

The Church of England in the Forest of Arden, 1660-1740

by

Susan Ann Jones

A thesis submitted to
The University of Birmingham
For the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

School of History and Cultures
The University of Birmingham

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

Abstract

This study explores the Anglican Church in a particular locality, namely the Forest of Arden region of Warwickshire, from the Restoration to 1740. This thesis is in sharp contrast to those histories that have depicted the Church of England as a moribund institution. It is contended that Anglicanism was a vibrant and accepted part of the lives of a considerable proportion of the laity, providing the focus of the communal and social life of the parish. What is more, the church and its clergy successfully served the needs of the people. In addition, it played a significant role in the spiritual, educational and moral discipline of the lower orders. This study shows that there was a high level of clerical commitment to the good of the people and that there was a considerable amount of lay participation in all aspects of church life. Evidence is also presented that there was a general Anglican commitment to harmony between those of differing religious views.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	
Maps	
List of Abbreviations	
Abstract	
Introduction	1
Chapter One -Popular Anglicanism	39
Chapter Two -The Church of England and its Competitors	103
Chapter Three -Church Discipline: Education and Coercion	149
Chapter Four -The clergy: Incomes, Pluralism and Patronage	203
Chapter Five -The Clergy: Lives and Ministry	259
Conclusion	305
Appendix	311
Bibliography	314

In Loving Memory of Nigel

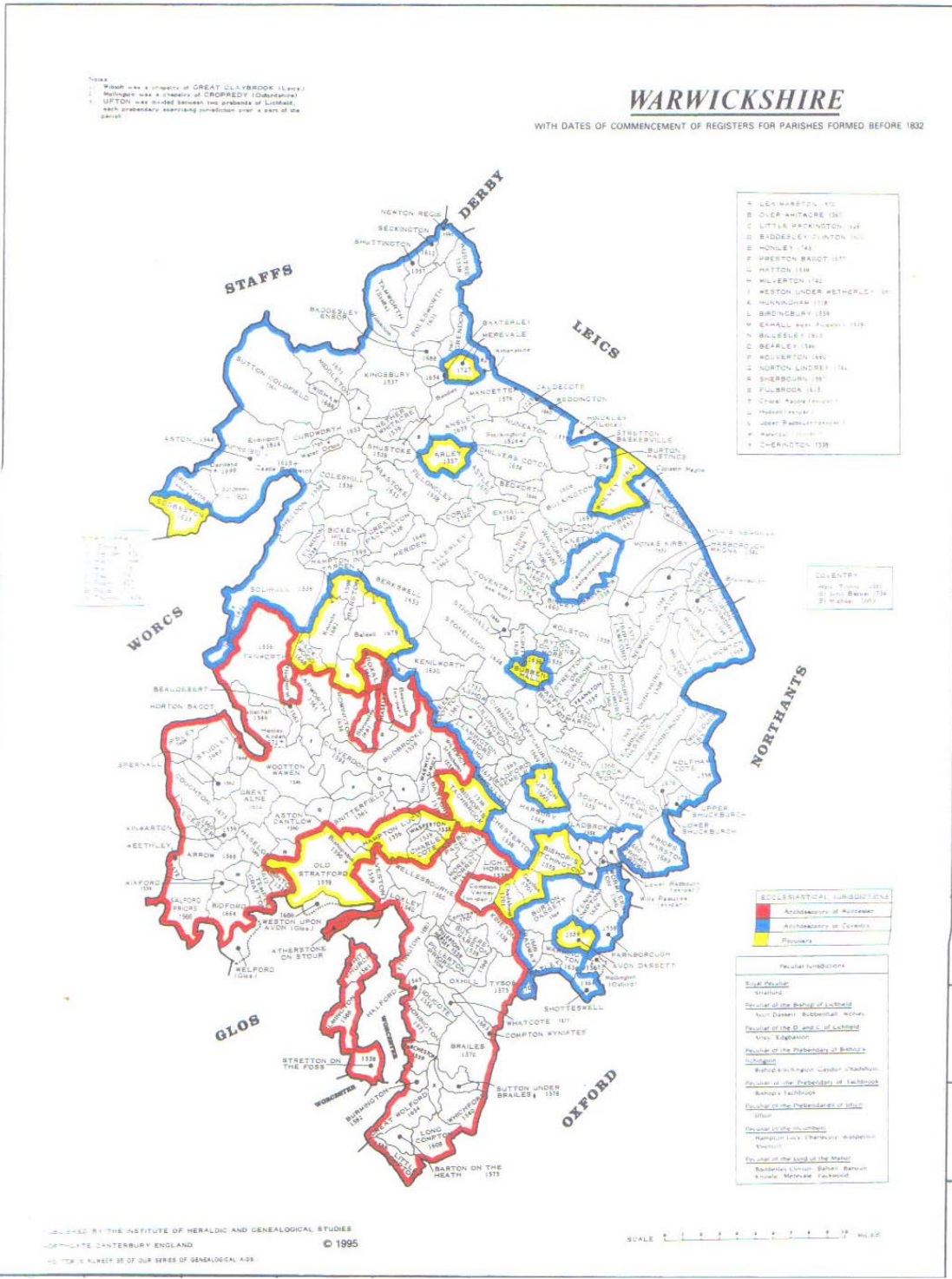
And

To my Daughters, Emily and Sarah

With much Love.

Acknowledgments

In writing this work, many people have been extremely helpful, and I wish to offer them my personal thanks. My thanks go to the staff of the record offices of Warwick, Worcester and Lichfield for their assistance in finding me documents so quickly and efficiently. Thanks are also due to Sarah Duffield, archivist, Church of England Record Centre for her assistance in helping to identify material concerning Queen Anne's Bounty for which I am extremely grateful. A great debt of gratitude is due to my supervisor Dr Michael Snape, whose patience, empathy and support has enabled me to complete this doctoral thesis through difficult personal times. My debt to him is enormous. On a personal note I would like to thank my dear friends Jennet and Steve Gabriel, without their support, encouragement and the use of their home this thesis would not have been completed. Finally, I would like to thank Sally Beadle for her continuing support but, more importantly for just listening.

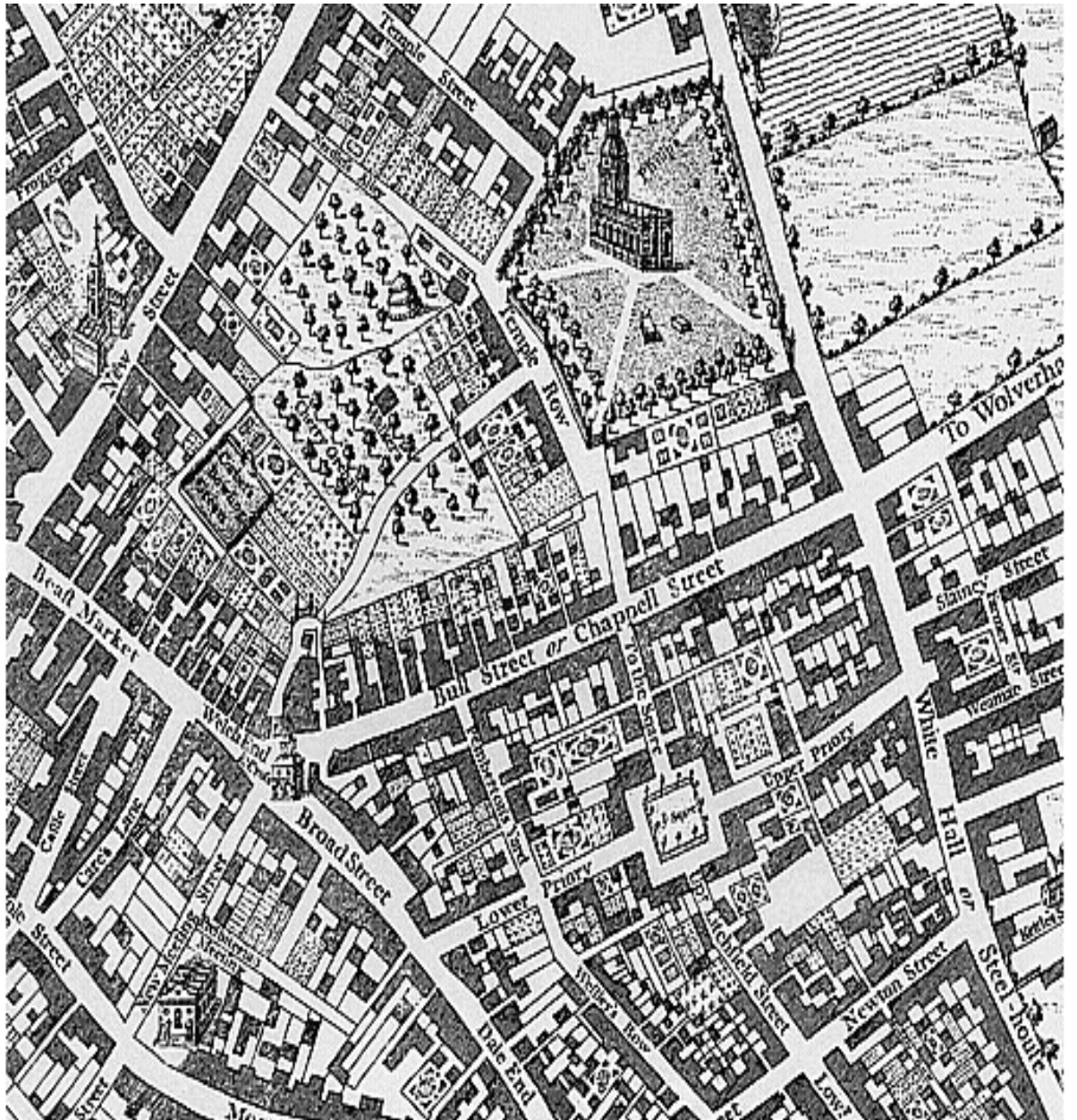


Source, Humphery-Smith, Cecil (ed), Atlas and Index of Parish Registers, 3rd edition (Phillimore2003), p.36

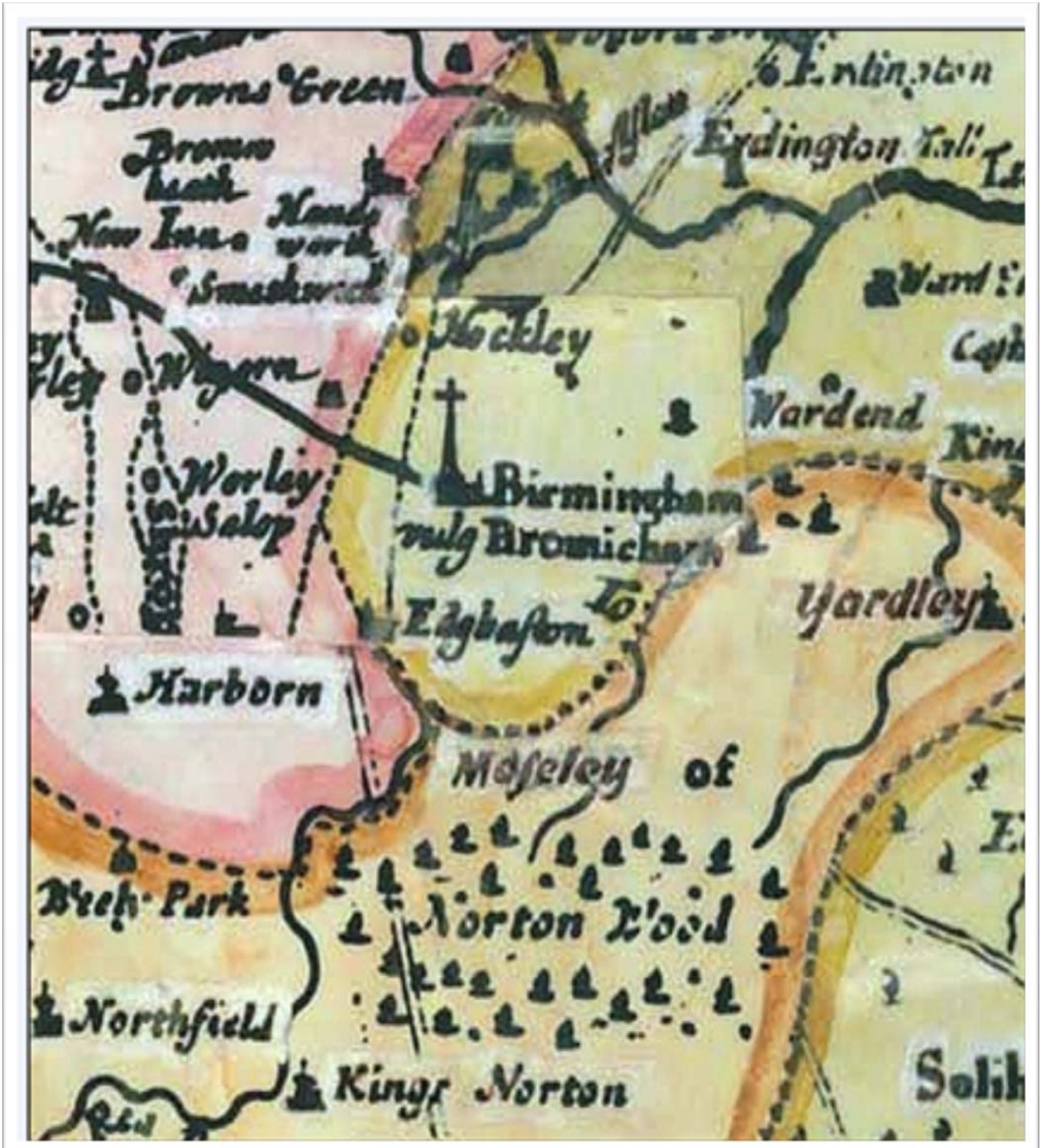
4. William Westley's Prospect of Birmingham, 1732



W. Westley Map of Birmingham 1731



Position of the parish of St. Martin's, Birmingham, 1695



ABBREVIATIONS

B.R.L.	Birmingham Reference Library
C.C.Ed.	Clergy of the Church of England Database
C.E.R.C.	Church of England Record Centre
L.R.O.	Lichfield Record Office
Q.A.B.	Queen Anne's Bounty
S.P.C.K.	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
V.C.H.	Victoria County History
W.C.R.O.	Warwickshire County Record Office
W.R.O.	Worcestershire Record Office

Introduction

With the publication in 1934 of Norman Sykes' *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century*, a new trend in ecclesiastical history was set in motion, one that challenged and questioned the received ideas about the restored Church of England. Sykes was insistent that the restored Church should not be judged by the standards of nineteenth-century commentators and their sharp contrast between 'pre-Victorian darkness and Victorian light'.¹ Nevertheless, he declared that the 'Church after 1663 was as riddled with poor livings and pluralism as its medieval predecessor'. In addition, he pointed out that the evolving Church had many problems to overcome. On balance, though, Norman Sykes's *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (1934) is credited with being a landmark volume in providing the first positive general assessment of the Church of England from the Restoration through to the Georgian period.

From the beginning of the period under study the Church of England was faced with a number of challenges. In the seventeenth century continuing tensions within the Church of England over theological and liturgical issues were among the factors leading to the English Civil War. It was hoped that by establishing an episcopal church government at the Restoration there would be religious peace and reconciliation. The Restoration of Charles II to the throne after the fall of Cromwell's Commonwealth was seen as a relief by the mass of the English people from the extreme Puritan attitudes inflicted on them during of the 'rule of Saints'. Episcopal Anglicans looked to the returning monarchy as their saviour from the extremes of Presbyterianism and Independency. The returning Cavalier Anglicans were determined on revenge. The Elizabethan Prayer Book was reissued, with minor amendments,

¹ Gerald, Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, Volume 1* (Manchester, 1988), p19.

and those Puritan ministers who were not prepared to accept it were ejected. Ministers who refused to conform and swear loyalty to the King were forbidden from preaching within five miles of any town. Later, Charles II's efforts to promote toleration were denounced as a sell-out to popery and created a fear of a Roman Catholic revival in England. More importantly, Charles II's Catholic sympathies and questions of religious toleration divided the established Church and the court. The 'popish plot' and, later, James II's perceived attempts to reinstate Catholicism heightened worries for the future of Protestantism in England. It was this threat that gave rise to the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688-89 and the invitation to the Protestant William of Orange to take the throne. The Revolution caused a crisis of conscience for many of the clergy in the Church of England, who were required to swear allegiance to William and Mary. They had previously sworn to be faithful to James II, though he had been a Roman Catholic; many refused to break their oath of allegiance and had to give up their livings. Significantly, during this period one of the most difficult questions was the degree to which Nonconformists and Nonjuring clergymen could participate in the established Church. In addition, the fear of a Catholic invasion or a Catholic rebellion, and wider suspicions of Jacobitism caused a number of riots throughout the eighteenth century. Simultaneously, a conservative Church was experiencing a theological revolution. The age of reason and the theology of the Latitudinarians were challenging traditional standards of belief and doctrine. The Church also had to respond to changes in society such as population growth and urbanisation. Surveyed as a whole, the eighty year period between the Restoration and the evangelical revival can be seen as a period during which the established Church laid the foundations of an evolving, growing and tolerant institution.

Nineteenth and early twentieth-century historians had been united in condemning the inefficient organisation of the restored Church of England. Scholars made much of the fact that lay patrons appointed the clergy and that many were non-resident or pluralist. They emphasised the Church's subservience to the civil government, the fact that the bishops were political appointees and that they were expected to spend a large part of their time in London, sitting in the House of Lords. Thus, bishops such as Benjamin Hoadly, with his quasi-Lockean views, and Lancelot Blackburne became the "whipping boys" of nineteenth and early twentieth-century historians. C.J. Abbey and J.H. Overton, in their classic nineteenth-century work, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, regarded bishops such as Hoadly as men in 'want of spiritual depth', and chastised the Church for failing in its spiritual duty and for identifying too much with the secular outlook of the Whig oligarchy.² Bishop Hoadly's view that the Eucharist was purely a commemorative act and the fact that during his time as bishop he rarely visited his dioceses and lived instead in London, where he was very active in politics, may have led to their conclusion.

As mentioned above, Norman Sykes's work in the 1930s made the greatest contribution to the rehabilitation of the eighteenth-century Church of England. His work was to remain a solitary beacon for the Church's institutional history until a renewal of interest occurred in the 1980s and 1990s.³ It would not, of course, be true to say that nothing appeared between these dates. Edward Carpenter's *Thomas Sherlock* (1936) and his biography of *Thomas Tenison* (1948) went some way to present his subjects in a more favourable light. The relative lack of research into the eighteenth-century Church, however, was in part due to the marginalisation of religious history and its separation from political and social history. After decades in the

² C.J. Abbey and J.H. Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1878), 2 vols, I, p. 214.

³ W. Gibson, *The Church of England 1688-1832: Unity and Accord* (London, 2001), p. 9.

wilderness there has been a resurgence of interest in the Church of England and revisionist historiography is now being produced, not only by traditional ecclesiastical historians, but by political, social and cultural historians. Ecclesiastical historians such as Jeremy Gregory, Arthur Warne, Jeffrey Chamberlain, Viviane Barrie-Curien, Donald Spaeth, Michael Snape and William Jacob underline the importance of religion for eighteenth-century English society and offer a re-evaluation of the nature of Anglicanism and the part it played. Likewise, political and social historians such as Linda Colley have come to understand that religion played a part in shaping English society and they therefore must incorporate religion in their work.

Revisionist historians, therefore, now challenge the verdict passed upon the eighteenth-century Church by nineteenth-century commentators. Their tone is one of approval and their historiography emphasises a more vibrant and effective Church than was traditionally thought. William Marshall, for example, in an essay entitled 'Episcopal Activity in the Hereford and Oxford Dioceses, 1660-1760' (1983), disposed of the charges of corruption and incompetence laid down by his predecessors. Marshall concluded:

The Church was led by men who saw its weaknesses and did their best to correct them. In places the Church was very much alive and even vigorous ...it was neither asleep nor decadent.⁴

Likewise, Donald Spaeth's overall evaluation of the Anglican Church from the Restoration to the eve of the evangelical revival is largely positive. Dr. Gregory's book *Restoration*,

⁴ W. Marshall, 'Episcopal Activity in the Hereford and Oxford Dioceses, 1660-1760', *Midland History*, 8, 1983, 106-20, at p. 118.

Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese (2000), also contributed to the rehabilitation of the Church in this period.

Although revisionist historiography now presents the Church in a more favourable light there are, nevertheless, historians who feel uncomfortable with many of these ideas. Peter Virgin's book *The Church in an Age of Negligence* (1989) took a more cautious approach. In part, Virgin attempted to rehabilitate the Church and defend its parochial clergy against the worst charges of abuse, neglect and greed. His work was, however, critical of the repeated failure of the established Church to reform until pressure from without forced change upon it in the 1830's. Virgin underlined this point, stating that:

Figures for non-residence improved after 1830 because pressure from without became stronger, and because a section of the leadership of the church, sensitive to the changed climate of public opinion, acted with new urgency and drive.⁵

Furthermore, in 1989, Paul Langford, in his comprehensive general history, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, also voiced his concern over the respectability now accorded to the restored Church by revisionist historians. 'Even Hoadly, the very type of episcopal cynicism and Erastianism, is in danger of being rehabilitated', Langford declared sarcastically.⁶ In addition, Dr. Snape's study of the industrial Lancashire parish of Whalley prompted him to conclude that too much of the revisionist argument comes from parishes and dioceses in the south of England. His research challenged revisionist attempts to depict the

⁵ P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence 1700-1840* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 267.

⁶ P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1988), p. 259. For a re-assessment of Bishop Hoadly see Marshall, 'Episcopal Activity', pp.114-5.

Church as a healthy and vibrant institution and suggested that all was not well with the eighteenth-century Church, in particular as a result of the rapid economic and population growth which took place in the country's industrialising areas during the last third of the century. Dr. Snape's post-revisionist case challenged the existing revisionist consensus on the success of the Church of England at this time.⁷

Clearly, Sykes' work has done much to stimulate debate and has helped to revise historians' attitudes towards the Restored Church. However, John Walsh and Stephen Taylor have rightly pointed out that Professor Sykes' conclusions have not 'commanded universal acceptance'. Instead, Walsh and Taylor suggest that contemporary historiography is now divided 'between optimists and pessimists'. 'This should not surprise us', they conclude, 'the Church was very different in the North of England compared to the south, and in the towns compared to the countryside'.⁸ The debate on the state of the established Church, therefore, still remains open. This can only be good for ecclesiastical history. Some works answer questions, others raise them, extending our knowledge and understanding of the condition of the restored Church. The debate on the condition and the role of the Church of England during our period helps to build up a picture of the nature and concerns of contemporary society. Even so, there are those, in particular Mark Goldie, who have asked the question why historians of the twenty-first century seem so preoccupied with challenging the judgements of Victorian critics, and have chastised church historians for not moving out of a historiographical framework

⁷ M.F. Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society: The Lancashire Parish of Whalley in the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2003).

⁸ J. Walsh and S. Taylor, 'The Church and Anglicanism in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh, S. Taylor, and C. Haydon (eds), *The Church of England c. 1689 c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 2, 12.

established nearly one hundred and fifty years ago.⁹ This, according to Dr. Gregory, is difficult as so many historians working outside church history depend on, and rehearse, the Victorian Church's judgements about its eighteenth-century predecessor.¹⁰ In answer to Professor Goldie, it is only by continuing to question the assumptions made by those Victorian critics that historians can finally put the Victorian model to bed. This can only be achieved by researching and making accessible all available source material relating to the Church, from the late seventeenth to the mid eighteenth centuries.

As mentioned above the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Church of England has not, until recent years, enjoyed much popularity among historians. In 1993, Daniel Szechi and Geoffrey Holmes noted that the 'present posture of scholarship on the eighteenth-century Church was 'handicapped by the scarcity of those local studies which can throw so much light on the national picture'.¹¹ Local evidence is invaluable in investigating and, more importantly, re-evaluating general assumptions about the state of the established Church from the Restoration to the mid eighteenth century. In spite of this, up to the 1980s there were only a handful of published studies: most notably Dr. Warne's study of Devon,¹² John Pruett's work on the clergy of Leicestershire¹³ and Diana McClatchey's study of the established

⁹ J. Gregory, review of M. Smith (ed.), *Doing the Duty of the Parish: Surveys of the Church in Hampshire 1810*, Available at 'Reviews in History', www.history.ac.uk/review/paper/gregory. Consulted on 4/09/2006.

¹⁰ M. Smith (ed), 'Doing the Duty of the Parish: Surveys of the Church in Hampshire 1810', *Hampshire Record Series*, 17, 2004.

¹¹ G. Holmes and D. Szechi, *The Age of Oligarchy: Pre-Industrial Britain, 1722-1783* (London, 1993), p.103, Quoted in Snape, *The Church of England*, p.3.

¹² A. Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon* (Newton Abott, 1969).

¹³ J. Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Latter Stuarts: The Leicestershire Experience* (Chicago, 1978).

Church in Oxfordshire.¹⁴ Historians were reliant on a small number of unpublished doctoral theses that were, on the whole, difficult to access.¹⁵ Nevertheless, during the 1990s a handful of doctoral dissertations were published that shed much light on the workings of the eighteenth-century Church in the localities. Mark Smith's work on Oldham and Saddleworth shed light on eighteenth-century Lancashire (a region that was usually thought of as difficult for the established Church),¹⁶ and Judith Jago's study of the Church in the archdiocese of York did a comparable service for Yorkshire.¹⁷ In addition, in 2000 Jeremy Gregory published his doctoral thesis on the archbishops of Canterbury and their diocese. Dr Gregory argued that the diocese of Canterbury was a victim of its own success, pointing out that 'meshing itself within local society accounts for the problems the Church had in adapting to social change; it was too well entrenched within the world around it for rapid alteration'.¹⁸

Historians are now increasingly recognising the importance of region, locality and environment in creating a framework for the national picture. The issue of regional and local diversity must be a priority for the historian of the eighteenth-century Church. As mentioned above, this was pointed out just over a decade ago, in a collection of essays edited by John

¹⁴ D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777-1869: A Study of the Established Church and the Role of its Clergy in Local Society* (Oxford, 1960).

¹⁵ For example J. Addy, 'Two Eighteenth-Century Bishops of Chester, William Markham and Beilby Porteus' (University of Leeds PhD, 1972); J.L. Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy, 1660-1714' (University of Birmingham PhD, 1975), 2 vols; J. Albers, "'Seeds of Contention': Society, Politics and the Church of England in Lancashire, 1689-1790' (Yale PhD, 1988); M.F. Snape, "'Our Happy Reformation': Anglicanism and Society in a Northern Parish, 1689-1789' (University of Birmingham PhD, 1994).

¹⁶ M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994).

¹⁷ J. Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church: Visitation Studies of the Diocese of York, 1761-1776* (London, 1997).

¹⁸ J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 293-4.

Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor,¹⁹ which they regarded as an overview of the state of research in the field at that time. This collection of essays has been seen as being ‘the most important general treatment on the position of the Church since the work of Professor Sykes in 1934’.²⁰ Like Professor Sykes’s *Church and State in England* this collection of essays has been a stimulus for the completion of a number of local studies.

Although there is now a renewed interest in the study of the eighteenth-century Church of England there is, to date, no comprehensive history of the established Church as an institution. However, research continues on regional religious history, which in turn will make a significant contribution to a national history of the Church of England in the period. In a book of essays edited by Dr. Gregory and Dr. Chamberlain (2003)²¹ the functioning of the Church of England in the localities was examined. Local and regional evidence from across the country illustrated the range of responses to a variety of problems and common themes. These included the Church’s relationship with Protestant Dissent and Roman Catholicism, its relationship with the laity, its social and economic position and its responses to and participation in a number of significant political events such as the Restoration, the Revolution of 1688 and reactions to the French Revolution. Furthermore, this collection of essays illustrated that, although local variations could be extreme, this did not mean that there was no common experience. Jeremy Gregory and Jeffrey Chamberlain point out that the collection of essays gathered in this book represented a further report on ‘work in progress’ and made a significant contribution to the understanding of the ‘religious topography of the

¹⁹ J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds), *The Church of England, c. 1689-c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993).

²⁰ J. Gregory and J.S. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 5.

Anglican Church'.²² This study is another regional contribution to the discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the eighteenth-century Church of England.

Our knowledge of the functioning of the Church of England in the West Midlands during the period under study is limited. What we know comes from individual local parish histories written by amateur historians, such as the Reverend Robert Pemberton's *Solihull and its Church* (1905). Taken on their own local histories do not give an accurate picture of the functioning of the Church of England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They do, however, contain a wealth of information, such as names of clergymen and their origins, that enables the ecclesiastical historian to build up a fuller picture of the Church in this period. Significantly, our knowledge of the Church in Birmingham has been coloured by the numerous histories that have claimed that 'the thought of the rising town became strongly Nonconformist in character'.²³ Furthermore, a study of the Restoration Church to the mid eighteenth century and its place in local society in the Forest of Arden region of Warwickshire has not yet been fully attempted. Dr. Haydon has recently published an essay examining the work of (and the difficulties faced by) the Church of England in the Warwickshire Feldon from the late seventeenth century to c.1800. In particular, he has focused on the Kineton deanery.²⁴ This essay contributes to the rehabilitation of the Church at this time and offers insights into the interaction of a national institution and a local community. Dr Haydon is less optimistic, however, about the Church in the later eighteenth century, concluding that 'the

²² Gregory and Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church*, p.4.

²³ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 458.

²⁴ C. Haydon, 'The Church in the Warwickshire Feldon c.1600-c.1800', in Gregory and Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church*, pp.145-173.

provision of services and patterns of residence give grounds for pessimism'.²⁵ This study will, therefore, be a timely opportunity to cast new light on the Church of England in the centre of England and to draw comparisons between two very different areas of Warwickshire. This study will focus on two deaneries, the deanery of Arden in the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry and the deanery of Warwick in the diocese of Worcester.

Before any evaluation of the eighteenth-century Church can take place it is necessary to consider available sources. Visitation and churchwardens' returns (documents submitted by parish clergy and churchwardens to the questions asked of them by their bishops and archdeacons) are a valuable resource for research; nevertheless, historians need to be wary when examining these documents and understand that visitation replies are the same as any other historical source and are not without their shortcomings. The information was being gathered for specific ecclesiastical purposes, and not with the interest of future historians in mind. However, historians are now beginning to benefit from the publication of these records, which directly concern the role of the Church in the localities.²⁶ The gradual rehabilitation of the Church's reputation can only benefit from the publication of primary sources and records such as those edited by Mark Smith for the Hampshire Record Society (2004).²⁷ Yet these published returns are only a fraction of those stored in the vaults of many county record offices. Anne Whiteman's edition of the Compton Census of 1676²⁸ shows what a

²⁵ Haydon, 'The Church in the Warwickshire Feldon', in Gregory and Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church*, p.173.

²⁶ See J. S. Leatherbarrow (ed.), 'Churchwarden's Presentments in the Diocese of Worcester, 1660-1760', *Worcestershire Historical Society Occasional Publications*, 1977.

²⁷ M. Smith (ed), 'Doing the Duty of the Parish: Surveys of the Church in Hampshire 1810', *Hampshire Record Series*, 17, 2004.

²⁸ A. Whiteman (ed.), 'The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition', *British Academy Records of Social and Economic History*, 10, 1986.

comparative study of returns from throughout the country can reveal. Although outside the chronological limits of this study, Mary Ransome's examination of 'The state of the Bishoprick of Worcester 1782-1808'²⁹ is a valuable research tool, not only for those interested in the parishes of Worcester and Warwickshire, but for all those interested in the eighteenth-century Church, since it gives a detailed picture of the functioning of a fairly typical diocese during the episcopate of Richard Hurd (1781-1808). Ransome's work helps to fill out the picture of the eighteenth-century Church provided by similar documents which had already been printed: parts of the *Speculum Dioeceseos Lincolniensis* and visitation returns for Oxford in 1738 and for York in 1743.³⁰ Published diaries and letters of individual clergy, bishops and their secretaries are an additional form of evidence. It must be remembered, however, that the information they contain is sometimes highly subjective and therefore problematic. Terriers and churchwardens' presentments also shed light on the local condition of the Church.³¹ It is important, however, to note that even this information should not be accepted at face value. For example, even Dissenters and Papists could serve as churchwardens and it may not have been in their interest to have cooperated fully with the

²⁹ M. Ransome (ed.), 'The State of the Bishopric of Worcester 1782-1808', *Worcestershire Historical Society*, 6, 1968.

³⁰ J.A. Lloyd (ed.), 'Articles of Enquiry Addressed to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford at the Primary Visitation of Dr Thomas Secker, 1738', *Oxford Record Society*, 38, 1957; R.E.G. Cole (ed.), 'The Speculum Dioeceseos Lincolniensis sub Episcopus Gul: Wake et Edm: Gibson', *Lincoln Record Society*, 4, 1913; S. Ollard and P. C. Walker (eds.), 'Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns, 1743', *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*, 72-7, 1928-32.

³¹ Examples for the diocese of Worcester; P. Morgan (ed.), 'Inspections of Churches and Parsonage Houses in the Diocese of Worcester in 1674, 1676, 1684 and 1687', *Worcestershire, Historical Society*, New Series, 12, 1986; Rev., D. Robertson, 'The Diary of Francis Evans Secretary to Bishop Lloyd 1699-1706', *Worcestershire Historical Society*, 1903; D. M. Barratt (ed), 'Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire Parishes, Parishes A to Li', *Dugdale Society*, 22, 1955 and Parishes Lo to W, 27, 1971; S.C. Ratcliff and H.C. Johnson (eds), *Warwick County Records, Quarter Sessions Records, Easter, 1674, to Easter, 1682*, 7, 1946 ; H.C. Johnson (ed), *Quarter Session Records Trinity, 1682, to Epiphany, 1690*, 8, 1953.

Anglican authorities. Nevertheless, these sources are still a valuable resource which gives us detailed information about the state of churches, the number and pattern of services offered, the relationship between Anglicanism, Protestant dissent and Roman Catholicism, and the economic state of the Church. The sources for this study of religion in Warwickshire during our period are generally good, and sometimes excellent. In particular, there are useful collections in the Warwickshire County, Worcester and Lichfield Record Offices, whilst there is also valuable material in the local studies departments of Warwick and Solihull libraries. In addition, Birmingham city archives based at the City Reference Library is a valuable repository, holding archival material for both Birmingham and the Anglican Church.

Forest of Arden

The Forest of Arden is a region of Warwickshire that from earliest times is said to have been divided from the Warwickshire Feldon (or ‘open field’ country) by the river Avon.³² The ‘enclosed Arden’ and the ‘champion Feldon’ were constantly commented on by contemporaries from the time of Leland onwards. It was John Leland and William Camden after him, who typified Warwickshire as being divided into ‘two parts’ by the river Avon.³³

³² V.C.H. *Warwickshire*, II, p.137; See also Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquates of Warwickshire Illustrated...Revised...and Continued...by William Thomas, D.D.*, II, 1730. Dugdale comments that:

‘Following which course, I first begin with Avon, as it enters the Shire at Clifton in the North-east, following it till it goes out at Salford in the South-West; dividing the Wood-land (for so that part of the Countie lying North thereof is called) from the Feldon’.

³³ V. Skip, *The Centre of England, Warwickshire, Worcester, Staffordshire, East Shropshire, North Gloucester* (London, 1979), p.26; A. Watkins, ‘The Woodland Economy of the Forest of Arden in the Later Middle Ages’ *Midland History*, 18, 1993, p.19. Leland records that:

To the north and west of the river was the heavily wooded, grassy Forest of Arden; to the south and east the open, ‘champion’ corn-growing country known as the Feldon.³⁴ Leyland, journeying through Warwickshire in 1540, drew a broad distinction between the Arden, which was ‘plentifull of gre[en]’ and the Feldon, ‘very plentifull of corn’.³⁵ From the Restoration the division seems to have been recognised to the extent of electing one Knight of the Shire for the Arden (initially Sir Richard Newdigate of Arbury near Nuneaton) and one for the Feldon (originally Thomas Marriett of Alscot).³⁶ The Forest of Arden covered the part of Warwickshire lying to the north of the Avon. To the north it merged into Cannock Chase, Staffordshire. To the west it ran into the royal forest of Feckenham, while to the east only a narrow tract of champion countryside separated it from Leicestershire.³⁷ Although a forest in the sense that it supported woodland, the Forest of Arden was never a forest by strict legal definition, as it had not come under Forest Law. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries economic expansion saw the colonisation and development of the Arden³⁸ while most of the Feldon remained open until the period of Parliamentary enclosure in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Arden was enclosed as the forest was cleared and therefore the Arden region never came under the open-field system.³⁹

I lernyd...that the most parte of the shire of Warwick, that lyeth as Avon river descendithe on the right hand or rype of it, is in Arden... the ground is enclosed. The other part of Warwyk-shire...is for the most part champion, somewhat barren of wood.

³⁴ Skip, *The Centre of England*, p. 28.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ W. E. Tate, ‘Enclosure Acts and Awards Relating to Warwickshire’, *Birmingham Archaeological Society*, LXV, 1934-1949, p. 72.

³⁷ Watkins, ‘The Woodland Economy’, p.19.

³⁸ *Ibid.*; A, Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire 1620-1660* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 1-4.

³⁹ Barrett, ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers’, I, p. li.; R.H. Hilton, ‘Social Structure of Rural Warwickshire in the Middle Ages’, *Dugdale Society Occasional Papers*, 9, 1950, pp. 22-25.

