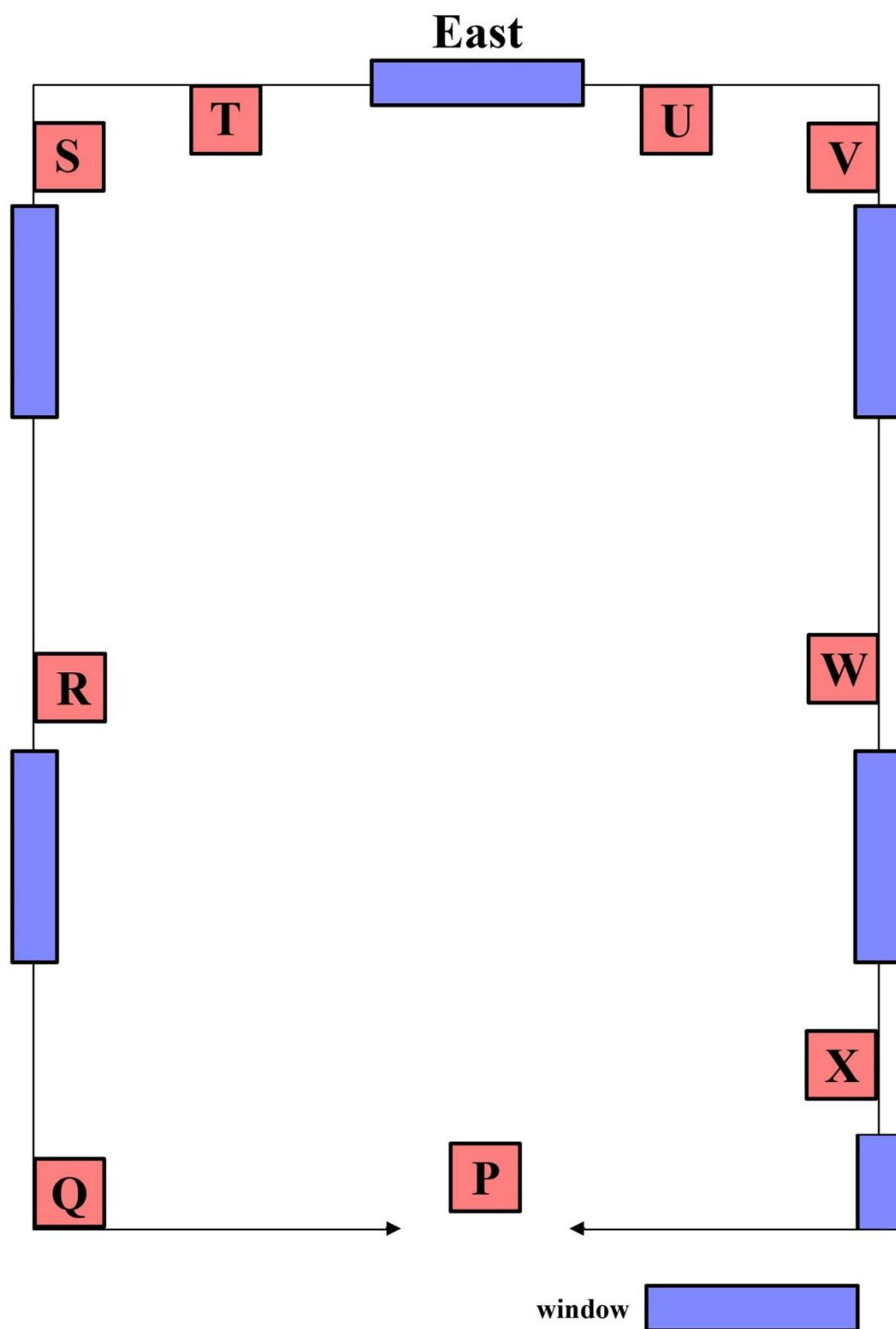


Diagram 6. a Diagram of the plasterwork scheme, the church of St Mary, East Knoyle, Wiltshire, 1639 (not to scale).

Opposite the scene of the Ascension, on the east wall and adjoining the north and south corners, is the centrepiece of the scheme, Jacob's Dream in four sections [S], [T], [U], and [V] [Figures 6. 23 and 6. 24]. The story of Jacob and the dream would have been well known to a seventeenth-century congregation.<sup>160</sup> The texts from the Old and New Testaments are interwoven typologically and materialise the meeting of heaven and earth in Christ. For example, the ladders of Jacob's story, which frame the altar, were the prime metaphor for the meeting of heaven and earth and the typology for the meeting of Christ's two natures.<sup>161</sup>

An example of the different interpretation by Durning and Tilbury, is one of the two texts above the sleeping figure of Jacob in the north-east corner, framed in a tablet [S]:

*GENESIS XXVIII. 16*

*JACOB AWAKED AND  
SAYD SURELY THE LORD  
IS IN THIS PLACE HOW  
DREADFUL IS THIS  
PLACE. THIS IS NOE  
OTHER BUT THE HOUS  
OF GOD AND THE  
GATES OF HEAVEN*

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<sup>160</sup> For example, it was used by Lady Grace Mildmay in her 'book of my meditations written', when she said the book 'hath been to me as Jacob's ladder and as Jacob's pillar, even a book of testimonies between God and my soule': Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 314.

<sup>161</sup> Durning and Tilbury, "Looking unto Jesus," 505-6.

It is a paraphrase of verses 16 and 17 from the King James Bible.<sup>162</sup> Fincham and Tyacke have suggested that the text, ‘This is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of heaven’ is Laudian. Fincham and Tyacke have found that the same text was also part of a Laudian scheme in the now ruined church of Glenfield, Leicestershire.<sup>163</sup> Durning and Tilbury persuasively suggest that the meditative purpose to the scheme could allow for other interpretations.<sup>164</sup> By demanding of the spectator an internalisation of meanings, it allows for the ‘possibility of variant meanings’. Durning and Tilbury argue that active participation by the hearer and listener is required through meditation.<sup>165</sup> They suggest that ‘his scheme could just as easily be received within a Calvinist understanding of sacramental grace (as that which sustains the elect) as within a ‘Laudian’ reading of communion as a propitiatory sacrifice’.<sup>166</sup> Tilbury and Durning’s argument is persuasive that this was a more complex scheme than the simply ‘Laudian’ label that other historians have given it.

As Tara Hamling has demonstrated, the story of Jacob’s dream was used, for example at Lanhydrock House, Cornwall, in the plaster ceiling, as an ‘exemplar for the operation of election’. Hamling said that the story illustrates that election was achieved not through good works but through God’s will, that Jacob had cheated on his brother Esau and yet it was Jacob and his lineage that God chose for his covenant. Calvin had developed this theme in his

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<sup>162</sup> KJB Genesis 28: 16 and 17.

<sup>163</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 260-261.

<sup>164</sup> Felicity Heal has ignored Durning and Tilbury’s argument although she references them; she characterises the scheme as Laudian: Felicity Heal, “Art and Iconoclasm,” in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism: Reformation and Identity c. 1520-1662 vol. I*, ed. Anthony Milton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 186-209, 202-203.

<sup>165</sup> Durning and Tilbury, “Looking unto Jesus,” 506, 511.

<sup>166</sup> Durning and Tilbury, “Looking unto Jesus,” 512; they particularly reference the changed text about stones.

thirteen sermons ‘Entreating of the Free Election of God in Jacob, and of reprobation in Esau’.<sup>167</sup>

The fragmentary Churchwardens’ accounts show that the Churchwardens were maintaining and improving their church from the extant record of 1618. The 1632 church plan may have been created by Wren himself as he was a proficient draughtsman [Figure 6. 21].<sup>168</sup> The Churchwardens accounts do not itemise payment for a plan, which might suggest the Rector either drew it or paid for it to be drawn.<sup>169</sup> The seating in the chancel on the plan shows what appears to be both north-south seats and east-west seats, although the east-west arrangement is not marked as the north-south is. On the plan there is a table at the east end with what appears to be three steps. No rail appears to be there. There is an unidentifiable object beneath the chancel arch, which carries the same markings as the unidentifiable objects on the inner faces of the south and north sides of the chancel arch.<sup>170</sup> The object beneath the arch is not marked as the communion table which is at the east end. Susan Guinn-Chipman offers an explanation from the plan of what appears to be alternative arrangements: a permanent east end table, a table permanently in the middle of the chancel, or a table that was moved along the peripatetic lines of the Elizabethan Injunctions of 1559. Having agreed that it is confusing,

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<sup>167</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*, 184; she pointed out that John Field had published these sermons by Calvin in English in 1579.

<sup>168</sup> For details of Robert Brockway’s evidence, in which he said the Rector had drafted the design himself, see J. Waylen, “Christopher Wren of East Knoyle D. D.,” *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* (1857): 115-119, 117-118; while the British Listed Buildings entry describes two lancet windows of thirteenth century on the north and south walls, the plan shows just two windows; at present there are two windows on the north wall and three on the south: WSHC: 536/18/1-4 Plan East Knoyle, 1632.

<sup>169</sup> Durning and Tilbury, “Looking unto Jesus,” 494. WSHC: PR/East Knoyle St Mary /536/45 Transcriptions of overseers’ and churchwardens’ accounts, dates between 1608 and 1674, 1632-3; <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-321114-church-of-st-mary-east-knoyle-#.Vyx5uM6cGM8>, (accessed 10 April 2016).