Medieval documents show that it was the influx of population into the west Arden manor of Tanworth-in-Arden which led to land clearance. Deeds from the Middle Ages show that this process continued throughout the Arden region in places such as Castle Bromwich and Lapworth. A fifteenth-century chantry priest named John Rous and the seventeenth-century Warwickshire antiquarian William Dugdale both noted the depopulated state of many villages in this region (plus unemployment, poverty and the ruinous state of many of the churches) due, so they claimed, to enclosure.⁴⁰ From evidence contained within the Warwickshire terriers, however, it is safe to say that the enclosures mentioned by Rous and Dugdale fell within the Feldon area.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the expansion of population in the Arden meant that by the beginning of the fourteenth century large tracts of this region had been cleared of trees. This led to a landscape of hedges and enclosed fields. Land in the north Arden parishes of Longdon, Widney (Solihull) and Coleshill had been fully enclosed by 1608. Likewise, the parish of Henley-in-Arden had been completely enclosed by the seventeenth century. Road maps drawn up between c.1540 and c.1675 leave no doubt that enclosure had been very widespread in the Arden region.⁴²

As a consequence of this pattern of clearing, small towns in the Arden, such as Solihull,⁴³ grew up around isolated homesteads. It was usual to find solitary farms and cottages scattered about irregularly, and only a tiny hamlet (or even no house at all), near the parish church. Social relationships in the Arden were more open and dispersed than elsewhere. Parishes were larger, and the pattern of settlement, in which the hamlet rather than the village took

⁴⁰ Tate, 'Enclosure Acts and Awards Relating to Warwickshire', p.61-2.

⁴¹ Barratt, 'Ecclesiastical Terriers', 1, pp.xlvii-lviii.

⁴² Tate, 'Enclosure Acts and Awards Relating to Warwickshire', p. 72.

⁴³ R. Pemberton, *Solihull and its Church* (Exeter, 1905), p.2.

precedence, was still that of a forest region, which had gradually been cleared by individuals rather than by communities. Lapworth and Bickenhill are also good examples of Arden parishes that had cottages and farmsteads widely scattered and isolated with only some three or four houses within sight of the church.⁴⁴ Settlement in Maxstoke was also dispersed amongst a number of small hamlets and isolated farmsteads.⁴⁵ Towns of longstanding such as Henley-in-Arden or Birmingham were of the single street type.⁴⁶ Henley-in-Arden grew as a settlement around a market rather than an established rural community. In the Arden, the parish church clearly served as a focus for communities which lacked other unifying institutions.⁴⁷ As much of the land had not been farmed through communal open-field agriculture, the manorial structure had remained weak.⁴⁸

The Arden region, as Dr. Hughes comments, is typical of the open village areas described by Joan Thirsk as ‘susceptible to rapid agricultural and industrial development’, and by Margaret Spufford as ‘likely cradles of religious radicalism’.⁴⁹ Late clearance of woodland on the Feldon, on the other hand, resulted in its villages having a distinctly town-like appearance. The houses were set closely together in streets, whilst the outlying areas of the parishes were relatively free of dwellings. In the Feldon, the nucleated village was the typical community; parishes were small, society was closely knit, traditional and highly manorialised. Two thirds of the parishes in the southwestern hundred of Barlichway, for example, contained a single manor with a resident lord. Most of the inhabitants therefore attended the same parish church

⁴⁴ R. Hudson, *Memorials of a Warwickshire Parish* (London, 1904), p.3.

⁴⁵ B. Gascogne and C. Hayfield, *Coleshill Remembered* (Arley, 1990).

⁴⁶ Pemberton, *Solihull*, p. xvi.

⁴⁷ M. Rowlands, *A Regional History of England: The West Midlands From A.D 1000* (London, 1987).

⁴⁸ Watkins, ‘The Woodland Economy’, pp. 19-36.

⁴⁹ A. Hughes, ‘Warwickshire on the Eve of the Civil War: A ‘County Community’, *Midland History*, p. 44.

and the same manorial court along with their neighbours, and were in close contact with a local gentleman.⁵⁰

Ecclesiastical jurisdiction

Warwickshire had once been part of the sprawling diocese of Mercia. The first subdivision of the Mercian see began in the second period of the English dioceses, 688-737. The episcopal jurisdiction of Worcester was formed from the old kingdom of the Hwicce in the southern part of Warwickshire, southwest of the Avon.⁵¹ It was founded by Ethelred, King of the Mercians, in 679 and was taken out of the diocese of Lichfield. Up to the nineteenth century, Warwickshire was under divided episcopal rule. The Warwickshire boundary of the Worcester diocese ran across the middle Avon from Tanworth by Warwick to Kineton and Whichford.⁵² The archdeaconry of Worcester included seventy parishes in the south-east of Warwickshire which up to 1918 formed the rural deaneries of Kineton and Warwick.⁵³ The diocese of Worcester contained about a third of Warwickshire and the parishes of Brome and Clent in Staffordshire, also Halesowen in Shropshire, and all Worcestershire except fifteen parishes and eight chapeltries, which were in the diocese of Hereford. The diocese consisted of one archdeaconry; and was divided into nine deaneries, containing 116 rectories, seventy-seven vicarages, twenty-eight curacies and about forty-six chapels (see Figure A.1 below). The most valuable livings were in the deaneries of Kidderminster and Droitwich, and some in

⁵⁰ Hughes, 'Warwickshire on the Eve of the Civil War', *Midland History*, p. 44.

⁵¹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, I, p.50.

⁵² Rowlands, *A Regional History*, p.7.

⁵³ Rev. G. Miller, *The Parishes of the Diocese of Worcester: The Parishes of Warwickshire*, 1 (London, 1832-1909). Warwick deanery contained approximately 30 parishes.

Pershore; the poor ones were mostly in the deanery of Powick and in the two Warwickshire deaneries of Warwick and Kineton.⁵⁴

Figure A.1. Number of Rectories, Vicarages, Curacies and Chapels of ease in each deanery of the Diocese of Worcester.

Deaneries	Rectories	Vicarages	Curacies	Chapels of ease
Kidderminster	10	8	5	4
Droitwich	10	6	0	6
Blockley	4	1	0	0
Evesham	1	5	7	0
Pershore	24	12	7	0
Powick	9	6	4	6
Worcester	25	8	2	6
Kineton	18	17	0	6
Warwick	15	14	3	8

Source: M. Ransome (ed.), 'The State of the Bishopric of Worcester 1782-1808', *Worcestershire Historical Society*, 6, 1968.

The medieval diocese of Coventry and Lichfield linked together the Benedictine priory of Coventry and the secular chapter of Lichfield cathedral. The two chapters took turns in electing a bishop. After Coventry priory was dissolved in 1539, elections of bishops became by act of parliament the preserve of the chapter of Lichfield cathedral alone, as Lichfield was declared to be 'the full and sole see and chapter of the bishopric of Coventry and Lichfield'. In the Middle Ages the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield had five archdeaconries (Chester, Coventry, Derby, Salop and Stafford). The area these covered comprised the counties of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, the southern part of Lancashire, and the northern part of Shropshire, northern and eastern Warwickshire. With the creation of the new diocese of Chester in 1541 the archdeaconry of Chester, including Cheshire and Lancashire, was detached from Lichfield diocese.⁵⁵ The archdeaconry of Coventry (Warwickshire) was subdivided into the four deaneries of Arden, Coventry, Marton and Stoneleigh (the deanery of Arden being relevant to this study).

⁵⁴ Ransome (ed), *Bishopric of Worcester*, pp.10, 21.

⁵⁵ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, I, p.1.

Before continuing it is worth discussing the state of religion prior to the Restoration and how the conflicts of that period affected Warwickshire. The abolition of episcopacy by parliament in 1641 and the turmoil of the Civil War cast a long shadow in the region during the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth. Warwickshire was on the line that separated the Royalist West from the Parliamentarian East⁵⁶ and had been the scene of one of the era's most famous battles, Edgehill (1642). In addition, Coventry became an important centre of Puritanism. The ejection of the clergy from their benefices, 'save those who thoroughly abandoned episcopacy in favour of their livings',⁵⁷ was also carried out in Warwickshire. The wife and children of Thomas Baker, rector of Baxterley, were turned out of their rectory by a Parliamentarian officer, who 'set a cradle with a young child of Mr Baker's in it on a dunghill'.⁵⁸ Likewise, John Arnway, archdeacon of Coventry, was offered restitution of £400 a year if he would 'but sign the Solemn League and Covenant';⁵⁹ he refused and was subsequently imprisoned. Although forty-three ministers in Warwickshire adhered to the Solemn League, including ministers from Solihull, Birmingham and the two Warwick churches, this was a small percentage considering that it was thought that there were at least two hundred ministers or preachers in Warwickshire at this time.⁶⁰ We may conclude that Warwickshire on the whole was not the stronghold of Puritanism that has been previously thought.

⁵⁶ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 42.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.43.

The Politics and Administration of the Forest of Arden

The Forest of Arden contained some established medieval towns, but only Stratford, Sutton Coldfield and Warwick had been incorporated by the seventeenth century. These incorporated towns, however, had a limited electorate, which ensured that administration in the corporations was bedevilled by oligarchic self-interest.⁶¹ In Warwick, for example, this was heightened by several factors. One was the disappearance of the trade companies, which left the corporation as the sole governing body of any kind within the borough.⁶² Likewise, in Warwick, influence was also brought to bear in parliamentary elections. The corporation and the (Tory) Greville family had sympathy with Crown policy under Charles II. This resulted in a pattern of parliamentary representation that did not change until the mid eighteenth century. A Greville represented either Warwick Corporation or Warwick Castle from 1664 to 1677.⁶³ Moreover, The Hon. Doddington Greville (who voted against the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts) represented Warwick in six successive Parliaments from 1705 to 1727.⁶⁴ The elections of 1715, however, showed a substantial Whig interest in the borough and, at a by-election on the death of William Colmore in 1722, the contest was close.⁶⁵ Warwick returned Tories for both corporation and Castle up to 1734 when Thomas and Henry Archer (Whigs) unseated Sir William Keyte and William Bromley.⁶⁶ These, however, were replaced by Tories at the next election (1740), Thomas Newsham declaring that the Archers ‘have done more injury to the inhabitants of the town than they will be ever able to

⁶¹ *The Borough of Warwick: Economic and Social History, 1545-1835*. Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report Consulted on, 21/01/2005.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ R. Sedgwick, *History of Parliament: The Commons 1715-54*, 2, Members E-Y (London, 1970).

⁶⁵ *The Borough of Warwick*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*; Sedgwick, *History of Parliament*, p.272.

compensate'.⁶⁷ The names of other members, both for Warwick and the County, confirm Warwickshire's reputation as 'a county with hardly a Whig in it'.⁶⁸ Clement Throckmorton,⁶⁹ a convinced Anglican, represented the county in 1660, 1661 and 1663, Sir Charles Holt,⁷⁰ another Tory, was a county M.P between 1685 and 1688, and the Mordaunt family, one of the leading Tory families at this time, provided Members of Parliament throughout the eighteenth century.⁷¹ In short, from 1715 to 1754 Tory county gentlemen represented Warwickshire, and were unopposed at elections. What is more, a strong majority of the local gentry of the Forest of Arden region (such as Sir Henry Gough and Sir John Bridgen) were clearly staunch Tories.

The policies of James II made an impact on the county and on the Forest of Arden (this will be discussed later). Moreover, the revolution of 1688-89 also left its mark. Twenty-one Anglican clergy from the Warwickshire region found it against their consciences to swear loyalty to William while James was still alive: one being the influential and respected John Kettlewell, vicar of Coleshill.⁷² Warwickshire, therefore, acquired a certain reputation for Jacobitism.

⁶⁷ *The Borough of Warwick*.

⁶⁸ Sedgwick, *History of Parliament*.

⁶⁹ Clement Throckmorton was a cousin of the Recusant Throckmortons of Coughton. This branch of the family was from Haseley and had previously been strongly Puritan in their theology. They converted to Anglicanism at the Restoration, presumably for political reasons.

⁷⁰ Sir Charles had no public appointment after revolution of 1689. This might confirm his affiliation to the Jacobite cause. Nevertheless, his name does not appear in a list of Nonjurors published in 1715 so he must have taken the oath.

⁷¹ V, Bird, *A Short History of Warwickshire and Birmingham* (Bristol, 1977), p.94.

⁷² Nonjurors for the deanery of Arden include John Kettlewell, Vicar of Coleshill, Mr Thomas Jacomb, Master of the free school at Coleshill, and Digby Bull, Rector of Sheldon.

Bishop Lloyd, a staunch Whig, instructed his clergy to read out, ‘at such times as the Congregations should be fullest in every Church and Chappel’ the ‘denunciation of the Jacobite rising’ prepared by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1715. This did not, however, change popular opinion in Sutton Coldfield. From the late 1600s the predominant tone of the town and neighbourhood was High Church and Tory. This was evident by the selection, in 1679, of Thomas Thynne, afterwards Viscount Weymouth, as High Steward of the Corporation. He was a resolute Tory and courtier. Likewise the Rector, John Riland, was a High Churchman with Jacobite sympathies. Indeed, some notes written in a book belonging to John Riland exhibit the bias of the owner. In a copy of the book *Bishop Prideaux’s compendium of History*, he wrote with reference to Henry I ‘an unlearned king was a crowned asse if so, what is our King George?’ Likewise, his history of the Stuarts went ‘Ye martyr, Charles, Charles ye 2nd James ye 2nd Queen Mary, Queen Ann, James ye 3rd now in Scotland’. There is also evidence that many of the neighbouring gentlemen favoured the Jacobite cause. It has been shown that they would meet in an inn at Coleshill (where Dr. Kettlewell, the Nonjuror, had been Vicar) to drink to the White Rose.⁷³

The Gentry

Despite the influence of aristocratic lines like the Ferrers and Throckmorton families, the vast majority of Arden manors were not controlled by dukes or earls, but by baronets and esquires.⁷⁴ The large baronial estates of the medieval period had been largely dismembered by

⁷³ W. K. Riland, *Three Hundred Years of a Family Living: Being the History of the Rilands of Sutton Coalfield* (Birmingham, 1889), p.21.

⁷⁴ Skip, *Centre of England*, p.162; Rowlands, *A Regional History*. Dr. Rowlands informs us that at the Restoration twelve Peers, forty-one Baronets and about 120 Esquires were resident in the county. Between them they held three quarters of all the manors.

the sixteenth century. Most had reverted to the crown, which disposed of them piecemeal to minor members of the Tudor gentry (the manor of Tanworth, for example, went to the Throckmorton family).⁷⁵ In addition, opportunities through enterprise (enclosure and the rearing of livestock in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries plus the Dissolution of the monasteries in 1536-39) enabled some families to build up estates (such as Baddesley Clinton, Coughton and Packwood) over a period of time. By the end of the seventeenth century, therefore, Warwickshire was a county in which there was a large number of prosperous country estates but which was not dominated by one great aristocratic family. As a result, the region fell much less under the sway of powerful and influential Whig landowners (as in Restoration East Anglia or south-western England) whilst even the gentry of the Feldon had a more settled, tightly knit society. From the early seventeenth century the Arden gentry were also faced with problems of rapid economic change, large numbers of landless labourers, and independent free-holders.

Economy

The Arden's economic development produced a much broader based society than that of the Feldon. It has been suggested that the Arden had fewer rich yeomen and gentry, but more poor than the Feldon region.⁷⁶ In spite of this, the hearth tax assessments for the parish of Claverdon in the reign of Charles II indicate a community with a large number of 'substantial yeomen'.⁷⁷ This may have been because the Arden possessed a more fluid society that in turn

⁷⁵ Skip, *The Centre of England*, p 160.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ P. Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman Thomas Pilkington, Vicar of Claverdon', in P. Styles, *Studies in Seventeenth Century History* (Kineton, 1978), p.73.

allowed freeholders of modest wealth to prosper through their own enterprise.⁷⁸ From the Middle Ages onwards, as Andrew Watkins has remarked, the ‘economic well being of the Forest of Arden was based on the freedom of individual enterprise which a weak manorial system allowed’.⁷⁹ Whereas late clearing on the Feldon resulted in a substantial number of free individuals enjoying only a degree of personal freedom⁸⁰ (in which they could combine pastoral farming with other trades such as carpentry, coopering, tanning, weaving and husbandry)⁸¹ early clearance of forestland produced a body of independent freeholders in the Arden who bought up any unwanted acres; there they concentrated firstly on beef production and, later, on the production of dairy products such as cheese. By the early eighteenth century, according to Daniel Defoe, the south Arden part of Warwickshire had become one of England’s three principal cheese-producing areas.⁸²

By the eighteenth century a considerable amount of land in south Arden had been transformed into arable land, which was more productive than the Feldon’s sheep-rearing husbandry. Warwick became an important supplier of agricultural produce during the seventeenth century. Although south Arden was predominately rural and the majority of its population followed agricultural occupations and those trades which were allied to them, there were parishes that concentrated on manufacturing. Coughton, in the deanery of Warwick, was

⁷⁸ Hughes, ‘Warwickshire on the Eve of the Civil War’.

⁷⁹ Watkins, ‘The Woodland Economy’, p.32.

⁸⁰ Skip, *The Centre of England*, p.139.

⁸¹ Warwickshire County Record Office [hereafter cited as W.C.R.O.], DR 34/1, 613/1, 91/1, Priors Marson where occupations are entered 1700-1710 30 out of 73 follow some trade, craft or profession ancillary to agriculture.

⁸² D, Defoe (1661?-1731). *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain [A Tour through England and Wales]*, 2 (London, 1959), p131; see also J. Parkhouse, *Shakespeare’s County: Warwickshire c-1550-c-1750*, p.6. Available at: jonathanpark@warwickshire.gov.uk. Consulted on, 20/01/2002. Warwickshire cheese was apparently Queen Anne’s favourite.

a centre of the needle industry in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Almost half of Coughton's population was employed in non-agricultural work.⁸³ The needle-making industry was also in existence in Studley near Alcester; Washford Mill was converted from a corn-milling establishment to needle making in 1730.⁸⁴ Studies of Bidford Grange Mill, Bidford-on-Avon, also show a development from corn milling through fulling to other uses, including paper milling, by 1729.⁸⁵ In addition, out of the 300 people who applied for relief after the fire of Warwick in 1694, 156 were tradesmen.⁸⁶ The parish of Lapworth also contained carpenters, masons, cordwainers (shoemakers), brick makers, tanners and a hatcheller (flax dresser); however, most of its men also worked on the land.⁸⁷

The parishes in the north part of the Arden region (which included the deanery of Arden and where parishes tended to be larger) contained extensive common land on which squatters could settle. The rate of growth in Arden parishes such as Fillongley, Berkswell and Meriden was much greater than comparable communities in the Feldon.⁸⁸ Berkswell, for example, had a traditional 'woodland' dual economy, whose inhabitants kept a few animals and grew crops whilst following a trade.⁸⁹ Joan Thirsk has emphasised an association of industry with wood pasture regimes, where the lower labour demands of a pastoral economy allowed workers to

⁸³ P. Styles, 'The Social Structure of the Kineton Hundred in the Reign of Charles II' in P. Styles (ed), *Studies in Seventeenth Century West Midland History* (Kineton, 1978), p.154.

⁸⁴ Parkhouse, *Shakespeare's County*, p.11.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *The Borough of Warwick*.

⁸⁷ J. Woodall, *Portrait of Lapworth* (Solihull, 1986), p.99.

⁸⁸ Rowlands, *A Regional History*, p.171.

⁸⁹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, IV, p.27.

take on additional employment.⁹⁰ The demand for consumer durables from the seventeenth century onwards enabled the landless poor to earn a living. Brick and tile makers, building workers, carpenters, joiners and turners, weavers and tailors were in demand in the growing industrial centres of north Arden. From 1650 onwards, forty to fifty per cent of men in the north of the Arden region were working as full-time craftsmen.⁹¹ This was evident in the Arden parish of Berkswell, where seventy-three out of 192 workers were employed in dual occupations including twenty-five weavers and tuckers and eighteen woodworkers.⁹² The prominence of textile workers may be explained by the close proximity of Coventry. Significantly, Sutton Coldfield's attempt to become an industrial centre in the late seventeenth century (by button, bayonet, blade and cotton-making) was only thwarted by the rise of Birmingham.⁹³ The growing economy of many small towns in the region can also be attributed to an improved road network. The prosperity of eighteenth-century Coleshill was due to its fortunate position on one of England's foremost coaching routes (it was a stopping point between London and Chester).⁹⁴ Dr. Thomas's edition of Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire* mentions the growth of Meriden due to its situation on the London road. Dr. Thomas wrote that:

This place, situated upon London road, having from some Inns and Alehouses, built for the receipt of passengers, grown of late times to the credit of a village,

⁹⁰ J. Thirsk 'Industries in the Countryside', in F.J. Fisher (ed.), *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England* (1969) pp. 70, 88.

⁹¹ Skip, *The Centre of England*, p.155.

⁹² V.C.H. *Warwickshire*, IV, p.34; Styles, 'The Social Structure of the Kineton Hundred', p. 154.

⁹³ M. Baxter, *Sutton Coalfield* (Stroud, 1994).

⁹⁴ B. Gascogne and C. Hayfield, *Coleshill Remembered* (Arley, 1990).

doth now utterly eclipse the name of *Allpath*, by which, and none other, the Town itself (where the Church standeth) was known.⁹⁵

The most important industrial growth in this period also came in the north Arden region. Here, raw materials in the form of clay, coal and water were abundant. The pottery industry of Chilvers Coton, near Nuneaton, was one of the most prolific in the county, where pottery production had been notable from as early as the thirteenth century.⁹⁶ The parish registers of Nuneaton reveal other trades in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (1682 and 1718), including brickmakers John and Daniel Ward and a tobacco pipe maker, Emmanuel Connaway. North-eastern forest parishes such as Nuneaton (where coal and iron were to be found) mushroomed in size.⁹⁷ The period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries saw increased demand for coal, with the Coventry market stimulating this demand.⁹⁸ The development of the Warwickshire coalfield, however, is said not to have had a big impact on the Birmingham markets until the late nineteenth century.⁹⁹ It was, nevertheless, in the pre-industrial period of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that industrial hamlets, such as Birmingham, started to grow.

Economy of Birmingham

William Hutton, the eighteenth-century Birmingham historian, wrote that Birmingham:

⁹⁵ Dugdale, *Antiquities*, 2, pp. 984-88.

⁹⁶ Parkhouse, *Shakespeare's County*, p.9.

⁹⁷ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p.171.

⁹⁸ E. Grant, 'Changing Perspectives in the Warwickshire Coalfield' in T.R. Slater and P.J. Jarvis (eds.), *Field and Forest: An Historical Geography of Warwickshire and Worcester* (1982), pp.323, 346.

⁹⁹ Slater, *History of Warwickshire*, p. 98.

Lies near the centre of the Kingdom, in the north west extremity of the county of Warwick, is a kind of peninsula, the northern part of which is bound by Handsworth, in the county of Stafford, and the southern by King's-Norton, in the county of Worcester; it is also in the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry, and in the deanery of Arden.¹⁰⁰

The ancient parish of Birmingham, comprising 2,996 acres, lay entirely in Warwickshire.¹⁰¹ On the north lay Handsworth parish in Staffordshire (with its hamlet, Perry Barr), and on the east the Warwickshire parish of Aston comprising the townships of Aston, Witton, Erdington, Water Orton, Castle Bromwich, Little Bromwich, Bordesley, Deritend, Duddeston with Nechells, and Saltley with Washwood. On the south Birmingham was bounded by Edgbaston in Warwickshire and on the west by the Staffordshire parish of Harborne and its chapelry of Smethwick.¹⁰² At the beginning of the seventeenth century Birmingham was largely rural. In the early eighteenth century the town still had a rural hinterland and rural occupations persisted among its inhabitants.¹⁰³ Furthermore, throughout the seventeenth century, Birmingham (and, indeed, the surrounding area) was not easily accessible by any means of water transport (Birmingham was eighty-five miles from the ports of Liverpool and Bristol and a good distance from the ports of London, Hull and Southampton). Some historians have suggested that this situation may have retarded its early growth.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, the River Severn¹⁰⁵ was close and throughout the latter part of the seventeenth century, with the

¹⁰⁰ Hutton, *An History of Birmingham* (London, 1783), p.3.

¹⁰¹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p.1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Court, *The Rise of the Midlands Industries*, p.22.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.4.

¹⁰⁵ Canals linked the region with the navigable Severn which in turn linked the region to the sea.

development of the canal system, the River Severn played its part in the economic life of not only Birmingham but of the region as a whole. Similarly, the importance of the River Trent can be discerned from a petition from the people of Birmingham to have the River Derwent from Derby to the Trent made navigable because, it was declared, ‘their trades do chiefly consist in steel and Iron and other ponderous commodities and the charge of land carriage is so great that it is a discouragement to these trades which by this navigation will be improved and the said charge lessened’.¹⁰⁶ Road development was also playing its part in bringing trade to and from principal waterways. The road leading from Birmingham towards Bristol through Bromsgrove and Worcester was said in 1706 to be almost impassable as a result of the heavy traffic of salt, iron, and coal. Hence, a petition was sent to Parliament for the establishment of a turnpike trust. It was turnpike between Droitwich and Worcester from 1713 and between Birmingham and Bromsgrove from 1726.¹⁰⁷ In 1727 the road from Birmingham to Dudley was said to be ‘greatly used for the carriage of iron goods, coal, and lime’.¹⁰⁸ Overall, growing trade brought better developments in transport, thus linking place to place and providing Birmingham and the surrounding area with important communications with the rest of the country, and above all with London. It was said that no town in ‘England derived more benefit from turnpike roads and canals than Birmingham’.¹⁰⁹ It is reasonable to assert that, as a consequence of the improvement in the transport system, Birmingham and the surrounding district became less insular.

¹⁰⁶ M.J. Wise, ‘Birmingham and its Trade Relations in the Early Eighteenth Century’, *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 2, 1949-50, 53-79 at p.78-9.

¹⁰⁷ V.C.H. *Warwickshire*, VII, p.28.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.27.

¹⁰⁹ C. Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, *Manor and Borough to 1865* (Oxford, 1952), p. 154.

By 1650 Birmingham was a small town of 5,000 people situated in the northwest part of Warwickshire. At this time it contained one church (St. Martin's) and was, according to William Hutton, the smallest parish in the neighbourhood, Aston and Sutton Coalfield being about five times larger.¹¹⁰ Deritend was a small hamlet bordering Birmingham, with Digbeth being the main thoroughfare into town. Figure A.3 illustrates that by 1700 Birmingham had approximately twenty-eight streets, 100 courts and alleys, 2,500 houses and 15,000 inhabitants. Thirty years later Birmingham had been divided into two parishes (St. Martin's and St. Philip's) and had an additional twenty-five streets, fifty courts and alleys, 1,250 houses and 8,000 inhabitants.¹¹¹ In other words, the town was nearly half as big again as it had been thirty years earlier. There was a new church, St. Philip's, with a charity school in the church yard where, according to William Westley, 'are maintained and taught upwards of fifty boys and girls'.¹¹² Demographic patterns began to change in Birmingham after 1680 and, by the end of the eighteenth century, Birmingham had overtaken Coventry as the largest town in the county. Old trades such as cloth making, tanning and smithying were being replaced by industries drawing on local supplies of metal. New jobs became available, being sought after by local labourers from the surrounding area.¹¹³

Figure A.3 The growth of Birmingham.

YEAR	No. OF STREETS	No. OF HOUSES	POPULATION
1650	15	900	5,472
1700	28	2504	15,032
1731	51	3717	23,286
1781	125	8382	50,295

Sources: A. Langley 'Birmingham Baptists', *Past and Present*, 1939, p. 17.

¹¹⁰ Hutton, *An History of Birmingham*, p.5.

¹¹¹ Birmingham Reference Library [hereafter cited as B.R.L.], *William Westley's Plan of Birmingham*, 1731; A, Langley, 'Birmingham Baptists', *Past and Present*, 1939, p.17; *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, pp.7-9.

¹¹² B.R.L, W. Westley's Plan of Birmingham.

¹¹³ T. Symonds, *The Demography of Digbeth and Deritend 1680-1850*, p.5.

The plague of 1665 brought death and ruin to many in Birmingham.¹¹⁴ In spite of this, it was noted that, by the eighteenth century, a considerable upturn in population meant that a single parish could not sustain Birmingham's inhabitants.¹¹⁵ Birmingham experienced an upsurge in population, especially between the years 1695 and 1710. These were years of foreign wars; local metalworking industries were no doubt doing very well. In fact, Birmingham gun makers had won contracts for snaphance muskets for Marlborough's wars.¹¹⁶ Local historians are quick to point out that an increase in numbers marked the transformation of Birmingham's rural economy to an urban economy. This seems to confirm the role which population played in stimulating the process of innovation. It must be mentioned, however, that this trend had been evident since the early sixteenth century but was becoming more marked at this time. Links between a growing population and a changing economy were just more apparent. Thomas Bladen, a Puritan minister, had noted in the early seventeenth century that:

God has blessed your town (Birmingham) more in the last twenty years than in a hundred years before. Witness the wonderful increase of buildings, multitudes of people and advancement of trade.¹¹⁷

It has been argued that immigrants into Birmingham came from no more than a fifty-mile radius and usually from immediately adjacent parishes.¹¹⁸ Evidence states that up to 1697 most of the migrants came from the immediate vicinity of Birmingham with the area of origin

¹¹⁴ Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, p.49.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.171.

¹¹⁶ M. Rowlands, 'Society and Industry in the West Midlands at the End of the Seventeenth Century', *Midland History*, 3-4, 1975-78, 48-60 at p.54.

¹¹⁷ Rowlands, 'Society and Industry in the West Midlands', *Midland History*, p.54.

¹¹⁸ Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, pp. 60-1.

widening considerably after this date.¹¹⁹ An analysis of 700 immigrants into Birmingham who reached the town with certificates under the Settlement Acts from 1686 to 1726 shows that nine tenths of them came from within a radius of twenty miles. While Warwickshire and Staffordshire each contributed more than 200; nearly 100 came from Worcestershire and about forty from Shropshire. Five other counties (Leicestershire, Chester, Derbyshire, Lancashire, and Middlesex) each sent just over twelve. Only fifty were reported to have come from other areas around the country.¹²⁰ The picture that emerges is that migrants entering Birmingham were from neighbouring towns and villages, with the occasional newcomer from further afield. However and more significantly, it is quite likely that most migrants into the town came without certificates, namely the poor and unskilled that came in from local agricultural districts in times of distress.¹²¹ The Act of Settlement of 1662 empowered parish officials in Birmingham to send back any migrant to their own parishes for relief if they failed to provide for themselves within forty days. Only those could stay who had been apprenticed or who served in public office or those who had been married in the parish. Many workers, however, moved on to the adjacent parish of Aston where they might find work in the many ‘forges and mills’¹²² of Deritend, a process which resulted in its growth and expansion and its absorption into Birmingham in the late eighteenth century.

As Birmingham became more industrialised, children from nearby parishes were sent there as apprentices. Masters took on as many boys as they could use. The Bridgeman family of Castle Bromwich left sums of money for both girls and boys to be ‘set up as apprentices in

¹¹⁹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p. 7.

¹²⁰ *Economic and Social History: Industry and Trade, 1500-1880*, p.7. Available at www.british-history.ac.uk/report ; Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, pp.60-1.

¹²¹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p.7.

¹²² Symonds, *The Demography of Digbeth and Deritend*, p. 5.

Birmingham'.¹²³ Birmingham was seen as the town of 'free trade' and 'economic freedom', 'every man was free to come and go, to found, to follow, or to leave a trade just as he chose'.¹²⁴ 'What Birmingham says to-day, England will say to-morrow', ran a traditional saying.¹²⁵ It is interesting to note that John Barrow's maxim that 'those who would enter Birmingham trades should be educated moderately well'¹²⁶ may have played its part in producing an unruly populace with strong 'Church and king' leanings. Education was totally Anglican in nature and may have been a victim of its own success. The Blue Coat School provided the growing town with a small army of apprentices raised in Anglican godliness.

Birmingham: Political and Administrative Organisation

Birmingham has long been associated with Nonconformity and much as been said about the town's puritan sympathies during the Civil War period. An article written in 1939 by Arthur Langley and published in *Past and Present* stated that 'the days of England's Uncrowned King saw the dawn of (Birmingham's) new era'.¹²⁷ A Royalist commentator in 1643 found it 'a pestilent and seditious town'; to Lord Clarendon, who spoke in retrospect, it was a town 'of as great fame for hearty, wilful, affected disloyalty to the king as any place in England'.¹²⁸ At the Restoration, however, Birmingham was commended for its 'readiness to serve King and country'.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, it has been suggested that, as a result of Birmingham's support for

¹²³ *The Reports of Charity Commissioners: Relating to the County of Warwickshire 1819-1837* (London, 1890), p.578.

¹²⁴ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p, 458.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p.90.

¹²⁷ Langley, 'Birmingham Baptists', p. 17.

¹²⁸ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p.270.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p.272.

Cromwell's regime, Charles II refused to grant the town a charter of incorporation.¹³⁰ This measure, it has been assumed, led to its long-term growth. This argument will be discussed later. Still, by the eighteenth century riots in Birmingham against Dissenters reflected a fusion of political and sectarian concerns. Birmingham had a High Church and Tory faction, but there was also a significant body of Dissenting and Whig opinion.¹³¹

Although trade and population were increasing during our period, one feature of the town, its government, remained unaltered. Birmingham was still a manor. The lord kept his rights as a landowner and head of the manorial court and the town still had a village mentality. Apart from the court, Birmingham's only other form of government was the parish with its churchwardens, overseers of the poor, constables, and surveyors of highways. Until the late eighteenth century, therefore, Birmingham still had the institutions of a rural parish. In 1716 there had been a movement to gain incorporation, and a petition for a charter was sent to Parliament, without any result. The pretext of the petition was to preserve order after riots had occurred in the town the previous year. One might suppose that the Whig party, in order to preserve order and protect the property of its members, forwarded the petition but Conrad Gill, in his *History of Birmingham*, suggests that the application came from the Tories, and that they used the riots as an excuse that might appeal to Whig ministers. The Whigs already were in the majority on the ruling body, but in a borough the Tories could have been expected to gain control.¹³²

¹³⁰ Langley, 'Birmingham Baptists', p. 17.

¹³¹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, pp.272-74.

¹³² Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, pp.73-5.

In 1722, the Tories tried again to upset the balance when the Court Leet of the manor held its autumn session, its jury carrying out the business of the town. J.T. Bunce has stated that it was ‘an unwritten but unbroken rule that the high Bailiff should be a Churchman and the low Bailiff a Nonconformist’.¹³³ Gill informs us that at times of heightened political feelings the low Bailiff would try to ensure that the jury contained a safe number of Whigs. However, in 1722 a plot was hatched to pack the jury with Tories. They would try to elect the next low Bailiff and he in turn would choose the next and so on; consequently, if the plan succeeded there would always be a Tory ascendancy in the manor. The full number of jurors was twenty-four but, in accordance with custom, the low Bailiff (at this time a Whig glover named Joseph Worrall) had been told to nominate thirteen. The court was awash with Tories when the election was due to commence, but no more than six out of the thirteen that Joseph Worrall had nominated had arrived by the time the election was due to begin, opening the way for a Tory victory.¹³⁴ At Warwick assizes in 1723, however, an action was brought to expel the new Tory bailiff from his office, on the grounds of illegal appointment. According to Conrad Gill ‘the Whig Presbyterians who brought the action won their case, on the grounds that the Deputy Steward had clearly violated the custom of the manor’.¹³⁵

Birmingham: Religious affiliations

We are often told that religious Dissent was strong in Birmingham. Certainly, during the Interregnum Presbyterians had been able to meet in the parish church (St. Martin’s) and in St. John’s Chapel (Deritend). In the 1640s Samuel Wills had made the pulpit of St. Martin’s a

¹³³ Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, p.74.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, pp.54-5.

platform for Presbyterianism.¹³⁶ Josiah Slader, a prominent advocate of Puritan views, was also said to have ‘held the pulpit’ of St. Martin’s until about 1634.¹³⁷ After the Restoration Presbyterians used a meetinghouse of their own in Digbeth and, in 1689, they built the Old meetinghouse in Worcester Street. In 1732 the new meetinghouse was built.¹³⁸ Presbyterians had become divided in their opinions early in the eighteenth century: many had been influenced by Deism and had adopted Unitarian views. Others subscribed to orthodox doctrine. The two branches parted company in 1748, when the Trinitarian section became Congregationalists and established Carr’s Lane chapel. The original building designed to hold 450 people, soon became too small for the congregation.¹³⁹

There were also other Nonconformist sects that were well established in Birmingham. The Baptists had a chapel in Cannon Street, built in 1738. The Society of Friends (Quakers), although less numerous, had several members who played a prominent part in the life of the town during the eighteenth century: the Lloyds, Pembertons, and Galtons all contributed to the growing prosperity of the town. As mentioned above, the strength of the Church of England in Birmingham has often been overshadowed by the ‘paramount influence of Nonconformity’.¹⁴⁰ Still, even if all the Protestant Nonconformist sects were combined their number would not have exceeded the number of Anglican worshipers in Birmingham during our period.

¹³⁶*V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p. 411.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, p.59.

¹³⁹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p. 416.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

Conclusion

The Forest of Arden clearly provides us with a valuable region for investigation. It possessed a historic unity, but was a stretch of country that contained great contrasts. The region was economically diverse, containing both a traditional agricultural economy and a growing industrial base. Moreover, the region did not constitute a single ecclesiastical unity as it was under the divided episcopal rule of the bishops of Lichfield and Coventry and of Worcester. Significantly, the manner of episcopal government has been widely regarded as a vital element in determining the fortunes of Anglican dioceses at this time. In addition, Birmingham in particular was experiencing growing industrialisation and urbanisation. Judging whether the Church of England in Birmingham was effective in maintaining a firm hold over the loyalties of its adherents in a town that was experiencing substantial population growth (and, in consequence, was presumably developing looser ties of community) is central to understanding the pressure the established Church faced at this time and the success of its response. Likewise, the status of Birmingham as an unincorporated town and the religious significance of this status are invaluable in gauging the real strength of local Dissent. Birmingham has often been seen as a town with a Dissenting majority. This study, however, aims to present a rather different picture of the fortunes of the Anglican Church in this increasingly important town at this time. By raising new points for discussion (such as the building of St. Philip's church and, more importantly, the forming of the new parish of St. Philip's)¹⁴¹ this thesis will aim to draw attention to the importance of the Church of England in what has been wrongly portrayed as a Dissenter's paradise.

¹⁴¹ *Act of Parliament for Building a Parish Church and Parsonage House, and Making a New Church Yard and New Parish of St. Philips (7 Anne, c.131) (1708).*

Throughout this study certain areas will be explored in order to shed light on the situation of the Anglican Church in the region. The relations of the Church of England with both Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters and the operation of the church courts will come under scrutiny. This enquiry will reveal a Church intimately involved in the life of the people, providing a great deal of their justice, acting as a moral policeman, and even providing a respectable system of popular education. This enquiry, therefore, will seek to present a broad picture of the functioning of the Church of England in a local setting, thus making a contribution to our existing knowledge of the established Church from the Restoration to the eve of the evangelical revival. This study does not wish to compartmentalise the period but one of the benefits of this time span is that it allows us to reconstruct a world that is too often forgotten. The following chapters will hopefully demonstrate the vitality of Anglicanism and the existence of a more vibrant and effective Church than has been traditionally thought.

CHAPTER ONE

POPULAR ANGLICANISM

The general impression, conveyed by both contemporaries and historians, of ordinary parish church services during the period of this study is of the ‘predictability of the Prayer Book service, of the length and dullness of the sermon and of the prevailing somnolence of the occasion’.¹ Victorian critics were vicious in their criticism of their eighteenth-century predecessors:

Who does not remember the air of grim respectability, which pervaded the modern town church of a certain type, with its big bleak portico, its pretentious beadle, and muffin capped charity boys? Enter and notice the tall neatly grained witness-boxes and jury boxes in which the faithful are impanelled; the ‘three-decker’ pulpit placed in the centre on the building; the lumbering gallery which is carried round three sides on the interior on iron columns; the wizen-faced pew-opener eager for stray shillings; the earnest penitent who is inspecting the inside of his hat; the patent warming apparatus; the velvet cushions which profane the altar; the hassocks which no one kneels on; the poor-box which is always empty. Hear how the Clerk drones out the responses for a congregation, which is too genteel to respond for themselves. Listen to the complicated discord in which the words of the Psalmist strike the ear, after copious revision by Tate and Brady. Mark the prompt, if misdirected zeal, with which old ladies insist on testing the

¹ J. H. Bettey, *Church and Community: The Parish Church in English Life* (Bradford-on-Avon, 1979), p.114.

accuracy of the preacher's memory by turning out the text. Observe the length, the unimpeachable propriety, the overwhelming dullness of his sermon.²

Similarly, *The Sleeping Congregation* (1736), William Hogarth's satirical portrayal of the dullness of eighteenth-century services, is still an image embedded in our consciousness. Oliver Goldsmith's declaration in 1765 that the public worship of the Church of England was 'dry, methodical and unaffecting: delivered with the most insipid calmness'³ only reinforces the popular image of Anglican public worship at this time.

Views of historians have inevitably been coloured by such contemporary criticisms of church worship. In his work on the Church of England, J.R.H. Moorman (1953) concluded that in its worship the Restoration Church of England was 'pedestrian and prosaic'.⁴ G.R. Cragg expressed the same sentiment in 1960 in his appraisal of the Hanoverian Church of England.⁵ In addition, in his treatment of episcopal activities in the Hereford and Oxford dioceses from 1660 to 1760, W.M. Marshall concluded that the worst failing of the established Church was in the 'tedium of its worship for the mass of the people'.⁶ More recently, there have been historians who were ready to redress the balance. F.C. Mather's work has done much to revise historians' attitudes. In his essay 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830' (1985), he not only illustrated how the introduction of certain forms of music and other innovations must dispel

² C. L. Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival* (London, 1872), p, 117.

³ Quoted in S. Goodenough, *The Country Parson* (Newton Abbot, 1983), p.93.

⁴ J.R.H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, 2nd Edition (London, 1953), p. 288.

⁵ G.R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789* (Harmondsworth, 1960), p.133.

⁶ W. M. Marshall, 'Episcopal Activity in the Hereford and Oxford Dioceses, 1660-1760', *Midland History*, 8, 1983, 106-120, at p.118.

the Church of England's reputation for 'musty formalism and commonplace moralising',⁷ but also how it was the preferences and availability of the laity which determined the frequency of communion, catechising and weekday services. The late Dr. Mather was not alone in advancing new perspectives on Anglican public worship. Dr. Jacob has made the point that 'in the first half of the eighteenth century the Church was clearly managed by lay-people, they provided the funds and energy, and determined the nature of the provision'.⁸ Implicit in both their arguments is the view that the eighteenth-century Church was the 'triumph of the Laudian ideal in Anglican liturgy and worship'.⁹

Holy Communion

'The solemn Act of Worship wherein we do most shew ourselves Christians', wrote Bishop Stillingfleet in 1690, is the 'celebration of the *Holy Eucharist*'. Here, Stillingfleet, commonly thought of as a Whig Latitudinarian bishop, was clearly exhibiting what F.C. Mather described as a form of Latitudinarianism that bore a 'mystical cast'.¹⁰ 'Holy Eucharist' was a term often used by High Churchmen to describe Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper.¹¹ On the other hand, as Mather pointed out, it is often assumed that 'one of the principal marks of the age's distrust of mystery was the minimal role accorded to the sacrament of the Holy

⁷ F. C. Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36, 1985, 255-83, at p.236.

⁸ W. M. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), p.222.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.222.

¹⁰ Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship', p. 256; See also Dr. G. V. Bennett, 'King William III and the Episcopate', in G. V. Bennett and J. D. Walsh (eds), *Essays in Modern English Church History in Memory of Norman Sykes*, 1966, pp.104, 31. Bishop Stillingfleet is seen as a 'moderate Tory'.

¹¹ V. Barrie-Curien, 'The Clergy in the Diocese of London in the Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), p.95.

Communion'.¹² An entry in the churchwardens' accounts of the parish of Solihull in the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry may help to dispel this assumption. In 1665 occurs the entry 'payed for the bread & wine & frankincence for the first Sacrament'.¹³ Incense, with its ritualistic overtones, was clearly still used in this parish in the late seventeenth century. Similarly, in 1688 the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of Aston reveal that 2s was paid for 'charcoales that were used at the church'.¹⁴ John Kettlewell, rector of Coleshill, also wrote that, at the dedication of a communion plate in 1684, the Holy Communion was celebrated 'according to an elaborate form'.¹⁵

The tone of Anglican worship was partly dictated by the interior design of the church. Within the church itself, Laud had regarded the altar as the most holy area.¹⁶ The aftermath of the fire of London in 1666, which necessitated the rebuilding of many of the capital's churches, served as the catalyst for the repositioning and railing of communion tables nationally. From the 1680s bishops can be found enforcing altar style and railed communion tables in their dioceses.¹⁷ Local examples of attempts to enforce the railing of chancels highlight the importance attached to the sacrament. It is evident from churchwardens' presentments that the requirement that the chancel should be railed was being rigorously

¹² Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship', p.269.

¹³ J. Featherstone (ed.), *Warwickshire Antiquarian Magazine*, 1859-1877, p.34; See also R. Pemberton, *Solihull and its Church* (Exeter, 1905), p.136.

¹⁴ A. E. Everitt, 'Aston Church', in *Birmingham and Midland Institute, Archaeological Section Transactions* 1870, p.21.

¹⁵ *A Complete Collection of the Works of John Kettlewell BD*, 1, 1719, pp. 56, 57, 58.

¹⁶ J. G. Davis, *The Secular use of Church Buildings* (London, 1968), p. 106. The evidence does point to the fact that Laudian ideals came back into prominence.

¹⁷ K. Fincham and N. Tyacke, 'Religious Change and the Laity in England', *History Today*, 6, June 2008, 42-48, at pp.47-8.

enforced in the diocese of Worcester in the early 1680s.¹⁸ Here and there, as at St. John's chapel, Henley-in-Arden, the communion table stood in the middle of the chancel to enable the communicants to partake of the bread and wine according to the 'old Puritan practice'.¹⁹ This practice, however, does not seem to have been widespread in the Forest of Arden. Although the churchwardens' presentments for the majority of parishes within the deanery of Arden in the Lichfield diocese have not survived,²⁰ it is possible to trace an attempt to emphasise the importance of Holy Communion by Bishop Wood (1671-1692). In 1685 all churchwardens and ministers of the diocese were required to:

Cause the communion tables of your severall and respective churches to be placed side way under the east windows of the chancels ...and to be decently served with rails that so they may not only be p [re] served from common users ...but also that your parishioners may ...with humble Reverence approach the sayd Rails ...to receive the devyne mysteries...²¹

This order, which originated from the commissary of the archbishop of Canterbury, was certainly sent to the parish of Astley²² and Dr. Salter has shown that churchwardens' accounts reflect the success of this order in the Lichfield diocese more generally.²³ The churchwardens'

¹⁸ J. L. Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy, 1660-1714' (University of Birmingham PhD, 1975), 1, p. 98.

¹⁹ W. Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden: An Ancient Market Town* (Buckingham, 1946), p.48.

²⁰ *Guide to the Contents of Lichfield Record Office* (1999). Lichfield record office have now published this comprehensive guide to both diocesan and non-diocesan holdings of the Lichfield Record Office, which is the record office recognised by the Bishop of Lichfield as the archive repository for the Diocese of Lichfield. It also includes Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive service.

²¹ Warwickshire County Record Office [hereafter cited as W.C.R.O.] DR 19/61. A full copy of this order exists.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p. 98.

accounts for the parish of St. Martin's, Birmingham, tell us that the communion table was railed in 1688.²⁴

Lay demand, financial constraints upon the parish, and regional traditions could be important factors in the frequency with which Holy Communion was administered. Canon 21 insisted on a minimum of three celebrations a year, at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun. Some ecclesiastics did encourage their clergy to administer it more often; in 1662, for example Bishop Henchman of Salisbury charged his clergy to administer communion once a month.²⁵ Various local studies have shown, however, that by the middle of the eighteenth century most churches had at least four celebrations per year.²⁶ Most of the returns made by the clergy to articles of enquiry at the bishop's primary visitations for the deanery of Arden do not survive, and therefore make it difficult to estimate the frequency of communion for this region. Churchwardens' accounts, however, can give an insight into the frequency of communion. Evidence indicates that, apart from Elmdon (whose rector was presented for 'not having above one sacrament in all ye whole year')²⁷ and Fillongley (where the number of celebrations went up from twice to the minimum of three times a year),²⁸ by 1674 considerable importance was attached to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the parishes of the deanery of Arden.

²⁴ J. Thackray Bunce, 'St. Martin's Church', in *Birmingham and Midland Institute, Archeological Section Transactions*, 1870, p.18.

²⁵ D. A. Spaeth, 'Common Prayer? Popular Observance of the Anglican Liturgy in Restoration Wiltshire' in S. J. Wright (ed.), *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion 1350-1750* (London, 1988), p. 133.

²⁶ A. Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon* (Newton Abbot, 1969), p. 45; N. Yates, R. Hume, and P. Hastings (eds), *Religion and Society in Kent, 1640-1914* (Woodbridge, 1994), p.27; J. Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Latter Stuarts: The Leicestershire Experience* (Chicago, 1978). Pruett gives a more pessimistic view, stating that in Leicestershire majority of churches administered the sacrament the minimum three times a year.

²⁷ L.R.O. B/V/5/1 Elmdon., Churchwardens' Presentments,

²⁸ W.C.R.O. DR 404/677-1097.

At Astley the number of celebrations was three or four in the 1670s, rising to six by the end of the century and, for the years between 1700 and 1740, the churchwardens' accounts indicate that between four and eight celebrations were being held.²⁹ At Aston, churchwardens' accounts record that, from 1671, six sacrament Sundays were the average.³⁰ Furthermore, it was said that John Kettlewell, vicar of Coleshill from 1682 until he was deprived as a non-juror, celebrated the sacraments 'frequently'. It was said of him that 'he always administered the Holy Communion on Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Day, the Sunday after, and Whit-Sunday; and several times of the year besides'.³¹

It had been the custom in the parish of Solihull since the beginning of the seventeenth century to administer the sacrament of Holy Communion four times a year, for which 'wine was procured in astonishing quantities' including twelve quarts of wine for 'Good Fryday Sacrament' and Easter Sunday.³² The large quantity of wine purchased for the Good Friday sacrament may reflect the survival of the 'Easter Sepulchre'.³³ The practice of consecrating the sacred elements on Maundy Thursday, and preserving them in a recess near the altar, to which the name of 'Easter Sepulchre' was given, was sanctioned about A.D.680. A careful watch was kept during these days. Any who desired it communicated from the Reserved Sacrament on Good Friday at the 'mass of the Pre-sanctified'. The churchwardens' accounts for Solihull show that the Easter Sepulchre was celebrated at Solihull in 1534-5 but it would be a grave mistake, however, to assume that the survival of this pre-Reformation custom

²⁹ W.C.R.O. DR 19/63-120.

³⁰ A. E. Everitt, *Aston Church*, (Birmingham, 1875), p. 17.

³¹ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', p. 107; See also *The Life of John Kettlewell: His Ministry while Vicar of Coleshill, till his Deprivation, II*, p. 24.

³² Pemberton, *Solihull and its Church*, p. 136.

³³ *Ibid*, p.112.

implied any crypto-Catholic beliefs. Although Solihull had a high ratio of Recusants, Judith Hurwich explains that such manifestations of ‘the old religion’ were expressions of social institutions rather than ‘specific religious doctrines’.³⁴ F. C. Mather points out when discussing Church ritual that ‘the momentum behind them derived from habit sustained by the social and economic needs of the village community. But their continuing incidence helped bolster the traditional element in ecclesiastical observance’.³⁵ Another possible explanation for the large quantities of wine purchased for the sacrament at Solihull may lie in the Book of Common Prayer, which orders that ‘if any of the bread and wine remain unconsecrated, the curate shall have it to his own use’.³⁶

Bishop Stillingfleet, in his primary visitation charge to the diocese of Worcester in 1690, stated that ‘there is generally too great a neglect of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper’ but he was not, however, ‘about to determine the frequency in [his] parishes’ for he supposed it ‘to be often done’.³⁷ In this respect the bishop had nothing to fear from his Warwickshire parishes apart from Sherbourne, which had only two sacrament Sundays until the mid-eighteenth century ‘as a general rule’.³⁸ The evidence from the deanery of Warwick also supports the argument that Anglican public worship in the eighteenth century was ‘higher’ than has generally been perceived, a fact that is reflected by the relative frequency with which

³⁴ J. Hurwich, ‘Dissent and Catholicism in English Society: A Study of Warwickshire, 1660-1720’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 16, 1976, pp .32-3.

³⁵ Mather, ‘Georgian Churchmanship’, pp. 260-61.

³⁶ The Book of Common Prayer

³⁷ Edward Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester’s Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese in his Primary Visitation* (1691), pp.31- 33. The assumption that latitudinarians did not urge frequent reception of the Eucharist can be challenged by the remarks of Bishop Stillingfleet.

³⁸ Salter, ‘Warwickshire Clergy’, 1, p.100; M. Ransome (ed.), ‘The State of the Bishopric of Worcester 1782-1808’, *Worcestershire Historical Society*, New Series, 6, 1968, p. 205. By 1782 Sherbourne had four celebrations a year.

the sacrament of communion was administered in this region. Parochial expenditure on wine reveals that communion may have been celebrated at Budbroke six times in 1704,³⁹ and about eleven times at St. Mary's, Warwick.⁴⁰ The same pattern can also be discerned at St. Nicholas', Warwick.⁴¹

The relative frequency of the sacrament in both deaneries may in part be due to the geographical configuration of the Forest of Arden region. As mentioned earlier the Arden region largely consisted of rural parishes that lacked larger settlements. Hamlets and houses lay scattered, and a parish consisted of these rather than a 'nucleated village' built round the parish church. It is entirely possible that, as Viviane Barrie-Curien has suggested, nucleated villages tended to have fewer celebrations than scattered hamlets, where it was more difficult to gather the whole population together. In the latter case, people came a few at a time to a communion service offered more frequently.⁴² On the other hand, the laity did not always appreciate the frequency of the celebration of Holy Communion. At Hasely the churchwardens' presentments reveal a dispute between parishioners and their minister. The churchwardens not only derided having the sacrament at Christmas but also objected to the 'great and unnecessary charge the Minister put the Parish to in having such frequent Sacraments, five in less than a year'.⁴³ A further indication that the outlay for sacramental bread and wine could be a burden upon the parish finances can be seen in the parish registers

³⁹ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p.100; W.C.R.O. DR 8/10.

⁴⁰ W.C.R.O. DR 141/1. By 1782, at, St. Mary's, Warwick, Holy Communion was celebrated monthly and on the 'great festivals'. Ransome (ed), 'Bishopric of Worcester', p. 212.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 213.

⁴² Barrie-Curien, 'Clergy in the Diocese of London', pp.100-1: See also Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 60. Dr Jacob makes the point that this suggestion remains unproven.

⁴³ W.R.O.BA 2289/10/xiii.

of Wooton Wawen in 1704. A memorandum referring to the provision of the ‘sacramental wine and bread’ for the mother church and her two chapels, Henley-in-Arden and Ullenhall, indicate concern over outlay for bread and wine. The memorandum pointed out that:

Whereas there has formerly been some misunderstanding between the inhabitants of Wooton and those of Henley and Ullenhall concerning the latter paying their proportion towards the charges of Sacramental bread and wine at Wooton. It is agreed that the inhabitants of Henley and Ullenhall shall pay their proportion of the said charges of Sacramental bread and wine and for the time being provide Sacramental bread and wine for their respective chapels.⁴⁴

This must have been a financial burden on smaller and poorer parishes and chapelries. Actually, the remaining churchwardens’ accounts indicate that the expenditure on wine for the chapelries of Henley and Ullenhall was minimal in our period; the provision of wine could be a costly business and in part affect the frequency with which the communion service was administered. This is evident at Beaudesert, a small, poor parish and neighbour to Henley in Arden, where the expenditure on wine was kept to a minimum, indicating that the celebration of Holy Communion was restricted to the statutory three or four times a year.⁴⁵

In part, it was lay demand which determined the frequency with which communion was celebrated. Contemporaries regularly remarked that the laity were reluctant to participate in

⁴⁴ W. Cooper, *Wooton Wawen its History and Records* (Buckingham, 1936), p. 94. The memorandum also indicates that the parishioners of Henley-in-Arden and Ullenhall should pay a proportion towards the upkeep of the mother church and repair their respective chapels at their own cost.

⁴⁵ W. Cooper, *Records of Beaudesert* (Buckingham, 1931), p.xliii.

the Lord's Supper. As Bishop of Worcester, Stillingfleet lamented in his primary visitation charge that 'There is generally too great a Neglect of this [the Lord's Supper], which is the most proper part of Evangelical Worship'.⁴⁶ Stillingfleet even compared this with the zeal of the early church: 'if we had that warmth and fervor of devotion, that Love to Christ, and to each other which the primitive Christians had, we should make it as constant a part of our Publick Worship, as they did'.⁴⁷ As mentioned before, Stillingfleet is often portrayed as an archetypal Latitudinarian, supposedly unimpressed by the outward forms of devotion, yet his Latitudinarianism could embrace a commitment to regular communion. In his visitation charge of 1690 he gave his reasons for why he believed partaking of the Lords Supper was in decline: 'unreasonable scruples in some and misapprehension in others, and a general coldness and indifference, as to matters of religion, have hitherto hindered the reviving of this primitive part of Devotion among us'.⁴⁸

The evidence does not permit us to estimate the precise number of communicants throughout our region at this time. John Kettlewell, vicar of Coleshill, was at pains to remind his parishioners of their duty to participate in the Lord's Supper. We are told that 'the greatest part of his parishioners had been very negligent in the Performance of that duty' and that Kettlewell 'took a great deal of pains to make them sensible of that Fault, both from the Pulpit, and in Conversation'.⁴⁹ Some churchwardens even made it clear that villagers went years without receiving communion. For example, the churchwarden of Arrow in 1674 stated

⁴⁶ Stillingfleet, *Charge*, p.31.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.32.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.33.

⁴⁹ *The Life of Mr John Kettlewell, II*, p.24.

that: 'Thomas Sigron hath not received the Sacrament of many years'.⁵⁰ On the other hand, it seems that at Claverdon in 1687 'All that are of the Church of England resort then unto upon the Lord's Day receive the communion according to the custom of the Church'.⁵¹ Although out of our period, 'The state of the Bishopric of Worcester in the year 1782' reveals that parishioners were still largely averse to participating in the Lord's Supper in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The survey shows that numbers of communicants were generally low, both in actual numbers and in relation to the total number of families in the parish. To give examples; in Wooton Wawen thirty-eight families produced nine communicants, while in St. Mary's, Warwick, 700 families produced only 150 communicants. Likewise, at Sutton Coldfield in the Lichfield and Coventry diocese in the latter part of the eighteenth century it was stated that 'the people are very negligent in their attendance upon it..., insomuch as not more than 120 usually communicate at ye festivals and at each of ye monthly Sacraments not more than 70.'⁵²

These figures do not tally with the answers given in the diocese of York in 1743, where there is a correlation between the number of families in a parish and the number of Easter communicants.⁵³ Easter, according to canonical requirements, was the one time at which everyone was supposed to communicate.⁵⁴ The Prayer Book rubric stipulated that 'every parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the year, of which Easter [is] to be

⁵⁰ W.R.O. BA, /1 807xi.

⁵¹ W.R.O. BA 2608 807 x.

⁵² W.K. Riland Bedford, *History of Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1891), p.41.

⁵³ Jacob, *Lay People*, p.58.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.59; D. Spaeth, 'Common Prayer? Popular Observance of the Anglican Liturgy in Restoration Wiltshire', in S. Wright (ed.), *Parish, Church and People: Studies in Lay Religion 1350- 1750* (1988), p.135.

one'.⁵⁵ Churchwardens' accounts of sacrament money received do give some confirmation that numbers could be larger at Easter. Aston churchwardens' accounts for 1671 record that 6s 4d was received at the first communion, 14s 0d at the next, 7s 0d at another and £1.0s.7d was received on Easter day.⁵⁶ In contrast, Dr. Spaeth has shown for Wiltshire that churchwardens' purchases of bread and wine for communion were only slightly, if at all, greater at Easter than at other feasts.⁵⁷ The same is true for at least a majority of parishes in the Forest of Arden.⁵⁸ The accounts for the parish of Astley, in the deanery of Arden, illustrate that the purchase of bread and wine for the Easter sacrament was no more than for any other feast. For example, in 1698 the accounts stated that the churchwardens had: 'paid for bread and wine ye Sunday at Easter 3s 4d, paid for bread and wine ye Sunday at Whitsun day 3s 4d, paid for bread and wine at Michaelmas 3s 4d'. In 1707 the churchwardens were still only paying 3s 8d for bread and wine for the Easter sacrament.⁵⁹

One possible reason for absence from communion after 1689 is the passing of the Act of Toleration. Indeed, churchwardens' presentments for both deaneries after this date show little or no presentments for non-attendance at church,⁶⁰ an indication of the lax regime that prevailed after 1690. In some cases, the explanation was a conscious Nonconformity. Certainly, all forms of Dissent flourished in the Forest of Arden; out of sixty-nine families in

⁵⁵*The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments: and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England* (London, 1638), p.262.

⁵⁶ Everitt, *Aston Church*, p.17, Accounts.

⁵⁷ Spaeth, 'Common Prayer' p.134.

⁵⁸ W.C.R.O. Churchwardens' Account Book; DRB. 64/63 Solihull; DR 404/48 Fillongley; DR 133, DR 141, DR 537, St. Mary's, Warwick; DR 360, HR 70, Alcester; DRB 81, Coleshill; DRB 14, 106 Elmdon.

⁵⁹ W.C.R.O. DR 19/63-120.

⁶⁰ W.R.O. BA 2289. Churchwardens' Presentments.

Arrow, thirty-four were Papist, seventeen Anabaptist and three Quaker.⁶¹ Similarly, the Solihull area was a hot bed of Catholicism and Birmingham was renowned for its Dissenting congregations. In spite of this, there is no evidence of active Dissent in many of the parishes of the Forest of Arden. At Claverdon after the Restoration the minister reported that ‘generally ye whole parish resort to Church to hear divine service’.⁶² There is also no evidence of vigorous Dissent in Birmingham in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration, although its minister and a majority of its inhabitants during the Interregnum were active Presbyterians.⁶³ We must ask, therefore, are there any other possible explanations for the lack of lay participation in the communion service?

The Book of Common Prayer was, perhaps, in part responsible for this situation, which warned communicants that ‘they ate and drank their own damnation if they received the sacrament unworthily’.⁶⁴ This point was not lost on Bishop Stillingfleet, who remarked that; ‘there are some who abstain, because they are not so well satisfied with themselves as to their own preparations’.⁶⁵ Equally, it was stated that

No minister shall in any wise admit to the receiving of the holy Communion, any of his flock which be openly known to live in sin notorious without repentance,

⁶¹ Ransome, ed, ‘Bishopric of Worcester’, p.189.

⁶² W.R.O. BA 2608/ 807/ x, Claverdon.

⁶³ S. Whitehouse, *A History of St. Martin’s Parish Church, Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1922), pp. 4, 12; Rev. A. T. Jenkins, *The Story of St. Martin’s, Birmingham’s Parish Church* (Birmingham, 1925), pp. 22-23; C. Gill, *History of Birmingham, Manor and Borough to 1865*, Volume 1(Oxford, 1952), pp. 54-56.

⁶⁴ The Book of Common Prayer, p.250.

⁶⁵ Stillingfleet, *Charge*, p. 33.

nor any who have maliciously and openly contended with their neighbours, until they shall be reconciled.⁶⁶

One could say that the rubrics themselves were alienating parishioners, for the above directive must have included many, if not the majority, of potential communicants in any given parish. If we look beyond the Forest of Arden we can get a clear idea of the implications of those statements. In 1692 the curate of Coddington in Bedfordshire reported that one of his parishioners had claimed that communion ‘did nothing but damn people; it was impossible to receive it worthily & those that receive it otherwise did damn themselves’.⁶⁷ In the eyes of many parishioners, therefore, it was better to abstain than to receive it and face the risk of certain damnation.

Weekday and Sunday services

The parish clergyman was under obligation to conduct services not only on Sundays, but also on saints’ days, fast days, and on days of national commemoration.⁶⁸ The incumbent was obliged to ‘declare to the people, every Sunday, at the time appointed, whether there be any Holy days or Fasting-days the week following’.⁶⁹ The Prayer Book stated that he should also read morning and evening prayers on every other day throughout the year, including the litany on Wednesdays and Fridays.⁷⁰ It was assumed that where there was a resident incumbent, the common practice was to have two services each Sunday, matins at 11.00 am, generally with a

⁶⁶ *A Collection of Articles, Canons, Injunctions: Together with Several Acts of Parliament Concerning Ecclesiastical Matters; Some whereof are to be Read in Churches* (1724), p.24.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Spaeth, ‘Common Prayer’, p. 135.

⁶⁸ A. Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London, 1980), p.63.

⁶⁹ *A Collection of Articles, Canons, Injunctions*, p.44.

⁷⁰ *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. x; 30.

sermon, and evensong at 3.00 pm. The morning service was often very long (three hours and fifteen minutes,⁷¹ without communion), including the litany besides a lengthy sermon. By the same token evening prayers often lasted an hour and a half.⁷² In addition, special prayers could be said at Christmas and Easter and for special occasions such as the monarch's succession.⁷³ The model of two Sunday services each week, however, was a somewhat unrealistic expectation. Sykes maintained that by the mid eighteenth century a majority of parishes did not live up to the ideal.⁷⁴ Anthony Russell has written that a steady decline in Sunday duty marked the whole century and the early decades of the nineteenth century, until by the 1820s one service, with a sermon, was the norm.⁷⁵ Similarly, Arthur Warne found that in Devon by 1744 weekday services were in decline in rural parishes.⁷⁶ Finally, Pruett has shown that a quarter of the parishes of Leicestershire had only one Sunday service by 1718 while almost half omitted services on weekdays.⁷⁷

When Bishop Stillingfleet began his first visitation as Bishop of Worcester in 1690 he declared that the main duty of a minister was not to 'preach a sermon or two in a week's time to your parishioners' but to 'watch over your flock i.e. knowing their condition, and applying yourself suitable to them'.⁷⁸ The bishop may have realised that double duty in a predominantly rural diocese was unrealistic. The silence from churchwardens' presentments for the Forest of Arden region does seem to indicate that services on Wednesdays and Fridays

⁷¹ N. Sykes, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1934), p.238.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Spaeth, 'Common Prayer'.

⁷⁴ Sykes, *Church and State*, p.238.

⁷⁵ Russell, *Clerical Profession*, pp.54-5.

⁷⁶ Warne, *Church and Society*, p.44.

⁷⁷ Pruett, *The Parish Clergy*, p. 133.

⁷⁸ Stillingfleet, *Charge*, p.12.

were rarely, if ever, performed. However, a presentment from the living of Binton stated that its incumbent had not performed weekday services 'since he came', suggesting that weekday services were performed before his arrival. What is more, the master of the charity school in Birmingham was instructed to take the boys to the 'said church [St. Philip's] on Wednesday and Friday mornings...to join in the service'.⁷⁹

Evidence from the deanery of Warwick does indicate that many parishes had only one service each Sunday. At Sherbourne in 1708 we are told that it was 'supplyd but once a week & that in the afternoon'.⁸⁰ At Henley-in-Arden in 1714 the churchwardens' stated that 'the minister omitted service every Sunday in the morning'.⁸¹ At Rowington in 1708 the churchwardens stated that Sunday service was only performed 'once'; however, by 1714 we are informed that service was performed twice.⁸² Many parishes had fortnightly services, as at Bearley whose churchwardens declared in 1708 'service only fortnightly'⁸³ and at Wolverton, where in 1708 the service was restricted to one service once a fortnight.⁸⁴

Evidence from the deanery of Arden on this subject is relatively sparse but we are informed in 1708 that at Astley 'the ancient and accustomed duty which has been usually done there is the performance of Divine Service once on Sundays...about eleven in the morning'.⁸⁵ Furthermore, in a letter to a Mr Rose from William Wright, curate of Astley, dated May 1708

⁷⁹ *A Short Account of the Charity School in St. Philip's Church Yard in Birmingham From its Institution in 1724 to 1806*, p.41.

⁸⁰ W.R.O. BA 2289/18/I, Churchwardens Presentments.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² W.R.O. BA 2289/ 17/iv.

⁸³ *Ibid* 2/v.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ W.C.R.O. CR 136/B/3600.

we are also informed that Wright preached ‘one afternoon in a fortnight’.⁸⁶ This may have been due to a dispute over his stipend.⁸⁷ In contrast, the pious John Kettlewell during his incumbency of Coleshill ‘preached twice every Sunday’.⁸⁸ A local study of the parish of St. Philip’s, Birmingham, shows that the services of Matins and Evensong were conducted every Sunday from its consecration in 1715 onwards.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the masters of the charity school were instructed not only to take the children on Wednesdays and Fridays but also to take all children to church twice each Sunday.⁹⁰ At Nuneaton, the children from the charity school were also ‘to be taken to the parish church every Lord’s Day morning and afternoon and whenever else divine service should be performed there’.⁹¹ This evidence is not conclusive but may suggest that two Sunday services and two weekday services may have been offered in the emerging industrial areas of the Forest of Arden region.

There is a temptation to point out that the number of services provided may have depended on the number of cures served by an individual clergyman.⁹² Again out of our time period, but a good indicator of this point, is Bishop Hurd’s survey of the diocese of Worcester in 1782, where it shows that about sixty per cent of the churches had single Sunday duty where two adjacent rural parishes were served by the same clergyman.⁹³ Evidence does support the

⁸⁶ W.C.R.O. CR 136/B/3599.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, /B/3595. A letter to Queen Anne’s Bounty written by William Wright stated that ‘I have not receiv’d ye stipend for Astly for the year 1704 the recovery of which has cost me almost as much as the salery is’.

⁸⁸ *The Life of Mr John Kettlewell: of his Ministry while Vicar of Coleshill, till his Deprivation, II*, p.23.

⁸⁹ C. Feeney, *St. Philip’s: An Eighteenth Century Church and Parish* (Birmingham, 1984), p.1b.

⁹⁰ *A Short Account of the Charity School in St. Philip’s*, p.41.

⁹¹ *The Reports of Charity Commissioners: Relating to the County of Warwickshire 1819-1837* (London, 1890), p.525.

⁹² N. Yates, *Building, Faith and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangements of Anglican Churches 1600-1900* (Oxford, 1991), p.56.

⁹³ Ransome (ed), ‘Bishopric of Worcester’, p. 9.

conclusion that clergy working in the deanery of Warwick throughout our period worked two adjacent livings so as to ensure that Sunday morning and afternoon services alternated in each. The rector of Wolverton was also the curate of Bearley;⁹⁴ the minister of Bidford also preached at Grafton fortnightly⁹⁵ and the minister of Atherstone, we are told, supplied ‘at Preston being half a mile from Atherstone’.⁹⁶ In addition, neighbouring ministers might also serve parishes that were waiting for an incumbent to arrive. In 1699, following the death of the rector, neighbouring ministers were serving Binton, an arrangement which was again renewed in 1705 when the rector ‘went... to be chaplain to a Regiment of Horse in Flanders’.⁹⁷ It may also be argued that lay demand contributed to the number of services performed. At Beaudesert in 1674 it was reported that ‘people do not come except at some (very) solemn times when there is a Sermon and then very rarely’. Two years later, in 1676, ‘service is not read, though the minister gives due notice’.⁹⁸ We could look on this as lay apathy or, as Dr. Spaeth has suggested, in rural parishes farmers pleaded farm routines for not attending morning services or releasing their servants to attend.⁹⁹

Catechising

Catechising the young was the primary means of propagating the tenets of Anglicanism during the eighteenth century and it had been an essential part of the pastoral work of the

⁹⁴ W.R.O. BA 2289/2/v.

⁹⁵ *Ibid* 3/iii.

⁹⁶ W.R.O. BA 2289/ 1/xv.

⁹⁷ *Ibid* 3/ii.

⁹⁸ W.R.O. BA 2289/2/vi.

⁹⁹ Spaeth, ‘Common Prayer’, pp.140-1.

Church of England since the reign of Edward VI.¹⁰⁰ The custom was not only enjoined by canon and Prayer Book rubric, but the Church of England catechism was seen as a model of instruction for a disciplined life, ‘the key of knowledge, which readily opens the door into the great mystery of godliness’.¹⁰¹ To catechise was an important clerical function laying down the foundations for an ‘ordered life of duty and sacrament’.¹⁰² George Herbert wrote in 1652 that:

The country parson values Catechising highly: for there being three points of his duty, the one, to infuse a competent knowledge of salvation in every one of his flock; the other, to multiply, and to build up this knowledge to a spirituall Temple; the third, to inflame this knowledge, to presse, and drive it to practice, turning it to reformation of life... Catechising is the first point, and but by Catechising, the others cannot be attained.¹⁰³

To achieve such standards the clergyman was ordered to instruct ‘the youth and ignorant persons of his parish’ in the Prayer Book catechism, and to test them on it ‘upon every Sunday and holy day before evening prayer’.¹⁰⁴ What is more, the catechism was intended to pave the way to confirmation and reception of the sacrament, the introduction to the Prayer

¹⁰⁰J. Gregory, ‘The Eighteenth-Century Reformation: the Pastoral Task of the Anglican Clergy after 1689’, in J. Walsh, S. Taylor and C. Haydon (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: from Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), p.71.

¹⁰¹ E. Boughen, *A Short Exposition of the Catechism of the Church of England* (1668), A3.

¹⁰² Mather, ‘Georgian Churchmanship’, p.279.

¹⁰³ G. Herbert, *A Priest to the Temple, or: The Country Parson His Character and Rule of Holy Life* (London, 1652), p. 21.

¹⁰⁴Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, pp.67, 9; See also Green, *The Christian’s ABC*, p.110; *A Collection of Articles, Canons, Injunctions*, p.42.

Book's order of confirmation stated that none shall be confirmed 'but such can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and can also answer to such other Questions, as in the short Catechism are contained'.¹⁰⁵ Bishop Lloyd of Worcester, when writing to his clergy in 1699, made this point plain:

All the children in your Parish that are above Ten Years Old, and have not received Confirmation; you either have already prepared them for that duty, or will do your utmost to prepare them for it, by making them perfect in their Catechism, before the time of my coming into your Neighbourhood.¹⁰⁶

Contemporary visitation charges repeatedly reminded the clergy of the importance of the catechism and of their duty to instruct their flock. Upon his elevation to the see of Worcester in 1690, Bishop Stillingfleet was at pains to urge his clergy to 'look after Catechising and instructing the Youth of your Parishes. He that would Reform the World to purpose must begin with the Youth; and train them up betimes in the ways of Religion and Virtue.' The Bishop emphasised that his clergy must 'catechise frequently' and let their parishioners see that 'you do it not merely because you are required to do it, but because it is the thing so useful and beneficial to them, and their children,' concluding that 'the fifty ninth Canon of our Church is very strict in it, which I desire you often to consider with the first rubric after the Catechism, and to act accordingly.'¹⁰⁷ Stillingfleet's enthusiasm for the catechism was echoed by his successor at Worcester, Bishop Lloyd, who pressed all his clergy 'very earnestly to

¹⁰⁵ *The Book of Common Prayer*, p.297.

¹⁰⁶ Rev. D. Robertson (ed.), 'Diary of Francis Evans, Secretary to Bishop Lloyd, 1699-1706', *The Worcestershire Historical Society*, 1903, p.17.

¹⁰⁷ *Stillingfleet, Charge*, pp.16, 17,18,19,20.

catechise and to expound the catechism'.¹⁰⁸ It must be noted that Bishop Lloyd had previously been Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, where no doubt his sentiments had been the same.