<sup>170</sup> I am grateful to Trevor Cooper, who has made a study of church seating plans, for drawing my attention to this.

and there are no clear answers, Susan Guinn-Chipman argues that the arrangements, whatever they were, were ‘Christopher Wren’s transitional Arminian alterations’, a view that appears untenable because it reads as teleological predestination, as if there was an inexorable sweep towards Laudianism, which then becomes retrospectively the reference point for all change.<sup>171</sup> Both George Yule and Nigel Yates have said that the table was set table-wise in the middle of the chancel, presumably because of the open space on the plan in the middle of the chancel.<sup>172</sup> Fincham and Tyacke place the chancel arrangements firmly within the Laudian story, arguing that ‘the narrative of Jacob’s dream and sacrifice above and behind the railed altar, emphasised the mystery and majesty of holy communion’, albeit there is no evidence for the rail.<sup>173</sup> There is a small table which appears to be of the 1630s, now in the north transept. What its function was in the 1630s can only be guessed.

Wren’s patron and mentor was Lancelot Andrewes; one of Lancelot Andrewes’s sermons, with which Wren would have been familiar, talked of the first ascension, that of the mind in aspiring to God in life, and the second ascension, to heaven, which is only for those who have aspired to ascension during their lives.<sup>174</sup> Wren not only owed his advancement to Andrewes, who as Bishop of Winchester was the patron of the living when Wren was appointed in

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<sup>171</sup> Susan Guinn-Chipman, *Religious Space in Reformation England: Contesting the Past* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), 107; Wrightson uses the phrase ‘teleologically predestined outcomes’ when discussing the unstable nature of social change: Keith Wrightson, “The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England,” in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*, eds. Adam Fox, Paul Griffiths and Steve Hindle, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 10-46, 37.

<sup>172</sup> Yule, “James VI and I,” 197; Nigel Yates, *Liturgical Space: Christian Worship and Church Buildings in Western Europe 1500-2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 35.

<sup>173</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 262-264.

<sup>174</sup> Durning and Tilbury, “Looking unto Jesus,” 509.

1623.<sup>175</sup> Durning and Tilbury have convincingly shown how ‘these plaster decorations as a whole are shot through with Andrewsian theology and that in certain respects Wren may have even been responding to specific passages in Andrewes’s writings’.<sup>176</sup>

What was the significance of this scheme in terms of the experience of the worshippers? The chancel was a more enclosed area than it is now. The careful design made the chancel area different from the rest of the church. We know from the fragmentary transcribed Churchwardens’ accounts that by 1637 communion was being celebrated monthly rather than the four or five times a year before Wren’s incumbency. Wren enhanced this discrete space, often called a ‘communion room’ by historians, by beautifying it. The texts and images gave the space an agency.<sup>177</sup>

The 1632 plan has raised more questions than are comfortable. Whatever the arrangements were for communion in 1632, disputed as they are by historians, we cannot be sure that they were still in place in 1639 when the plasterwork scheme was finished. However, the communicants behaved during communion, as they entered the chancel area, they saw first the four panels at the east end, displaying the story of Jacob’s Dream, a typology for the scene of Christ’s Ascension. They saw the scene of Christ’s Ascension itself as they left. The iconography is rare, the result of one controlling designer and investor. When the Committee

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<sup>175</sup> McCullough, “Andrewes,” *ODNB*; Nicholas Tyacke, “Lancelot Andrewes and the Myth of Anglicanism,” in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church c. 1560-1660*, eds. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 5-33.

<sup>176</sup> Durning and Tilbury, “Looking unto Jesus,” 493.

<sup>177</sup> For a summary of the scholarly understanding of agency, see Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*, 266-269.



for Sequestration for Wiltshire called Robert Brockway, the hapless plasterer, before it in 1647, his evidence is crucial.

He testified,

Dr Wren did invent and make a model of draught thereof in paper... Dr Wren did himself pay for the works, and used to come every day to overlook it, and give directions therein.<sup>178</sup>

The scheme is not just a narrative, but serves as a focus for the communicants for meditation, for internalising the meanings of the images and texts, and for their active participation.<sup>179</sup>

Wren had used word-image combinations, familiar from emblem books and popular prints of the period.<sup>180</sup> Fincham and Tyacke have seen the iconography as Laudian, emphasising the holiness of the church fabric, and Jacob's sacrifice to God as a reminder of the Laudian emphasis on the sacrifice of the Eucharist.<sup>181</sup> Durning and Tilbury have developed a convincing, more calibrated argument, that while not denying the Laudian elements of, for example, sacrifice, and the holiness of the space, the iconography could also be received through a more Calvinist reading of sacramental grace (as that which sustains the elect) and the church as a spiritual community, the living stones.

This leads directly to the question of the significance of the decoration of the chancel in terms of identity. Its design and investment by the Rector gives it a rare identity of displaying the

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<sup>178</sup> Waylen, "Wren," 117-118.

<sup>179</sup> Durning and Tilbury, "Looking unto Jesus," 511.

<sup>180</sup> Durning and Tilbury, "Looking unto Jesus," 511.

<sup>181</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 263-264.

incumbent's talents, resources, and theological thinking. But Wren did not operate in a vacuum. The fragmentary Churchwardens' accounts show that the Churchwardens were maintaining and improving their church from 1618. He was beautifying a building that was already cared for and being improved, and a space that was already well equipped as a communion room. Rectorial identity met parochial identity. Laudian identity has been suggested by Fincham and Tyacke, but Durning and Tilbury have finessed that by demonstrating that it could also have been read as an expression of the beauty of holiness which had resonance with aspects of Calvinist theology, for example a belief in the church as a spiritual community, and a reading of sacramental grace sustaining the elect. The neat lines of demarcation, so beloved of historians, seem mistaken here. While his contemporaries were installing pictorial imagery in the chapels of Cambridge and Oxford colleges, Wren could be seen to have compromised in meeting the particular demands of the setting of a parish church.<sup>182</sup> Unlike the 1639-1640 elaborately painted decoration in the chancel of the now ruined church of Glenfield, the white plain plasterwork at East Knoyle made it more congruent to a remote parochial church.<sup>183</sup> Context appeared important to the Rectorial designer, and in this lies his sensitivities to the context of a parish, rather than for example of an Oxford or Cambridge college.

The second complete scheme at Sherrington has not been the subject of detailed study as East Knoyle has. George Yule argues that most churches had instructional texts on their walls, and

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<sup>182</sup> Durning and Tilbury, "Looking unto Jesus," 511-512.

<sup>183</sup> For details of the Glenfield scheme, see Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 260-261, and earlier in this chapter; the white plasterwork at East Knoyle compares in that sense with the ceiling at Exminster, described in chapter 4.

cites Sherrington as an example.<sup>184</sup> The isolated surviving texts at Boscombe, Chelvey and Puddletown suggest that they were part of a larger whole. Whilst there is not yet evidence to support Yule's view that Sherrington was typical, the material evidence at Sherrington of a complete scheme of painted wall texts in 1630 can inform an understanding about the effect such a scheme had on its worshipping congregation. It also testifies to its instructive and decorative purposes, in compliance with royal instructions.<sup>185</sup> However, this comprehensive design seems to have gone far beyond what was required of the parishioners, and may not have been as typical as Yule suggests, representing locally-led decoration. Discovered and restored in 1939, the eleven wall texts had begun to re-appear after years beneath the whitewash.<sup>186</sup> When the church was rebuilt in 1624, the arms of the Lord of the Manor of Boyton, Thomas Lambert, and his wife Anne Dauche, were placed over the entrance to the south porch with the date 1624. Although there are no secondary sources to help, Lambert could also have been the sponsor for the wall decoration six years later.<sup>187</sup> There are no Churchwardens' accounts either to help to understand the extent of the investment, but other parishes' levels of expenditure indicate that such a scheme would have involved either the churchwardens or a donor, such as Lambert, in significant cost. Of the eleven wall texts at

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<sup>184</sup> Yule, "James VI and I," 190; the font, communion rails and communion table at Sherrington were discussed in chapter 5.

<sup>185</sup> [http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-313565-church-of-st-cosmas-and-st-damian-sherri#.VxH6ce\\_2aM8](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-313565-church-of-st-cosmas-and-st-damian-sherri#.VxH6ce_2aM8), (accessed 17 April 2016); Rosamund Willoughby, *Sherrington: A Wiltshire Village* (Codford: R. Willoughby, 1998), 22.

<sup>186</sup> Jane Becker discovered and restored the eleven wall texts in 1939, after they began to re-appear after years beneath the whitewash: [http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-313565-church-of-st-cosmas-and-st-damian-sherri#.VxH6ce\\_2aM8](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-313565-church-of-st-cosmas-and-st-damian-sherri#.VxH6ce_2aM8), (accessed 17 April 2016); Willoughby, *Sherrington*, 22; for details of the discovery at Wareham, see Howard, "Afterword," 271.

<sup>187</sup> We can compare this complete scheme with the cost of investment in much more limited schemes; in 1607 the Churchwardens' accounts for Somerton note that they spent 12s on painting the Ten Commandments and the King's Arms, and 8s to the painter for 'writing certain sentences commanded by his Majesties channons'; in 1634-35 the Churchwardens' accounts for the large church of Wimborne Minster itemise expenditure of £10 for the writing of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and 'divers sentences of Scripture': SHC: D\P\som/4/1/1 Cwa Somerton, 1607; DHC: PE-WM/CW/1 Cwa Wimborne Minster, 1634-35.

Sherrington, one has a date 1630, but the text is lost, and two others have only illegible text.<sup>188</sup> Eight have been restored from the original. This gives us a good idea of what the whole scheme would have looked like. With one exception, the texts are symmetrically arranged [Diagram 6. b]. The texts match each other in location apart from the absence of a text on the south wall.<sup>189</sup> The symmetry of the shapes and the decoration itself demonstrates leads to the conclusion that this project was carefully planned and thought out.

The legible texts seem to divide into five: the standard texts, the Creed [H] and the Lord's Prayer [D]. The fifth Commandment [C] is linked thematically to 'Suffer the little children' [K]. The third pair would seem to be centred on death, judgement and salvation [A] and [B]. The fourth group seems to be the two apt texts either side of the communion table [E] and [F]. The single extant cartouche frames three texts [G], which are also about salvation and sin, and the beauty of holiness as well. The texts match each other in location apart from the absence of a text on the south wall, just to the west of the chancel arch, which

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<sup>188</sup> Of these, one has an ambiguous Biblical reference.

<sup>189</sup> This is just to the west of the chancel arch, which would have mirrored the text on the north side by the chancel arch, [G].

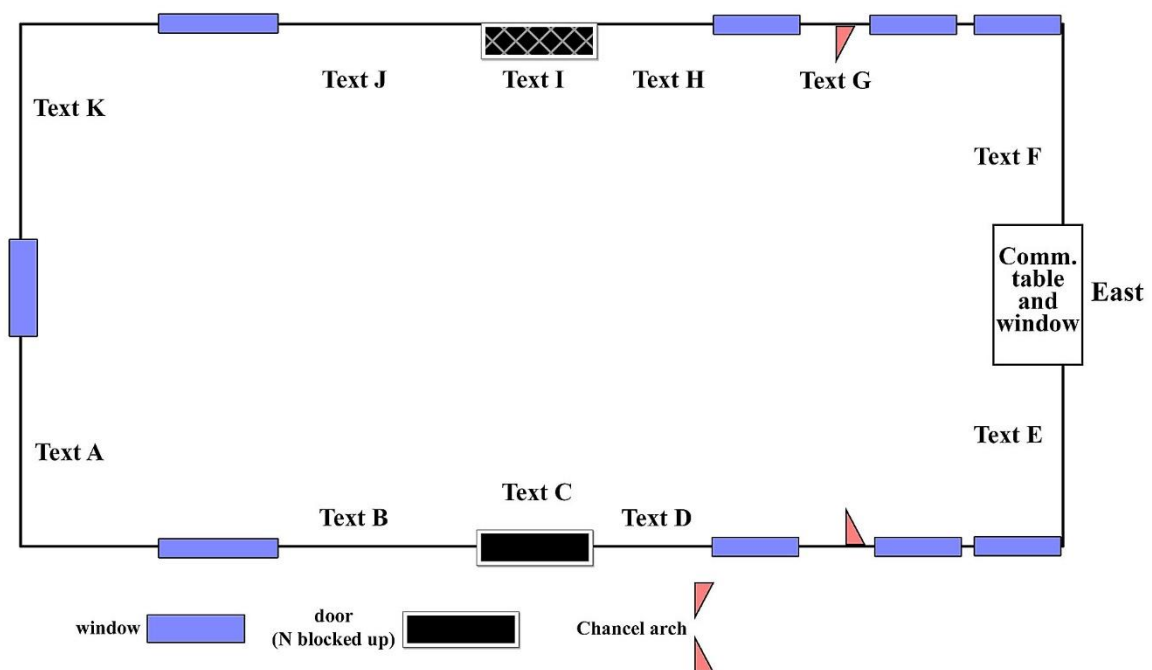


Diagram 6. b Diagram of the wall scheme, the church of St Cosmas and St Damian, Sherrington, Wiltshire, 1630 (not to scale).

would have mirrored the text on the north side by the chancel arch, [G] on the sketch. In addition, the architectural frames surrounding the texts on the south wall and the north wall, [B] and [J], mirror each other's shapes. The texts either side of the communion table, called [E] and [F], on the east wall in the chancel, also have similar, matching architectural frames. The other cartouches surrounding the texts are also arranged opposite each other in a mirrored way. The texts, [D] and [H], opposite each other are rectangles, whilst texts [C] and [I], also opposite each other, are oval shapes within rectangles. On the west wall, either side of the window, [A] and [K], are the cartouches, which are matching oval shapes. The symmetry of the shapes and the decoration itself demonstrate that this scheme at Sherrington was carefully planned in detail. These and other painted texts were a visual display that went far beyond the

traditional view that wall texts were a ‘triumph of the word over the image’. The distinction between text and image is problematic, a view that Keith Thomas emphasised.<sup>190</sup>

At Sherrington, the decoration of the frames of the cartouches is typical of the period, of rich patterns of scrolls and leaves. The two frames at the west end, [A] and [K], each have a cherub poking over the top of the frames. Although representations of the supernatural were largely avoided because of the danger of abuse of such images, the images of angels were deployed by Protestants of all stripes, as discussed earlier at Cameley, Mulcheney, and Abbotsbury.<sup>191</sup> The black lettering, so common on walls, and in some Geneva Bibles, would have been easier to read for a semi-literate population, a theme developed by Femke Molekamp.<sup>192</sup> Tara Hamling has suggested that it also carried authority as the typeface associated with canonical texts, and evoked both reverence and ‘comfort through familiarity’<sup>193</sup>.

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<sup>190</sup> Keith Thomas, “Art and Iconoclasm in Early Modern England,” in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, eds., Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 16-40, 35.

<sup>191</sup> For Cameley, see earlier in this chapter; for Mulcheney and Abbotsbury, see chapter 4; Laura Sangha, *Angels and Belief in England, 1480–1700* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012).

<sup>192</sup> Femke Molekamp, ‘Using a Collection to Discover Reading Practices: The British Library Geneva Bibles and a History of their Early Modern Readers’, *Electronic British Library Journal* (2006), Article 10: 1-13, online at: [http://www.bl.uk/eblj/2006articles/article\\_10.html](http://www.bl.uk/eblj/2006articles/article_10.html); for details of the extent of the editions of the Geneva Bible, see William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), particularly chapter 4, 71-86; Keith Thomas, “The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England,” in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. Gerd Baumann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 97-131, 98-101.

<sup>193</sup> Hamling, “Living with the Bible,” 227-228.

As a member of the congregation entered the church by the south door, the text, [D], on their immediate right, is the Lord's Prayer [Figure 6. 25].<sup>194</sup> Opposite the Lord's Prayer on the north wall, [H] is the Creed [Figure 6. 26].<sup>195</sup> Two of the most commonly recited texts are therefore opposite each other.

Over the south door, [C] [Figure 6. 27], is one of the Ten Commandments,

*Honour thy Father and thy Mother.*<sup>196</sup>

As all the wall space was taken, the complete set of the Decalogue, which there would have been, could possibly have hung from the chancel arch. A reason for choosing the fifth commandment may be a link between the fifth commandment, and the text on the north side of the west wall, [K]:

*Suffer Little children to come unto me,*<sup>197</sup>

There seems a correlation between parenting and children in these two texts, [C] [Figure 6. 27] and [K] [Figure 6. 28]. One is a literal connection: the children would see the

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<sup>194</sup> Unlike most of the texts, the words are not from the King James Bible, but from the 'Bible version' of the 1623 *Book of Common Prayer*, which was produced in King James I's reign, intended to be bound up with the Bible: <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1559/BCP1623.pdf>, (accessed 20 April 2016).

<sup>195</sup> The wording is from the 1623 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

<sup>196</sup> The full text is from the 1623 BCP edition: '*Honour thy Father and thy Mother. that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth Thee,*' while the KJB says '*Honour thy Father and thy Mother. that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth Thee*'.

<sup>197</sup> The full text is: '*Suffer Little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God Matthew chap XIX, verse 14 Come ye children hearken unto me. I will teach you the Fear of the Lord*' *Psalm XXXIII, verse XI*. The texts of the whole scheme are from the King James Bible or from the 'Bible version' the 1623 *Book of Common Prayer*, but they are sometimes paraphrased and not precise texts, the sort of paraphrasing that people used in their own meditative writings: for examples of paraphrasing in notebooks, see Hamling, "Living with the Bible"; Alec Ryrie also discusses paraphrasing: for example Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 302; for examples of paraphrasing, see *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington 1618-1654: A Selection*, David Booy, ed. (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2007), 224; and Sir Rodney Stoke's devotional guide to his children: FSL: V.a. 520 Sir Edward Rodney (1590-1657) and others, prayers and meditations.

commandment from their place at the back of the church and the parents would have seen the text aimed at them as they turned to see how their children were behaving at the back of the church. Catherine Wright provides examples of children being seated at the back of the church.<sup>198</sup> The other link of the two texts is to the broader concepts of hierarchy, and subordination, which the Fifth Commandment was used to define.

The third pair are both about death, judgement and hope in Christ. They would both have been seen on leaving the church. To the west of the fifth commandment is [B], a familiar text from the King James Bible, used in the funeral service [Figure 6. 29]:

*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*<sup>199</sup>

This text about death and hope in Jesus Christ has a corollary in its adjacent text [A] [Figure 6. 30]:

*For we must all appeare before the judgement seat of Christ*<sup>200</sup>

These texts bind the living community of the church through the familiar liturgy and catechesis, into their concerns about death, judgement and hope in Christ.

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<sup>198</sup> Catherine Wright, "The Spatial Ordering of Community in English Church Seating, c. 1550-1700," (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2002), 85.

<sup>199</sup> The full text is from the KJB: '*Looking for that Blessed hope and the Glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ Titus chap 2, verse 13 Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord Revelations chap XIV, verse 13*'; the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* uses this text from Revelations in the 'Order for the Buriall of the Dead': *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, Brian Cummings, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 172.