Although catechising was regarded as an important part of the clerical role, it has long been assumed that the eighteenth-century clergy gradually let the habit lapse, or at least confined the practice to the season of Lent with extra instruction when notice was received of a visitation and confirmation by the bishop.¹⁰⁹ Norman Sykes maintained that catechising was indeed confined to Lent;¹¹⁰ Overton and Relton, on the other hand, suggested that it had almost ceased altogether by the end of the eighteenth century.¹¹¹ More recently, and challenging these views, Diana McClatchey has shown for Oxfordshire, and Arthur Warne for Devon, that the practice was often conducted in the summer months, which were longer and more conducive than the season of Lent.¹¹² A frequent criticism attributed to the decline in catechising was the practise of pluralism and non-residency.¹¹³ Furthermore, Ian Green has suggested that in rural areas, where the parishioners were often scattered over several hamlets or the value of livings was low and pluralism necessary, catechising was irregular.¹¹⁴ This may be the case in the Forest of Arden. Edward Welchman, rector of Lapworth, complained

¹⁰⁸ A. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717: Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet* (London, 1952), p.55.

¹⁰⁹ Sykes, *Church and State*, p.244.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.243-6.

¹¹¹ J. H. Overton and F. Relton, *The English Church from the Accession of George I to the end of the Eighteenth Century 1714- 1800* (London, 1906), p.294.

¹¹² D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777-1869: A Study of the Established Church and the role of its Clergy in Local Society* (Oxford, 1960) pp.144-6; Warne, *Church and Society*, pp.48-9; Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship', p.290.

¹¹³ Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, pp.132-33.

¹¹⁴ Green, *The Christian's ABC* p.114-5.

that he had been trying to catechise the young of his parish for nine years and he wrote to a friend in 1699 stating that 'in this country the houses lie wide, and the children are not able to travel so far'.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the churchwarden of Wasperton reported that their incumbent, William Doelittle, did not catechise every Sunday because:

Hee serving two cures and reading Divine service three times a day, he hath not possibly time, but when the dayes are long, hee constantly catechises one Sunday in the afternoon before Divine service in one parish and the next Sunday in the afternoon.¹¹⁶

Churchwardens' returns show that in the rural parishes of the diocese of Worcester the rubric, which insisted on catechising being a regular Sunday activity, was generally no longer observed. Visitation articles from the diocese of Worcester regularly asked about catechising but presentments rarely give any answers before 1714, which may have been symptomatic of the zeal of Bishop Lloyd whose interest in catechising increased after 1714. Indeed, we may infer that to consolidate the Hanoverian succession Bishop Lloyd was very concerned to push the political precepts of the catechism.

Church Buildings

'Any church building is an expression of the religious sentiments of its time and place' remarked a local historian when referring to the building of St. Philip's, Birmingham.¹¹⁷ St.

¹¹⁵ R. Hudson, *Memorials of a Warwickshire Parish: Being Papers mainly Descriptive of the Records and Registers of the Parish of Lapworth* (London, 1904), p.177.

¹¹⁶ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p. 96.

¹¹⁷ Feeney, *St. Philips*, p.3a.

Philip's, consecrated in 1715, is one of many churches built at this time and referred to as 'preaching boxes' from the simplicity of their interiors and the importance given to the pulpit. There are numerous prints depicting the interior of Anglican churches during our period and we can reconstruct the interior of a late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century church from churchwardens' accounts. These sources indicate that there were fewer monuments, plain glass in the windows and whitewashed walls, whitewashing being cheap and easy to apply, and symbolically brought light even to the darkest corners of the church. After 1690, St. Martin's, Birmingham, was even said to have lost its 'medieval beauty' after some modernising; the windows losing their tracery and becoming mere oblongs of glass; the walls being coated with whitewash; and, to increase light, the roof being raised to provide both chancel and nave with clerestory windows.¹¹⁸ The churchwardens' accounts for the parish of Hampton in Arden testify that whitewashing the interior of the church was carried out over a period of many years.¹¹⁹ Whitewash provided a base for suitable texts, these texts drawing the parishioners' attention to their Christian duty of obedience to established authority and to the wickedness of rebellion; they may have included such sentences as 'The powers that be are ordained of God' and 'My son, fear God and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change'.¹²⁰ In some cases the Ten Commandments, the creed and the Lord's Prayer were painted directly on to the walls, but in most cases these were painted upon boards arranged around the altar. It had been the requirement of the 82nd canon of the Canons of 1604 that 'the Ten Commandments be set upon the east end of every church and chapel, where the

¹¹⁸ Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, p.75.

¹¹⁹ J. C. Adams, *Hampton in Arden: A Warwickshire Village* (Birmingham, 1951), p.40.

¹²⁰ Bettey, *Church and Community*, p.96.

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'.¹²¹

Alongside these scriptural texts, and indicating the fundamental relationship between Church and state, stood the royal arms, an example of which can still be seen at Wooton Wawen; the royal arms of Hanover stand over the south door of the church and the arms feature the royal monogram 'G.R.' (George I 1714-27). Likewise, at St. John's chapel, Henley-in-Arden, the royal arms of the Hanoverian dynasty are painted on a board in the tower, now indistinct; it would originally have occupied a more conspicuous position.¹²² At Solihull, the churchwardens' accounts for 1660 inform us that '£2 5s' was paid to 'William Baynton' for 'paynting the king's armes in the church'.¹²³ During the eighteenth century at Holy Trinity, Sutton Coldfield, the chancel archway displayed to the congregation three large wooden tablets showing the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Creed. Above them, in the apex, was a larger wooden tablet showing a royal coat of arms.¹²⁴

It has been suggested that these whitewashed church interiors, which suggested 'Anglican seemliness, decency and order'¹²⁵ no longer attracted the generous donations from the laity on the scale of the pre-Reformation Church. Pre-Reformation parishioners willingly lavished money on the fabric, furnishings and decoration of their churches. Parishioners left property and land in their wills which provided revenue for their church and each parish vied with its neighbour as to the richness of the ornaments given to embellish its church. Bequests and gifts

¹²¹ Quoted in Sykes, *Church and State*, p.234.

¹²² Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden*, p. 57.

¹²³ J. Featherstone (ed.), 'Solihull', *Warwickshire Antiquarian Magazine*, 1859-1877, p.34.

¹²⁴ N.G. Evans, *An Investigation of Holy Trinity Church Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1988), p.9.

¹²⁵ Betty, *Church and Community*, p .76.

from parishioners throughout the Middle Ages have been well documented.¹²⁶ St. Mary's, Warwick, offers a prime example of this generosity. The earls of Warwick were active in rebuilding, adorning and beautifying the collegiate church of St. Mary's throughout the Middle Ages. Moreover, their wills often contained endowments and instructions for work to be carried out posthumously in their names. In 1544, however, St. Mary's endowments were confiscated and the eastern part of the building was handed over to the mayor and corporation of the borough, while the western part (the nave, aisles, transepts and tower) belonged to the parish. By the end of the seventeenth century the part of the church for which the parish was responsible was in a poor state of repair. In spite of this the rebuilding of St. Mary's after it was destroyed by fire in 1694 produced a number of lay benefactors who provided much of the finance for the fabric, furnishings and decoration of the new church. Despite this generosity, St. Mary's churchwardens were still obliged to obtain money from compulsory church rates or from pew-rents and other charges upon churchgoers towards the finishing of the church. From 1704 onwards, life interests in pews were sold to parishioners and their relatives in family groups at high prices, the money being paid to the commissioners for the finishing and upkeep of St. Mary's.¹²⁷

Many studies of the Church in this period have viewed the upkeep, adornment and rebuilding of Anglican churches as a reliable reflection of popular attachment to the established Church. Dr. Gregory has noted that 'the power of the Church to extract money from the laity for the care of its places of worship should be seen as an alternative view to the

¹²⁶ Pre-Reformation churchwardens' accounts offer an insight into the constant stream of bequests and gifts from parishioners. Dr. Thomas's edition of Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire* provides a picture of the pre-Reformation parish church and its benefactors in Warwickshire.

¹²⁷ W.C.R.O. DR 1618/WA.4/3; See also P. B. Chatwin, 'The Rebuilding of St. Mary's Church, Warwick', *Birmingham Archaeological Society Transactions*, 1949.

one where the social hold of religion was increasingly marginal'.¹²⁸ Linda Colley, on the other hand, has claimed that these donations are an insight into discovering Tory gentry, for these, she believes, were the most enthusiastic when it came to sponsoring refurbishment programmes.¹²⁹ Gifts of £100 and £30 were received from Lord Brooke and Lord Digby, both prominent Tories, towards the building of St. Mary's, Warwick;¹³⁰ Lord Digby also donated communion plate to Coleshill in the first year of James II's reign.¹³¹ What is more, from 1715 to 1754 Warwickshire was said to be a county 'with hardly a Whig in it' and Tory gentlemen, unopposed at elections, represented it.¹³² There can be no question, as Linda Colley has suggested, that the Tory gentry were active sponsors of refurbishment programmes, but it is equally important to remember that Whigs could also claim to be supporters of the Church, and Whig laymen contributed generously to the upkeep of many churches.

Soon after purchasing the lordship of Edgbaston in 1717, Richard Gough, a prominent Whig,¹³³ set about to 'repair and beautify' the church, mostly at his own expense. In 1725 he not only paid for alterations to the church but also resolved to augment the living by obtaining the 'Queen's bounty'.¹³⁴ Additionally, Sir Richard's influence secured the funds needed for the

¹²⁸ J. Gregory (ed), *The Speculum of Archbishop Thomas Secker* (Woodbridge, 1995), p. xxiii.

¹²⁹ Gregory (ed), *The Speculum*, p. xxiii; See also L. Colley, *Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714-60* (Cambridge, 1982), p.117.

¹³⁰ M. Farr (ed), 'The Great Fire of Warwick', *Dugdale Society*, 1992, p.xxix.

¹³¹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 47.

¹³² R. Sedgwick, *History of Parliament: The Commons 1715-54*, 2, Members E-Y (London, 1970).

¹³³ Richard Gough was a strong supporter of Walpole. In 1715 he presented an address to the King expressing delight at 'the safe Establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty'. The Goughs were members of the new rising class or 'pseudo gentry'; See D. Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and Towns 1774-1969* (Leicester, 1980).

¹³⁴ Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated...Revised...and Continued...by William Thomas, D.D.*, II, 1730, p.901.

completion of St. Philip's, Birmingham. In the south porch of St. Philip's there is an inscription which reads 'His Most Excellent Majesty King George, upon the kind application of Sir Richard Gough to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, gave £600 towards finishing the Church. A.D. 1725'.¹³⁵ It is also necessary to mention the Archer family, who not only provided the county with a Whig presence throughout the eighteenth century but also contributed to the adornment and upkeep of Solihull and Tanworth parish churches. Thomas Archer, a friend and supporter of Henry Pelham, was a conscientious patron who provided funds for both the rebuilding and adornment of the church at Tanworth.¹³⁶

It would be a further mistake to assume that donations only came from the gentry class as evidence of a more general goodwill can also be found. The affection shown for the church by the non-gentry class is revealed in donations of church plate and contributions to church repair. Individuals gave generously, as for example Edward Sale, Esq., who donated a chalice to St. John's chapel, Henley-in-Arden, in 1732.¹³⁷ The wrought iron altar rails at Ullenhall chapel bear the inscription: 'J Ward, T. Williams, donors, 1735'.¹³⁸ A large silver Patten was donated to the church at Claverdon by 'Sarah, wife of Thomas Walford of Binton' in 1683.¹³⁹ Court Dewes donated a flagon in 1727 and a communion cup and cover in 1737 to the church at Studley¹⁴⁰ and Bernard Whalley gave towards the rebuilding of the church at Billesley in 1692.¹⁴¹ Significantly, the Philips family donated the land for the building of St. Philip's

¹³⁵ Feeney, *St. Philip's*, p.1b-c.

¹³⁶ J. Burman, *The Story of Tanworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire* (London, 1930).

¹³⁷ Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden*, p.59.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* p.127.

¹³⁹ E. G. Wheeler Galton, *Claverdon* (1934), p.35.

¹⁴⁰ British History on Line at www.british-history.ac.uk/reportasp. Consulted on: 16/08/2008.

¹⁴¹ Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, 2, p.719.

church, in Birmingham. These examples illustrate the non-gentry status of the donors and are only the tip of the iceberg; many more could be cited.

A frequent criticism of the post-Restoration Church is that it failed to take adequate care of its places of worship.¹⁴² When addressing these issues historians usually emphasise that many churches were in a shocking state of dilapidation.¹⁴³ Neglect of church fabric, however, was not unique to this period. To remedy the neglected state of the churches in England and Wales was one of William Laud's resolutions when he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, commenting in 1633 on the neglect of William Laud's predecessor, George Abbot, Claverdon wrote:

The people took so little care of the churches and parsons as little of the chancels, that, instead of beautifying or adorning them in any degree, they rarely provided for their stability and against the very falling of very many of their churches; and suffered them, at least, to be kept so indecently and slovenly that they would not have endured it in the ordinary offices of their own houses.¹⁴⁵

It has been suggested that a contributory factor to the apparently poor condition of many churches in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the destruction and neglect

¹⁴²J. Walsh and S. Taylor, 'Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, p.9.

¹⁴³Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, p.258.

¹⁴⁴P. Morgan (ed.), 'Inspections of Churches and Parsonage Houses in the Diocese of Worcester in 1675, 1676, 1684 and 1687', *Worcester Historical Society*, New Series, 12, 1986, p.5.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Morgan, 'Inspections', p.5.

caused by the Civil War. Edgbaston parish church was extensively damaged by Parliamentary troops during this period of upheaval, when 'roof materials were used to barricade the hall, lead from the roof was melted down for bullets and horses were stabled in the church'.¹⁴⁶ This thesis, however, concurs with John Pruett whose study of Leicestershire concludes that, although some churches did show signs of war damage, it seems to have been a minor problem restricted to a few isolated parishes.¹⁴⁷

When Bishop Stillingfleet began his first visitation as Bishop of Worcester in 1690 he issued a declaration to his clergy listing the standards he expected them to meet. He reminded his clergy that, during the time of Queen Elizabeth, all persons having ecclesiastical benefices were required to set apart a fifth of their revenue to maintain their churches; he hoped his clergy would be 'mindful of this' and keep their churches in sufficient repair.¹⁴⁸ During the period of this study, however, it is possible to extract examples that reveal the neglect of church fabric. In a sermon preached in 1688 Bishop Thomas of Worcester complained that:

Many rural and parochial churches hold resemblance, both by their structure and their furniture, with barns rather than with temples: Windows unglazed and shattered, floors unpaved, depraved with pits; roofs ungarnished, even unceiled with rudeness of profaneness, walls defaced with gashes, liveried with cobwebs instead of tapestry.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ M. Hampson, (ed.), *Images of England, Edgbaston* (Birmingham, 1999)

¹⁴⁷ Pruett, *The Parish Clergy*, p.21.

¹⁴⁸ Stillingfleet, *Charge*, p.45.

¹⁴⁹ Rev. G. I. Smith and Rev. P. Onslow (eds.), *Diocesan Histories, Worcester* (1883), p.283.

It may seem on the surface that the majority of churches needing structural repairs were the victims of ordinary parochial neglect. John Walsh and Stephen Taylor have, however, pointed out that these problems were less a result of the failure of rectors and churchwardens to act than of the continual struggle necessary to keep medieval fabrics in decent repair.¹⁵⁰ As mentioned above, whether or not St. Mary's, Warwick (before it was destroyed by fire), had suffered from lack of proper care is not known, but its upkeep must have been a considerable responsibility.

A further example of the difficulties of maintaining medieval churches can be gleaned from the records of St. Martin's, Birmingham. The churchwardens of the parish of St. Martin's had a constant battle with the medieval sandstone structure of their church. It has been stated that 'due to the grime and smoke from the hundred forges in Digbeth and Deritend, the friable sandstone structure had badly decayed'.¹⁵¹ In 1690, as the fabric was worn and in need of considerable renovation, Thomas Gisbourne and Edward East, both churchwardens, gave the instruction to encase the church in three layers of redbrick.¹⁵² This must have seemed the most cost-effective solution at the time. Similarly, in 1732 the churchwardens at Castle Bromwich also took the step to encase their medieval timber framed chapel with brick.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ J. Walsh and S. Taylor, 'Introduction', in Walsh, Hayden, and Taylor (eds) *Church of England*, p.9.

¹⁵¹ B. O'Connor, *Places of Worship in Digbeth and Deritend 1680-1850* (Birmingham, 1988), p. 32.

¹⁵² *Ibid*; Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, p.75; Rev. A. T. Jenkins, *The Story of St. Martin's, Birmingham Parish Church* (Birmingham, 1925), p.25; S. Whitehouse, *A History of St. Martin's Parish Church, Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1922), pp.12-14. St. Martin's underwent almost a century of much criticised alterations, mainly carried on the churchwarden's instructions. Although in 1690 this form of renovation was approved by many contemporaries, the 'material and the workmanship', Hutton said, were 'excellent', the taste of the nineteenth century, however, found the church hideous and demanded a complete rebuilding. Likewise, the local historians mentioned above universally condemned the 1690 renovation, making such comments as 'buried in an ugly tomb', 'spirit of vandalism' and 'puritanical plainness'.

¹⁵³ J. Betjeman (ed), *Collins Guide to English Parish Churches* (1958), p.374.

Churchwardens' accounts generally give proof of the regularity of maintenance work on church buildings and reveal the considerable costs incurred by the parish. Indeed, it has been suggested that a continuing worry of parishioners was the prospect of a drastic increase in church rate¹⁵⁴ to pay for church upkeep. With respect to Warwickshire as a whole, Dr. Salter, in his study of the Warwickshire clergy, concluded that parishioners often took the action of delaying or refusing the payment of church levies in the case of repairs.¹⁵⁵ Although gaps in the sources make it difficult to disagree with Dr. Salter, there is no concrete evidence from the two deaneries under study to suggest that parishioners were hostile towards levies being imposed for church maintenance. It must be noted also (as Figure 1:1 clearly demonstrates) that lay benefactors were an important source of finance when it came to church repair. Upon a table of benefactions in the church of Binton, dated 1722, reads the inscription:

An unknown person, supposed to be the Lady Walter, gave land in the field and a parcel of ground in Welford Medow, to the repairing and adorning the church.¹⁵⁶

Likewise, an unknown donor gave a piece of land in Wooton Wawen, the rent of which to be 'carried to the churchwardens' accounts, and applied to the repair of the church'.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Church rates came to replace church ales (a common form of fund-raising for the maintenance of parish churches in the Middle Ages) during the early seventeenth century; Jacob, *Lay people*, p.192; D. Hey, *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* (Oxford, 1998), p.84.

¹⁵⁵ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p. 107.

¹⁵⁶ *The Reports of Charity Commissioners*, p.122.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p.75.

It is useful to note that although it was the primary duty of the churchwardens to maintain the fabric of their churches and levy a rate for any necessary work,¹⁵⁸ it was usually the practice to consult the vestry about any major expenditure relating to repairing, improving, or adorning their parish church. Again, vestry meetings are often thought to have been hostile towards expenditure on church repairs. This does not, however, appear to have been the case in Birmingham, where the vestry of St. Martin's did not seem to have hesitated to vote funds towards both the exterior and interior maintenance of their church.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, the vestry of St. Philip's, Birmingham, ordered that in 1735 the 'sum of £60 [is] to be raised by churchwardens by levey, towards the repairs of the organ'.¹⁶⁰ At Sutton Coldfield a poor rate levied on the inhabitants was apparently producing more than was needed. Hence, it was agreed at a vestry meeting in May 1739 that the surplus money should for three years 'following Lady Day 1739' be 'paid and applied towards new pewing and amending the parish church'.¹⁶¹

It is abundantly clear from innumerable churchwardens' accounts from all over the Forest of Arden region that maintenance work on church buildings was a regular occurrence. The churchwardens' accounts for Ansley parish in the Lichfield and Coventry diocese were carefully kept and the accounts for the years 1672 to 1722 illustrate the parish's constant battle to keep its Norman church in good repair. The accounts for the year 1676 give a good insight into the regularity and cost incurred in maintaining church premises:

¹⁵⁸ Jacob, *Lay People*, p.192.

¹⁵⁹ Potts, *The Story of Birmingham*, p.15; Jenkins, *The Story of St. Martin's, Birmingham*, p. 24.

¹⁶⁰ B.R.L. L14.13.260385 (Local Studies).

¹⁶¹ N. G. Evans, *An Investigation of Holy Trinity Parish Church Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1988), p.180.

Going to rid the Churchyard of broken tiles and straw, And spent... 00 02'
'Bricks for the Belfree and carriage of them from Nuneaton... 04 08' 'When
John Slingsby did looke into the Church to see how many bricks would serve...
00 02' 'Lyme and fetching of it from Stockingford... 00 08' and 'Masons for
work at the Church and spent on the masons... 02 08.¹⁶²

The condition of churches was monitored by visitations by the archdeacon or bishop, when the churchwardens would hand in presentments. These were reports on the state of the church and its contents. The diocesan authorities, however, had little power when it came to the enforcement of their orders for necessary repairs or replacements of fittings.¹⁶³ In 1674, the then Bishop of Worcester, Walter Blandford, became aware of the inadequacy of this system. After a visitation, probably archidiaconal, held in April and May 1674, the majority of churchwardens presented their churches as all in 'good order'.¹⁶⁴ Bishop Blandford, therefore, must have been aware of the poor state of many of the churches and parsonages in his diocese and, as a consequence, he initiated a system of inspections. On 23 July 1674, Sir Timothy Baldwin, Chancellor of the Diocese, wrote to Thomas Vernon, the registrar:

My Lord Bishop is desireous that some clergiemmen should ride and visit all the churches and parsonage houses etc. before the visitation, the better to awaken the churchwardens to make true presentments: and to that end, two clergiemmen are

¹⁶² S. Timmins, 'Ansley Parish Accounts 1672-1722', *Birmingham and Midland Institute Transactions, Archaeological Section*, vol xvii, 1891, pp. 1-17. There are many more examples that can be cited from the accounts of parishes within the deanery of Arden.

¹⁶³ P, Morgan, 'South Warwickshire Clergy in the Late Seventeenth Century', *Warwickshire History*, 3, 1970, p.9.

¹⁶⁴ Morgan (ed), 'Inspections', p.5.

appointed for ten or twelve parishes, which may doe some good; and easily rode by them in two or three dayes perambulation...¹⁶⁵

Clearly this memorandum indicates that the authorities realised the unreliability of the churchwardens' returns. A letter signed by Walter Blandford dated 25 July 1674 and sent to the clergy selected as inspectors, outlines clearly what their duties would be; it states:

Gentlemen. Being informed of great decayes in the fabrick of many parish churches, chapels and the mansion houses of ministers within my Diocese, and being desirous to prevent the ruin and subversion of them, which in some places the grosse neglect of repaying them seems to threaten and in others the burdan will be very grievous and hard to be borne if the worke be not speedily done, these are therefore to authorise and require you in person (jointly or severally) to view the churches, chapels and houses of the incumbents of the places here under named, and also the utensils, vestments and bookes there...¹⁶⁶

Worcester is apparently the only diocese that adopted this system in this period, or whose records have survived.¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, there are no returns later than 1687.¹⁶⁸ Paul Morgan, who has researched this area thoroughly, suggests that the system faded out possibly because of a change of officials in the registry, or with the realisation that the inspections were not

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*; Original document, Worcestershire RO, 716. 02 BA 2056. 72.

¹⁶⁶ W.R.O. 713. 021 BA 267, f. 7 18.

¹⁶⁷ Morgan, 'South Warwickshire Clergy', p. 9; Morgan (ed), 'Inspections', p.5. Dr Morgan points out that page 47-48 of D.M. Owens's, 'The records of the Established Church in England, excluding parochial records', *British Records Association* (1970), states that church inspections were also regular at Peterborough in the early seventeenth century.

¹⁶⁸ Morgan (ed), 'Inspections', p. 8.

particularly effective.¹⁶⁹ Certainly, the usefulness of returns varied according to the temperaments of the inspecting clergymen. Thus, Roger Byrd and Thomas Warkman gave long reports in 1674, such as that on St. John's chapel, Henley-in-Arden:

Henly Chappel is almost in all parts out of order. The windows are unglazed, the floore unpaved, the font unleaded and uncovered; the Communion table hath neither flagon nor chalice, nor carpet, nor linen cloth belonging to it; the Bible for the deske is of a small print and old translation. The cusion for the pulpit not worth naming, or deserving that name; there is no common prayer booke for the clerke. One of the bells is dropt out of the frames; the rest are loose in them, insomuch as it's dangerous to ring them. And some of the neighbours whose houses are neare it have complained to us that they are in great feare lest the tower should fall on them; the top whereof is very faulty, both as touching the stone worke and leads insomuch as the raine hath already rotted the timber, or gists under the leads, and threatens as much to the bell frames. And the like is also to be said of the leades on one isle of the church are so faulty that they portend in a short time the ruin of it.¹⁷⁰

In contrast the Reverends Jemmat, Keyt, White and Southerne in 1687 merely reported that 'Henly is in the parish of Wootton Wawen. The chapel is in good repair'.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Morgan (ed), 'Inspections', p.43.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.101.

Another weak point was that sometimes a clergyman might inspect his own church. Thomas Pilkington, vicar of Claverdon, reported on his own church in 1674 and stated that: 'the church and chancel are not onely in exerlent repayr, but also very decently adornrd. The vicaridge house is in very good repayr'.¹⁷² On the whole, however, the inspectors were honest clergymen, chosen for their dependability¹⁷³ and, judging from the presentments, their visits did have some effect. However, much depended on the churchwardens and incumbent of the parish and, of course, if there was no money then little could be done. As might be expected, it was the poorer livings and curacies that had most faults, such as Bearely chapel:¹⁷⁴

1674: The Chancel is much out of order, the font broken and out of its place, no surplice, no common prayer booke for the clerke, no carpet for the Communion table, nor cover for the chalice.

1676: The font is unleaded and uncovered; the chancel is extremely out of order; there are no seats in it. The floore is wholly unpaved, the walls need whiteing and writeing upon; there is no carpet for the Communion table, no silver chalice; no booke of 39 articles, no table of dgrees, no herscloth, no hood for the minister.

¹⁷² Morgan (ed), 'Inspections', p.52.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* An example of such loyalty can be gleaned from the presentment sent to the Bishop in 1674 from Thomas Pilkington and Samuel Jemmat: 'All these places wee have both viewed diligently, and as those who are and shall remaine for ever sensible of our obligation to canonicall obedience. And all these particular accounts wee have given in faithfully and truly without malice, favour or affection, and so wee hope that both my Lord and the court will accept of our service in good part.'

¹⁷⁴ Bearley was a perpetual curacy endowed with 'some tithes'. There was neither house nor glebe for the curate but there was 'four pound pr Annum paid by my lady Carrington'. In 1708 it was stated that 'the allowance to ye minister being but 8lip per Annum' (W.R.O. BA 2289/2/V). The value of the living was not given in terriers, indicating its poor status.

1684: Wants a common prayer book for the clerk, and a black hearse cloath,
and the chancel is out of repair.’¹⁷⁵

Overall, the final returns of 1684 show that there had been an improvement in the condition of the churches in the deanery of Warwick since the commissioners first reported in 1674. Likewise, there is no reason to doubt that the churches of the deanery of Arden were not adequately maintained up to the end of our period. Dr. Thomas, visiting a large number of churches in the process of gathering material for his history of the county (1730), noted that the majority of churches in our region were not neglected, for mention is made of ‘rebuilding, reseating and redecorating’.¹⁷⁶ Again it must be stressed, however, that the wealth of parishioners affected the ease with which substantial improvements could be made. More prosperous parishes such as Solihull and Sutton Coldfield, both in the diocese of Lichfield, had the finances to make more elaborate alterations and maintain their parish church to a high standard. Nevertheless, it must be concluded that the laity appear to have been supportive and generous in maintaining, improving and rebuilding even the poorest of parish churches, as Figure 1:1 indicates.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 43, 70, 93.

¹⁷⁶ Dugdale, *Antiquities*, II.

Figure 1:1 Schedule of church building work, 1660-1740. Forest of Arden

Church/Chapel	New building	Rebuilding	Reseating	Gallery
Alcester		1729-32/P/Pr/B		
Atherstone		1662/P		1714/P
Balsall		1721/P/Pr		
Barton		1690/P/Pr/B		
Berkswell				1731/P
Birmingham, St. Martins			1690-1734/P/Pr	1690-1734/P/Pr:
Birmingham, St. Philip's	1714/P/Pr/B			1727/P/Pr.new west gallery.
Billesley		1689-92/P		
Binton		1687/		
Budbroke		1701/Pr		
Castle		1726-1732/Pr	1732/Pr	
Bromwich		1660's/P/Pr/B		
Edgbaston			1731/P/Pr	
Meriden				1715/P/Pr
Nuneaton		1730/Pr		
Ward end			1732/P/Pr	
Sheldon			1679/Pr	
Solihull		1706/P/Pr/B		
St. Mary's, Warwick		1735/Pr		
St. John's		1700/P/Pr	1679/Pr	1708/Pr
Deritend		1734/Pr		
Sutton Coldfield				
Tanworth				

Key: Dates are indicated and followed by the source of funding. P=Public; Pr=Private; B=Brief.

Sources: W.C.R.O. DR 360/3; Dugdale, Sir William, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated...Revised...and Continued...by* William Thomas, D.D., 2 volumes (1730); Rev. G. Miller, *The Parishes of the Diocese of Worcester: The Parishes of Warwickshire*, 1 (London, 1832-1909); Various Local Histories. L.R.O. B/C/5 Consistory Court Papers, Faculty and Fabric Papers; W.C.R.O. DR.360/3/1, Alcester Account Book.

If medieval churches were often in need of constant repair they were also not well adapted to pulpit oratory. During the eighteenth century, if not before, the majority of refurbishment

projects in rural parishes and provincial towns in the Forest of Arden involved the complete rebuilding or partial reconstruction of medieval parish churches. As a consequence, commodious pulpits, sounding boards and galleries could be built. Clearly these new ‘auditory’ churches were designed for preaching. Holy Trinity church, Sutton Coldfield, was fitted out with Laudian fittings from Worcester Cathedral in an altered medieval church.¹⁷⁷ In addition to the religious tastes of the time, the poor condition of parish churches was a prime motive for rebuilding. The medieval parish church at Billesley had fallen into decay over many years and was rebuilt in 1692.¹⁷⁸ Barton church was rebuilt in 1721 on account of its roof falling in¹⁷⁹ and the chapel of St. John’s, Deritend, fell into disrepair, too deep-seated for remedy. The building was eventually pulled down in the mid-1730s to make way for a more substantial brick construction.¹⁸⁰ Edgbaston parish church was rebuilt after its destruction by Parliamentary forces during the Civil War and, as already mentioned, the opportunity to build a more fashionable church at Castle Bromwich was taken in 1732 when the whole structure was re-clad in red brick.¹⁸¹ Similarly, St. Martin’s, Birmingham, was completely ‘modernised’ in 1690. In addition, St. Mary’s, Warwick, was rebuilt because of its destruction by fire. William Jacob has suggested that new churches were frequently the focal points of the rebuilding of a town, as in the case of St. Mary’s, Warwick.¹⁸² However, from the documents relating to the rebuilding of the town and church it is apparent that it was the commissioners’ priority to re-house and to re-establish trade. As soon as possible after the fire, steps were taken to alleviate the distress of the community; an Act of Parliament was obtained to deal

¹⁷⁷ Betjeman, *Collins Guide to English Parish Churches*, p.374.

¹⁷⁸ Dugdale, *Antiquities*, 2, p.719.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 695.

¹⁸⁰ B, O, Connor, *Places of Worship in Digbeth and Deritend*, p.17.

¹⁸¹ Betjeman, *Collins Guide to English Parish Churches*, p.374.

¹⁸² Jacob, *Lay People*, p.186.

with the situation, in which the rebuilding of the church was mentioned in comparatively few words.¹⁸³ Indeed, a petition had to be signed by seventy of the inhabitants in order to draw the commissioners' attention to the matter of the church. Significantly, when Celia Fiennes came to Warwick in 1697 she commented on a certain lack of urgency:

The town of Warwick by means of a sad fire about 4 or 5 year since that laid the greatest part in ashes, its most now new buildings which is with brick and coyn'd with stone and the windows the same; there still remains some few houses of the old town which are built of stone; the streets are very handsome and the buildings regular and fine... the ruins of the Church still remains, the repairing of which is the next worke design'd; the Chancel stands still in which was all the fine monuments that were preserv'd from the fire...¹⁸⁴

As Celia Fiennes mentioned, the chancel was still intact and church services were still conducted there; hence, provision was probably viewed as adequate until such time as the new church could be built.

What appears to have been a principal concern in Arden's expanding market and manufacturing parishes during the period of this study, and a primary motive for a building project, was the provision of suitable seating for the growing numbers of the middling sort.¹⁸⁵ The use of pews had been growing during the latter part of the seventeenth century and had

¹⁸³ P. Chatwin, 'The Rebuilding of St. Mary's Warwick', *Birmingham Archaeological Society Transactions and Proceeding*, 65(1949), pp.5, 6.

¹⁸⁴ C. Morris (ed.), *The Journey of Celia Fiennes* (1949), pp.114, 15.

¹⁸⁵ C. W. Chalklin, 'The Financing of Church Building in the Provincial Towns of Eighteenth-Century England', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns*, (1984), p. 288.

become a regular part of the furniture of the church by the beginning of the eighteenth century. The ordering of seating in churches emphasised the rigid social structure of local society, mirroring the rank and social status of the occupants. In 1708, at Holy Trinity church Sutton Coldfield, Henry Lord Ffolliott had a private gallery constructed across the west end of the nave for the use of himself and his wife, Elisabeth. In a small south gallery sat the Duncumbs from the Moat house and the Rilands from the rectory, while facing them in a smaller gallery was the master of the grammar school with his family.¹⁸⁶ Churchwardens were ever anxious to provide more seats, which would generate income, and as a consequence, poorer parishioners were relegated to the dark corners of the church. St. Philip's, Birmingham, did make allowances for free seats for the poor in the aisles and galleries.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the power of the purse was not without its influence. After the consecration of St. Philip's (5 October 1715), rules were laid down about the allocation of seats; among them is the following:

Ordered (to avoid all disturbances in ye Church) yt every person shall take their seat as they come, and not to strive for any particular place. Ordered, yt if it shall happen there should be any dispute between any persons about taking any place in ye seat, ye person who subscribes most to ye said Church shall be preferred.¹⁸⁸

The eighteenth century is not usually portrayed as a century of church building and clearly it certainly fell far behind the nineteenth. In part, this may be that there was already a

¹⁸⁶ Evans, *An Investigation of Holy Trinity Parish Church, Sutton Coldfield*, p.8.

¹⁸⁷ A. Baynes, *Two Centuries of Church Life, 1715-1915, St. Philip's Birmingham: An Eighteenth Century Church and Parish* (Birmingham, 1915), p.25-6

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

sufficiency of churches and so little need to build more. Indeed this was the view of Norman Sykes, who stated that ‘little general need for further construction existed, for the Middle Ages had endowed their successors liberally in the provision of churches’.¹⁸⁹ This argument, however, tends to overlook the growing problem that confronted the Church of England during our period, namely how to accommodate an increasing number of Anglican worshippers in the growing industrial districts of the country.¹⁹⁰ In his studies of Oldham and Saddleworth, Mark Smith concluded that the Church of England rose to the challenge that confronted it.¹⁹¹ Moreover, Jan Albers claimed that:

The Church of England was extremely effective in providing new and larger churches... Through building, rebuilding and enlargement, seating space was created for many thousands and Anglican influence was extended to new areas, demonstrating that the Church structure could indeed cope with an unprecedented challenge to its physical resources.¹⁹²

Birmingham

The towns of the Forest of Arden did not experience the same scale of demographic expansion as the industrialising towns of southern Lancashire. Even so, certain areas of the Lichfield and Coventry diocese did see a marked growth in population which, although it did not compare with the huge upswing in the latter part of the eighteenth century, did force the

¹⁸⁹ Sykes, *Church and State*, p.232.

¹⁹⁰ M.F. Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society: The Lancashire Parish of Whalley in the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2003), p.36.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Albers, J. ‘“Seeds of Contention”’: Society, Politics and the Church of England in Lancashire, 1689-1790’ (University of Yale, PhD, 1988), p.64.

Church of England to confront its position. For example, prosperity and growth characterised Sutton Coldfield after the Restoration. The power of the stream, the Ebrook, was harnessed by water mills along its course for the manufacturing of buttons, spades, blades, wire and gun barrels. By the mid eighteenth century the church, Holy Trinity, had been extensively repaired and the interior enlarged with the addition of galleries.¹⁹³

Although the first half of the eighteenth century was a period of urban development and manufacturing growth in Birmingham it is surprising to find that historians of the Church of England generally overlook its importance during the early eighteenth century. Significantly, church historians make little of the fact that a new parish was created in Birmingham in 1715. Recent historiography has tended to concentrate on Birmingham as a centre of growing Nonconformity, ignoring the Anglican Church both as an institution and its relationship with society at large. Without a doubt, both the building of a new church and the creation of a new parish in Birmingham must be considered as key issues when gauging the strength of local Anglicanism during this period.

Until the beginning of the eighteenth century visitors to Birmingham would have found, as Leland did, 'but one Parroch Church',¹⁹⁴ that being St. Martin's. By the start of the eighteenth century, however, estimates suggest that the population of Birmingham had outgrown St. Martin's.¹⁹⁵ In contemporary sources, the need for a new church is continually related to the

¹⁹³ Evans, *An Investigation of Holy Trinity Parish Church, Sutton Coldfield*, pp.8-9.

¹⁹⁴ Baynes, *Two Centuries of Church Life*, p.15.