<sup>200</sup> The full text from the KJB is: '*II Cor. chap v, verse 10, 11 For we must all appeare before the judgement seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*'; because the bottom of the text is obscured by building materials, it is not clear how much of verse 11 is there: '*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences*'.



The fourth pair, the two texts on either side of the communion table, on the wall at the east end, are both architecturally framed.<sup>201</sup> One is illegible [F]; text [E] is in a matching frame, and is entirely appropriate to be adjacent to the communion table [Figure 6. 31]:

*For as often as  
ye eat this bread  
And drink this  
cup, ye doe shewe  
the Lord's death  
till he Come  
I Cor chap XI  
verse 26*<sup>202</sup>

There remains the single cartouche [G] on the north wall by the chancel arch [Figure 6. 32]. It has no extant mirror cartouche on the south wall. It has three texts, one again about salvation, one about sin, and one about the beauty of holiness.

*Salvation belongeth  
unto the Lord, and thy blessing  
Be upon thy people  
Psalm 3: 8  
Stand in awe; and sin not  
Comune with your own heart  
within your chamber and be  
still Psalm IV, verse 4  
worship the Lord in the*

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<sup>201</sup> On the north side of the east wall is the text [F] on the sketch; there is no legible text apart from the reference, 'RII ver: 26', which probably refers to KJB Revelation 2: 2, 'And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations'.

<sup>202</sup> The text is from the KJB.

*beauty of holiness*  
*I Chron Chap XVI,*  
*verse 29*<sup>203</sup>

The third sentence ‘Commune with your own heart within your own chamber’, advocated domestic devotion, linking the whole concept of piety within and beyond the church.<sup>204</sup> The fourth sentence in the cartouche, ‘*worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness I Chron Chap XVI, verse 29*’ is from the text of the King James Bible. It is a text which first came from Psalm 96: 9 which Richard Hooker had quoted in the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, and which later became associated with Archbishop Laud.<sup>205</sup> It has been hijacked historiographically as a strap line for Laud and his fellow enthusiasts, but it represented a clear wish from the Elizabethan church onwards by Protestants of many stripes to beautify their churches.<sup>206</sup> This appears a very different project from the non-extant decoration at Glenfield, Leicestershire, of 1639-40, which presented Laudian themes, such as kneeling at communion, the crucifixion, and the material holiness of the church building.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> The first two texts are slight amendments to the KJB, and the third is from the KJB.

<sup>204</sup> See chapter 4 for another example of the notion of piety beyond and within the church being displayed, the decorated door at North Newton.

<sup>205</sup> For a summary of Hooker’s views see Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480-1642*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 144-145; and Peter Lake has argued that contemporaries saw Hooker as a continuation of ‘English conformist business as usual’: Peter Lake, “Business as Usual? The Immediate Reception of Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity*,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 52, no. 3 (July 2001): 456-486.

<sup>206</sup> There is a text about the ‘beauty of holiness’ in the church at Burton, West Sussex, high up on the south wall, near the Decalogue above the rood beam; there the text references Psalm 96: 9; I am grateful to Trevor Cooper who pointed out the text at Bruton; on a later joint visit to Bruton, the text appears contemporaneous with the early seventeenth-century Decalogue; details of how recent studies have shown that the beauty of holiness was shared by a broad range of positions within the English church are summed up in Durning and Tilbury, “Looking unto Jesus,” 490-491

<sup>207</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 260-261 n. 45.

This unusually well preserved scheme demonstrates the care and planning that had been invested in the shapes of the frames, the location of the texts, and the correlation of some of the texts. None of the texts at Sherrington would suggest a specific confessional position.<sup>208</sup> The care, the planning, the investment all tell a story of parochial investment and religious piety.<sup>209</sup> The texts appear to encompass the whole of Christian life, from childhood through to death. Like the images of the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins on the door at North Newton, the scheme relates to a living out of the Reformed Protestant faith in and beyond the church.<sup>210</sup> The old assumption that these texts were the manifestation of Laudianism seems redundant in the recently acknowledged more complex and calibrated world of the early seventeenth century. Alec Ryrie has depicted and analysed this world in his book, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*. He argues that many people defied categorisation, and that ‘the key difference among British Protestants was not doctrine but ardour’.<sup>211</sup> This notion is very helpful if we attempt to label accurately the parishioners of Sherrington. They took far more trouble and incurred more expense than was required of them. The material evidence tells the story of Protestant ardour, broad religious concerns, and local pride, indicating

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<sup>208</sup> They are in contrast to those that we know about in the now ruined church of Glenfield, Leicestershire: Nikolas Pevsner, second edition revised by Elizabeth Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003, first published by Penguin, 1960, second edition 1984, reprinted with corrections 1992, 1998), 161-162; there some, but not all, of the 1639-1640 wall texts are susceptible to a Laudian interpretation; for example, above the altar was Psalm 95: 6, ‘Come let us worship and fall downe and kneele before the Lord our maker’, which alluded to the requirement in that archdeaconry that the sacrament be taken kneeling at the rails; inscriptions above both doors at Glenfield emphasised the holiness of the church building: ‘Put off thy shoes from of thy feete for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground’, (Exodus 3: 5); and ‘This is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of heaven’, (Genesis 28: 17).

<sup>209</sup> Clive Rouse notes the deliberate choice of texts and the careful planning of their position in Lincolnshire and Buckinghamshire: Rouse, “Wall Paintings,” 11.

<sup>210</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>211</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, 472.

attitudes that went beyond repair and renewal to investment in innovative decoration, suitable to the Word centred liturgy.

The sitting, listening congregation would also have had their worshipping experience changed by the decorated, carefully planned and instructive wall texts. The effect of them makes the chancel and the nave seem an entity, with the chancel arch becoming a visual irrelevance. Texts about salvation would have been seen on leaving the church, and texts about Holy Communion on approaching the east end. Parents and children would have seen different texts for their different responsibilities, the children as they left the church, and the parents as they turned to see what their offspring were doing at the back of the church. All would have been reminded of the general precepts of authority and hierarchy. The lines of sight had been carefully planned. The instantly recognisable texts acted as visual cues for thought and behaviour.<sup>212</sup>

Not only were the wall texts instructive, but they were beautiful and holy. They were the material expression of the 'beauty of holiness', but not specifically confessional. The ardour of the parishioners, and their commitment to their Protestant faith, is clear. Their wish to express their pride in the parish is displayed in their thought out, planned scheme of wall texts.

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<sup>212</sup> For an analysis of how the system of memory was distributed across the preacher, the parishioner, the book, and the physical environment of the church, see Evelyn Tribble, "'The Chain of memory': Distributed Cognition in Early Modern England", *Scan Journal* 2/2 (September 2005), [http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal\\_id=53](http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal_id=53) (accessed 2 May 2013).

## *Conclusion*

The whitewashing of medieval images considered ‘superstitious’ was followed by new forms of decoration. Decorated walls sometimes exceeded compliance, and, as palimpsests, testified to the continuity of the tradition of wall decoration, as well as to the innovation of the imagery, fit for the Reformed Protestant faith. The encompassing walls, comely, edifying, and demonstrating the purpose of the building, were made beautiful by Protestants of all stripes. Some walls show the sophisticated juxtaposing of Old and New Testament texts, and the imaginative use of typology. The material evidence furthers an understanding that the traditional polarised paradigm of Laudian or non-Laudian, of godly or ‘avant-garde conformist’, has been replaced by a more subtle and more complicated pattern. There was no clear alignment between confessional position and decoration. There was, however, often a link spatially and conceptually between the Decalogue and the Royal Arms. One of them or both of them were sometimes placed at the focal point, where the dismantled rood would have been. Above that the Doom would have been, a potent symbol of the ultimate judgement in divine authority. The Decalogue and the Royal Arms continued the focus of authority in the Reformed church.<sup>213</sup> In both instances they faced the subject congregation, emphasising the social division. Parochial pride, civic status, familial identity, and rectorial generosity all played their part in the re-imagining of the visual environment in churches, displayed on the walls.

The churches of Sherrington and East Knoyle have well considered, appropriate schemes for their spaces, where worshippers were invited to participate in meditation on the whole of their

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<sup>213</sup> Clive Rouse notes that the idea of judgement continued to be connected after the Reformation to the entry to the chancel: Rouse, “Wall Paintings,” 13.

Christian lives, from birth to death, within and beyond the church building. At East Knoyle, the Rector's design spoke directly to the 'living stones', the spiritual community, having resonance with Calvinist soteriological understanding, as well as displaying Andrewsian theological concepts. The reception of the images and text at East Knoyle allowed a more subtle engagement by parishioners than the traditional confessional demarcations implied. The careful positioning of the images and texts in both complete schemes demonstrates a sensitivity to the worshippers' experience, effecting appropriate viewing on entering, or leaving the space, as well as different viewing while moving around or sitting. The decorated walls were conducive to piety. At East Knoyle, Sherrington, and elsewhere, the parishioners, surrounded by decorated walls, could literally and conceptually 'worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.' The walls and the concept belonged to them all. Such a notion is a fitting end to this virtual tour of the parish church.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION: LEAVING THE EARLY MODERN PARISH CHURCH



Figure 4. 1 Door with the top panels displaying the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the church of St Peter, North Newton, Somerset, 1635-7.