¹⁹⁵ P. Crowe, *St. Martin's in the Bull Ring* (Birmingham, 1975), p.23; Potts, *The Story of Birmingham Parish Church, St. Martin's*; Jenkins, *The Story of St. Martin's*; Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1. All these local studies of Birmingham refer to the growing population in Birmingham concurring that, until the end of the seventeenth

needs of a growing population. John Hough (1699-1717), the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry in whose diocese Birmingham was situated, wrote that he would:

...Almost consent to anything, rather than have six thousand people in a Town under my care, destitute of any place where they might serve God publicly while they live, or lay down their bodies in rest when they die...¹⁹⁶

Similarly, writing on St. Martin's, William Hutton, the first historian of Birmingham, informs us that:

Invention was afterwards exerted to augment the number of sittings; every recess capable of admitting the body of an infant was converted into a seat, which indicates, the continual increase of people.¹⁹⁷

The need for more accommodation was often a prime motive for church building¹⁹⁸ and there can be no question that the vestry of St. Martin's felt the need to accommodate more parishioners. Yet, and as C.W. Chalklin remarked, the building of a new church could be postponed by the erection of new galleries.¹⁹⁹ Hutton's passage admirably demonstrates the short-term solutions adopted by the vestry of St. Martin's in the opening years of the

century, the population of the parish of Birmingham was comparatively small, and then it suddenly grew at the beginning of the eighteenth century, until it was too large for a single parish.

¹⁹⁶ Letter sent by John Hough to Lord Sommers March 24, 1707; Quoted in Feeney, *St. Philip's: An Eighteenth Century Parish*, p.1b.

¹⁹⁷ W. Hutton, *An History of Birmingham* 3rd edition (London, 1783), p.235.

¹⁹⁸ Chalklin, 'The Financing of Church Building', p.290.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

eighteenth century. It was decided by the wardens and vestry that they should 'install every possible seat every where, not only of the floor space but also by the installation of galleries, surrounding the whole church'.²⁰⁰ It began to be felt, however, that one church was insufficient to minister to the growing population of the town. Until 1818, no parish could be divided nor could a new parish church be commissioned without the consent of Parliament.²⁰¹ Hence, in 1708 a petition was presented to Parliament by the 'inhabitants of Birmingham', the first reading being recorded thus:

21 Feb[ruary] 1708: A petition of the inhabitants of Birmingham, in the county of Warwick, is presented to the House; setting forth, that the Town aforesaid has but one church, not sufficient for a 5th part of the inhabitants, who are very populous, and have raised a very considerable sum, towards erecting a new church, and parsonage house, and Ww. Ing, Esquire, and Penelope Philips, spinster, freely offer a piece of Ground, fit for that purpose: The petitioners therefore pray, that leave may be given to bring in a Bill for making the said intended Church in the said Town a parish Church.²⁰²

This petition is a clear indication that lay finance and goodwill was essential for the creation of a new parish. Accordingly, by the end of 1708, an Act of Parliament (7th Q. Anne, Cap.

²⁰⁰ Potts, *The Story of Birmingham Parish Church*, p.15.

²⁰¹ *House of Commons Journal*, 16, 1708-1709.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

34)²⁰³ had been passed, assigning a parish to the new church that was about to be built. The church was duly consecrated on 5 October 1715.

There can be no question that a growing population was the main catalyst for the building of St. Philip's. A reading of the preamble to the Act clearly illustrates this point. This relates that:

The Town of Birmingham, in the County of Warwick, being a market Town of great Trade and Commerce is becoming very populas, and hath but one Church in it, which is not sufficient to contain the grater Part of the inhabitants, whereby they are deprived of Benefit of Divine Service.²⁰⁴

Broader issues, however, should be considered when discussing the creation of the new parish and church in Birmingham. There has developed among historians the notion that pressure for new churches in towns tended to come from prosperous tradespeople living in the newly built up areas,²⁰⁵ although Penelope Corfield has pointed out that some attempt was made to match church provision with urban growth so that in most expanding towns there were some new Anglican churches. Underpinning the construction of these new churches, she claims, were the needs of a developing 'monied class'. Hence, churches were mostly built for 'fashionable' congregations in the 'fashionable' quarters of towns. As a consequence, she argues that, the

²⁰³*Act of Parliament for Building a Parish and Parsonage, and Making a New Churchyard and New Parish in Birmingham, to be called the Parish of St. Philip* (1708).

²⁰⁴*Act of Parliament* (1708).

²⁰⁵ Chalklin, 'The Financing of Church Building', p.288.

Church of England in developing towns acquired a ‘middle class gloss’.²⁰⁶ The middle classes or ‘middling sort’ were not, of course, a socially self conscious or particularly coherent grouping. There was a substantial distance between men of mercantile fortunes, small tradesmen or craftsmen, tenant farmers, doctors, lawyers and small businessmen. However, such men had one thing in common. Together they were becoming the dominant voice in town and country, collectively controlling the most dynamic portions of the economy.²⁰⁷

One can well appreciate why, in the opinion of the majority of local historians, St. Philip’s is generally referred to as the church of the ‘gentry’. Indeed, it was Sir Richard Gough who obtained a royal contribution of £600²⁰⁸ towards finishing the church. In the south porch of St. Philip’s there is an inscription, which states:

His most Excellent Majesty King George, upon the kind application of Sir Richard Gough to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, gave £600 towards finishing the church A.D.1725.²⁰⁹

Equally, the commissioners appointed by the bishop to oversee the building of St. Philip’s seem to have come from the leading Warwickshire families of the period.²¹⁰ Examination of wider evidence seems to substantiate Dr. Corfield’s analysis. Local historians all point to the

²⁰⁶ P. J. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982), p.139; See also Jacob, *Lay People*, p.200.

²⁰⁷ For a wider insight into English society see R. Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1982).

²⁰⁸ Feeney, *St. Philip’s: An Eighteenth Century Church and Parish*, p. 1c.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p.1b.

²¹⁰ Baynes, *Two Centuries of Church Life*, p.19.

fact that both parish and church were located in the newly developing smart residential area to the north of the old town, known locally as the 'High Town Quarter'.²¹¹ The newly erected buildings around St. Philip's church were houses of merchants and leading professionals.²¹²

The elegance of this part of town impressed visitors, with William Toldervy observing that:

St. Philip's is a very beautiful, modern building... There are few in London so elegant. It stands in the middle of a large Church-yard, around which a beautiful walk... on one side of this Church-yard the buildings are as lofty, elegant, and uniform as those of Bedford-Row... These buildings have the Appellation of Tory-Row and this is the highest and genteelest part of the Town of Birmingham.²¹³

St. Philip's was constructed in the new commercial sector of Birmingham, an area of stone-built houses, unlike the low-lying industrial area around St. Martin's in the Bull Ring, with its cramped half-timbered houses occupied by the mass of workers.²¹⁴ An extract from a letter written in 1755 gives a clear indication both of the area and of the class of people inhabiting the new parish. It states:

²¹¹ *Act of Parliament*, (1708).

²¹² Gill, *History of Birmingham*, p.123.

²¹³ Feeney, *St. Philip's*, p. 2d.

²¹⁴ N. Tipaft, *Religion in Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1972), p.40; Baynes, *Two Centuries of Church Life*, p.17-18.

The upper part of the town... contains a number of new and regular streets and a handsome square, all well built and well inhabited... and a very good new modern built church.²¹⁵

Conrad Gill in his *History of Birmingham* comments that 'in Birmingham, as in ancient Rome, there was a tendency for industry to spread in the low-lying parts, leaving the hills for residences of the well to do'.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, behind the 'well built' houses and the 'new and regular streets' of the High Town quarter there were many small narrow courts, crowded with buildings housing many families and workshops.²¹⁷ The people who inhabited these courts also worshiped at St. Philip's. The marriage registers for the mid to late eighteenth century indicate the range of occupations in the new parish; shoemaker, toy-maker, barrel-filer, button-maker, hired servant, baker, barber, gardener and buckle-maker.²¹⁸ A more realistic view, and one that complements Dr. Corfield's analysis, is that the key group of parishioners attending St. Philip's at this time came from the newly emerging 'moneyed class', the type of small businessman and his family on whom Birmingham's prosperity depended.

The new 'moneyed class', however, were not always members of the established Church. Even so they were not entirely out of its orbit. William Hutton, the Birmingham historian and himself a Dissenter, recorded that 'we applied for a licence and went through the marriage ceremony at St. Philip's church'.²¹⁹ Although burial places were made available to Dissenters

²¹⁵ Four Topographical Letters by R.Reston to P.Patching, a London Innkeeper, 1755. Quoted in Feeney, *St. Philip's*, p.2a

²¹⁶ Gill, *History of Birmingham*, p.123.

²¹⁷ Feeney, *St. Philips*, p.2d.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 2b.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.1d.

in Birmingham after the Act of Toleration if they had the money to buy the land needed, very few dissenters owned their own cemeteries. During the period under study, the only burial places in Birmingham were the cemeteries of St. Philip's or St. Martin's. Therefore, for those who were not Anglicans, such as Roman Catholics or Presbyterians, St. Philip's church and parish was a necessary part of their lives and, indeed, deaths. Significantly, William Hutton expressed his great affection for St. Philip's, writing that when he first saw the church it was 'untarnished by smoke, and illuminated by a western Sun'. It seemed to him 'the pride of the place'.²²⁰ The four-acre church-yard was planted with rows of trees, providing an important open space for the inhabitants of the parish, whether Anglican or Dissenter. Evidently, St. Philip's church and parish had a central role not only in the structure of local government but in the social life of Birmingham.

Popular Culture/ Folk-lore

Before concluding this chapter it is worth examining the Church's dealings with the part-Christian, part-pagan realm of 'folk-lore or 'popular culture'. 1660 marked not only the restoration of the monarchy but also the introduction and popularisation of a new Anglican ecclesiastical calendar. The traditional festivities of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun ran alongside the new 'politicised national anniversaries'²²¹ of 30 January (the anniversary of the execution of King Charles I in 1649); 29 May (Royal Oak day, the king's birthday and the day on which Charles II entered London in 1660), and 5 November (Gunpowder Treason day). These episodes, according to David Cressy, were commemorated as signs of God's interest in his Protestant nation and were duly marked in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as

²²⁰ Gill, *History of Birmingham*, p. 75.

²²¹ David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells* (Stroud, 2004), p. 171.

days of fasts and thanksgiving. This new national calendar, Cressy argues, became an 'important instrument for declaring and disseminating a distinctively Protestant national culture', which gave 'expression to a mythic and patriotic sense of national identity'.²²² More importantly, the new elements in the calendar bound together the 'English nation' in a manner that allowed politics and popular culture to work together to reinforce 'social cohesion at a critical point in England's development'.²²³

Until the publication of Keith Thomas' *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971), this immense subject had not been well served by historians. Studying popular culture is in itself beset by many difficulties. The most obvious of these is lack of evidence: popular culture was predominantly oral in nature, and hence is now largely lost to the historian. What we know about early modern popular culture has come to us via Puritan and gentry observers (most notably in Warwickshire, Dr. William Thomas's edition of Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*), or in the form of incidental details found in court papers or diaries. A more acute problem, however, is one of definition. To date no adequate definition of what 'popular culture' actually was has been produced. Most commonly it was thought of as a form of 'unofficial' culture, as the shared attitudes, values and assumptions of non-elite groups.²²⁴ Popular beliefs, however, cannot be viewed in isolation. Indeed, Keith Thomas informs us that it is the merging of the 'magical' and the 'religious' that 'lies at the heart of the matter'.²²⁵

²²²*Ibid*, p. xi.

²²³*Ibid*, back cover.

²²⁴ Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society*, p.43.

²²⁵ K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971), p. 196.

England was only merry on selected occasions. For most of the lower orders during our period, daily life was plagued with inexplicable occurrences. In part, popular belief derived its force from these uncertainties of life. Bob Bushaway pointed out that ‘alternative knowledge and belief was a coping mechanism which could deal with the aspect of chance but was also a source of dignity, self respect and self-help’; he also stated that ‘such beliefs were by no means viewed, from a popular perspective at least, as being in conflict with the teaching of the established Church’.²²⁶ Most feasts and festivals provided not only an occasion for general enjoyment, but also gave the lower orders a sense of the rhythm of the world in which they lived; in part it may have fostered a sense of belonging. At Abingdon in Berkshire, for example, young people went in groups on May morning, singing a carol from which the following verses are taken:

We’ve been rambling all the night,
And sometime of this day;
And now returning back again,
We bring a garland gay.
A garland gay we bring you here;
And at your door we stand;
It is a sprout well budded out,
The work of our Lord’s hand.²²⁷

The rites of passage of birth, marriage and death had strong links with magical beliefs. A christening was still regarded as a quasi-magical rite essential to the child’s welfare, even by those parents who seldom attended church. In St. Martin’s, Birmingham, mass public

²²⁶ B. Bushaway, ‘‘Tacit, Unsuspected, but still Implicit Faith’: Alternative Belief in Nineteenth Century Rural England’, in T. Harris (ed.), *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500-1850* (London, 1995), p.215.

²²⁷ The Golden Bough: *A Study in Magic and Religion*. Available at: <http://en.wikibooks.org>.

christenings were not uncommon²²⁸ while the ceremony of churching had parallels with the post-natal purification rites recorded in many non-Christian and pre-Christian cultures.²²⁹ Sir Richard Newdigate wrote in his diary that he ‘went with my wife to chapel to her churching’.²³⁰ Churchwardens’ accounts and Terriers also show that churching was a common practice in our period. In the Terrier of 1718 for the parish of St. Philip’s, Birmingham, we are told that the rector received ‘6d for every Churching of a woman’.²³¹ It must be stated, however, as Peter Clark has pointed out, that these rites of passage were also accompanied by ‘heavy feasting at the local tipling house, celebrations which probably overshadowed the church service’.²³² Nevertheless, there was still much about life in our period that was ‘irrational’ and, as Barry Coward, concluded ‘at the popular level it may be that belief in magic was just as strong and prevalent as in earlier periods’.²³³

This was clearly demonstrated in Birmingham in the eighteenth century with the ceremony of ‘clipping’ the church (see Appendix 1). The purpose of the ceremony (which was probably of pre-Christian origin) was to create a magical chain around the church, so creating a force against the power of evil and driving away the devil.²³⁴ Remarkably, even after the building of the new church of St. Philip’s and the creation of an entirely new parish this ancient ritual was still performed in Birmingham, the established Church still being willing to accommodate folkloric custom. On Easter Monday, the children from Birmingham charity

²²⁸ B. O’Connor, *Places of Worship: 1680-1850 in Digbeth and Deritend* (Birmingham, 1988), p.47.

²²⁹ C. Phythian- Adams, *Local History and Folklore* (1975).

²³⁰ A. Ponsonby, *More English Diaries from the XVI to the XIX Century* (1927), p.54.

²³¹ L.R.O. B/V/16.

²³² P. Clarke, ‘The Alehouse and the Alternative Society,’ p.63.

²³³ B. Coward, *The Stuart Age* (London, 1980), p.458.

²³⁴ Betty, *Church and Community*, p.113.

school performed this ancient ritual. The first arrivals joined hands with their backs to the church. Gradually the numbers increased until the chain completely surrounded the whole of St. Martin's. As soon as the chain was completed the party broke up and made their way to St. Philip's, to repeat the ceremony there. It was stated that a 'large jovial holiday crowd usually witnessed this event'.²³⁵ Popular attachment to the Church of England was, therefore, not only expressed through attendance at church but could also be manifested in customary community celebrations. In The Forest of Arden, as elsewhere in eighteenth-century England, the established Church was an overseer of a variety of local pastimes and calendrical festivities.

Another way in which the Church was involved in the life of the parish was through 'perambulation' (beating the bounds). This pre-Reformation ritual was considered essential for maintaining a certain record of the parish bounds in days before detailed maps, and it was particularly important in forest areas with few natural boundaries.²³⁶ The procession of perambulation was conducted during Rogation week; in some large parishes it may have taken two or three days to complete. It was the sole survivor of a multitude of processions of the pre-Reformation Church.²³⁷ Some historians have suggested that there is no evidence of the survival of this festivity into the eighteenth century.²³⁸ However, perambulations seem to

²³⁵ O'Connor, *Places of Worship*, p.47.

²³⁶ Bettey, *Church and Community*.

²³⁷ E. S. Wood, *A Comprehensive Account of the Development of Rural and Urban Life and Landscape from Pre-History to the Present Day* (1995), p.271. Church processions on special feast days (Whitsun or Corpus Christi) went round the churchyard: if the church was built too close to the churchyard wall it might be pierced by a passage to let the processions through, as at Lapworth in the deanery of Arden. Processions also went out from the church into the parish outside, or vice versa, along set routes- 'procession ways' used for weddings and funerals.

²³⁸ Thomas, *Religion*, pp.71, 75; Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society*, p.28.

have lingered on in some parishes of the Arden region throughout our period. Beating the bounds was performed at Alcester in 1694²³⁹ and, in 1715, the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of Ansley recorded that 1s 6d was spent 'when we walked ye Bounds of the parish.'²⁴⁰ At Tanworth-in-Arden from the Restoration onwards the parish records speak of the 'prosessions about ye parish, beating the bounds or the perambulation'. Here, Sir Simon Archer, Lord of the manor, recorded that crosses which marked the parish boundaries had been destroyed by the Puritans during 'troublesome times'.²⁴¹

From this evidence it might be fair to say that the collective identity of the parish remained strong throughout our period. The attachment between Church and community was often expressed in activities, which centred on church buildings, most notably the village wake. Dr William Thomas, who completed Dugdale's *Antiquities*, wrote that wakes 'are now discontinued in many Counties, especially in the East and some Western parts of England, but are commonly observed in the North, and in these Midland parts'.²⁴² Many places in the Forest of Arden were noted for their village wakes, mops and statute fairs,²⁴³ the most noteworthy being those of Wooton-Wawen, Studley and Alcester. The wake, partly a religious festival and partly a rustic carnival, was ordinarily held on the Sunday after the patron saint's day. At Henley-in-Arden, Maypoles were erected on Mayday (a custom the Puritans were unable to stop)²⁴⁴ and a feature of which seems to have been ale drinking at

²³⁹ W.C.R.O. DR 360.

²⁴⁰ Timmins, *Ansley Parish Accounts, 1672-1722* p.11.

²⁴¹ J. Burman, *The Story of Tanworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire* (Birmingham, 1930) p.6.

²⁴² Dugdale, *Antiquities*, 2, p. 682.

²⁴³ *The Gentleman Magazine* of April 1794.

²⁴⁴ W.C.R.O. DR, iii, 27 1-2. At the Easter Quarter Sessions in 1655 the court was informed that 'usually heretofore there have been at Henley-in-Arden several unlawful meetings of idle and vain persons about this

parish expense.²⁴⁵ Claverdon had a mop,²⁴⁶ which was held on Michaelmas day and was dedicated to St. Michael and All Angels. Folk songs and folk dancing was a popular feature of this annual occasion.²⁴⁷ There was also a hiring or mop fair held in Henley-in-Arden throughout our period. William Hutton informs us that while Birmingham had no wakes of its own, there were ‘three in its borders’, those being ‘Deritend, Chapel and Bell wakes’. Deritend wake was held annually on the 29th August (St. John’s feast day). Prior to 1795, the ‘church ground’ was let to a local butcher for grazing his animals, which he sub-let to a local showman for the erection of ‘swing boats’ and for the use of ‘beasts’ for the wake. Also included was a custom whereby locals carried bulrushes to the chapel for the older folk to decorate their fireplaces.²⁴⁸ This custom was probably a remnant of the rush-bearing ceremony, which originated in the need to scatter fresh rushes on church floors, and the ceremony usually preceded the parish feast.²⁴⁹ Jan Albers concludes that the custom of rush bearing reflects the vitality of popular Anglicanism.²⁵⁰ However, this is the only reference to this ceremony to be found for the Forest of Arden region.

time of year for the erecting of May poles and May bushes and for using of Morris Dances and other heathenish and unlawful customs’.

²⁴⁵ Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden*, p.136.

²⁴⁶ The object of the ‘mop’ or ‘statute’ fair was originally for the hiring of agricultural workers and domestic servants. The name came about because farm workers, labourers, servants and craftsmen would take along an item to represent their trade to the fair. When the workers had no specific skills they would carry a mophead to signify that they were free for employment. Mop fairs were always held on Monday before and the Monday after Michaelmas day (11 October). They were held after the harvest when people were looking for work for the winter.

²⁴⁷ Wheler, *Claverdon*, p.19.

²⁴⁸ O’Connor, *Places of Worship in Digbeth and Deritend*, p.27.

²⁴⁹ Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society*, p. 28-9.

²⁵⁰ Albers, “Seeds of Contention”, p. 202.

Chapel wake, William Hutton informs us, was held in the ‘meridian of Coleshill-street; was hatched and fostered by the publicans, for the benefit of the ‘spiggot’. Amongst the amusements, was bull-bating (until 1773), and horseracing through the streets. Bell wake came into being when ten bells were hung at St. Philip’s, Birmingham. Hutton also informs us that ‘Till within these few years, we were at this wake struck with a singular exhibition, that of a number of boys running a race through the streets naked’.²⁵¹ Although this culture was a facet of the emerging industrial urban society, these celebrations were still in some way connected with the church and were deeply rooted in a more rural past.

Dr. William Thomas, visiting a large number of parishes in the process of gathering material for his projected history of Warwickshire, treated at some length the particulars of the wake celebrations, which were not quite as innocent as they might have been. The parish clerk of Ilmington informed him that their ‘scandalized parson suspected the wake to be of no religious institution, but set up by Mobbish People for wrestling and other masculine Exercises’.²⁵² Henry Bourne, a Newcastle clergyman and antiquarian, mirrored this sentiment in 1725:

At present there is nothing left but very Refuse and Dregs of it; Religion having not the least Share of it, which till these latter Ages always had some. Rioting and Feasting are now all that remain, a Scandal to the Feast in particular, and to Christianity in general.²⁵³

²⁵¹ Hutton, *An History of Birmingham*.

²⁵² Dugdale, *Antiquities*, 2.

²⁵³ J. Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities: including the Whole of Mr Bourne’s Antiquitates Vulgares, with an Addenda to every Chapter of that Work* (London, 1810), pp. 292, 97.

Even so, the *Gentleman's Magazine* of April 1794 stated that the wakes of Warwickshire had always been characterised by their 'wild revelry and sports of fencing, wrestling, jumping, bowling, skittles and quoits'.²⁵⁴ The mop fair at Henley-in-Arden was known locally for its drunken and unruly behaviour. To deal with unlawful behaviour during the mop a court of summary justice, known as a 'pie powder' court, was kept in session for the duration.²⁵⁵ On the other hand, in 1704 the constables of Birmingham issued a proclamation stating that 'no further money was to be spent in public rejoicing unless the constable call a public meeting'.²⁵⁶ This vividly illustrates the tension between the popular celebration of the wake as a religious festival and the containment of what was seen as acceptable behaviour in the emerging industrial town of Birmingham. E.P. Thompson has suggested that the Church was losing its command over the leisure of the poor during the eighteenth century. However, as we have already commented, even in Birmingham there was still a strong link between the Church and the popular festivities of the laity.

Even superficially secular activities, such as charitable donations and bequests had religious overtones, for their proceeds were usually distributed on Sundays and holy days, at church.²⁵⁷ Alms for the poor at Beaudesert in the eighteenth century, we are told, were to be given out in the church on Good Friday and St. Thomas's Day.²⁵⁸ St. Thomas's Day, 21 December, was the most common of all 'doling days'. Also the will of Roger Taylor of Edgbaston (1728)

²⁵⁴ *The Gentleman Magazine*, April, 1794.

²⁵⁵ Henley-in-Arden News Letter. Available at www.henleynews.co.uk/06_04_13.html. Consulted on; 16/8/2008.

²⁵⁶ Feeney, *St Philips*, p.4c.

²⁵⁷ Jacob, *Lay People*, p.161.

²⁵⁸ *The Reports of Charity Commissioners*, p.20.

stipulated that bread was ‘to be distributed to the poor on Christmas day and Whitsunday’.²⁵⁹ Going ‘a Gooding,’ or ‘a corning,’ on St. Thomas’s Day was also practised in Warwickshire. Women begged money and in return presented the donors with branches of herbs. John Brand, the author of *Popular Antiquities*, stated that:

My servant, who is from Warwickshire, informs me that there is a custom in that county for the poor on St. Thomas’s Day to go with a bag to beg of the farmers, which they call going ‘a corning’.²⁶⁰

The parish church also continued to touch life at many points, not purely ecclesiastical. An ever-present reminder of the importance of the Church in every-day life was the tolling of church bells. Bell-ringing formed an important function in the community. It is impossible to read the churchwardens’ accounts of any parish from the fifteenth century onwards without being made aware of the importance of the bells, for they were always expensive to maintain and demanded constant expenditure upon their upkeep. In Birmingham, so churchwardens’ accounts inform us, six bells were recast in 1682. In addition, large sums were often spent on ropes, and on frames. The fact that churchwardens allowed large sums to be provided for bell repair, and that during our period new bells were added to many peals, is in itself evidence of the continuing popularity of bells and bell-ringing. Bell-ringers in Birmingham were held in high esteem within the parish. They had their own guild of bell-ringers known as the ‘ancient guild of St. Martin’s youth’; non-members could ring but they were known as ‘ringing

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.590.

²⁶⁰ J. Bland, *Observances on Popular Antiquities*.

outcasts'.²⁶¹ Briefly, bells were not only rung to summon people to church, but for weddings and to give warnings of fire or other disasters, to celebrate victories, to mark occasions such as Guy Fawkes Day and the monarch's birthday. The emphasis on bell-ringing as a conveyer of information can be gleaned from the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of Aston; these accounts also give a clear indication of the important function of bell-ringing in the life of a parish. We are informed that on 29th May, 1670 the bells rang to summon the villagers to 'rejuce on the Anniversary of the King's nativity and return day'. They also rang in 1685 when 'Monmouth was taken at Sedgemoor'. The coronation of William III in 1690 was announced to the parish by a 'merry peal' and the bells rang once again in 1697 on the occasion of the King's return after signing the Peace of Ryswick. In 1708 they rang for the capture of Lisle; in 1713 they rang after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht. In 1722 the neighbourhood was likewise informed of the accession of King George II by a peal of the church bells.²⁶²

Conclusion

'The chains which bound the common people,' according to E.P. Thompson were forged by the Church.²⁶³ The Church of England played a vital role in the life of the laity in the parishes of the Forest of Arden not only in terms of the many popular, folk-loric pastimes that coexisted alongside orthodox Christianity, but also in terms of the rhythm of public worship and the maintenance and upkeep of church buildings. The Forest of Arden's case does not conform to Edward Thompson's analysis, which suggests that popular Anglicanism was in

²⁶¹ Potts, *The Story of Birmingham Parish Church: St. Martin's-in-the-Bullring*, p. 7; Jenkins, *The Story of St. Martins, Birmingham Parish Church*, p. 58.

²⁶² Eliot, *Aston Parish Church*, p 10.

²⁶³ E. P. Thompson, 'Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture', *Journal of Social History*, 7, 1974, p. 382.

decline during the eighteenth century. Thompson in particular points to the Church's retreat from popular calendrical festivities.²⁶⁴ Even with Birmingham's newly emerging urban population there was still a strong link between the Church and the popular festivities of the laity. The town of Birmingham clearly illustrates that folk culture was not static but evolved to meet the needs of the newly emerging urban population and that the Church still played an integral part in these past-times. Equally, in the more rural areas of the region, the popular festivities of the laity, which constituted a blend of official and unofficial beliefs, reinforced the Church's role in a pre-literate society. Folklore and the magical lived in unison with Restoration Anglicanism.

Nineteenth-century commentators would have given the eighty-year period of this study a negative appraisal when considering church building. However, the vitality of local Anglicanism in the industrialising community of Birmingham is evident when we consider the building of St. Philip's church and, more importantly, the assigning of a new parish to it. Birmingham was undergoing considerable economic and demographic changes but the established Church rose to the challenge to capture the hearts and minds not only of the rising moneyed class but also the many migrant workers who were entering the town at this time. The buoyancy of Anglicanism can be illustrated by the generosity of the laity, both Whig and Tory, in financing and sponsoring both church and parish. Historians often overlook the vitality of local Anglicanism in Birmingham, concentrating instead on the role Dissent played in its growth. However, the building of the church and the creation of the parish of St. Philip's embodied the aspirations of all sections of the laity in Birmingham; it was an expression of their cultural and social identity as well as of their faith. Similarly, the laity in the rural areas

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, pp.49, 55.

of the Forest of Arden were also supportive and generous in maintaining and improving even the poorest of parish churches. Religion was an integral part of society in the period under study and therefore charitable donations and bequests for the improvement and rebuilding of churches had a religious purpose. Christian charity in the form of donations and bequests reflects, not only the strength of popular Anglicanism but, they also demonstrate how religion was ‘central to people’s lives’.²⁶⁵

The loyalty offered by the laity, however, was not unconditional. Services, particularly in the rural deanery of Warwick, were conditioned by lay demand and, more importantly, by customary habits. Demand and custom usually dictated a single service, often alternating between morning and afternoon or even taking place fortnightly. What is clear is that there was not the steady decline in the performance of Sunday duty during the eighteenth century which has been claimed by Anthony Russell.²⁶⁶ Churches in market towns, moreover, such as Warwick, Solihull and Sutton Coldfield and the emerging industrial town of Birmingham, usually held two services on a Sunday throughout our period, a clear indication of urban piety. This challenges the assumption that the Church was weaker in urban than in rural areas.

Although lay demand also determined the frequency with which Holy Communion was celebrated, the conditions placed on communicants by the wording of the Prayer Book was an alienating factor when considering the low numbers of communicants both in rural and urban areas. Many parishioners believed that receiving the sacrament constituted a promise to repent past offences and commit no more. Failure to fulfil this promise could lead to eternal damnation. The failure of the Church to address this mind set can be seen as contributing in part to the negative appraisal given to the eighteenth-century Church by nineteenth-century

²⁶⁵ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 221.

²⁶⁶ Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, pp. 54-5.

commentators. As this study has shown, the view that catechising had largely died out by the mid eighteenth century can no longer be accepted. The clergy of the deanery of Warwick and Arden catechised during Lent with some parishes extending the period of catechising back to the summer. As will be seen in a later chapter, the duty of catechising was also taken up by charity schools working in unison with the Church of England.

It would be wrong to assume that the laity of the post-Restoration period were all firmly wedded to the Church of England. However, as this survey of popular Anglicanism in the Forest of Arden clearly demonstrates that the Church of England held the loyalty of a considerable proportion of the population. They took the lead in managing the affairs of the parish, which was the major focus of communal and social life. Indeed, the period under study remained a largely traditional society and the Church was central to the lives of most people. What is more, and as the next chapter on the Church and its competitors will illustrate, a widespread belief in the abiding value of a unified Church knitted together all members of society.

CHAPTER TWO

The Church of England and its competitors

If a man's sentiments and practice in religious matters appear even absurd, provided society is not injured, what right hath the magistrate to interfere?¹

So wrote the eighteenth-century Birmingham historian, William Hutton in 1783. Like many educated liberals of his age, Hutton saw someone's religion as a private issue, sentiments [which] are as much his private property, as the coat that covers him, or the life which that coat encloses'.² English popular culture was strongly Christian; it was not, however, as J.C.D. Clarke was at pains to point out, 'totally Anglican'.³ However, panic induced by a perceived threat to Anglican authority might rouse extensive prosecution and persecution of Nonconformists, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic. The religious and political excesses of extreme Puritanism during the Civil War and Commonwealth period rendered Protestant Nonconformity distinctly suspect after the Restoration and its religious settlement of 1662. There was an ingrained fear of popery. Memories of the reign of Mary Tudor, as preserved in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, were embedded in the consciousness of loyal Englishmen and women, both Tory and Whig. Popular hostility towards Protestant Nonconformists could occasionally find violent expression, most notably in the Sacheverell riots of 1710. Even so, in a sermon preached before King Charles II on 1 December 1668, William Lloyd, future Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry and subsequently of Worcester, attempted to highlight Anglican toleration:

¹ W. Hutton, *An History of Birmingham* (London, 1783), p. 110.

² *Ibid.* p.110.

³ J.C.D. Clarke, *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, 1985), p.7.

Neither our Religion, nor our Church, is a Persecuting Spirit. I know not how it may be in particular persons. But I say again, it is not in the genius of our Church: She hath no doctrine that teacheth Persecution; she hath not practised it, as others, when they were in Authority. I thank God for it, and I hope, she will always continue in that temper; which, being added to the Marks of a true Christian Church, may assure us, that She is a Church according to the mind of Christ.⁴

While forcing people to worship in ways that were abhorrent to their consciences was an objectionable business for some, after the Restoration a series of statutes known collectively as the Clarendon Code was passed to strengthen the position of the Church of England. The Corporation Act (1661) required all officers of incorporated towns and cities to take communion according to the rites of the Church of England and to renounce the Presbyterian covenant. The Act of Uniformity (1662) required all ministers in England and Wales to use and subscribe to the Book of Common Prayer; nearly 2,000 ministers resigned rather than submit. The Conventicle Act (1664) forbade the assembling of five or more persons for religious worship other than Anglican. The Five-Mile Act (1665) forbade any Nonconformist preacher or teacher to come within five miles of a city or corporate town where he had served as minister. To court popularity with Dissenters and to ease the position of Roman Catholics, Charles II attempted to interfere with the operation of these laws. In 1662 and 1672 he attempted, unsuccessfully, to introduce his declarations of indulgence. As a political device to weaken the Whigs, the Test Act of 1673 largely superseded the Clarendon Code, although some of the statutes, in modified form, remained in force for some time. The Act excluded from public office (both military and civil) all those who refused to take the oaths of

⁴ Quoted in A. Tindal, Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717: Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet* (London, 1952), p.223.

allegiance and supremacy, who refused to take communion according to the rites of the Church of England, or who refused to renounce belief in the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. The Blasphemy Act of 1697 made denying the doctrine of the Trinity, the truth of Christianity, or the authority of the scripture punishable by up to three years imprisonment. Those publishing theologically heterodox opinions also risked prosecution for blasphemous libel. On balance though, these legal provisions were rarely invoked, and attempts in the early 1720s to strengthen them failed to win parliamentary support. Although a theological student was hanged for heresy in Scotland in 1698, no heretic had been executed in England since the early seventeenth century. In addition, before repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts began to be widely debated it has been argued that the solidarity of Birmingham's leading citizens was not threatened by sectarian differences.⁵

After the Act of Toleration of 1689, England saw an expansion of religious pluralism and a growing number of churches worshipping side by side. Voltaire observed this diversity with the detachment of an outsider:

If one religion only were allowed in England, the government would very possibly become arbitrary if there were but two, the people would cut one another's throats; but as there are such a multitude, they all live happy and in peace.⁶

Plainly, Voltaire exaggerated the harmony of his period. He was right, however, to note the plurality of religious organisations. The Act of Toleration allowed freedom of worship to all

⁵ Hutton, *An History of Birmingham*, p. 110.

⁶ Quoted in P. Corfield, 'Georgian England: One State, many Faiths', *History Today*, 45, 1995, p.16.

Trinitarian Protestants although, on the political front, many realised that too many concessions to Protestant Dissent would alienate the Church of England.⁷ In a letter sent to Richard Newdigate, a prominent Warwickshire Whig and hence a supporter of Toleration, we get a sense of the fear felt by conservative Anglicans. Toleration, the letter stated, would be:

Certainly destructive to our reformed religion. I pray consider that everyone who seems to have the same honest aims as you is not sincere as you are... Dear Sir, we are blind and in the dark... God knows, while we think we pursue our safety we may probably leap into irremediable ruin!⁸

This legislation, however, was not especially tolerant in the widest sense of the word. It did not allow complete religious freedom, since Catholics, Unitarians, and non-Christian religious groups had no rights of public worship. The Toleration Act had neither disestablished the Church of England nor repealed the old Test and Corporation Acts. Under these laws all office holders were required to take oaths of allegiance and supremacy and to prove by certificate that they had taken communion according to Anglican rites. Here, then, was a potential barrier to all but those of the Anglican persuasion. This was not lost on Voltaire, who observed in 1733 that:

An Englishman, as to one whom liberty is natural, may go to heaven his own way. Nevertheless, tho' one is permitted to serve God in whatever mode or fashion he thinks proper, yet their true religion, that in which a man makes his fortune, is the

⁷ J. Spurr, 'The Church of England: Comprehension and the Toleration Act of 1689', *English Historical Review*, 1989, p.927.

⁸ B. D. Heming (ed.), *History of Parliament 1660-1690*, III, Members, M-Y (London, 1983).

sect of Episcoparians [sic] or Churchmen, call'd the Church of England, or simply the Church, by way of eminence. No person can possess an employment either in England or Ireland, unless he be ranked among the faithful, that is, professes himself a member of the Church of England.⁹

This system, however, was easily circumvented and open to abuse. To the annoyance of most Tories, some Dissenters simply conformed occasionally to gain office.¹⁰ In 1711, the Tories passed a law against this practice but in 1726 Sir Robert Walpole's government introduced the first Indemnity Act and, after that, his successors frequently did the same from 1727 to 1757 (this became an annual event thereafter). The Toleration Act nevertheless safeguarded the Church of England as the established Church: 'The Church of England, as by law established, [is] so essential a part of the constitution, that whatever endangered it would necessarily affect the security of the whole', wrote William Pitt as late as 1790. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, having an established Church meant that no absolute division could be made between Church and State. The monarch in Parliament was supreme Governor on earth of the Church of England. The source of authority in Church and State was the same. Dr. Jacob points out, however, that the Act undermined the Church of England as the national Church, by permitting people to choose to meet for Trinitarian worship in a place other than their parish church.¹¹ Nevertheless, the political and social supremacy of Anglicanism remained secure after 1689; despite fears of Tory Churchmen, the

⁹ Voltaire, *Letters Concerning the English Nation* (Oxford, 1733), p.26.