This thesis provides significant evidence that not only were churches not neglected in this period, rather they were frequently well maintained throughout the eighty years.<sup>1</sup> The cyclical nature of investment and the reasons for more extant evidence from the early seventeenth century than from Elizabeth's reign were discussed earlier. There were two primary reasons: first, fittings and furniture that had been hastily installed to meet the new requirements at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign were replaced by more durable and expensive items later. Second, as time passed, it became clear that the Protestant settlement was here to stay and this gave confidence to investors for the long term. This thesis also has demonstrated that plenty of varied and distinctive decoration, Reformed Protestant decoration, was sophisticated in nature, and carefully planned. It has also been possible to show that this decoration was sponsored by diverse individuals and communities before the Laudian drives of the 1630s, and was often motivated by local priorities. This study also challenges John Reeks's specific proposition that the churches of Bath and Wells diocese were neglected until the arrival of Bishop Piers in 1632.<sup>2</sup>

By foregrounding material evidence in a specific local study, this thesis has demonstrated that improvements in the churches of Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire occurred before the Laudian drives of the 1630s, the extant evidence dating mainly from the turn of the century onwards.

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<sup>1</sup> As described in chapter 1, specific presentments about neglect in parish churches, has been extrapolated, firstly by the authorities' general complaints in 1561, 1563, 1604 and 1629, and then subsequently by its reiteration in the secondary literature. As seen in chapter 1, by 1630 both those who could be called Laudians, and those who could be called Puritans had different agendas for claiming that the churches were neglected. As already seen, this generalised view of neglect has also been challenged by the work of Julia Merritt in London, by Valerie Hitchman around London, and by Joan Barham in Sussex.

<sup>2</sup> John Reeks maintains that Piers oversaw a significant improvement in the repair and maintenance of churches in his diocese, having inherited a neglected estate. By his own words of caution to the reader, Reeks acknowledges that his view is based on Churchwardens' accounts after 1625, and therefore has not considered the evidence in the accounts before 1625: John Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset, 1625-1662, with particular reference to the Churchwardens' Accounts," (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 2014), 40, 57, 58-60.



The pattern in a West country regional context develops Julia Merritt's findings in London churches in the same period.<sup>3</sup> This thesis agrees with her challenge to the paradigm of the old and oversimplified Laudian and non-Laudian binary. A central argument is that not only did Protestants of all stripes invest in decorating their churches, but also that it is unhelpful to use Laudian as the universal reference point for decoration and improvement. So the terms 'pre-Laudian', 'proto-Laudian' and 'avant-garde conformist', prevalent in the literature, and particularly used by Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, do not bear the weight of the evidence because Protestants from across the confessional spectrum, or of no known confessional position, were planning, investing in, and creating church interiors, for a range of reasons singular to them, and not by preordained theological or teleological drivers.<sup>4</sup> The material evidence, along with archival evidence, provides substance to a corollary proposition: that local events were important catalysts for investment, and often more important than the national context as the driving force for what I propose should be described as locally-led decoration.

By studying extant seating, and how it determined the use of space within the constraints of medieval structures, a theme emerged that was repeated in other chapters: that change was a more calibrated story than a simple response to the requirements of the reformed liturgy. This challenges Robert Whiting's argument that the reformed liturgy and overcrowding were the

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<sup>3</sup> Julia Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and the Phenomenon of Church-Building in Jacobean London," *The Historical Journal* vol. 41, no. 4 (December 1998): 935-960.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c. 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), passim and specifically chapter 3, 'Avant-garde conformity and the English Church, c. 1590-1625'.

sole drivers of change.<sup>5</sup> Evidence of other drivers was found both in the subtle changes to seating at Trull, Winterborne Minster and Chelvey, and in contrast, in the radical changes to seating studied at Cameley and Bridgwater. Whilst the latter two demonstrated the use of space for seating in an innovative way, the galleries of North Petherton, Lyme Regis and Puddletown literally and metaphorically took seating to a new level. In these eight examples, the sponsors of the investments ranged from elite families, to a Corporation, to a London merchant, and to the churchwardens of four churches on behalf of the parishioners. Whilst the importance of social status as a motive can be identified, as Christopher Marsh and Amanda Flather have established, the material evidence itself, the seating, frequently displayed complex identities, worldly and confessional.<sup>6</sup> In the new church of Folke, at the moment of potential greatest parochial pride, Walter Rideout was at the centre of a litigious quarrel about his familial position in the church. As in other chapters, it was clear that seating not only expressed combined identities, for example the bold statement of civic pride and authority at Bridgwater, interwoven with a reformed emphasis on preaching, but also it had agency in sustaining those identities. The decoration of extant seating can be understood in terms of remembrance, such as at Trull and Wimborne Minster. It can be understood in terms of modification of traditional forms, building on the memory and material of medieval arrangements but catering to the new practical and aesthetic requirements of reformed worship. Such decoration can also be understood in terms of the deployment of new fashions,

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 209.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Marsh, "'Common Prayer' in England, 1560-1640: The View from the Pew," *Past and Present* no. 171 (May 2001): 66-94; Christopher Marsh, "Sacred Space in England, 1560-1640: The View from the Pew," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 53, no. 2 (April 2002): 286-311; Christopher Marsh, "Order and Place in England, 1580-1640: The View from the Pew," *The Journal of British Studies* vol. 44, no. 1 (January 2005): 3-26; Amanda Flather, *The Politics of Place: A Study of Church Seating in Essex, c. 1580-1640*, (Friends of the Department of English Local History, Friend Papers no. 3, Leicester, 1999): 2- 54; Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).

such as the grotesque at Trull, showing the education and taste of the patron.<sup>7</sup> At Folke, Mere, Maiden Bradley, and Trull, an analysis of the seating provides ample support to the existence of rural networks of joiners and carvers, giving further weight to the suggestions made by Luke Hughes for the Salisbury area.<sup>8</sup>

Interwoven layered identities were also displayed in the commissioning of pulpits: familial, parochial, civic, episcopal, and confessional. By exceeding compliance with the regulatory framework, decoration embodied diverse identities. The material evidence of the 1640 tall, magnificent pulpit at Cerne Abbas demonstrated local priorities while appearing to conform earlier to Bishop Skinner's campaign with the purchase of a modest, and cheaper communion table. To label the pulpit Laudian because of its date and decoration is too careless in the story of the long Reformation, which has shown itself to be more nuanced. Decoration was commissioned by Protestants of different hues, and the decorated pulpits of, for example, Croscombe, Somerton, and Lyme Regis cannot be labelled Laudian. By concentrating on the viewership of pulpits, rather than the listening experience, the parishioners' experience of worship can be studied in a different way from that of traditional scholarship.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> For more on edited memory, see Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist, "Introduction: The Arts of Remembrance", in *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England: Memorial Cultures of the Post Reformation*, eds. Andrew Gordon and Thomas Rist (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 1-15, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Luke Hughes, "Ecclesiastical Joinery of the First Half of the Seventeenth Century in South Wiltshire and Beyond: The Influence of Economic and Social Developments," *Ecclesiology Today* issue 52 (Summer 2015): 25-60.

<sup>9</sup> Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 266-269; Tara Hamling, "Visual Culture," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, eds. Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock, Abigail Shinn, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 90-91; Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing. English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Laura Feitzinger Brown, "Slippery Listening: Anxious Clergy and Lay Listeners' Power in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* XLVII/1 (2016): 3-23.

sponsorship of pulpits at Lyme Regis, Puddletown and Croscombe, and a number of parishes that experienced a change of incumbent, like Thorne Coffin, was contextualised by specific local events. Churchwardens and other investors were often keen to inscribe the date of the pulpit's erection. One third of the extant pulpits are dated. The worshippers' experience of the theatre of preaching was determined by a number of variables, particularly proximity to the pulpit.<sup>10</sup> The experience was also determined by images and inscriptions of Biblical texts on the pulpit. Memorialisation was realised through dating, initials and names of the investors. The synoptic nature of images was seen at Somerton and St Cuthbert's, Wells, with their heraldic associations.<sup>11</sup> These synoptic images prompted reflection, for example at St Cuthbert's, on the nature of deliverance, yet in their simplicity they resisted prolonged gazing, and its alleged superstitious dangers.<sup>12</sup> Heraldic images at Somerton, St Cuthbert's, Wells, and Brinkworth spoke to the themes of antiquity and status.

Whilst pulpits generally also exhibited clericalism and authority, they sometimes displayed parochial competitiveness and copying; for example, at Thurloxton and Stoke St Gregory in the process of copying, images became corrupted. Some images, like those at St Cuthbert's, Wells, were familiar in a domestic context, whilst the interesting choices of Biblical texts inscribed on pulpits, increase an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between the preacher, and his listening congregation. This analysis of texts on pulpits develops new

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<sup>10</sup> Adrienne Hood demonstrated generically for material evidence how proximity produced different physical experiences: Adrienne Hood, "Material Culture: The Object," in *History Beyond the Text: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, eds. Sarah Barber and Corinna Peniston-Bird (London: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Tara Hamling and Claire Tilbury have developed the theme of synoptic images and heraldic images: Hamling, "Visual Culture"; Clare Tilbury, "The Heraldry of the Twelve Tribes of Israel: An English Reformation Subject for Church Decoration," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 63, no. 2 (April 2012): 274-305.