¹⁰ The Test Act stated that: 'The said respective officers [i.e. Public officers] shall also receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the Church of England... in some parish church, upon some Lord's day, commonly after divine service and sermon'.

¹¹ W. M. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), p.15.

Act of Toleration offered very little other than mere toleration to orthodox Protestant Dissenters and nothing to Roman Catholics.

It must be noted that the Act of Toleration has served to eclipse James II's Declaration of Indulgence for most historians. The King's intentions were to grant entire liberty of conscience to all his subjects:

The execution of all and all manner of penal laws in matters ecclesiastical for not coming to church or not receiving the Sacrament or for any other Nonconformity to the religion established or for or by reason of the exercise of religion in any manner whatsoever is suspended by his Majesty's gracious Declaration to all his loving subjects for liberty of conscience dated 4th April 1687 in the third year of his Majesty's reign.¹²

It could be argued that by granting a general religious toleration, James effectively ended two decades of persecution and allowed all who refused to conform to the established Church freedom of worship. Indeed, recent research has pointed out that the Toleration Act actually reduced the limits of religious freedom granted by James II in the last years of his reign.¹³ David Wykes has shown that the Toleration Act, far from granting Protestant Dissenters

¹² H.C. Johnson, *Warwick County Records, Quarter Sessions Records, Trinity, 1682, To Epiphany, 1690*, Volume VIII, 1953, p.207.

¹³ W.A. Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688* (Oxford, 1988), p.187.

freedom from persecution, led to a generation and more of bitter religious strife, of which he argues, the 'Dissenters in Birmingham were to suffer an undue share'.¹⁴

On the other hand, much of the late seventeenth to the mid eighteenth century saw Anglican churches providing the only large covered meeting places available outside towns. The parish church was the natural focus for the community; there were no alternative buildings in the typical parish that could fulfil this role. Parish churches served as sources of spiritual comfort and also as centres for village social life. The Church of England was still providing the intellectual leadership and education for the majority of the ordinary people. At religious services the incumbent would not only preach the word of God but would also explain to his congregation important national developments: wars, victories, defeats and developments concerning the royal family. Weakening of the Church of England, therefore, struck pragmatic Whig politicians, such as Walpole, as unwise.

Dr. Haydon has demonstrated the continuing potency of English anti-Catholicism during this period.¹⁵ Ian Green, however, has demonstrated that the Restoration Church, particularly in Canterbury, was far from being an intolerant institution; indeed, it was willing to engage in dialogue with Nonconformists.¹⁶ Dr. Gregory suggests that consensus was more useful than confrontation. Rather than confronting local Nonconformists, argued Gregory, the clergy sought to establish amicable relations and tolerantly regarded them as competitors rather than

¹⁴ D. L. Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687 and the Early Organization of Dissent: The Building of the First Nonconformist Meeting House in Birmingham', *Midland History*, 13-16, 1991, p.86.

¹⁵ C. Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester, 1993).

¹⁶ I. Green, *The Re-establishment of the Church of England 1660-1663* (Oxford, 1978), Chapter 1.

outright opponents.¹⁷ William Gibson also presented evidence of the widespread Anglican commitment to harmony between those of differing religious views.¹⁸ Cesar de Saussure, a French Protestant living in London in 1729, did not witness extreme anti-Catholicism in the cosmopolitan context of the capital. He wrote an account of English religion in which he stated that:

The Roman Catholics, who are very numerous in England, where they live in perfect peace and security, with every facility for celebrating their religion publicly. On every Sunday and Saints' day services are held in the chapels belonging to the ministers of Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and Sardinia. These chapels are always crowded. Many peers, such as the Duke of Norfolk, the Earls of Dumbarton, Lord Petre, and others, have their own chapels and chaplain. This, to tell the truth, is contrary to the law, but their minister is tolerant, and wisely pretends to ignore these facts, Jesuits, however, are looked upon as disturbers of the peace and of public welfare.¹⁹

Although Cesar de Saussure's account may not have been wholly representative of the national situation, it does give some indication that Catholics were able to worship in relative freedom along side those of the established Church in London. How far can we say this is true for the Forest of Arden?

¹⁷J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and Their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 231-2; J. Spurr, 'Review of J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese*', p.3. Available at, H-Albion, H-Net Reviews www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi.

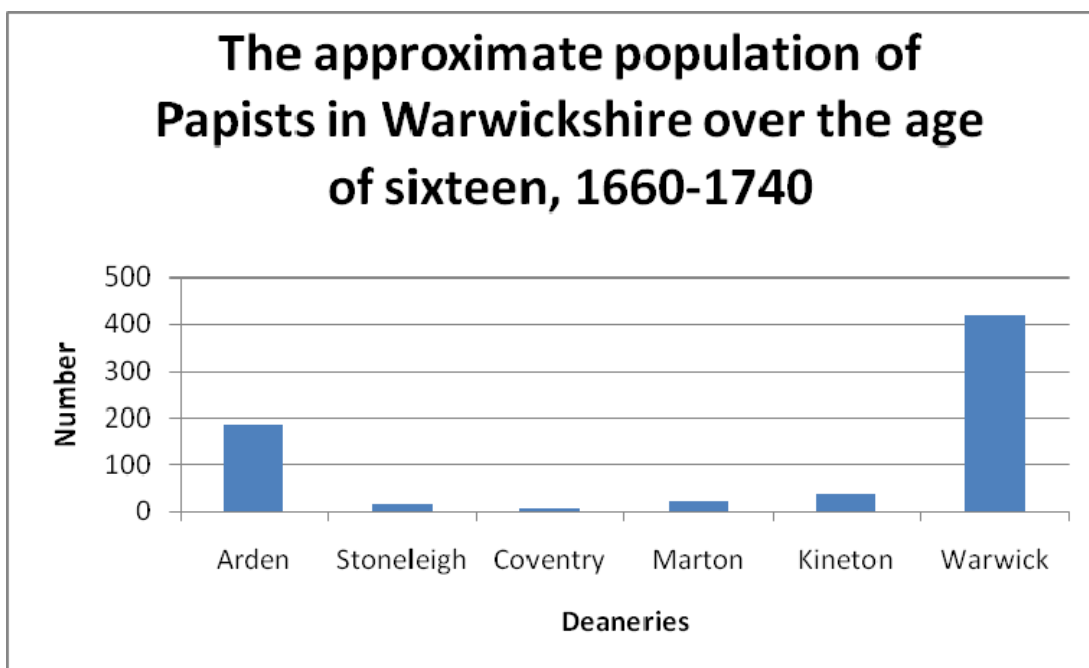
¹⁸ W. Gibson, *The Church of England 1688-1835: Unity and Accord* (London, 2000).

¹⁹Quoted in W. Gibson, *Religion and Society in England and Wales, 1689-1800* (Leicester, 1998), p. 221.

ROMAN CATHOLICS

The Compton census of 1676 gives a clear indication that Warwickshire had above the national average of Roman Catholics in its population.²⁰ Roman Catholics seem to have been most numerous in the west and southwest part of the county.

Figure.2:1



Source: *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 45.

Figure 2:1 above clearly shows that Roman Catholics were strongest in the two deaneries of the Forest of Arden. The Warwick deanery, where most of the Warwickshire Catholics resided, was almost entirely rural.²¹ This supports Dr. Gregory's work on the diocese of

²⁰ The returns for Warwickshire parishes are printed in, S.C. Ratcliff and H. C. Johnson (eds), *Quarter Sessions Records, Easter, 1674, to Easter, 1682*, VII, 1946, p. lxxxiii-xcvii.

²¹ J. Hurwich, 'Dissent and Catholicism in English Society: A Study of Warwickshire, 1660-1720', *Journal of British Studies*, 16, 1976, p. 32; C. Haydon, 'The Church in the Kineton Deanery of the Diocese of Worcester, c. 1660-c. 1800', in J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds). *The National Church in Local Perspective: The*

Canterbury where he stated that ‘Catholics remained rooted in the rural parishes’.²² The Papists of Coughton parish were a fifth of the population, whilst in the adjoining parish of Arrow they were a quarter.²³ In Bidford parish, immediately south of Arrow, there were upwards of sixty Papists. Likewise, the adjacent parishes of Hampton and Berkswell, which fell within the borders of the deanery of Arden, had many of the Roman faith. More than a quarter of the adult population of Wooton Wawen were Catholics and, in the neighbouring parishes of Rowington²⁴ and Tanworth, there were also a fair proportion of Papists. These parishes also adjoined Baddesley Clinton, where the Ferrers family had long associations with the ‘old Faith’.²⁵

It is important to recognise, however, that the extent of recusancy in a parish would vary over time and that the Compton census was only an estimate based on churchwardens’ presentments from April 1676. The actual numbers of Roman Catholics at any one time are difficult to determine. The character of records, which do not always distinguish between popish recusants and Protestant Dissenters, as well as their incompleteness, make precise estimates difficult. Nevertheless, Franciscans records (of baptisms, conversions, confirmations, marriages and deaths), indicate the strength of Roman Catholicism in the region. During the latter part of the seventeenth century the Franciscans (who were active in Birmingham, Edgbaston and Solihull) maintained the Catholic faith locally. By the time of

Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800 (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 166-7; Ratcliff and Johnson (eds), *Quarter Sessions Records, Easter 1674, To Easter 1682*; Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform*, p.206.

²² Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform*, p.206.

²³ W.R.O. Arrow (xi) B.A. 2289/1 807. Presentments for 23 September, 1674 inform us that at Arrow ‘there are many Papists’.

²⁴ J. Woodall, *From Horca to Anne Being a 1000 years in the life of Rowington* (Solihull, 1974), p.87.

²⁵ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 46.

Bishop Compton's census in 1676 the Franciscans had been ministering in the region for nearly twenty years. Travelling priests had said Mass and performed baptisms and marriages in all parishes, they also welcomed those who wished to be 'reconciled to the faith'.²⁶ The Franciscan Register clearly shows that a large number of those baptised came from Tanworth, a village near Henley-in-Arden. In the first part of the eighteenth century Solihull seems to have been the most significant Catholic locality and, by 1750, it was a separate mission. The names of Rowington, Coleshill, Alvechurch and Fillongley also frequently recur as the homes of Papists.²⁷

Between 1658 and 1700 the Franciscans' list of *reconciliati* included 288 people from the parishes of the modern city of Birmingham. Of these, 107 were said to come from Edgbaston, ninety-six from Birmingham, twenty-five from Harborne and two from Aston.²⁸ The corresponding figures recorded for Bishop Compton state that there were no papists in Edgbaston or Harborne, whereas there were eleven out of approximately 2,600 households in Birmingham, and thirteen out roughly 1,500 households in Aston. While the Aston figures may have been over estimated, the other parishes, as shown in the Franciscan records, are more likely to have had more Roman Catholic inhabitants than were enumerated. It is important to note that the Franciscan records also indicate that the largest number of persons from the Birmingham area to be baptised between 1657 and 1699 came from Edgbaston

²⁶ W.P.W. Phillimore and P.E. Williams (eds), *Warwickshire Parish Registers: Franciscan Register*, pt.1, 1657-1824 (1904), II; Woodall, *From Horca to Ann.*, p.87.

²⁷ Woodall, *From Horca to Ann.*, p.87.

²⁸ *Birmingham, Religious History: Roman Catholicism*, p.2. Available at. www.british-history.ac.uk.

(eighty-seven). Between 1708 and 1750, ninety-nine were baptised, while the corresponding numbers for Birmingham were thirty and seventy-five.²⁹

Dr. Ann Hughes has suggested that the Catholic gentry of Warwickshire were a cohesive and closely inter-married group and that they dominated the villages where they were resident.³⁰ John Bossy has also pointed out that local loyalty to the gentry family was a strong factor in keeping Catholicism alive in the neighbourhood of a Catholic estate.³¹ Warwickshire, according to Judith Hurwich, conformed to this pattern of 'seigneurial' Catholicism.³² Colin Haydon has shown that in the Kineton Deanery in the Feldon region of Warwickshire, Catholics clustered round the large estates of local gentry who would also safeguard the worship of nearby recusants, who were usually their tenants.³³ On one level the evidence does suggest that in the Forest of Arden many Catholics were clustered around the estates of the local gentry, in particular the Middlemores of Edgbaston, the Ferrers of Baddesly Clinton, the Throckmortons of Coughton, and the Carringtons of Wooton Wawen.³⁴ In 1705, for example, it was noted that Lady Carrington had 'many Popish servants'.³⁵ Coughton, in the deanery of Warwick, remained a chief centre of Warwickshire recusancy and, during the reign of Charles II, the Jesuits of the 'Residence of St George' served its Roman Catholic community.³⁶ The recusant Carringtons, Middlemores and Throckmortons were among the richest Warwickshire

²⁹ *Birmingham, Religious History: Roman Catholicism*, p.2.

³⁰ A. Hughes, 'Warwickshire on the Eve of the Civil War: A 'County Community''? *Midland History*, p.51.

³¹ J. Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *Past and Present*, 21, 1962, pp.39-40.

³² Hurwich, 'Dissent and Catholicism in English Society: A study of Warwickshire,' p. 33.

³³ Haydon, 'The Church in the Kineton Deanery', pp.166-167.

³⁴ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p.46.

³⁵ W.R.O. BA.2911/716.02.

³⁶ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 46.

families.³⁷ However, it must be pointed out that the Ferrers family were rarely in residence at Baddesley Clinton.³⁸

Although the above seems to present a picture for 'seigneurial Catholicism', one should note that Catholics also clustered where there were energetic Catholics of the middling sort. This is evident at Solihull, in the deanery of Arden, where several Catholics of middle to high socio-economic status lived; for example, the Warings with 10 hearths, the Hugfords with 8 hearths and the Neweys with 5 hearths.³⁹ It was stated that about one tenth of the inhabitants of Solihull were Papists.⁴⁰ As mentioned above, the registers kept by the Franciscans reveal the breadth of their activities in and around Solihull, Edgbaston and Birmingham and show that there were many more Catholics in this region than the diocesan and quarter sessions presentments record.

In view of the Jacobite threat, an Act was passed in 1715 'to oblige Papists to register their names and real estates' and its effects highlight that all conditions of society in our area were represented. The local registers included six esquires, various gentlemen and yeomen, and others with cottage and freehold property, described as tailors, glovers, weavers, thread-makers, cordwainers, or labourers.⁴¹ Equally, in the return of papists (1706) for the parish of St. Martin's, Birmingham, representatives of various social groups can be found. They

³⁷ Hughes, 'Warwickshire on the Eve of the Civil War', p.51.

³⁸ J. Woodall, *Portrait of Lapworth* (Solihull, 1986), p.11.

³⁹ V.T.J. Arkell, 'An enquiry into the frequency of the Parochial Registration of Catholics in a Seventeenth Century Warwickshire parish'. *Local Population Studies*, 9, 1972. Hearth tax was a national tax levied from 1662 to 1688, based on the number of hearths in a dwelling. It serves as a rough standard of living index, and thus as an indirect index of wealth.

⁴⁰ V.C.H. *Warwickshire*, II, p. 46.

⁴¹ J.O. Payne (ed.), *Records of the English Catholics of 1715* (London, 1889), pp.270-80.

included a schoolmaster, a washerwoman, a barber, a gentleman, a labourer, an optician and a victualler.⁴² The plebeian Catholics of the Forest of Arden were not directly dependent on the Catholic hierarchy, at least in an economic sense.⁴³ Catholic gentlemen were patrons who provided the services of the priest for the neighbourhood. Judith Hurwich estimates that less than a third of the known Catholics of Warwickshire in 1714 were tenants on the Catholic owned estates registered in that year.⁴⁴

In his will of 31 January 1748, Francis Carrington, Esq., of Wotton Wawen left £20 a year for the maintenance of a priest at Wotton. Similarly, Anne Throckmorton, in her will of June 14th 1725, left £35 to Bonaventura Giffard,⁴⁵ the Vicar Apostolic⁴⁶ of the Midlands district. As far as Catholicism is concerned, there is no reason to doubt that the presence of gentry families, with their ability to maintain a priest, did more than anything else to keep the ‘old faith’ active in the rural and semi-rural districts of the Forest of Arden. In spite of this, the survival of a high proportion of established families of lower social status also helped to keep the community alive. In Solihull, for example, sixty out of 165 Catholic surnames contained in the Hearth Tax returns have been shown to go back into the medieval period.⁴⁷ It has been shown that Papist families were much the same in Berkswell, Bickenhill, Hampton and Solihull in 1660 as they had been in 1580-95.⁴⁸ Similarly, the Attwood, Cowper, Greswold,

⁴² L.R.O. B/A/12 (i) Return of Papists, 1706.

⁴³ Hurwich, ‘Dissent and Catholicism in English Society’, p.37.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Payne (ed), *Records of the English Catholics*, p. 72.

⁴⁶ N. Tiptaft, *Religion in Birmingham in 1688* (Birmingham, 1972). Catholic England was divided into four ‘Districts’, Bonaventure Giffard, born at Wolverhampton became first Vicar Apostolic of the Midlands district.

⁴⁷ *Warwick County Records, Hearth Tax Returns*, 1, 1957.

⁴⁸ J. Woodall, *The Book of Greater Solihull* (Buckingham, 1990), p.54.

Shipton and Reeve families of Rowington can be found in the recusant roll of 1592.⁴⁹ In addition, there are several names from the Arden region running through the Franciscan records from their inception in 1657 to their end in 1824 (such as Partridge, Middlemore, Fielding, Ferrers, Knight, Howard and Windsor).⁵⁰

On a negative note though, Roman Catholicism remained the most reviled form of religious ‘deviation’ and there was an historic mistrust and fear of this religion. For example, in 1666 a troop of horse was required in Warwick to restore order after a boy gathering blackberries had found what was pronounced a ‘popish fireball’⁵¹ (this coincides with the Great Fire of London and with rumours that Catholics were responsible for it).⁵² During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was a fear born out of the alignment of Catholicism with Jacobitism and treason. Although Catholics were subject to stringent penal statutes, most right-minded Protestants regarded them with suspicion. William Lloyd delivered many sermons that attacked papists. He never, however, advocated violence or abuse. Lloyd often quoted Queen Elizabeth’s dealings with the papists as an example of a limited toleration of the more moderate ‘Romanists’. For this reason Lloyd was often compelled to defend himself against accusations of ‘being not Protestant enough’.⁵³ The charity schools, bulwarks of Anglicanism, recognised the advantage of teaching the young to read the Bible as a way of inoculating them against popery. A sermon preached at the opening of the charity school in Birmingham pointed out that:

⁴⁹ J. Woodall, *From Horca to Ann* (Solihull, 1974), p.87.

⁵⁰ Phillimore and Williams (eds), *Warwickshire Parish Registers*, II.

⁵¹ *The Borough of Warwick: Political and Administrative History, 1545-1835*. Available at British History online www.british-history.ac.uk/report.

⁵² I would like to thank Dr. M.F. Snape for this information.

⁵³ Tindal, Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717: Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet*, pp.223-4.

An advantage I shall mention arising from these schools, has an equal regard both to Church and State, which is this that this education tends in the most effectual manner to prevent the growth and return of Popery among us, which is counted the greatest enemy to both. For what method can be so effectual to bring Popery again into this nation, as that which kept it up here before the Reformation, and which now keeps it up in Popish countries? Now this is known to be a national ignorance spread over the common people; among whom the very scriptures are locked up, and the public worship performed in an unknown tongue. What better method then can our Church take to bar out Popery, than by opening the eyes of the people; in direct opposition to this principle of Popery therefore is this education.⁵⁴

In the late seventeenth century this fear of Catholicism was reinforced by the contemporary political situation in Europe,⁵⁵ especially the sufferings of the Huguenots in Catholic France under Louis XIV⁵⁶ and of German refugees from the Palatine. In the churchwardens' accounts for St. Mary's, Warwick, of 1685-1686 there is the entry: 'Ppd to the apparator for carrying the money to Worcester that was collected for the poore ffrench protestants.' This probably

⁵⁴ Blisse, *Publick Education, Particularly in the Charity Schools: A Sermon Preached at St. Philip's Church in Birmingham, 1724 at the Opening of a Charity-School, Birmingham*.

⁵⁵ W. M. Marshall, 'The Diocese of Hereford and Oxford, 1660-1760', in J. Gregory and J.S. Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-180* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 216.

⁵⁶ D. Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687 and the Early Organisation of Dissent: The Building of the First Nonconformist Meeting-House in Birmingham', *Midland History*, 16, 1991, p. 86.

refers to the Huguenot refugees who had flocked to England in large numbers on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.⁵⁷

Fear of Catholicism was heightened due to the fabrications of Titus Oates (many Roman Catholics in the country were convinced that Bishop Lloyd, then Bishop of St Asaph, had a hand in Oates' allegations).⁵⁸ This disclosure not only strengthened the forces of intolerance in Parliament but also roused the county magistracy to unaccustomed keenness in the implementation of the laws against Roman Catholics. This is highlighted in an increase in the presentments of Catholics at quarter sessions in Warwickshire. Presentments for Popish recusants in Warwickshire were never numerous. There had, however, been a wave of presentments for recusants in 1673, after the withdrawal of the second Declaration of Indulgence and before the passage of the first Test Act.⁵⁹ The number dramatically increased at the Easter sessions of 1679, where over three hundred persons were presented as Catholic recusants.⁶⁰ It was noted that a number of papists from the parish of Rowington were asked to take the Oath of Supremacy and Allegiance.⁶¹ At the Epiphany sessions of 1679, twenty-one persons, together with Thomas and Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Clinton, and a number of other local Catholics, both men and women, were summoned before the court and bound in recognisance of various sums of money, varying between £25 and £200 to appear at the next Sessions. Each was obliged to find two acquaintances to stand surety of an equivalent

⁵⁷ T. Kemp, 'Warwick Registers', *Birmingham Archaeological Society Transactions and Proceedings*, XLV, 1919, p.13.

⁵⁸ Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717*, pp.89-90. In response to the Catholic allegations the bishop wrote to Bishop Sancroft stating that: 'their tales, which I durst not contradict, I did never countenance or encourage'.

⁵⁹ Haydon, 'The Church in the Kinton Deanery', in Gregory and Chamberlain, (eds), *The National Church*, p.168.

⁶⁰ Ratcliff and Johnson (eds). *Warwick County Records Quarter Sessions Records*, 7, pp.lxx-lxxii.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p.139.

amount.⁶² In part this was due to the panic induced by the threat of the Popish plot. Indeed, Françoise Deconinck-Brossard has mentioned that even as far north as Northumberland there were many outbursts of anti-Catholicism in its wake'.⁶³ Dr. Gregory has also stated that, despite the low numbers of Papists in Canterbury, anti-Catholic sentiment was resurrected as a result of Oates' allegations.⁶⁴

Although the statements of Oates (and other conspirators such as Belie and Daingerfield) were soon shown to be untrustworthy, a backlash caused by his allegations had already been put in motion and a number of priests had been arrested and condemned to death merely because they were Catholic priests. Andrew Bromwich of Perry Barr near Birmingham was one such victim. One witness alleged that he had 'given communion to eight or nine people on four occasions'.⁶⁵ Bromwich was condemned in 1679 at Stafford Assizes to be 'drawn upon hurdles to execution, hanged by the neck, cut down, and mutilated'.⁶⁶ He was, however, reprieved and ultimately freed in 1685 on the accession of James II. When he returned to his ministry, Bromwich became founder and priest of the mission at old Oscott.⁶⁷

⁶² Ratcliff and Johnson (eds). *Warwick County Records Quarter Sessions Records*, 7, pp.125- 37.

⁶³ F.D. Brossard, 'We Live so Far North: the Church in the North-East of England', in Gregory and Chamberlain, (eds), *The National Church*, p.230.

⁶⁴ Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform*, p.206.

⁶⁵ W.F. Hackwood, *Handsworth Old and New* (Handsworth, 1908), p .43.

⁶⁶ R. K. Dent and J. Hill, *Historic Staffordshire* (Wakefield, 1975).

⁶⁷ *Ibid*; E. M. Rudland, *Ballads of old Birmingham and Neighbourhood* (London, 1915).

**Andrew Bromwich of Perry Barr,
Priest of the ancient holy church,
Was held for trial at Stafford assize,
For the faith that was his beyond research.**

**Judged as priest by a terrible law
To hang and ere death its mercy gave,
His bowels to burn to his dying view;
His quarters to know no peaceful grave.**

THE REIGN OF JAMES II

Anti-Catholic sentiment grew during the reign of James II. During James' reign 'The World Turned Upside Down'⁶⁸ for most Anglicans. The appointment of Roman Catholics to every position of secular authority was seen as part of the King's Romanising policy. Roman Catholic peers were admitted to the Privy Council and to the new court of High Commission set up to control ecclesiastical discipline. It was also assumed that the army was being flooded with Papists. From the Arden region of Warwickshire, Robert Feilding of Solihull was appointed to the Warwickshire bench. It was stated that he had raised a regiment in Warwickshire for the King,⁶⁹ which may have been during Monmouth's rebellion. Authoritative opinion is agreed, however, that Fielding, who was a convert, was a dishonest opportunist, 'subservient only to the King's will' and his own interests.⁷⁰

On the other hand, long established Catholic names were also recorded in the Warwickshire Commission. Lord Carrington of Wotton Wawen was made Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire

**Yet God in his mercy rose to aid,
By a monarch new was his freedom given;
And he turned again to his holy tasks
That erst by the threat of his doom were riven.**

**Ten years and seven did he labour on,
And stirring of Oscott of old was his,
And he gave his all for the faith he taught.**

**Saint Mary of Oscott hath greatly grown,
A college for priests and for worship blent,
O'erlooking the Tame it lifts its head
To the God of all for his monument.**

After he died in 1701 there was a fairly continuous succession of priests.

⁶⁸ The Title of a book by C. Hill. *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During The English Revolution*. (London, 1974).

⁶⁹ Ratcliff and Johnson (eds), *Warwick County Records Quarter Sessions*, 8, p.xxv.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. xxvi. Fielding was known as a bully, bigamist, wife beater and heiress hunter. H.C. Johnson describes him as 'with out doubt the most colourful and least reputable of all the pre-Revolution Warwickshire Justices'.

in 1687.⁷¹ Robert Throckmorton of Coughton and Richard Bethan of Rowington were admitted to the Warwickshire bench in 1687. The government of James II employed Robert Brent of Ilmington, a Catholic lawyer, and in 1685 a rumour was circulated that he was to be made Attorney General. By 1687, however, Brent was the Catholic agent of the board of regulators (a committee of Privy Councillors set up to regulate the municipal corporations). After the Revolution of 1688 he was denounced as ‘that Popish Solicitor’ and was arrested. Out of the nine individuals appointed to the Warwickshire bench between 1687 and 1688, all but one was Roman Catholic.⁷² In addition, a new corporation of recorder, mayor, and twelve aldermen was nominated for Warwick. The corporation was headed by Francis, Viscount Carrington, as the new recorder, with John Eades as mayor (a known Roman Catholic). Nine of the aldermen were members of Roman Catholic families living in the area to the south and west of Warwick, which was the home of most of the county’s Roman Catholic families.⁷³ Against this background it is not surprising to find a day of thanksgiving for England’s ‘deliverance from Popery’ recorded in Aston in 1689.⁷⁴ On the other hand, it is also interesting to note that there are several entries in parish registers throughout our region referring to thanksgiving for the birth of the Prince of Wales, the future ‘Old Pretender’. In St. Mary’s Warwick churchwardens’ accounts for 1688-9 there is the entry: ‘Paid ye ringers for ringing the bells on the day of thanksgiving for the Prince of Wales’.⁷⁵ Clearly, whatever may

⁷¹ Ratcliff and Johnson (eds), *Warwick County Records, Quarter Sessions*, 8, p. xxviii.

⁷² *Ibid.* pp. xxviii-xxix.

⁷³ *The Borough of Warwick: Political and Administrative History, 1545-1835*. Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report.

⁷⁴ Rev. W. Eliot, *The Parish Church of Aston-Juxta Birmingham: its Ancient History and Modern Restoration* (Birmingham, 1889), p.10.

⁷⁵ Kemp, ‘Warwick Registers’, p.14.

have been the inward feelings of the inhabitants of Warwick, they at least outwardly manifested their loyalty.

After the revolution of 1688 Catholics were associated with Jacobitism and were seen by the authorities as a threat to the new regime. In 1688 Henry Booth, second Lord Delamere, came to Birmingham with a 'substantial' force from Manchester in an attempt to prevent any demonstrations on behalf of James II. Violence, therefore, was directed against James' partisans and against the newly built Franciscan church and convent of St. Mary Magdalene.⁷⁶ With Lord Delamere's backing, drums were beaten as his regiment marched on the church.⁷⁷ A priest of the time gave the following account of the attack:

First defaced and most of it burrent within to near ye value of 400 [pounds] by ye Lord Dellamere's Order upon the 26 day of November 1688 and on the day seven night following the rabble of Bermingham begon to pull the church and convent down, and seased not until they had pulled up the foundations. They sold the materials, of which many houses are built in the town of Bermingham, the townsmen of the better sort not resisting the rabble, but quietly permitting if not proapting to doe it.⁷⁸

The priest, Leo Randolph, declared that the destruction was accomplished by the 'rabble at the instigation of Lord Delamere', while the 'better sort' looked on.⁷⁹ According to

⁷⁶ R. K. Dent, *Old and New Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1953), p.398.

⁷⁷ B. O'Connor, *Places of Worship in Digbeth and Deritend* (Birmingham, 1988), p.8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.8-9.

⁷⁹ Phillimore and Williams (eds), *Warwickshire Parish Registers*, li. 4-16.

contemporary evidence, however, Randolph later said mass in Smallbrook Street, thus ensuring the continuation of a Catholic presence in Birmingham.

However, Lord Delamere was not satisfied with the sacking of St. Mary Magdalene and also turned his attention to Edgbaston hall. The hall was the residence of Sir John Gage, a baronet and a noted Roman Catholic. In 1687 Sir John had joined with King James in making a gift towards the building of the Roman Catholic church in Birmingham. Lord Delamere took 500 cavalymen to Edgbaston Hall where, it is said, ‘a great quantity of Arms’⁸⁰ was seized. The hall was afterwards burned to the ground ‘to prevent its use as a sanctuary for Papists’.⁸¹ Later, in 1690, Sir John Gage was imprisoned in the Tower for high treason.⁸² Anti-Catholic feeling at this time was also turned against the Roman Catholic chapel at Coughton Hall. In retrospect, William Hutton argued that the ‘rude hands of irreligion’ had been responsible for these outbursts.⁸³ On balance, though, the perennial fear of popery easily stirred discontent. This was evident during 1715 and during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6. Robert Throckmorton of Coughton was sensitive to this situation and in 1715 drafted a statement on behalf of the ‘Roman Catholics of England, deprecating the great severity designed against them by the bills now depending in the house of Commons as a result of a few of their members having engaged in the late insurrection’.⁸⁴ Throckmorton proposed a form of oath

⁸⁰ W.P.W. Phillimore, and W.F. Carter, *Some Accounts of the Family of Middlemore of Warwickshire and Worcestershire* (London, 1901).

⁸¹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p.68.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ W. Hutton, *An History of Birmingham* (London, 1783), p.127.

⁸⁴ W.C.R.O. Documents in the Throckmorton Archive. These documents are on show at Coughton Court, Warwickshire.

expressing the submission of Catholics to King George I and promising not to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the realm.⁸⁵

Sir Robert had, in fact, been lobbying for Catholics since the Revolution. As Catholics were not seen as altogether 'English' Sir Robert was conscious of their vulnerability. In 1706 he wrote to Nathaniel Pigott, a lawyer in London much concerned with Catholic affairs. The letter dated, December 15, 1706 stated:

Since so many noble persons join in sentiment with us I think some of us ought to wayte upon some eminent person in the ministry to acquaint him what to Roman Catholics are willing to do, that in case the government encourages either an address or declaration by word of mouth from us we may immediately get it drawn and signed by those who concur it, the Duke of Devons [hire] having spoken against the bill at the last secession think I would be a proper person to be applied unto as our enemies accuses us of favouring arbitrary power etc. I think we ought to have a good paragraph within we declare ourselves for the English constitution which undoubtedly is the best in the world- To express our sense of having lived without persecution under her present Majesty, to promise to behave ourselves as becomes good subjects, to conclude with congratulating successes' etc. If the substance hereof or any other matter be agreed on, and that my presence can father it I shall not be wanting, I am your servant R.T.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ W.C.R.O. Documents in the Throckmorton Archive.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Still, distrust of Papists, and especially of Jesuits, led to the survival of Catholic disabilities throughout the eighteenth century. This distrust could, of course, be fanned by the Anglican clergy. In 1715, the Reverend James Parkinson, the whiggish chief master of the free school of Birmingham, even published:

A Loyal Oration, giving a short account of several plots, some purely Popish others mixt; the former contriv'd and carried on by Papists, the latter by Papists and also Protestants of the High Church party, united together against our Church and State. As also of the many deliverants that Almighty God has vouchsaf'd to us since the Reformation.⁸⁷

In fact, there were local preachers who preached anti-Catholic rhetoric well into the nineteenth century.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic congregations of the Arden region, once they had recovered from the aftermath of the Revolution, showed signs of growth and development. Clearly, presentments and suspicion did not stop, as the constable accounts for Solihull in 1701 include expenses 'for going about the parish in pursuance of a justice's order to search Papist houses for armes and horses, etc'⁸⁹ As time passed, however, there was increasing practical tolerance, as shown by the building and survival of the chapel and school at

⁸⁷ A. Baynes, *Two Centuries of Church life, 1715-1915: St. Philip's, Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1915), pp.26-7. Rev Parkinson was known as a man of a 'cantankerous disposition'.

⁸⁸ Wolverhampton Archives and Local studies. (DX-634/102). Anti-Catholic Flier from the early nineteenth century. 'Roman Catholics, The same Yesterday, Today, and Forever; according to their own creed!!! Protestants forget not the Fire & Faggot, the Rack and Inquisition, with all its Horrors!!!'

⁸⁹ R. Pemberton, *Solihull and its Church* (Exeter, 1905), p. 135.

Edgbaston. The school came into existence in about 1725 and for over a century it was one of the most conspicuous of the few schools in England where Catholics could be educated. Moreover, from 1688 a fairly continuous succession of priests served the mission.⁹⁰ By the late eighteenth century William Hutton remarked that the Edgbaston mission had ‘a numerous congregation, chiefly living in Birmingham’.⁹¹ Between 1740 and 1750 a small Catholic mission also appears to have been started at Solihull and by 1760 a priest’s house with a small chapel (although still illegal and thus hidden from the road) had been built, by 1775 there was even a resident priest.⁹² By the latter part of the century the Franciscans had once again established a mission in Birmingham. In 1786 a Father Nutt of Edgbaston collected a fund of £312 and built a church in Broad Street. It was designed, however, to resemble a factory so that it would not attract too much attention.⁹³ Marie Rowlands has also shown that the rural papists of Warwickshire who lived and worked on the estates of landowning Catholic families could also worship with comparative freedom.⁹⁴

It could be a grave mistake to assume that persecution by the Church or state necessarily brought alienation at an individual level. It is possible that running parallel with negative attitudes was willingness by Catholics, Nonconformists and the public at large to accommodate each other for the common good. William Eades, Vicar of St. Mary’s, Warwick, from 1687 to 1700, laid the first stone in a new ‘popish’ chapel in 1687.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ *Warwickshire Parish Records*, II. 2.

⁹¹ Hutton, *History of Birmingham*, p. 121-2.

⁹² Woodall, *The Book of Greater Solihull*. p.55; Pemberton, *Solihull and its Church*, p.34.

Mr Hugford Hassall who lived at ‘the priory’ gave land and built the Church and Priests’ house.

⁹³ W. Greaney, *Guide to St. Chad’s Cathedral Church, Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1877), p.8.

⁹⁴ M.B. Rowlands, *A Regional History of England: The West Midlands from A.D. 1000* (London, 1987). p.197.

⁹⁵ *V.C.H. Warwick*, VIII, p.524.

Significantly, Eades was even thought to have ‘popish tendencies,’⁹⁶ arising in part from his father, John Eades, a mayor of Warwick from 1688 to the early eighteenth century and a known Roman Catholic. Although William Eades had a long running dispute with the corporation of Warwick, his Catholic connections did not seem to have caused problems with his parishioners. Thomas Winmills, churchwarden at Claverdon in 1675, protested at having to return the names as well as the number of those absenting themselves from Church.⁹⁷ Claverdon was a parish from which no recusants were presented at Quarter Sessions before the Warwickshire magistrates ordered a general enforcement of the laws against them in 1683. More significantly, a number of Recusants have been identified in Solihull as serving as parish officers. Between 1612 and 1679 an estimated fifty-nine Papists served as parish officers on approximately 112 occasions. The evidence shows that Catholics served sixty terms as surveyor of the highways, seventeen as overseers of the poor, five as rent collectors, four as parish bailiffs and sixteen as churchwardens.⁹⁸ Moreover, Catholics were ready to offer their assistance in wider parish business. Robert Throckmorton was active in the foundation of the free school at Coughton; he subscribed £25 a year after the funds raised were not enough for a satisfactory endowment.⁹⁹ Lady Carrington also gave money for repairing the chancel at Wotton Wawen in 1708. Moreover, Philip Loxley and Robert Salt, both Roman Catholics, purchased pews at Edgbaston parish church and were tenants of property in Edgbaston.¹⁰⁰ The division between papists and the established Church was not as

⁹⁶ *The Borough of Warwick: Political and Administrative History*, Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report

⁹⁷ P. Styles, ‘A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman Thomas Pilkington, Vicar of Claverdon’, in P. Styles, *Studies in Seventeenth Century History*, p.71.

⁹⁸ V.T.J. Arkell, ‘An Enquiry into the Frequency of the Parochial Registration of Catholics in a Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Parish’, *Local Population Studies*, no, 9 (1972).

⁹⁹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 46.