<sup>12</sup> Tara Hamling, "Visual Culture".

thinking about the relationship between preacher and listener, which scholars such as Laura Feitzinger Brown had analysed.<sup>13</sup> Core Protestant beliefs were articulated in the well-known texts at Lyme Regis and Minety, ‘Faith is by hearing’, and ‘Be instant’. At whom the injunction at Brinkworth, ‘Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel’, was aimed, is an interesting question. At Croscombe, the message, ‘Blessed are they that hear the Word of God’, is a study in theological ambiguity, either intentionally meaning that the blessed keep the Word of God, or determinedly ambiguous that those who keep the Word of God would be blessed, an example of rustic Pelagianism. Also the meaning could have been intended in one way by the commissioning party, and taken in another by members of the worshipping congregation. Whilst texts expressed and reinforced Protestant identity, there is irony that the text, ‘Faith is by hearing’, is visually and prominently displayed. More than irony, decorated pulpits demonstrated that Protestantism was not just a religion of the spoken word, but remained informed by visual and material cues in important ways. It is one of the many examples that hostility to images, Patrick Collinson’s ‘iconophobia’, that supposedly characterised English Protestantism after 1580, is no longer a useful framework, even in relation parish churches.<sup>14</sup> The material and visual evidence suggests that distrust of figurative

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<sup>13</sup> Feitzinger Brown, “Slippery Listening”.

<sup>14</sup> As seen in chapter 1, ‘iconophobia’, was a term coined by Patrick Collinson to describe a ‘repudiation of all images’: Patrick Collinson, ‘From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation’, first published as *The Stenton Lecture* (Reading, 1985) reprinted in Peter Marshall (ed.), *The Impact of the English Reformation, 1500-1640* (London: Arnold, 1997), 279-308, 282. His argument was developed by describing a society ‘suffering from severe visual anorexia’: Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. The Third Anstey Memorial Lecture in the University of Kent at Canterbury-15 May 1986, Elizabethan Essays* (Basingstoke, 1988), 117-9. This was challenged by Tessa Watt and subsequently others who placed visual culture at the heart of the success of the Reformation: Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and for example the essays in Hamling and Williams, *Art Reformed*.

images in places of worship did not prevent investment in churches in decorated furniture and fittings.

In the chapter on thresholds and access, doors, windows, screens and ceilings, the door at North Newton provided a perfect image for Reformed Protestants as they both entered and left the church [Figure 4. 1]. The door was a point of access between the world outside and the life inside the church, and the synoptic image of salvation was ideal as a prompt for meditation on the theme of spiritual readiness for the whole of the worshipper's life through a depiction of the Parable of Wise and Foolish Virgins. It was also a neat allegory for the Calvinist notion of the saved and the damned. This study has added evidence to the thesis that past assumptions about the demarcation between private and public spaces and their imagery are not tenable.<sup>15</sup>

The evidence of windows indicated, as Valerie Hitchman has shown in a thirty-mile radius from Westminster, that many churches undertook regular maintenance and repair long before the 1630s.<sup>16</sup> This is one of the challenges to the old assumption that churches were in disrepair and a state of neglect until saved by the Laudians. A cluster of fashionable windows in Dorset has resonance with Maurice Howard's view of their creative design in replenishing an old tradition.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For more on private and public spaces, see Hamling, "Visual Culture".

<sup>16</sup> Valerie Hitchman, "*Omnia Bene or Ruinosa?: The Condition of the Parish Churches in and around London and Westminster c. 1603-1677*," (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Maurice Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Jacobean England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 70-71.

Ceilings, like Axbridge and East Brent, were also part of a style that was more than a regression to Gothicism. Angels displayed on ceilings, such as at Mulcheney and Abbotsbury, were malleable images, used by Protestants across the confessional spectrum, as Laura Sangha has demonstrated.<sup>18</sup> Angels were also part of the imagery of a celestial space, for which such decorated ceilings provided a metaphor as a threshold to heaven. Whilst the ceilings at Abbotsbury and Axbridge were material expressions of access to the beauty of heaven, they were different in other ways. The ceiling at Abbotsbury with its interweaving of images of lineage, and the typological expression of Reformed theology, was the product of an elite family, whilst the ceiling at Axbridge was driven by parochial pride and part of a larger scheme for improvement and decoration. The ceiling at Abbotsbury was much more complex than the ‘Laudian’ label Fincham and Tyacke gave it.<sup>19</sup> Once again, these ceilings both displayed complex identities, and also had agency in sustaining those identities, and thus transformed the worshippers’ experience.

Chancel screens have often been labelled Laudian and four examples, Bridgwater, Croscombe, Folke, and Rodney Stoke were analysed and shown not to be.<sup>20</sup> Their apparent traditional appearance was also shown to be misleading in the case of Bridgwater and Croscombe, where their purpose was radical and innovative, making the chancel space redundant for most of the service, and creating a boundary which focused on the importance of the Word of God preached in the nave. Layered identities were on display on the chancel

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<sup>18</sup> Laura Sangha, *Angels and Belief in England, 1480–1700* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 256.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Addleshaw and Etchells call the screen at Cartmel Priory ‘Laudian’: George Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 38.

screens at Bridgwater and Croscombe: parochial, civic, and confessional at the former, and familial, parochial, royal, and confessional at Croscombe. These screens were magnificent and grand, but never could they be labelled Laudian. On both Croscombe's and Bridgwater's screens were synoptic texts or images that spoke to the viewing congregation of authority, local authority linked to royal, the inseparable authority of the monarch's headship of both the church and of the state. This thesis agrees with the argument that heraldic devices provided a sense of continuity, a view posited by Tittler in a different context.<sup>21</sup>

The chapter on fonts, communion rails and communion tables, sacramental fittings and furniture, concurs with Arnold Hunt's challenge to the old perception that simply associated Puritanism with preaching, and Laudianism with the sacraments.<sup>22</sup> First it was established that the fonts studied were congruent with the pattern described by Francis Bond, that whilst there were few new fonts in this period, there were a considerable number of new font covers.<sup>23</sup> Whilst fonts became sites of controversy in the 1630s in some parishes, the practical expediency of font covers, of differing shapes, some highly decorated, some with doors and locks, was evident. Also evident was the investment exceeding compliance by Protestants of many hues, and of no known confessional position. Extant fonts, for example at South Barrow and Ryme Intrinseca, that memorialised the donor were rare. Only one cover with the controversial dove, which Margaret Aston described, was found and that dated 1624, long before the Laudian drives emerged.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Public in Provincial England, 1540 to 1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 33.

<sup>22</sup> Arnold Hunt, "The Lord's Supper in Early Modern England," *Past and Present* no.161 (1998): 39-83.

<sup>23</sup> Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908).

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 595-604, 598.



Communion rails were also set up for practical purposes; however, they became in the 1630s associated with Laudian impositions, and thus, by some, with superstitious practices.<sup>25</sup> John Reeks's analysis of Churchwardens' accounts in Bath and Wells shows that nineteen of the twenty-one surviving accounts demonstrate that parishes were conforming to Piers's demands from 1633. Of these nineteen accounts, Cameley's rails are the only extant ones in this study.<sup>26</sup> It was not possible either to substantiate or challenge Robert Whiting's view that rails were uncommon between 1560 and 1625.<sup>27</sup> It was possible to establish that rails *per se* did not mean that the communion table was turned altar wise, for example at Cameley, a view commonly conflated.<sup>28</sup> At Cameley apparent conformity concealed the realisation of local priorities. Although the extant rails at Cameley can be described as 'Laudian' because of Piers's repeated demands, their history tells a more complex story of parochial response than the description suggests. There the apparent early conformity in 1634 to Piers's directives conceals the Churchwardens' failure to turn the table, and resulted in additional expenditure on rails as a consequence in 1637. It was also possible to show that a godly parish, such as Puddletown, which erected rails on four sides of the table between 1634 and 1637, was driven by local motives that were anathema to Laudians, and to be more secure in that judgement

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<sup>25</sup> John Craig, "Psalms, Groans and Dogwhippers: The Soundscape of Worship in the English Parish Church, 1547-1642," in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 104-123.

<sup>26</sup> Reeks, "Parish Religion in Somerset," 123-125; in the surviving Churchwardens' accounts in Dorset and Wiltshire, where rails are itemised, for example at Wimborne Minster, and Cerne Abbas, there are no extant rails that match the date of expenditure.

<sup>27</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 3, 31.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 226.

than Fincham and Tyacke had been.<sup>29</sup> In this and other examples, the malleable nature of orthodoxy and conformity is revealed.

Whilst there were undoubtedly communion rails and tables that could be called ‘Laudian’ by virtue of a parish’s confessional sympathies, rather than through imposed orders, none of the extant rails and tables in this study can be linked to such specific local sympathies because of an absence of archival evidence. The study of communion tables was inspired by Fincham and Tyacke’s work. The local perspective showed that the location and orientation of communion tables was complex, and the casual references to Laudian tables and Laudian rails of the 1630s and even before, pervasive in the literature, does not bear the scrutiny of specific local investigations, which demonstrate unexpected chronologies, and specific local priorities, by no means always in accordance with the evidence that Fincham and Tyacke have cited.<sup>30</sup> By using the material evidence with archival sources, I have added a new perspective, that parochial responses were sometimes complex, to the views of Margaret Stieg, Andrew Foster and John Reeks on the binary question of success, or failure, of Piers’s policy on communion rails in Somerset.<sup>31</sup> The chronological relationship between communion rails and communion tables is difficult. The tables’ permutations of various locations and different orientations provided different worshipping experiences, specifically the way in which the communicants

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<sup>29</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 249.

<sup>30</sup> Addleshaw and Etchells call the communion rails at Puddletown ‘Laudian’: Addleshaw and Etchells, *Architectural Setting*, 170; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, indexed under communion tables, orientations and locations, and particularly, 176-218.

<sup>31</sup> The success or not of Piers’s campaign to impose communion rails in the Diocese of Bath and Wells has been discussed by Stieg, Foster and Reeks: Margaret Stieg, *Laud’s Laboratory: The Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Early Seventeenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), 306; Andrew Foster, “Churchwardens’ Accounts of Early Modern England and Wales: Some Problems to Note but Much to be Gained,” in *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, eds. Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, and Beat Kumin, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 74-93, 90-91; Reeks, “Parish Religion in Somerset,” 129.

moved, and were offered diverse emphases of underpinning theology of the sacramental liturgy. Inscriptions on tables memorialised the investment, as they had done on pulpits. The images of the communion table at Somerton were examined in detail for its rare synoptic image, and for its carefully planned scheme of images, boldly displaying parochial pride in a time of economic difficulty in the town. In this parish, the local analysis was able to extend Fincham and Tyacke's reference to it and explore both the material evidence and the local context in 1626, long before any Laudian labels can be justified. They cite it briefly in their chapter, 'Avant-garde conformity and the English Church, c. 1590-1625', a term already shown to be untenable in the context of material evidence.<sup>32</sup>

The chapter on walls also tells the story that Laudians did not have a monopoly on decoration, or the beauty of holiness, which concurs with George Yule's view.<sup>33</sup> While the material and archival evidence on walls shows repair, maintenance, continuity of imagery and innovation, they provide a more complex pattern than Robert Whiting suggests of simply first purging the walls of images, then replacing them with Scriptural texts.<sup>34</sup> They are, as Maurice Howard, suggested, palimpsests.<sup>35</sup> Not only did Protestants of different stripes decorate their walls, they reimagined and exploited the visual whilst conforming to the requirements to display the Decalogue and other texts. As on screens, walls provided ideal spaces to display images of authority, such as the Royal Arms, and episcopal arms, sometimes with congruent texts. Authority and the Decalogue were linked, spatially and notionally. Minehead provides an

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<sup>32</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 106.

<sup>33</sup> George Yule, "James VI and I: Furnishing the Churches in His Two Kingdoms," in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, eds. Anthony Fletcher, and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 182-208, 201.

<sup>34</sup> Whiting, *English Parish Church*, 131-134.

<sup>35</sup> Howard, "Afterword," 267-271, 271.

example of the Decalogue linked to familial identity, memorialisation, and specific local drivers. The Decalogues at Minehead and Cameley show that different locations and styles prioritised the purposes of the Decalogue, for ornament, and for edification, variously. Two detailed case studies, East Knoyle and Sherrington, demonstrate the more subtle analysis of walls than had previously been thought. Whilst agreeing with Durning and Tilbury, that the sophisticated typological images and texts in the chancel at East Knoyle were open to being understood in more than one way, and could be more complicated than just a Laudian design - which is how Fincham and Tyacke labelled them - this study has developed their argument further and demonstrated how the scheme changed the worshipping experience.<sup>36</sup> As with the image at North Newton on the door, so the decoration and texts at Sherrington provided cues to the congregation for thought and behaviour not just within the confines of their church but for the whole of their lives lived beyond its walls.<sup>37</sup> Parochial pride was made manifest in the more accessible black letter script, and the worshipping experience was transformed by a scheme that was carefully paired, and thoughtfully planned. The investors in the 1630 scheme realised ‘the beauty of holiness’ literally and metaphorically on their walls, but no label can accurately be ascribed to their confessional position. Protestant ardour was more significant than a specific confessional label, as Ryrie has argued.<sup>38</sup>

This study has challenged the easy labelling of all decoration in the early modern parish churches as Laudian. The evidence is strong for all types of material evidence. It has also

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<sup>36</sup> Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 263-264; Louise Durning and Clare Tilbury, “‘Looking unto Jesus’: Image and Belief in a Seventeenth-Century Chancel,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* vol. 60, no. 3 (2009): 490-513, 506, 511-512.

<sup>37</sup> Yule, “James VI and I,” 190.

<sup>38</sup> Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

challenged Fincham and Tyacke's argument that Laudian was a reference point for all decoration before the 1630s. Rather this study has shown that Julia Merritt's analysis in London on the improvements in churches in the early seventeenth century, driven by 'a wide range of different types of individual and collective social, practical and religious impulses', does have resonance in Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire.<sup>39</sup> It has expanded her comment and shown that diverse communities, not just a 'single aristocrat or gentleman' in more rural parishes, were repairing, maintaining, cherishing, and decorating their churches. It has shown that the boundaries between secular and confessional identity were porous, and that the same images were used in private and domestic spaces, as they were in public and ecclesiastical spaces. On pulpits, walls, doors, ceilings, and screens, images and texts were used as cues for thought and behaviour for the whole of the worshipper's life. In this the porous nature of these boundaries is paralleled by the porous nature of the boundaries of the message, which was itself not confined to the church. Some conclusions have not been neat, some have made the complex story of the long Reformation even more complex, but there are no apologies for that. The material evidence in this local study substantiates the argument that diverse investors responded in a more calibrated manner to the imposed changes than has previously been maintained, and were sometimes driven by specific local factors.

This study inevitably points to further areas to investigate, which the limitations of time and resources precluded from this study. The first would be to extend the study to Devon and Cornwall, and by so doing, complete an analysis for the whole of the West Country. The second would be to research networks of skilled craftsmen, and to work on the relationship

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<sup>39</sup> Merritt, "Puritans, Laudians and Church-Building," 936.

between the craft Companies in towns such as Salisbury, with their rural hinterland. The third would be to interrogate extant household accounts of elite houses adjacent to parish churches, where the investor lived, in order to understand whether there was a chronological link between the work in the parish churches of Abbotsbury, Chelvey, Croscombe, North Newton, North Petherton, or Rodney Stoke, and the workmen being employed in the house.

As the worshippers left their parish church, they would have carried with them the memory of visual images of its interior into their lives beyond its walls. For example, the parishioners of North Newton would have passed through the west door with its representation of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, a cue for mediation on their own salvation, and a prompt for spiritual preparedness throughout the whole of their lives, not just when they were in the church [Figure 4. 1]. As the congregation passed through the south door of the church at Sherrington, their final visual directive over the door was ‘To Honour Thy Father and Thy Mother’, a specific instruction for family life, but also a generic reference for behaviour and thought towards those set in authority over them in the world. As those who had sat in the nave of Bridgwater church departed, the text on the screen of the Corporation Pew, which had faced them during the service, ‘Feare God. Honour the King’, would have been clear in their collective recall as a reminder of their duty to the inextricably intertwined secular and ecclesiastical powers. Such images and texts were also familiar to them in their domestic lives, in their homes and taverns. Secular and religious identities were interwoven in the material evidence, just as the visual cues spoke to life inside the church and outside in the world. Similarly, as there was no clear demarcation between visual images in private and public spaces, so the material evidence has shown that confessional boundaries were porous. The material evidence in the parish churches of three West Country counties and dioceses

proclaims the vitality of the reformed and reimagined visual, and the care and consideration that had informed the decorating of them, as well as the varied impulses that drove diverse communities and individuals to invest. Like the sixteenth and seventeenth-century worshippers leaving their church, only to return Sunday after Sunday, researchers need to return time and again to continue to interrogate the rich evidence these buildings contain, and, in so doing, obtain a greater understanding of how the complexities of the English Reformation played out in the parishes.

## Appendix 1 – List of surveyed parish churches

Parish	County	Dedication	Post code
Abbotsbury	Dorset	St Nicholas	DT3 4JJ
Cerne Abbas	Dorset	St Mary	DT2 7JQ
Charminster	Dorset	St Mary	DT2 9RD
Dewlish	Dorset	All Saints	DT2 7LR
Dorchester	Dorset	St Peter	DT1 1XA
Folke	Dorset	St Lawrence	DT9 5HP
Ibberton	Dorset	St Eustace	DT11 0EN
Irwine Courtney	Dorset	St Mary	DT11 8RA
Longburton	Dorset	St James the Great	DT9 5PF
Lyme Regis	Dorset	St Michael	DT7 3BU
Marnhull	Dorset	St Gregory	DT10 1PZ
Melcombe Horsey	Dorset	St Andrew	DT2 7PZ
Minterne Magna	Dorset	St Andrew	DT2 7AT
Oborne	Dorset	Old Church	DT9 4LA
Puddletown	Dorset	St Mary	DT2 8SN
Ryme Intrinseca	Dorset	St Hippolytus	DT9 6JX
Spetisbury	Dorset	St John the Baptist	DT11 9DF
Stockwood	Dorset	St Edwold	DT2 0NG
Stourton Caundle	Dorset	St Peter	DT10 2QH
Wareham	Dorset	St Martin on the Walls	BH20 4HE
West Stafford	Dorset	St Andrew	DT2 8AB
Whitchurch Canonorum	Dorset	St Candida	DT6 6RQ
Wimborne Minster	Dorset	The Minster	BH21 1EB
Winterborne Came	Dorset	St Peter	DT2 8NT
Ashington	Somerset	St Vincent	BA22 8ED
Axbridge	Somerset	St John the Baptist	BS26 2AR
Banwell	Somerset	St Andrew	BS29 6EA
Bath	Somerset	St Peter and St Paul	BA1 1LT
Bathford	Somerset	St Swithun	BA1 7RS
Bishops Hull	Somerset	St Peter and St Paul	TA15 EB
Biddisham	Somerset	St John the Baptist	BS26 2RH
Bridgwater	Somerset	St Mary	TA6 3EQ
Bristol*	Somerset	St John the Baptist	BS2 0ET
Bristol*	Somerset	St Mary Redcliffe	BS1 6NL
Broomfield	Somerset	All Saints	TA5 2EQ
Bruton	Somerset	St Mary	BA10 0EF
Cameley	Somerset	St James	BS39 5AH