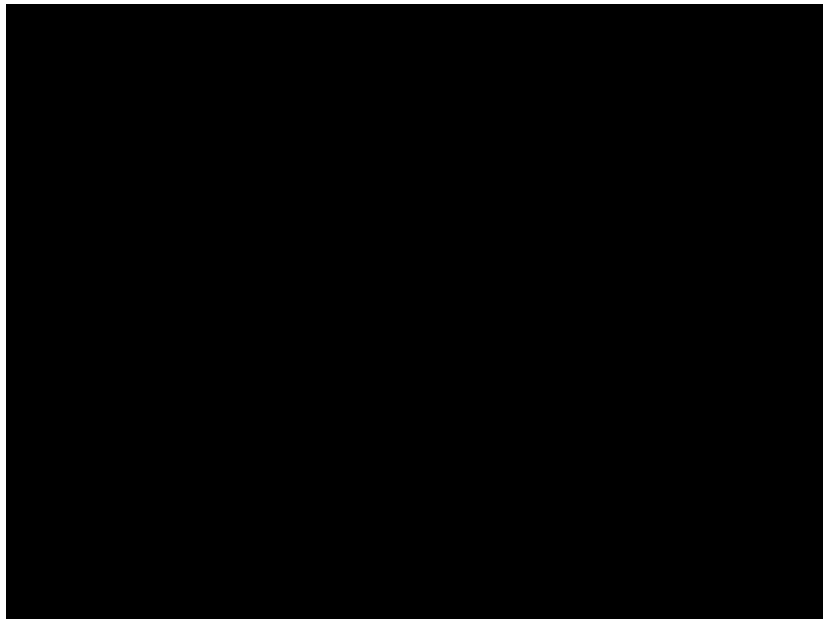
¹⁰⁰ F.C. Wellstood, ‘The Registers of Edgbaston Parish Church 1636-1812’, *Dugdale Society*, II, 1936, p.xix.

clear-cut as one may have thought. The Catholic Throckmorton family, for example, presented to Coughton, though a nominee dealt with the matter.¹⁰¹ Baddesley Clinton also had a Catholic patron, Edward Ferrers. Indeed, Catholic patrons seem to have found no practical difficulty in exercising control over their rights of patronage.

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

The Compton census of 1676 placed Nonconformists at 4 per cent of the adult population of England and the returns from Warwickshire show that, out of an estimated 32,585 inhabitants, approximately 1,670 (5.1 per cent) were Protestant Dissenters,¹⁰²

Figure.2:2



Source: *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 45.

¹⁰¹ Dugdale states in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* that in 1684 Robert Throckmorton was patron of Coughton with 'Henry St John Armig acting as *Gardianus*.'

¹⁰² The Compton Census returns are printed in; L. G. Turner, *Original Records of Nonconformity*, 3 vol. (1911-14); The Warwickshire returns are printed in *Ratcliff, et al., eds. Warwick County Records*, 7, p. IXXXiii-c.

Figure 2:2 above illustrates that the deaneries of Stoneleigh, Arden and Coventry contained the majority of Dissenters in Warwickshire. In the hundred of Knightlow, which comprised the deaneries of Stoneleigh and Coventry, Nonconformity flourished. Although Protestant Dissenters were to be found throughout the county, a line drawn diagonally across the county from northwest to southeast would separate the parishes in which Catholics were numerous from those in which Dissenters were more common.¹⁰³ Whereas Catholicism was strong in the rural west and southwest of the county, Nonconformity was strongest in the north and east, districts which included the emerging industrial and trading centres. A strong complement of Dissenters resided in the city of Coventry and in the boroughs of Warwick and Sutton Coldfield. More importantly for this study, Dissent was also strong in the emerging towns of Aston and Birmingham.

All the major denominations of Dissenters had important meetings in the Arden region. Down to 3 February 1673, thirty-seven licences had been issued in Warwickshire for Dissenting meetings, twenty-eight Presbyterian, two Congregational and seven Baptist.¹⁰⁴ In our region there were nine Presbyterian, one Congregational, and one Baptist congregation. It is interesting to note that, of the twenty-six Quaker meeting places registered in Warwickshire between 1689 and 1750, no fewer than eighteen had been operating illegally before 1689. It has been estimated that the number of adult Quakers in Warwickshire in 1689 was between 700 and 900, sufficient to make it one of the few counties able to set up a school for children of members of the Society of Friends. This was situated in the Quaker meeting room at Warwick.¹⁰⁵ In 1689 there were at least eighty-six Friends who came from Warwick itself.

¹⁰³ Hurwich, 'Dissent and Catholicism in English Society, p.32.

¹⁰⁴ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 45.

¹⁰⁵ V. Bird, *A Short History of Warwickshire and Birmingham* (London, 1977), p .130.

The membership of the Warwick meeting is said to have been ‘probably not much inferior’ to that of Coventry (250-300). These numbers may have declined slightly in the eighteenth century but the strength of Quakerism in Warwick remained substantial until the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁶ The majority of Quakers in Warwickshire, however, still lived in its rural areas as late as 1720.¹⁰⁷

It must be stressed that the number of Protestant Dissenters may be somewhat underestimated. For example, many returns for the Compton census may have excluded Dissenters who occasionally attended their parish church (such as moderate Dissenters like Richard Baxter)¹⁰⁸ and were thus regarded as Anglicans; at the parish level it was not always easy to distinguish conformists from Nonconformists. In addition, the returns were not of the whole population, but those of the age of sixteen and upwards. What's more, a churchwarden might himself be of a Dissenting persuasion.¹⁰⁹ The facts may be hard to establish, but for a more realistic estimate of the whole population, it has been suggested that it might be necessary to add about forty to every hundred.¹¹⁰ Figure 2.3 below gives an amended total of the whole population of Warwickshire and their affiliation 1676.

¹⁰⁶ *The Borough of Warwick: Nonconformity*. Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report.

¹⁰⁷ Hurwich, ‘Dissent and Catholicism,’ p. 45.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Baxter was a Puritan evangelist who in 1640 explicitly rejected belief in episcopacy in its current English form. In 1660 he played a prominent part in the restoration of Charles II, but declined the offer of the bishopric of Hereford due to his views on episcopacy. The refusal debarred him from ecclesiastical office and he was not allowed to return to Kidderminster. Between 1662 and 1668 he suffered persecution at the hands of Judge Jeffreys. He was in sympathy with the removal of James II and welcomed William and Mary.

¹⁰⁹ Chatwin, ‘The Rebuilding of St. Mary’s Warwick’, p. 7. Out of the seventy names on a petition sent to the commissioners for the rebuilding of St. Mary’s Warwick, over a dozen had been, or later became churchwardens’, all were well known for their Nonconformity:

¹¹⁰ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1671-2*, pp. 422, 435, 438.

Figure 2.3.

DEANERY	CONFORMIST	PAPIST	NONCONFORMIST	TOTAL
ARDEN	14,106	184	391	14,681
STONELEIGH	2,352	16	464	2,832
COVENTRY	4,182	6	361	4,549
MARTON	2,650	22	115	2,787
KINETON	4,186	38	176	4,400
WARWICK	7,163	417	257	7,837
TOTAL	34,639	683	1,764	37,086

Source: *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 45.

The value of the Compton census as an index of the strength of Protestant Nonconformity has been questioned. There are those historians who have speculated that the Archbishop's intention was to prove how few Dissenters there were and therefore the figures produced for him, as evidence, must be unreliable.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, after making due allowances for the inadequacies of the Compton census, it is clear that Dissenters made up only a small minority of the population. In part this situation may have been due to simple persecution. Colin Haydon has stated that from 1660 to 1678 persecution in the Kineton hundred was heavier than elsewhere in Warwickshire because several local justices promoted it.¹¹² There is little doubt that Anglicans felt bitter over their plight in the Civil War period but, as ever it was the prevailing political situation that largely determined the intensity (or otherwise) of persecution. Thus, in the 1660s, it was quite fierce; it was limited in the 1670s and very severe after 1680. Although Marie Rowlands has stated that the justices of Warwickshire were zealous in fulfilling their duties of breaking up conventicles and prosecuting those who dissented from the established Church,¹¹³ evidence supports the fact that in Warwickshire as a whole 'it needed great external pressure or the apprehension of great dangers to rouse the

¹¹¹ Ratcliff *et al.*, eds, *Warwick County Records*, 7, p.lxxviii; *V.C.H. Warwickshire*. I, pp.45-46.

¹¹² Haydon, 'The Church in the Kineton Deanery', p. 168.

¹¹³ Rowlands, *A Regional History of England*, p.194.

Warwickshire bench to any extensive prosecution of Nonconformity'.¹¹⁴ The evidence shows that, although the laws were enforced against Dissenters in Warwickshire at times of political unrest, they were generally done so in moderation.¹¹⁵ It is probably true to say that the local justices were more concerned with the internal harmony of their parishes. On balance, although Protestant Dissent was a problem for the Church, in Warwickshire at least it was not seen as a dangerous or even aggressive threat.

This can be illustrated by the case of the ejected minister of Alcester, Samuel Tickner, who was described by his contemporaries as 'a very holy, self-denying, peaceable man' who 'continued with his people, who were some of the most wealthy in the parish, after he was turned out in 1662, preaching constantly to them, but rarely in time of public service'.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, while bishop of Worcester, Stillingfleet instructed his clergy to 'seek the acquaintance of Dissenters in order to do them good'.¹¹⁷ While Bishop Hackett, the first bishop of Lichfield and Coventry after the Restoration, stated that 'Conventicles in Corporations were the Seminaries out of which came warriors against King and Church',¹¹⁸ even he respected the integrity of Dissenters and made efforts to protect them from ejection.¹¹⁹ Bishop Hackett was said to have sent for 'worthy, dissatisfied ministers in his diocese, hoping to gain upon them' and he even gave 'encomiums of several of them'. The

¹¹⁴ Ratcliff et al., eds, *Warwick County Records*, 7, p. Ixx.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. Ixxxii.

¹¹⁶ S. Palmer, *The Nonconformist's Memorial: Being an Account of the Ministers, Who were Rejected or Silenced after the Restoration, Particularly by the Act of Uniformity, which took place on Bartholomew-day, Aug. 24, 1662 (MDCCLXXV)*, p.479.

¹¹⁷ *The Bishop of Worcester's Charge to the Clergy of His Diocese in His Primary Visitation: Begun at Worcester, Sept. 11, 1690.*

¹¹⁸ Hurwich, 'Dissent and Catholicism', p.34.

¹¹⁹ Rowlands, *A Regional History of England*, p.194.

bishop respected the ejected minister of Sutton Coldfield, Anthony Burgess, and spoke of him in 'high terms as a scholar and a divine', concluding that he was 'fit for a Professor's place in the University'.¹²⁰ Bishop Lloyd, as bishop of Worcester, was also known for his toleration of Dissenters.¹²¹ While, Isaac Maddox, bishop of Worcester from 1743, was on friendly terms with Philip Doddridge, the 'genial and liberal-minded leader of the Congregationalists'.¹²²

Significantly, the incidence of persecution varied, with some denominations being harassed far more than others. The greatest sufferers were the Quakers. While more orthodox Dissenters regarded them as Papists in disguise, their way of life brought them into collision with the law over a wider range of offences than the Presbyterians or Baptists. It was not only their refusal to pay tithes (the Warwickshire quarterly meeting asked all its members in 1712 to 'keep clear in their testimonies against tithes and church rates so called')¹²³ that put them in conflict with the authorities. It was also their refusal to take off their hats in a court of justice; their persistence in carrying on their business on Sundays; their habit of forcing themselves into congregations and proclaiming that the clergyman was a lying witness and a false prophet, and their refusal to pay for the upkeep of the parish church.¹²⁴ In 1660 some Warwick Quakers had their windows broken for opening their shops on Christmas Day.¹²⁵ Likewise, the constable of St. Martin's, Birmingham, went with 'a rude multitude armed with swords and staves, which pulled the Friends out of the house of William Reynolds and beat

¹²⁰ Palmer, *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, p.491.

¹²¹ Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd*.

¹²² D. Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687 and the Early Organisation of Dissent: The Building of the First Nonconformist Meeting House in Birmingham', *Midland History*, 13-16, 1988-91.

¹²³ Feeney, *St. Philips: An Eighteenth Century Church and Parish*, p.11b.

¹²⁴ W.R.O. BA 2289/1 807 (xi). September 23, 1674 the churchwardens' of Arrow presented Humfry Toms a Quaker for refusing to 'pay to repairs of ye church'.

¹²⁵ Bird, *A Short History of Warwickshire*, p. 129.

and abused some of them'.¹²⁶ In fact, it has even been stated that Quakers were 'hated by one and all'.¹²⁷ Between 1669 and 1687 219 persons from Birmingham were indicted at quarter sessions for Dissent. The majority were Quakers.¹²⁸ The intense persecution of Quakers in the Birmingham area is reflected in the records of Warwickshire Quarter Sessions. Thirty-two presentments in 1679, sixty-eight in 1680, thirty-eight in 1682. A further eighty-two presentments from the neighbourhood of Birmingham were made between 1682 and 1687.¹²⁹ Constables broke up Quaker meetings throughout our region, and those attending them were sent to prison.¹³⁰ Besse estimates that in 1661 there were 140 Quakers in Warwick gaol.¹³¹ In 1666 and 1667 George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement, visited Quakers imprisoned in Warwick. In 1666 a Henry Jackson also made an appeal to Lord Arlington on behalf of twenty-two Quakers, his fellow prisoners at Warwick, who had been there for five years. He wrote that 'twenty of them were thronged in a stinking room, where they could not lie down together, no straw nor food except at enormous rates, even 3*d.* for a quart of water'.¹³²

It must be remembered, however, that it was part of the Quaker way of life to face any hardship quietly and without resistance if they were to 'witness' to the truth. Adrian Davies has shown in his book, *The Quakers in English society, 1655-1725*, that they may have even

¹²⁶ J. Besse, *Abstracts of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers* (1753), p.736.

¹²⁷ F. Bate, *The Declaration of Indulgence, 1672* (Bristol, 1908), p.3.

¹²⁸ Rowlands, *A Regional History*, p.194.

¹²⁹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p. 3.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid*; Besse, *Sufferings of Quakers*, p.762-7.

¹³² *State Papers Domestic*, Charles. II, Volume 170, No. 58; Vol. 178, No. 115. No record of their release appears among the state papers.

let themselves be arrested for this reason.¹³³ Theirs was 'passive resistance at its most aggressive', wrote Mark Goldie.¹³⁴ Indeed, Samuel Pepys remarked in 1664 that he:

Came by several poor creatures, carried by the constables for being at a conventicle. They would go like lambs, without any resistance. I would to God they would either conform, or be more wise and not caught.¹³⁵

Bishop Lloyd of Worcester, however, tried his best to mitigate the sufferings of those Quakers who were brought to his notice. In one account we are told that when a number of Quakers were imprisoned by the dean and chapter of Worcester in Lancaster Castle for 'a small matter of tythe' he sent a certain Richard Davies¹³⁶ to intercede. Davies recorded the outcome:

The bishop said, Discharge them, discharge them; and ordered them to be discharged, without paying fees. So after a little time I parted with the Bishop and Chancellor, and acknowledged their kindness: And I went to friends in the city of Worcester and told William Pardoe what success I had with the bishop, and desired them to wait on the Chancellor to get the Order, that it might be sent speedily; and in a little time I heard they were discharged.¹³⁷

¹³³ A. Davies, *The Quakers in English Society, 1655-1725* (Oxford, 2000), p. 262.

¹³⁴ M. Goldie, 'Voluntary Anglicans', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 4, 2003, pp. 977-990.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Goldie, 'Voluntary Anglicans', p. 982.

¹³⁶ Tindal, Hart, *William Lloyd; An Account of the Convincement ect of Richard Davies*, pp. 254-255.

¹³⁷ Quoted in Tindal, Hart, *William Lloyd*, p.187.

BIRMINGHAM

Joseph Priestley personified the town's importance in the eighteenth century as being a centre of Nonconformity and radical politics.¹³⁸ It is often argued that Birmingham was one of the most important national centres of Nonconformity during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Similarly, the strength of the Parliamentary and Puritan cause in Birmingham during the 1640's and 50's has been widely noted.¹³⁹ Historians have even claimed that the prosperity of Birmingham can be traced to the significant influx of Nonconformists at the Restoration.¹⁴⁰ From 1662 Birmingham did give refuge to the victims of the Clarendon Code, part of which forbade Dissenters to have any meeting within a town or borough with a royal charter. One fifth of the parish clergy of England were ejected at this time with twenty-four of the ejected ministers settling in or near Birmingham. These included Samuel Fisher, ejected in 1662 from Thornton-le-Moor, in Cheshire; Samuel Wills, the former rector of St. Martin's, who was licensed to preach as a Presbyterian; Thomas Baldwin, William Fincher, George Martyn and Thomas Willesley.¹⁴¹ Thomas Bladon, a Presbyterian minister who also made Birmingham his home, eulogized Birmingham in 1702:

When the Corporation Act came forth your town of Birmingham was an asylum, a place of refuge for nine of us, and two more that lived near your town, and the ancient professors then alive gave us kind reception.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ V.C.H. *Warwickshire*, VII, pp. 1-3.

¹³⁹ A. Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1649* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 80-1, 329-30; R. Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort, 1642-1646* (London, 1982), pp. 0-1.

¹⁴⁰ Jenkins, *The Story of St. Martins*, p. 22.

¹⁴¹ Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687', p. 87; See also Palmer, *The Nonconformist's Memorial*.

¹⁴² T. Bladon, *A Presbyterian Meeting, where there is a Parish Church there is no Schism: And they that go Thither are no Schismatics. Being an Answer to Mr Abraham Jeacock, Curate in Birmingham* (1702), p. 6.

The town does appear, therefore, to have become a refuge for ejected ministers in the early 1660's. Before 1700 there were in Birmingham two congregations of Presbyterians and one Quaker meeting.¹⁴³ David Wykes has commented on the ecclesiastical survey of Nonconformist conventicles made in 1669 and has claimed that it illustrates the strength of orthodox Dissent in Birmingham at this time. This recorded two illegal meetings, both served by ejected ministers. Thomas Willesley was preaching at his own home while about a hundred persons were meeting at the house of William Bell, where William Fincher, Thomas Baldwin, and George Martyn, all ejected ministers, were also preaching.¹⁴⁴

It is, however, too easy to draw a sharp contrast between the freedom of towns like Birmingham and the prevailing restraints in chartered boroughs. Such a mistaken view has been perpetuated by the claims of commentators such as William Hutton, who stated that 'it was the absence of charteral restrictions which made Birmingham attractive to Dissenters'.¹⁴⁵ The view that Nonconformity was mainly, if not solely, responsible for the development of Birmingham as an industrial town appears to have been manufactured in the nineteenth century; an account of the rise of Birmingham compiled in 1864 mentions that the comparative religious freedom of the town was one of the many attractions of the town for the industrial immigrant in the seventeenth century. This view was further endorsed by two subsequent general histories of Birmingham by R.K. Dent, published before 1900. Equally, a memorandum submitted by Birmingham corporation in 1938 to the Royal Commission on the geographical distribution of the industrial population accepted the argument that in 1662 'the town became a refuge of relatively large numbers of educated and religious minded people,

¹⁴³ C. Gill, *History of Birmingham, Manor and Borough to 1865*, Volume I (Oxford, 1952), p.59.

¹⁴⁴ Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687', pp. 87-88.

¹⁴⁵ Hutton, *An History of Birmingham*, p.111.

chafing under restrictions imposed on their religious opinions elsewhere’ and that the immigrants ‘contributed to the furtherance of that particular type of individualism which to this day is considered to characterise much of the industrial life of the city’.¹⁴⁶

However, recent research has led to modifications of this traditional view. In one study it has been pointed out that there is no evidence of a ‘perceptible increase in Birmingham’s population in the period immediately before 1680’ and that ‘the census of conformists, Nonconformists and Papists organised by Bishop Compton in 1676 reveals that the recorded Nonconformists accounted for a negligible proportion of the total population of Birmingham in that year’. Several other places in north Warwickshire were sheltering a much larger number of Nonconformists in absolute and relative terms than was Birmingham.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, one should note that Dissenters were not as numerous in Birmingham, ‘a town without a charter’, as they were in Coventry, a town which had one. More significant, though, is the fact that immigration into Birmingham surged after the Toleration Act was already on the statute book and even then Birmingham did not have an unusually high proportion of Dissenters.¹⁴⁸

One could, of course, argue that it was in part Birmingham’s trade and manufacturing connections that drew Dissenters to Birmingham. A vast literature, led by Max Weber and R.H. Tawney, emerged on the connection of ‘Puritanism’, capitalism and the rise of industry. John Cobet pointed out in 1667 that:

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in *Baptist Union, Official Handbook of the Birmingham Assembly* (1939). p.73.

¹⁴⁷ R.A. Pelham, *The Growth of Settlement and Industry c.1100 –c.1700: Birmingham and its Regional Setting*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁴⁸ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, pp, 411-415.

Dissenters are not excluded from the nobility; among the gentry they are not a few, but none are of more importance than they in the trading part of the people, and those that live by industry, upon whose hands the business of the nation lies much.¹⁴⁹

In Birmingham there was a variety of trading and manufacturing opportunities and many of the Dissenting migrants to the town were indeed associated with trade. Of the twenty-seven Birmingham Dissenters who can be associated with trade between 1660 and 1720 (twenty-two Presbyterians and five Quakers), about half were engaged in the iron industry.¹⁵⁰ Quakers in Birmingham were certainly prominent in the iron trade (all five Quakers mentioned were ironmasters) and in finance.¹⁵¹ The Lloyds, who settled in the town in 1698, were iron merchants and bankers. The Pemberton and Galton families also played an important role in the manufacturing life of Birmingham. Members of these families greatly increased their wealth and social prestige, eventually becoming country gentlemen and marrying into the gentry.¹⁵²

It has been suggested, however, that Dissenting tradesmen in Birmingham in the early eighteenth century may have conformed or practised occasional conformity in order to gain status or political power. In spite of this, only three cases of merchants' conformism have been documented in Warwickshire up to 1720 and only one for Birmingham, that relating to

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in Feeney, *St. Philips an Eighteenth-Century Church and Parish*, p.8b

¹⁵⁰ Hurwich, 'Dissent and Catholicism in English Society', p. 49.

There were 11 Dissenting merchants in 1660, 13 in 1683-86 and 15 in 1703-6.

¹⁵¹ Any History of Birmingham will mention the Quaker association with Iron and small manufacturing workshops.

¹⁵² Hurwich, 'Dissent and Catholicism in English Society', p. 49.

the Presbyterian branch of the Pembertons of Birmingham, who definitely rejoined the Church of England before 1720.¹⁵³ Still, the wealth and political power of the Dissenting merchant community of Birmingham remained greatly inferior to that of Coventry.¹⁵⁴ In addition, it must be mentioned that non-Christian groups in Birmingham also had relative freedom, not only to worship but also to participate in the growing entrepreneurial spirit. The Jewish Oppenheim family were prominent in the pewter trade and worshiped with a small contingent of fellow Jews at a synagogue in a street named the Froggery.¹⁵⁵ Although their numbers were small, visitors often joined them, for we are told that ‘many itinerant traders of this race came to buy and sell in Birmingham’.¹⁵⁶

As mentioned above, Nonconformist congregations were formed in Birmingham from the early Restoration period and, in 1669, John Hacket, then Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, expressed his mistrust of the ‘desperate and very populous rabble of dissenters that lived at Birmingham’.¹⁵⁷ Writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Hacket even requested assistance from a ‘troop of horse’ to quell any uprising that might occur.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, local Royalists felt very uneasy about the ‘anti-Stuart’ tradition of the ‘Common people’.¹⁵⁹ In the years between the Restoration and the Revolution of 1688, the Holts, a local ‘cavalier’ family, were distinguished for a vigorous persecution of Nonconformists in and around Birmingham. Sir Robert Holt was made Sheriff of Warwickshire in 1660 and Justice of the Peace in the

¹⁵³ Hurwich, ‘Dissent and Catholicism in English Society’, p. 50.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Gill, *History of Birmingham*, 1, p.78. (The Synagogue stood on the present day New Street Station).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.78.

¹⁵⁷ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p.272.

¹⁵⁸ Wykes, ‘James II’s Religious Indulgence of 1687’, p. 88.

¹⁵⁹ *Cal. S. P. Dom.* 1676, pp. 6-7.

following year. From 1661 he also served as a county member and was quickly noted in the House of Commons for his hostility to the leaders of the reconciled Presbyterian party, Baxter and Calamy. Of the local Nonconformists, Thomas Wilsby was ‘much troubled’ by Sir Robert Holt.¹⁶⁰ Sir Charles Holt, likewise, had a zeal for the eradication of Dissent. A Justice of the Peace for Warwickshire from 1682 and Deputy Lieutenant from 1685 to 1688, he felt obliged to eliminate all Nonconformist representation on the governing body of the Birmingham free school. With other local Tories, Sir Charles was also responsible for an attempt in 1685 to upset the charter of the free school.¹⁶¹ In 1704 he attempted to acquire the manorial rights of Birmingham with the known objective of getting ‘command of those people he had great contest with’. He was not successful.¹⁶² In state papers there is further evidence of the fierce hostility of Sir Charles Holt towards Dissent. In a letter dated 8 December 1684, Sir Charles wrote to Lord Sunderland:

This morning I received your letter of the 6th and am very much surprised that the King should be so misinformed concerning the conventicle at Olbury. Tis totally surpressed and no conventicler has been held there since we were put in commission. We constantly hold monthly meetings in the town and shall do so for some time. We have also issued Warrants for apprehending the Preachers. As

¹⁶⁰ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p. 272.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* Local Nonconformist gentlemen associated with the Birmingham free school were: Sir John Wyley, Robert Dod and the Ironmaster Humphrey Jennens.

¹⁶² M. Rowlands, ‘Society and Industry in the West Midlands at the end of the Seventeenth Century.’ *Midland History*, 1975-78, 3-4; A. Gooder, ‘Two letters relating to the Manor and Rectory of Birmingham’, *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*. Number 1, 1955, p. 191.

soon as we catch them, I will give you notice, for indeed they are very dangerous rogues.¹⁶³

Despite (and even because of) the perceived Puritan and Nonconformist tradition of seventeenth-century Birmingham, the eighteenth century saw major riots take place against Dissenters in the town. The riots of 1714 and 1715 set the pattern of Birmingham politics in the eighteenth century. Many histories of Birmingham concur that Birmingham was a ‘political nation of merchants and manufacturers’, with a ‘strong bent towards Dissent’, and with ‘an unruly populace with strong Church, King and Jacobite tendencies’.¹⁶⁴ This was an explosive mix, with the ‘bunting, beggarly, brass-making, brazen-hearted, blackguard, bustling, booby, Birmingham mob’ notorious by 1789.¹⁶⁵ David Wykes has suggested that until the Hanoverian succession in 1714 Dissenters had serious anxieties about their continuing liberty, particularly as a result of the growing political conflict during Queen Anne’s reign.¹⁶⁶ Their fears were reinforced on more than one occasion in Birmingham. Dissenters suffered severely during the High Church reaction in 1710, especially during the Sacheverell riots. It is interesting to note that in the same year as the riots against Dissenters, St. Philip’s church was built to accommodate the growing ‘Anglican’ population. Following Sacheverell’s acquittal for sedition,¹⁶⁷ mobs plundered and burnt meetinghouses in Birmingham. William Hutton wrote that:

¹⁶³ *Cal. of State Papers Dom. May 1684-Fed 1685*. p.238.

¹⁶⁴ *Birmingham, a Political and Administrative History to 1832*. Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report. p.7.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p.7.

¹⁶⁶ Wykes, ‘James II’s Religious Indulgence of 1687’, p.97.

¹⁶⁷ In 1709 Sacheverell delivered two sermons at St Pauls. He launched a fierce attack on the incumbent Whig government, the Hanoverian succession and what he considered to be the unduly tolerant attitude of the Church of England towards Dissenters. A number of consequences have been attributed to the trial of Dr Sacheverell-

In the reign of Queen Ann, when that flaming Luminary, Dr Sacheverel, set half the kingdom in blaze, the inhabitants of this region of industry caught the spark of the day, and grew warm for the Church.¹⁶⁸

Hutton and earlier writers attributed a disturbance in 1714 to the influence of Dr. Sacheverell, who preached at Sutton Coldfield three days before George I's coronation, his congregation being augmented by some '200 Birmingham Jacobites'.¹⁶⁹ Hutton states that 'Sacheverell did not teach his hearers to *build up Zion*, but perhaps to pull her down; for they immediately went and gutted a meeting house'.¹⁷⁰ Hundreds of the citizens of Birmingham attacked the houses of Dissenters William Guest, Thomas Gisburne and John Murdock. The defenders were forced to open fire with shotguns and to use their swords.¹⁷¹ From that date the ominous cry 'Damn King George, Sacheverell for ever!' became current in the town,¹⁷² a clear indication of religious issues impinging on national politics. Sacheverell has also been identified as the stimulus to the much more serious rioting that took place in Birmingham before the Jacobite rising of 1715. In April 1715, justices had to be brought in from Solihull 'to still the mob there'.¹⁷³ Alarm was naturally felt for the security of Birmingham, 'a town which by reason of its manufacturing of firearms was capable of furnishing vast

Dissenters suffered; support for the Church of England strengthened; The Whig ministry fell and the Tories enjoyed a return to power.

¹⁶⁸ Hutton, *An History of Birmingham*, p.108.

¹⁶⁹ R. Bedford, *Three Hundred Years of a Family Living: Being a History of The Rilands of Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1889), p, 21.

¹⁷⁰ Hutton, *An History of Birmingham*, p, 109

¹⁷¹ *Political and Administrative History*. www.british-history.ac.uk/report. p.3.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ R.K. Dent, *Old and New Birmingham: A History of the Town and its People* (Wakefield, 1973), p.398.

quantities'.¹⁷⁴ Riots began at West Bromwich in early July and spread to Birmingham within days. The mob had control of the town for ten days, and it is reported that the rioters boasted that 'they would burn every Presbyterian's house'.¹⁷⁵ They attacked the Old Meeting, gutting the interior and causing extensive damage. The Lower Meetinghouse in Deritend, however, suffered less destruction. John Ruston, the landlord, was not a Presbyterian and promised 'It should never more be put to that use, but he would turn it into dwelling houses, if they would only take away the seats and leave the case whole'. The rioters 'upon that condition only took the seats and burnt them', and they 'not so much as broke any of the windows or doors'.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, even when the Warwickshire justices tried to restore order by calling out the *posse comitatus*, a force of about 1,000 men, this proved also to be 'tumultuous and mutinous...being made up chiefly of mercenary rabble'.¹⁷⁷

The Jacobite rebellion of 1715 precipitated a more general outburst of mob violence throughout the Arden region. In a response to a petition from the House of Commons, George I appointed a commission to enquire into the damages sustained by Protestants as the result of 'riotous assemblies' between the dates of his accession and 1st August 1715. As a result, meetinghouses around the Birmingham area obtained grants for re-building. At Dudley a grant was obtained to rebuild a meetinghouse in 1717. Likewise, a meetinghouse at Cradley was rebuilt, partly with Government aid, in 1717. Both had been burnt down in the riots of July 1715.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ *V.C.H, Warwickshire*, II, pp.273-415.

¹⁷⁵ Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687', p.97.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687', p. 97.

¹⁷⁷ *Political and Administrative History*: www.british-history.ac.uk/report. p.3.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

We must also mention the ‘semi-secret’ treasury grant to Nonconformist churches known as the ‘*regium donum*’ or ‘Kings gift’ (1722-1851). This was paid out of Treasury money, under royal prerogative, and was not discussed in Parliament before 1806.¹⁷⁹ The *Regium donum* has not received much attention from historians and its significance has been underestimated or ignored. Indeed, J.C.D. Clarke made no reference to it in his *English Society* (1985). Government financial support was distributed annually to trustees from old established Dissenting churches. The funds were then distributed to supplement the incomes of needy Nonconformist ministers. This scheme clearly blurred the boundary between established and Non-established churches. What is more, the laity could also be generous to both the establishment and Nonconformity alike. In the will of Richard Scott, dated 1694, we are told that he gave the ‘governors of the free Grammar school of King Edward the 6th, Birmingham the sum of £100, in trust’. Also, he instructed that ‘40s per annum’ was to be paid to the Nonconformist

Minister or Ministers, equally which should constantly officiate in the Meeting house in Birmingham, standing near Pinfold Street, during such time that such minister or ministers should officiate there; and in default of such minister or ministers, that then such trustees should yearly pay the said 40s equally between two such ministers widows, or in default of two such widows, then to one such widow living in or nearest to the town of Birmingham.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ P. Corfield, ‘Georgian England: One State, Many Faiths’, *History Today*, 45, 1995, p.18.

¹⁸⁰ *The Reports of Charity Commissioners: Relating to the County of Warwickshire 1819-1837* (London, 1890), p.441.

As with the case of local Catholics, it could be a grave mistake to assume that persecution by the Church or state brought alienation at a personal level. Samuel Stevenson, a high Sheriff of Warwickshire and a Justice of the Peace in 1672, was licensed to perform Presbyterian marriages in his house in Sutton Coldfield, the banns having been read in the church previously.¹⁸¹ From a petition by the inhabitants of Warwick for the speedy rebuilding of the church, we are informed that many were known for their Nonconformity.¹⁸² Significantly, at least seven Birmingham Dissenters served as constables on the court Leet, or as Low Bailiff.¹⁸³ Indeed, William Gibson presents evidence in his book *The Church of England 1688-1835: Unity and Accord* (2000) that there was widespread Anglican commitment to harmony between those of differing religious views. Despite some occasional turbulence, the Anglican laity was generally on friendly terms with their Nonconformist neighbours and calculated legal action against them was widely unpopular. Justices of the peace were unenthusiastic about prosecuting Nonconformists, as were churchwardens.

Conclusion

The majority of the Catholic community in our area resided in the rural and semi rural areas of the Forest of Arden whereas Dissenters were most numerous in the emerging industrial and trading centres. This fits neatly with the wider national picture. Although the Catholic gentry were strong in keeping Catholicism alive in and around their estates there was also strong middle to high socio-economic Catholic groups living in county towns, in particular Solihull. What is more, long established families remained faithful to the Catholic faith.

¹⁸¹ N. G. Evans, *An Investigation of Holy Trinity Parish Church Sutton Coldfield* (1988), p.18.

¹⁸² Chatwin, 'Rebuilding of St Mary's Warwick'.

¹⁸³ Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687', p. 93.

This study of the Church of England and its competitors clearly illustrates that Catholics and Dissenters lived side by side with their conformist neighbours in the Forest of Arden and were far more closely integrated into the day to day parish life of the region than one might suppose. They held positions of responsibility at parish level, they left money in their wills to the parish poor and they served on manorial courts. However, this harmony could be upset during times of political unrest. Fear of Catholicism was heightened due to the fabrications of Titus Oates. Equally, the reign of James II induced panic in the Forest of Arden. Hostility towards Roman Catholics in Birmingham was marked in 1688-89. Similarly, the 'Church in danger' rioters of 1714-15 directed their hostility against Nonconformists. A stimulus for these disturbances may have been loyalty to the established Church; however, as Wesley commented when he visited Birmingham in 1743, he was 'received with tolerance by all but unruly elements of the mob'.¹⁸⁴ In contrast, some conformists could feel an intense mistrust towards Quakers and this provoked open hostility at parish level. On balance, though, Nonconformity was not a major problem for the parishes of the Forest of Arden and even Birmingham was generally free from friction between conformist and Dissenter. Significantly, from the Restoration to the end of the period under study the bishops of Lichfield and Worcester were known for their toleration of Dissenters. The significance of this being the Anglican laity were able to involve their Nonconformist neighbours in the day to day life of the parish.

¹⁸⁴ 'Religious History: Churches' www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp. Consulted on 16 November 2005; *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, VII, p.416.

CHAPTER THREE

Church Discipline: Education and Coercion

The church, from the days of St. Paul, has always been concerned with the moral behaviour and conduct of its members.¹

Paul Langford has suggested that the Church as an institution was valued for its role in promoting morals and reforming manners in an age of rapid change and of increasing anxiety about public order.² Legislation had always been in place to regulate the manners and morals of the English people. A 1643 pamphlet, for example, listed sixteen laws useful for ‘the better suppressing of unlawful pastimes, swearing and cursing, drunkenness [and] unlawful games’.³ By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the Church saw an acute need to purge the vices of the lower orders. Pious individuals were appalled by the lack of interest shown by justices in prosecuting lapses of virtue: ‘England has the best laws the worst obeyed of any civilised nation’, John Heylyn concluded in a sermon preached to the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in 1721. The officers of the consistory courts still saw themselves as guardians of public morality. However, historians have commented that it was the failure of the Church courts to enforce standards of morality that brought forth the religious societies formed by ‘responsible citizens’ to suppress immorality.⁴ In the last decades of the seventeenth century, Societies for the Reformation of Manners endeavoured to effect improvements by enforcing the laws against swearing, drunkenness, street debauchery and

¹ J. Addy, *Sin and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1989), p. 15.

² P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p. 133.

³ *A Collection of Certain Statutes in Force...For the Better Caution of Such as are Inclined to Delinquency* (London, 1643).

⁴ Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, p.213.

Sabbath-breaking. It is generally believed that High Church Anglicans shunned these organisations because of their ecumenical character. Indeed, Henry Sacheverell's notorious assize sermon of 1709, *The Communication of Sin*, where he labelled moral reformers as 'Troublesome Wasps', reinforces this view.

CHARITY SCHOOLS

The great and general depravity of manners, so justly complained of in this learned, this polite, this Christian Country, must very sensibly, and deeply touch the Heart of every Friend of Mankind, and every Lover of his Country. The greatest undoubted Source of this is bad, or negligent, and imprudent Education of Children, even from the very first Dawn, and Efforts of Sense and reason in them. Of Consequence, if ever there is a Reformation of our Morals, it must begin here; without this, the Pulpit, Pillory, and Gibbet preach almost in vain.⁵

William Willets expressed this view in 1750 in his preface for two sermons delivered on the Christian education of children. It clearly captures the spirit of the age, linking good morals with a sound Christian education, this being interpreted in an Anglican sense; education would save children from falling by the wayside.