Catcott	Somerset	St Peter	TA7 9JA
Chapel Allerton	Somerset	Allerton Church	BS26 2PQ
Chard	Somerset	St Mary	TA20 2DP
Cheddar	Somerset	St Andrew	BS27 3RF
Cheddon Fitzpaine	Somerset	St Mary	TA2 8JU
Chedzoy	Somerset	St Mary	TA7 8RL
Chelvey	Somerset	St Bridget	BS48 4AA
Chilthorne Domer	Somerset	St Mary	BA22 8RD
Clevedon	Somerset	St Andrew	BS21 7UE
Compton Dundon	Somerset	St Andrew	TA11 6PE
Croscombe	Somerset	St Mary	BA5 3QS
Curry Mallett	Somerset	All Saints	TA3 6TD
(was known as St James)			
Dinder	Somerset	St Michael	BA5 3PB
Durston	Somerset	St John	TA3 5AF
East Brent	Somerset	St Mary	TA9 4HZ
East Quantoxhead	Somerset	St Mary	TA5 1EJ
Elworthy	Somerset	St Martin	TA4 3PY
Goathurst	Somerset	St Edward	TA5 2DE
Halse	Somerset	St James	TA4 3AD
Ilminster	Somerset	St Mary	TA19 0DU
Keynsham	Somerset	St John Baptist	BS31 2BL
Middle Chinnock	Somerset	St Margaret	TA18 7PH
Middlezoy	Somerset	Holy Cross	TA7 0NU
Minehead	Somerset	St Michael	TA24 5RZ
Muchelney	Somerset	St Peter and St Paul	TA10 0DQ
Mudford	Somerset	St Mary	BA21 5TJ
North Newton	Somerset	St Peter	TA7 0BG
North Petherton	Somerset	St Mary	TA6 6SE
Pawlett	Somerset	St John the Baptist	TA6 4RX
Puxton	Somerset	Holy Saviour	BS24 6TF
Rodney Stoke	Somerset	St Leonard	BS27 3UN
Somerton	Somerset	St Michael	TA11 7NB
South Barrow	Somerset	St Peter	BA22 7LN
Stoke St Gregory	Somerset	St Gregory	TA3 6EJ
Swell	Somerset	St Catherine	TA3 6PZ
Thorne Coffin	Somerset	St Andrew	BA21 3PZ
Thurloxtton	Somerset	St Giles	TA2 8RH
Trull	Somerset	All Saints	TA3 7JZ
Watchet	Somerset	St Decuman	TA23 0HU
Weare	Somerset	St Gregory	BS26 2LE
Wells	Somerset	St Cuthbert	BA5 2AW
West Coker	Somerset	St Martin	BA22 9DB
Winsford	Somerset	St Mary Magdalene	TA24 7JH

(former;y St Peter)			
Wyke Champflower	Somerset	Holy Trinity	BA10 0PP
Aldbourne	Wiltshire	St Michael	SN8 2EL
All Cannings	Wiltshire	All Saints	SN10 3NY
Alton Priors	Wiltshire	All Saints	SN8 4LB
Barford St Martin	Wiltshire	St Martin	SP3 4AH
Berwick St James	Wiltshire	St James	SP3 4TS
Boscombe	Wiltshire	St Andrew	SPP 4 0AJ
Brinkworth	Wiltshire	St Michael	SN15 5AF
Broad Blunsdon	Wiltshire	St Leonard	SN26 7DG
Clyffe Pypard	Wiltshire	St Peter	SN4 7PZ
Dauntsey	Wiltshire	St James	SN15 4HS
Durnford	Wiltshire	St Andrew	SP4 6AZ
Durrington	Wiltshire	All Saints	SP4 8AL
East Knoyle	Wiltshire	St Mary	SP3 6AE
Easton Royal	Wiltshire	Holy Trinity	SN9 5LZ
Edington	Wiltshire	SS Mary, Katherine & All Saints	BA13 4QR
Foxley	Wiltshire	No dedication	SN16 0JJ
Highworth	Wiltshire	St Michael	SN6 7AD
Inglesham	Wiltshire	St John the Baptist	SN6 7RD
Little Somerford	Wiltshire	St John the Baptist	SN15 5JW
Lydiard Tregoze	Wiltshire	St Mary	SN5 3PA
Maiden Bradley	Wiltshire	All Saints	BA12 7HA
Mere	Wiltshire	St Michael the Archangel	BA12 6DS
Minety	Wiltshire	St Leonard	SN16 9PT
Monkton Farleigh	Wiltshire	St Peter	BA15 2QJ
Odstock	Wiltshire	St Mary	SP5 4JA
Sherrington	Wiltshire	St Cosmas and St Damian	BA12 0SN
South Wraxall	Wiltshire	St James	BA15 2SE
Steeple Ashton	Wiltshire	St Mary	BA14 6EW
Stratford sub Castle	Wiltshire	St Lawrence	SP1 3YP
Sutton Mandeville	Wiltshire	All Saints	SP3 5ND
Tisbury	Wiltshire	St John the Baptist	SP3 6AZ
Winterbourne Stoke	Wiltshire	St Peter	SP3 4SU
Woodford	Wiltshire	All Saints	SP4 6NR
Other counties alphabetically			
Langley Marish	Berkshire	St Mary	SL3 7EL
Dorney	Bucks	St James the Less	SL4 6QP
St Katharine Cree	City of London	St Katharine Cree	EC3A 3DH
Arthuret	Cumbria	St Michael and All Angels	CA6 5SJ

Cartmel	Cumbria	St Mary and St Michael	LA11 6QD
Hawkshead	Cumbria	St Mary and All Angels	LA22 0NT
Alstonefield	Derbyshire	St Peter	DE6 2FX
Risley	Derbyshire	All Saints	DE72 3SU
Branscombe	Devon	St Winifred	EX12 3DA
Bratton Clovelly	Devon	St Mary	EX20 4JX
Braunton	Devon	St Brannock	EX33 2EL
Buckland Monarchum	Devon	St Andrew	PL20 7NA
Cullompton	Devon	St Andrew	EX15 1JU
Dartmouth	Devon	St Saviour	TQ6 9DL
Kentisbeare	Devon	St Mary	EX15 2BG
Exminster	Devon	St Martin	EX6 8DF
Holcombe Rogus	Devon	All Saints	TA21 0PE
Pilton	Devon	St Mary	EX31 1QJ
Plymtree	Devon	St John the Baptist	EX15 2JU
Eggescliffe	Durham Co.	St John the Baptist	TS16 9DQ
Haughton le Skerne	Durham Co.	St Andrew	DL1 2DD
Sedgefield	Durham Co.	St Edmund	TS21 3AT
Bishop's Cleeve	Gloucs	St Michael and All Angels	GL52 8LJ
Blockley	Gloucs	St Peter and St Paul	GL56 9ES
Chipping Campden	Gloucs	St James	GL55 6JG
Deerhurst	Gloucs	St Mary	GL19 4BX
Bishop's Waltham	Hampshire	St Peter	SO32 1AD
Ellingham	Hampshire	St Mary and All Saints	BH24 3PJ
North Baddesley	Hampshire	St John the Evangelist	SO52 9DF
North Stoneham	Hampshire	St Nicholas	SO50 9NW
Odiham	Hampshire	All Saints	RG29 1LZ
Stockbridge	Hampshire	Old St Peter	SO20 6HH
Abbey Dore	Herefordshire	Holy Trinity and St Mary	HR2 0AA
Sellack	Herefordshire	St Tysilio	HR9 6QP
Aylsham	Norfolk	St Michael	NR11 6BZ
Cawston	Norfolk	St Agnes	NR10 4AG
Wilby	Norfolk	All Saints	NR16 2JP
York	North Yorks	All Saints, Pavement	YO1 8RZ
York	North Yorks	St Martin cum Gregory	YO1 6LN
Burton Latimer	Northants	St Mary	NN15 5LU
Passenham	Northants	St Guthlac	MK19 6DQ
Buckland	Oxfordshire	St Mary	SN7 8RL
Burford	Oxfordshire	St John the Baptist	OX18 4RY
Tackley	Oxfordshire	St Nicholas	OX5 3AE
Yarnton	Oxfordshire	St Bartholomew	OX5 1PY
Moreton Say	Shropshire	St Margaret of Antioch	TF9 3RS
Checkley	Staffordshire	St Mary and All Saints	ST10 4NJ
Ilam	Staffordshire	Holy Cross	DE6 2FX

Clare	Suffolk	St Peter and St Paul	CO10 8NY
Newdigate	Surrey	St Peter	RH5 5DL
Old Woking	Surrey	St Peter	GU22 9JF
Baddesley Clinton	Warwickshire	St Michael	B93 0DG
Burton	West Sussex	no dedication	GU28 0QU
Egdean	West Sussex	St Bartholomew	RH20 1JU
Hardham	West Sussex	St Botolph	RH20 1LW
Stopham	West Sussex	St Mary	RH20 1EG
Worth	West Sussex	St Nicholas	RH10 7RT
Leeds	West Yorks	St John the Evangelist	LS2 8JD
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton	St Peter	WV1 1TS
Spetchley	Worcs	All Saints	WR5 1RS

\*Bristol was in the Diocese of Bristol but technically not part of Somerset.

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DHC: PE/PUD/CW5/2 Scheme for allowing sittings in the new pews, 1637.

DHC: PE/PUD/CW/5/3 Seating plan for the new pews, 1679.

DHC: PE/PUD/CH/2/1 The will of William Bradish D.D. of Puddletown, 1638.

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FSL: V.a. 520 Sir Edward Rodney (1590-1657) and others, prayers and meditations.

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SHC: D\B\bw/2181 Church records other than accounts, 1571.

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