Although the grammar schools were the mainstay of education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there had from the Middle Ages existed simple elementary schools where children were taught to read and write. Cathedrals and monasteries, colleges and

⁵ W. Willets, *Christian Education: Being the Substance of Two Sermons on Tit. I.6. With Familiar Dialogues Betwixt a Parent and his Child, on the Plan Down in Theses Discourses* (London, 1750), p.3.

collegiate churches, religious and trade guilds had often provided such teaching. These schools, however, were victims of the Reformation's attack on ecclesiastical foundations.⁶ All the same, it has been shown that at least one in three villages nationally had schooling provision of some form before the eighteenth century, and about one in ten villages and towns provided opportunities to prepare for higher education in the form of their classical schools.⁷ The term 'Charity School' has been applied to a range of non-classical schools with very different origins that offered free or subsidised education to their scholars. How many of the charity schools were actually new, and how many simply continued or replaced existing ones, is difficult to determine. It has been suggested that the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K) created the vision of a single coherent movement.⁸ Historians have even speculated whether there was a charity school 'movement' at all: evidence from other parts of the country, in particular Leicestershire, has shown that they were little more than a continuation of a process which had its roots in the early seventeenth century.⁹ However, Dr. Jacob has concluded that in the period 1680 to 1735 there was an increase in the number of legacies to schools and in the number of schools established. Using evidence from local studies, he has shown that there was a widespread movement for founding schools in Wales, Yorkshire, County Durham, Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire and Kent.¹⁰

⁶ A. Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon* (Newton Abbot, 1969), p.129.

⁷ J. Broad, London Metropolitan University 'Charity Schools in Context: Schooling for the Poor from the Thames to the Humber in 1710' *Abstract of a Paper for Cambridge Conference 9th September 2005*. Available at, www.educ.cam.ac.uk/events/conferences/part/18thcentury.

⁸ W.K. Lowther Clarke, *The History of the S.P.C.K* (London, 1959), pp.19, 44.

⁹ J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000), p.249; J. Simon, 'Was There a Charity School Movement? The Leicestershire Evidence' in B. Simon (ed.), *Education in Leicestershire, 1540-1940*, 1968, pp.55-100.

¹⁰ W. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), p.168.

We can trace the existence of educational establishments in the Forest of Arden back to the sixteenth century, when an educational charity was mentioned in the will of Sir Robert Throckmorton of Coughton in 1518. It stated that ‘A prest I will shall keep a school and teche grammer freely to all my tennts children, to have yearly therefore £8 and his chamber’.¹¹ There was a school at Berkswell in 1509, and the will of Walter Newport dated 12th June 1584 stated that ‘the sum of £400 was to be given to buy lands, or some annuity or rent charge of the value of £20 a year or more to be employed to the use of a school for the teaching of poor men’s children of Alcester’.¹² George Whateley, a native of Henley-in-Arden, by a deed of September 1586 also gave a house to be used as a school; the school would benefit from ‘a yearly rent of 20s out of Fordend in Ullenhall and two crofts called Ote Myles in Beaudesert, and 10s out of a house in Bridge Street, Evesham’. In the early nineteenth century it was noted that this school was to be ‘always in union with, and conducted according to the principles and in furtherance of the ends and designs of the National Society for promoting the education of the poor in the principles of the established Church’.¹³ A school in Knowle also appears to have existed in 1605.¹⁴ In 1647, £4 10s per annum for the salary of a master to teach both boys and girls of the town of Baddesley was mentioned in the will of a Mr Abbott.¹⁵ There is also mention of a school at Maxstoke in 1653.¹⁶ Furthermore, there is evidence of expenditure on a schoolhouse in Castle Bromwich in 1656/7.¹⁷

¹¹ *The Reports of Charity Commissioners: Relating to the County of Warwickshire 1819-1837* (London, 1890), p.22.

¹² *Ibid*, p.2.

¹³ W. Cooper, *Henley in Arden: An Ancient Market Town and its Surroundings* (Buckingham, 1946), p. 79.

¹⁴ J. Woodall, *The Book of Greater Solihull* (Buckingham, 1990), p.76.

¹⁵ *The Reports of Charity Commissioners*, p. 656.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 224.

¹⁷ W.C.R.O. DR (B) 105/10.

The charity schools had their own agenda. Their aim was not only to make their pupils into good men (and, in some cases, women), but also good citizens: loyal both to the Crown and to the Protestant succession and the established order generally.¹⁸ In a directive to the masters and mistresses of the charity schools in London, Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, made it clear that they should encourage their charges to:

Pray constantly for the King and the Royal Family by name, in the daily Prayers which are us'd in the School Morning and Evening; adding in the most proper place these or the like words, *We beseech thee also to pour down thy blessings in a plentiful Manner upon our Gracious Sovereign King George, and upon all the Royal Family. Grant that he may enjoy a long and happy reign over us, and that there may never be wanting one descended from him, to sit upon his throne, and to preserve thy true Religion in these Nations.*¹⁹

Education was to be rooted in Anglican principles, principles that would ensure that children 'may never forsake the bosom of their Mother Church. May continue in her Communion steadfast and immoveable'.²⁰ More importantly the Church of England maintained its monopoly over popular education through the episcopal licensing of schoolmasters, thus ensuring conformity with Anglican beliefs.

¹⁸ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon*, p.130.

¹⁹ E. Gibson, *Directions Given by Edmund Lord Bishop of London to the Masters and Mistresses of the Charity Schools within the Bills of Mortality...London...St. Paul's November the 14th. 1724*, p .8.

²⁰ C. Rose, 'London's Charity Schools, 1690-1730', *History Today*, 1990, p. 19.

In an article for *History Today* in 1990, Craig Rose attributed the rise of the charity School movement to the crisis faced by the Church of England in the late 1690's. The Toleration Act of 1689, passed in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution, had broken the Anglican monopoly on the religious life of the nation and Nonconformity appeared to be flourishing.²¹ Without a doubt, the Toleration Act had inadvertently blunted the Church's coercive machinery against immorality, while the lapse of the licensing laws in 1693 unleashed a flurry of heretical and anti-clerical pamphlets. Hence, by the end of the decade many Anglicans believed that they were experiencing an unprecedented confrontation with rampant 'Dissent, heterodoxy, anti-clericalism and general irreligion'.²² The Church of England saw the charity school as a way to reassert its influence over the lower orders. The charity schools were seen by contemporaries as providing a Christian education, which Bishop Dawes of Chester believed rescued its pupils from 'the very jaws of Hell', and threw 'wide open the Gates of Heaven for them'.²³

It has also been remarked that the goal behind the establishment of the first London-based charity schools during the reign of James II was to thwart the spread of Popery amongst the ignorant.²⁴ Forty years later, Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, instructed his teachers to inculcate in their pupils a fear of a Popish monarch. The bishop made it clear that all masters and mistresses should 'give them a just Apprehension of the Terrors of a Popish Reign, and of the Persecutions and Cruelties which Protestants are to expect under a Popish Prince'.²⁵ When

²¹ Rose, 'London's Charity Schools', p.18.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.17.

²⁵ E. Gibson, *Directions Given by Edmund Lord Bishop of London to the Masters and Mistresses of the Charity-Schools within the Bills of Mortality...London...St Paul's November the 14th, 1724*, p 8.

examining the rise of the charity school movement nationwide, historians have concluded that it was, in part, anti-Catholicism that accounted for the popularity of these schools in the first half of the eighteenth century.²⁶ The ‘Movement’ was seen as a crusade defending Anglican Protestantism against irreligion and Popery.²⁷ One contributor to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1735 expressed the concerns of many Anglicans.

The little knowledge many have of Religion in general, and the Protestant in particular, makes them easy prey to artful and zealous Popish Priests.²⁸

Significantly, the deanery of Arden had as one of its rectors Dr. Thomas Bray, who was a founding member of the S.P.C.K. Bray saw himself as having a special role in promoting the establishment of charity schools and their goal of eradicating Popery. The general belief at the time was that the ignorance of the poor was a weakness upon which Popery would play. With a strong Catholic presence in and around Birmingham (there was a Catholic mission at Edgbaston) the opening of the new charity school at St. Philip’s was viewed as a united Protestant effort to thwart the spread of Popery. Hence, a word of warning to the congregation on the dangers of Popery was a necessary component in Thomas Bisse’s sermon preached at the opening of St. Philip’s charity school in Birmingham in 1724. On this point, Bisse set out the advantages of a charity school education both for the poor and for the nation as a whole:

²⁶ R. O’Day, *Education and Society 1500-1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain*, (London, 1982), p. 253; M.F. Snape, *The Church in a Lancashire Parish: Whalley, 1689-1800*, in J. Gregory, and J.S. Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1669-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003), p.256.

²⁷ C. Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1969), p.278.

²⁸ *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, V, 1735, p.481.

The advantage I shall mention arising from these schools, has an equal regard both to Church and State, which is this that this education tends in the most effectual manner to prevent the growth and return of Popery among us, which is counted the greatest enemy to both. For what method can be so effectual to bring Popery again into this nation, as that which kept it up here before the Reformation, and which now keeps it up in Popish countries? Now this is known to be a national ignorance spread over the common people.²⁹

While there is something to be said for this viewpoint, it does not take into account the fact that money was willingly received from Catholics, or those closely associated with them for the funding of local charity schools. The funds supplied for a school at Coughton in 1704 were not enough for a satisfactory endowment. Sir Robert Throckmorton, a prominent Catholic gentleman, therefore subscribed £25 per year to keep the school solvent.³⁰ Similarly, George Fentham, a Birmingham mercer, subscribed money for the setting up of a charity school in Birmingham in 1690; Fentham's wife was a known Catholic and she was presented in 1679 for being a 'Popish Recusant'.³¹ George Fentham himself is mentioned in the register of the Franciscan mission of 1657-1830. The entry states that 'Mr George Fentham gave in bricks £15'. These bricks represented his contribution towards the building of the Roman Catholic chapel and priest's house in Mass-house Lane, Birmingham.³²

²⁹ Bisse, *A Sermon Preached at St Philip's Church in Birmingham, August 9, 1724: At the Opening of a Charity School*, pp.25-6.

³⁰ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 46.

³¹ J.C. Adams, *Hampton in Arden a Warwickshire Village* (Birmingham, 1951), p. 101.

³² *Ibid*; W.P.W. Phillimore, J.L. Whitfield and P.E. Williams (eds), *Warwickshire Parish Registers: The Franciscan Mission at Birmingham 1657-1824* (London, 1904) 2 vols.

The central role played by Anglicanism in the life of the charity school cannot be overstated. In 1706 it was stated that their primary purpose was ‘the education of poor Children in the knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion, as profes’d and taught in the Church of England’.³³ Anglican clergymen often played a major role in the establishment of the schools and were usually trustees of the schools based in their parishes. Consequently, when the Blue Coat School was established in Birmingham, the rector, William Higgs, was named as a trustee. The twenty-four trustees on the committee of the charity school in Birmingham in 1724 were instructed that ‘the rectors of St. Martin’s and St. Philip should always be included in that number’.³⁴ During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries philanthropy was seen as a means of strengthening and reinvigorating Anglicanism.³⁵ Charity, especially on the part of the clergy, was central to Christian piety and was viewed as a ‘crucial element in true Christian observance’.³⁶ Almsgiving served to cement a clergyman’s pastoral ministry and, as a more long term investment, the clergy often left money in their wills for the establishment of charity schools in their parishes. In the will of Devereux Wilson of Henley-in-Arden, dated 19th May 1725, we learn that ‘any said profits’ were to be given ‘to and for the use and support of a charity school, to instruct children of poor people to read the English tongue and in the principles of the Church of England, as the law established’.³⁷ John Million, vicar of Anstey, who died about 1719, left the residue of his property for the purpose of establishing a

³³ *An Account of Charity Schools Lately Erected in England, Wales, and Ireland: With the Benefactions Thereto; and of the Methods Whereby they were Set Up, and Governed: Also, a Proposal for Enlarging their Numbers*, (London, 1706), p.3.

³⁴ *Short Account of the Charity School in St. Philip’s Church Yard, in Birmingham: From its Institution in 1724 to 1806*, p. 29.

³⁵ Jacob, p.294

³⁶ Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society*, p.72.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 83.

school for the poor of his parish.³⁸ The clergy could also have the deciding vote on who was admitted to the schools. At Sheldon we are told that an indenture of 1730 entrusted ‘the schoolmaster there with the teaching from time to time to read and write such poor children not exceeding ten in number [who] should be nominated by the Rector’.³⁹ Henry Greswold, rector of Solihull, stipulated in his will of 1700 that the boys and girls who were to receive his charity must be ‘nominated yearly by the minister or curate of the parish of Solihull’.⁴⁰

Strict religious qualifications were also required of teachers. Thus, in 1685, the trustees of the school at Atherstone insisted that the schoolmaster or mistress be an ‘Anglican’.⁴¹ Similarly, Bishop Lloyd’s regulations relating to the masters and mistresses of those charity schools set up for the poor of his diocese stated that ‘first... they be members of the Church of England, Frequenting the Prayers and Holy Communion, free from Scandal in their lives, orderly in their families’.⁴² Indeed, the main criterion for a teacher was that he or she should be a member of the ‘Church of England’. However, there were those who slipped through the net. Hatton Atkins, a suspected Papist, was known to have taught at Warwick from about 1702 to about 1717 and he was presented by the churchwardens three times during that period for ‘teaching school contrary to the law’, for teaching a school ‘notwithstanding my Lord bishop’s Certificate’ and for ‘teaching school in the said parish not having [a] bishop’s certificate’.⁴³ Teaching by Catholics was illegal until 1778, when the first Relief Act permitted it. Before then, on paper at least, Catholic schoolmasters were liable to perpetual

³⁸ *The Reports of the Charity Commissioners*, p.801.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 592.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 301.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 502.

⁴² A. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd, 1662-1717: Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet* (London, 1952), p.212.

⁴³ W.C.R.O. 2289/807 (ii). Churchwardens’ Presentments, St. Mary’s, Warwick.

imprisonment. In spite of this, there is no evidence that Atkins was imprisoned. Teachers also had to be morally upright people. Ian Green has shown that from Elizabethan times schoolmasters were often regarded as responsible adults who should 'lead the way'.⁴⁴ It was thought that the licensing power of bishops would ensure this. When John Underhill and Edward Abbot wished to receive licenses to teach school in Stourbridge and Studley, Francis Evans, secretary to Bishop Lloyd, mentioned that the bishop 'examined both publicly'.⁴⁵ Likewise, in 1683, Samuel Simpson was cited before the consistory court for 'officiating as curate at Claverdon and as schoolmaster there and at Rowington without a licence'.⁴⁶

The religious instruction which teachers were required to give was also strictly Anglican in content. At its heart was the catechism of the Church of England. As James Talbott wrote in his *Christian School Master* (1707), the first duty of a charity school teacher was to:

Imprint in the mind and memory of the Children committed to his instruction the Fundamental Doctrines of our Holy Religion as that are laid down in the Excellent Catechism of our Church.⁴⁷

Historians, and in particular F.C. Mather, have suggested that enthusiasm for catechising was fed by that broad educational impulse, part religious and part social, which gave rise to the

⁴⁴ I. Green, *Children in Understanding: The Emergence of the English Catechism under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts*, p.419.

⁴⁵ D. Robertson (ed.), 'Diary of Francis Evans, Secretary to Bishop Lloyd, 1699-1706', *Worcestershire Historical Society*, 1903, p.104.

⁴⁶ P. Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman, Thomas Pilkington, Vicar of Claverdon', in P. Styles, *Studies in Seventeenth Century History* (Kineton, 1978), p.88.

⁴⁷ J. Talbott D.D., *The Christian Schoolmaster: Or The Duty of those who are Employ'd in the Publick Instruction of Children Especially in Charity Schools* (London, 1707).

S.P.C.K. and the charity schools.⁴⁸ In reality, catechising the young was a traditional practice not confined to the long eighteenth century. Evidence supports the fact that before the Restoration it was being stipulated by benefactors that their largesse was to be used for the teaching of the Church catechism. In 1647, Mr Abbott of Baddesley Ensor left £4 10s in his will for a teacher to teach ‘both Boys and Girls of the town of Baddesley to read English perfectly, and to say by heart Mr Ball’s Little Catechism. Also to buy books and Catechisms for the poor children of the said school’.⁴⁹ Undeniably, it was the Anglican catechism which was the vital component of all Anglican schools for, whether English or classical, it was impressed upon all licensed schoolteachers to be meticulous in the teaching of it. Bishop Lloyd of Worcester laid down detailed regulations governing the syllabus to be taught in his charity schools. He made it clear that ‘all children be taught the Church Catechism 3 times a week and that as soon as they can say it perfectly they also learn some exposition of it, such as shall be thought by the Trustees the most fit for their use’.⁵⁰ Likewise, in 1712 Richard Smith stressed to the future trustees of his charity school in Nuneaton that:

The said master and mistress should make it their chief business to instruct the children under their care in the Principles of the Christian religion as laid down in the Church of England Catechism. And should teach them to pronounce the said Catechism distinctly, and should instruct them out of the explanation thereof by

⁴⁸F.C. Mather, ‘Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830’, *Journal Ecclesiastical History*, 36, 1985, p.279.

⁴⁹ *The Reports of the Charity Commissioners*, p.656.

⁵⁰ Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd*, p.219.

the most Rev. Father in God, William [Wake] Lord Archbishop of Canterbury,
printed in 1720.⁵¹

A further example of the hold the Church had over those attending charity schools was compulsory attendance at church services. Attendance at church was always part of the scheme, and national charity school rules were explicit in this respect, stating that:

The Master shall bring the children to church, twice every Lord's Day and Holy Day; and shall teach them to behave themselves with all Reverence while they are in the house of God, and to join in the public service of the Church. For which they are always to have ready their Bibles bound up with the Common Prayer.⁵²

The ideal was to bring the children to church at least on Sundays and holy days; in some places on Wednesdays and Fridays also, or even every day, as at Sheldon, Dr. Bray's parish. The will of Richard Smith also stipulated that the benefactors of his charity should be taken 'to the parish church of Nuneaton every Lord's Day morning and afternoon and whenever else divine service should be performed there'.⁵³ Similarly, an entry in the parish register of Preston Bagot ran: 'The poor of the charity school do constantly attend the church as well Sundays as Holy days, and that nothing be allowed as a reason for neglecting the same but great sickness'.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *The Reports of the Charity Commissioners*, p. 525.

⁵² *An Account of Charity Schools Lately Erected in England, Wales and Ireland: With the Benefactions Thereto; and of the Methods they were Set up, and are Governed: Also, a Proposal for Enlarging their Number* (London, 1710), p.6.

⁵³ *The Reports of the Charity Commissioners*, p. 525.

⁵⁴ J. Burman, *The Story of Tanworth in Arden, Warwickshire* (London, 1930), p.94.

Overall, though, a wider object of the charity school was to spread virtue among the poor by teaching them to read. It was hoped that pupils would then soak themselves in the Bible, the catechism and classics such as the *Whole Duty of Man*. These new schools were to provide the knowledge needed by the lower orders in a Protestant country. It was thought that a ‘Christian and useful Education of the Children of the Poor, is absolutely necessary to their Piety, Virtue, and an honest living’.⁵⁵ It must be mentioned, however, that the schoolroom as a form of inexpensive, even profitable poor relief, was a widely recognised concept in the early eighteenth century.⁵⁶ Parochial authorities felt real fear at the increase in their pauper population and Bishop Lloyd of Worcester, concerned at this point, told his churchwardens that:

I would advise you to see what poor children there are in yor Parish that are brought up at Parish Charge, or whose Parents receive yor relief; and to cause those children, whether boys or girls, as many as you can get Masters and Mistresses for, to be bound apprentices as soon as they are of age for it.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, it was assumed that poor children were being educated beyond their needs and above their station: ‘If parents are too poor to afford their children the elements of learning’, suggested Bernard Mandeville, ‘it is impudence in them to aspire any further’.⁵⁸ It was widely believed among the higher orders that education should not be generally extended to the poor since it would upset the social order and increase expectations beyond acceptable levels. The

⁵⁵ *An Account of Charity Schools Lately Erected in Great Britain*, p.3.

⁵⁶ Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, p.133.

⁵⁷ Robertson, ‘Diary of Francis Evans’, pp. 39, 42.

⁵⁸ B. Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefit, with an Essay on Charity and Charity- Schools and a Search into the Nature of Society* (London, 1728).

upheaval of the mid-seventeenth century was used as an example of how dangerous it was to educate the lower classes, the argument of the day being that:

There is no need of any learning at all for the meanest ranks of mankind: Their business is to labour, not to think: Their duty is to do what they are commanded, to fill up the most servile posts, and to perform the lowest offices and drudgeries of life, for the convenience of their superiors, and common nature gives them knowledge enough for this purpose. They are born in the lowest station, and they ought always to be kept in ignorance that so knowing nothing but what they are bid, they may do their work without reasoning about it.⁵⁹

Even so, it was seen as desirable for the poor to be able to read the Bible, if only to help them to discover that they should accept their humble place in God's greater plan of things. Although Isaac Watts, a champion of charity education for the poor and a prominent Dissenter, believed that this section of society should not be 'generally educated in such a manner as may raise them above the services of a lower station', he felt quite passionately that a Christian education was beneficial to the whole nation, arguing:

Tell me, you that forbid children the knowledge of letters and would not suffer them to learn the art of reading, tell me, whether you can suppose they can ever become the worse labourers, worse servants, worse ploughmen or soldiers by reading in the word of God what duties they owe to men? Are not all the principles and rules of virtue and goodness, of diligence and sobriety, of

⁵⁹ I. Watts, *Sermons, Discourses and Essays, on Various Subjects: An Essay towards the Encouragement of Charity Schools, Particularly among Protestant Dissenters* (London, 1753), II, p.726.

obedience to superiors, of justice to their neighbours, of truth, faithfulness and love to all men contained in his holy book? And when the poor young creatures shall find all these things commanded and required by the great God that made them, when they shall read many happy examples of these duties, and the vengeance of God against transgressors, will all this have no influence upon their hearts, to lead them to practise these virtues?⁶⁰

The Bishop of London's directions, circulated in 1724, ordered that children were not to be taught anything to 'set them above the condition of servants, or the more laborious employments'.⁶¹

In a sermon preached at the opening of the charity school in Birmingham, Thomas Bisse rehearsed the principles put forward by Isaac Watts and Bishop Gibson:

Instead of the idle it brings forth the industrious; instead of the ignorant, the understanding; instead of the mischievous, the useful. Besides this, Charity, like the daughters of wisdom, endeavours to finish what it has begun. And therefore after it has led them through this education, leaves them not at random to provide for themselves; but sees them placed out to callings, for which it has fitted them, either as servants or apprentices to the lower trades or occupations. Providence hath raised, and probably will always raise some out of these nurseries into a high and flourishing condition: And such remarkable blessings on particulars should be look'd upon as a testimony from above that with the whole *God is well pleased*.

⁶⁰ I. Watts, *Sermons, Discourses and Essays, on Various Subjects*, p.726.

⁶¹ Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, p.27.

However this charity in setting up such schools, decides not this to be her true original view and intention, being desirous not to disorder, but only better the world, not (as some object) to change the subordination of mankind, by raising these children above their level, into the ranks and trades belonging to their betters; but only to preserve them, so as that they sink not below themselves into the species of beggars and felons, which are not better than brutes and beasts of prey... This charity therefore, if rightly understood, is a preserver of order... For it keeps the lowest order of mankind, *vis.* the poor, in its proper situation, fitting it for its proper office; ⁶²

In the Arden region, benefactors who were keen to preserve the social hierarchy usually left instructions for the type of education to be delivered. By an indenture dated 14th February, 1694, William, Lord Digby, directed that £4 per annum was to be employed in teaching and instructing daughters of the poor inhabitants of Coleshill to ‘read, spin, knit, sew, and to acquire any other skill useful for getting an honest living’, and also in teaching the sons to ‘write, and cast accounts’, so as to qualify them for being ‘bailiffs or gentlemen’s servants, or for some honest trade’.⁶³ Nationally, the trend was for benefactors to insist on the teaching of the Church catechism, and local benefactors were no exception to this rule. Richard Smith’s charity for the school at Nuneaton in 1712 stated that ‘the said master and mistress should make it their chief business to instruct the children under their care in the Principles of the Christian religion as laid down in the Church of England Catechism’.⁶⁴

⁶² Blisse, *Public Education, Particularly in the Charity Schools: A Sermon Preach’d at St Philip’s Church in Birmingham, August 9, 1724: At The Opening of a Charity School, Built to Receive an Hundred Children*

⁶³ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p.370.

⁶⁴ *The Reports of the Charity Commissioners*, p .525.

The charity schools were never free of controversy. It was alleged that they were nurseries of High Church principles (and even Jacobitism)⁶⁵ while John Chambelayn observed on 6th July 1716 that the trustees of charity schools are ‘for the greater part what you call High Churchmen’.⁶⁶ Christopher Hill has argued that ‘post 1660 hostility to education as politically dangerous was still widespread’ and that the charity school movement began as an activity in which Anglicans and Nonconformists co-operated but was hijacked by High Churchmen following the Schism Act of 1714.⁶⁷ Linda Colley has stressed that charity schools may have had a special attraction for the Tory gentry, as they enabled this section of society to fulfil their charitable obligations while passing on partisan religious principles to the objects of their benevolence. More importantly, the schools exemplified the Tory belief that the Church of England still had a decisive role to play in the running of secular society.⁶⁸ On first inspection the evidence from the Forest of Arden seems to support Linda Colley’s argument. This shows that Tory gentlemen were indeed instrumental in the setting up of local schools and that they took an active role in their administration. William, Lord Digby, a prominent Tory gentleman, took a particular interest in the education of the poor. As we have seen in February 1694, he directed that £4 was to be used for the teaching of the poor of Coleshill.⁶⁹ He was ‘desirous’ that the charity school at Sheldon ‘might continue and be better supported’.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Rose, ‘London Charity Schools’, p.19.

⁶⁶ Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, p.26.

⁶⁷ Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution*, p.277.

⁶⁸ L. Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory party, 1714-1760* (Cambridge, 1982), p.100.

⁶⁹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p.370.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 591.

However, historians such as G.M. Trevelyan have argued that the quarrels of High Churchmen and Low Churchmen were not to the fore in the founding of charity schools, stating that ‘in some of these better activities members of the two parties co-operated with each other and with Dissenters. The able men at the head of the movement introduced the principles of democratic co-operation into the field of education’.⁷¹ Dr. Gregory suggests that charity schools were neither the pet projects of Tories nor the ‘nurseries of Jacobitism’, as some Whig propagandists maintained, but met with the support of Whig clergy too.⁷² Tory High Churchmen detested Bishop Lloyd, the Latitudinarian Bishop of Worcester, but, in a pastoral to the clergy of his diocese, Lloyd pronounced that:

How great a public Blessing would it be if there were in every Parish in this Church and Kingdom a Sufficient Number of good discreet Masters and Dames maintained with public Salaries for the teaching of Male and Female Children apart to read and to say their Catechism...also to write and to do such little Works as would Enable them to live by their Labour! Happy are they that are God’s Instruments for the procuring of such a Blessing in the Parishes where he has placed them.⁷³

⁷¹ G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (London, 1973), pp.325, 7.

⁷² J. Gregory, ‘Archbishops of Canterbury, their Diocese, and the Shaping of the National Church’, in J. Gregory, and J.S. Chamberlain (eds.). *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800*, p.40; J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000), p. 250.

⁷³ Gregory, ‘Archbishops of Canterbury, their Diocese’, in Gregory, and Chamberlain (eds.). *The National Church in Local Perspective*, p.40; Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform*, p. xiv.

Bishop Lloyd, in line with his contemporaries, saw education as a way to ‘rescue [the poor] from the evils naturally consequential to a habit of idleness, vice, and beggary; and to enable them to become useful members of, instead of nuisances to, Society’.⁷⁴ This underlying premise was the driving force that led the Bishop of Worcester to take a keen interest in all diocesan schools, to the extent of personally founding two charity schools in Worcester in 1713.⁷⁵ What is more, in 1707 Lloyd offered to give £1 to meet every £9 subscribed to set up charity schools in the parishes of his diocese.⁷⁶ Bishop Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester from 1689 to 1699, who also belonged to the Low Church, Latitudinarian school of Restoration Anglicanism, yet lectured his clergy on the benefits of educating their flock. In a visitation charge delivered to his clergy in 1690, he made it clear that the clergy should take care of the education of their parishioners so that they could ‘instil the principles of Virtue and Religion into them, there by soften the Fierceness... direct the weakness [and] govern the inclinations of mankind’.⁷⁷

Founded in 1699, the S.P.C.K. became involved in providing schools with resources such as books, with rules for their internal regulation and with and assistance in finding suitable teachers. James Talbot’s *Christian Schoolmaster* was commissioned by the society and published in 1707. It set out a curriculum, a method of teaching and detailed rules and orders for anyone wishing to establish a school, and could be given to a newly appointed teacher to provide guidance on how to go about their job. Dr. Spaeth has consequently suggested that the S.P.C.K. played an important role in linking the localities with the nation, serving as an

⁷⁴ Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717*, p. 221.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 220.

⁷⁶ Lowther Clarke, *The History of the S.P.C.K.*, p. 36.

⁷⁷ Stillingfleet, *Charge*, p. 16.

early example of a central initiative for educational reform.⁷⁸ However, the schools depended mainly on the support of local patrons, clerical and lay, and on voluntary subscriptions and church collections for their continuation. We are informed that at St. Mary's, Warwick, 'about Midsummer 1712' a Charity Box was set up in the church with this inscription over it: 'For the use and increase of the Charity School'. This collection:

Had so good an effect, that several Children have been taught and clothed out of what was found in it... There are also three Boys taught and clothed, partly out of the Offertory, and partly at the charge of the Vicar of St Mary's Parish, and two Boys more are taught and clothed at the Expense of some private Persons of the Town. So that now in all the Charity Schools of this Place, which are three, there are taught and clothed fifty-two Boys and forty-two Girls.⁷⁹

The costs of running a school included finding (or building) a place to meet, the salary of the teacher and books and clothing for the children in order to encourage attendance. In Birmingham, the charity school of St. Philip's was established by subscription and it depended on lay gifts for its continued maintenance. Figure 3.1 below shows how the expenses necessary for maintaining the Blue Coat charity school in Birmingham from 1722 until 1740 were actually met.

⁷⁸ D. Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger: Parsons and Parishioners, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2000), p.135.

⁷⁹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II.

Figure. 3.1

Year	Benefactions and Legacies	Subscriptions	Sermons
1722	£500.0.0		
1724	£350.0.0		
1727	£558.12s.2d		
1728		£11.0.0.	£69 16s 10d
1729	£50.0.0.	£24.9s.6d	£80.10s.11d
1730	£70.	£78.12s.0.	£89.8s.10d
1731	£200.0.0		
1732	£101.0.0	£270.	£171.1s.6d
1733	£50.0.0.	£200.11s.	£165.15s.7d
1734	£230.0.0		
1735	£35.0.0	£88.10s.6d	£88.6s.7d
1737	£70.0.0	£287.1s.	£226.5s.11d
1738	£32.11s.0.	£98.6s.0.	£80.3s.2d
1739	£82. 0s. 6d.		
1740		£90.10s.6d	£73.8s.5d.

Source: *Short Account of the Charity School, St. Philip's Church Yard, in Birmingham, from its Institution in 1724 to 1806*, p.7.

As can be seen, the money came from the laity in the form of benefactions, legacies, subscriptions and contributions at charity sermons. It is striking that considerable sums were given in subscriptions and sermons in the 1730s a fact that might reflect the heightened fear of popery nationally also it is remarkable that the value of benefactions and legacies declined in

these years, a fact which may reflect changing patterns of benevolence that were both cause and effect of the Mortmain Act of 1736.⁸⁰

Although lay donations were sometimes sizeable, they were not always sufficient to maintain a school on their own. For example, it has been estimated that the annual costs of a child being educated at the Blue Coat school in Birmingham ran to £4.17s.2d.⁸¹ The clergy often had to bear a considerable financial burden themselves, as they were constantly either paying the whole cost of a school or maintaining some of the children. In 1712 three boys were being taught and clothed at the charity school in the parish of St. Mary's, Warwick, at the charge of their vicar, Moses Hodges. Similarly, the school at Henley-in-Arden was being maintained by the generosity of Devereux Wilson, for we are told that in May 1725 he gave 'certain rent charges for the support of a charity school'.⁸² In addition, the clergy were often encouraged to teach in the schools without payment. Lady Katherine Leveson, by a codicil to her will dated 21 February 1670, declared her 'desire to be that the minister, to whom she had given £20 yearly to read prayers, should also teach, without fee, twenty of the poorest boys of Balsall'.⁸³ As mentioned above, Bishop Lloyd of Worcester was an avid supporter of education for the poor. At his visitation of 1699 he reminded his clergy of the:

Religious education of children (which indeed is a principle part of your duty)...

For unless your care of this sort of Education be so short as to leave out them that most need it, the poor Children that are left on Parish-Charge, or that have Parents

⁸⁰ Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society*, p.78.

⁸¹ *Short Account of the Charity School, St. Philip's Church Yard, in Birmingham, from its Institution in 1724 to 1806*, p.21.

⁸² *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, III, p.212.

⁸³ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p.370.

so poor that they cannot pay for their Teaching, you will find that the care of Providing for the Education of these lies Chiefly charged upon you, by the Laws both Divine and Human.... where God has given you wherewith to contribute to this charge, there no doubt you ought to do it according to your Ability; and the less any of you can spare of your own, the more diligent you ought to be in getting your Neighbours of the Laiety to contribute towards it.⁸⁴

From the reports of the charity commissioners we can conclude that the local laity seems to have been most generous in their support for charitable education. Dr. Jacob has suggested that the burst of charitable activity (and in particular charitable donations for educational proposes) in the early part of the eighteenth century put what was previously available on a sporadic basis onto a more solid and formal footing.⁸⁵

Birmingham did have one completely new school for the poor, founded in 1724 and supervised by its governors, namely the Blue Coat School. Elizabeth Philips, by indenture dated 6 November 1722, was given power by the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry to erect and set up a charity school out of a considerable sum of money collected by the inhabitants for the stipend of a master and mistress, who were to teach poor children ‘writing, reading, the Christian religion according to the principles of the Church of England, and other things suitable to their condition and capacity’.⁸⁶ The school was established on the site that it was to occupy for two hundred years, at the eastern end of St. Philip’s churchyard. The school was

⁸⁴ Robertson, ‘Diary of Francis Evans’, p.16.

⁸⁵ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, p.163.

⁸⁶ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, II, p. 372.

built originally to receive one hundred children⁸⁷ and its revenue came from voluntary subscriptions, normally helped by two collections each year in the local churches, at Easter at St. Martin's and at Michaelmas at St. Philip's.⁸⁸ Although, educational provision for the poor of Birmingham had been limited, there had been some educational provision for the poor of St. Martin's parish before the establishment of the Blue Coat School. George Fentham, mercer, by a will dated 24 April 1690 gave lands for a master to teach poor children to 'know their letters spell and read English'.⁸⁹ The school was said to be 'two hundred yards from and about the Bull Ring'.⁹⁰ However, the recipients of this charity were transferred to the new charity school at St. Philip's shortly after its foundation, where they were distinguished by the wearing of dark green clothes instead of blue.⁹¹ The master and mistress of the Blue Coat School were paid a gratuity of £10 for their services in the instruction of these children. The number varied from ten to twenty.⁹²

Colin Haydon has mentioned that educational provision in the Kineton deanery of Warwickshire was 'naturally limited'.⁹³ It is difficult to estimate the extent of educational provision in the Arden region at the Restoration but comparing the number of foundations with the number of parishes and chapelries it would appear that one-third of the parishes and chapelries of the deanery of Arden had educational provision in the form of a charity or grammar school. This rose to about two-thirds in the first decade of the eighteenth century. In

⁸⁷ Blisse, *A Sermon Preach'd at St Philip's Church in Birmingham*.

⁸⁸ Gill, *History of Birmingham, II*, p. 82.

⁸⁹ *V.C.H. Warwickshire, II*, p. 327.

⁹⁰ *The Reports of the Charity Commissioners*, p. 402.

⁹¹ Gill, *History of Birmingham, II*, p. 82.

⁹² *V.C.H. Warwickshire, II*, p 327.

⁹³ C. Haydon, 'The Church in the Kineton Deanery of the Diocese of Worcester, c. 1660-c. 1800', in Gregory and Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church*, p. 147.

contrast, the deanery of Warwick had one-fifth provision at the Restoration, rising to two-fifths in the mid eighteenth century.⁹⁴ The lower figure for the deanery of Warwick may be due to its rural nature. The deanery had only two towns of substance, Alcester and Warwick. It has been shown that charity schools were more effective in towns where semi-skilled labour was more prominent. In contrast, in the rural parishes the schools were not universally popular as the lower orders could not afford to lose the earning capacity of their children and the demand for literacy was lacking. It has been shown, for example, that Solihull boys over six could find work and contribute to the family coffers and, likewise, children over ten years of age could earn approximately a fifth of a man's wage.⁹⁵ In 1699, Edward Welchman, rector of Lapworth, wrote to John Chamberlayne of the S.P.C.K. hoping it could offer a solution to this problem. He wrote:

I have endeavoured these ten years to get a school for the poor of this Parish; which does not answer the expectation, the houses being at such a distance the smaller children cannot come, and the parents cannot spare others from their work. On this I desire the advice of the society.⁹⁶

It is also difficult to estimate the number of charity schools that were established in the region during our period. Contemporary information concerning charity schools is uneven and the S.P.C.K. relied on good will for its data.⁹⁷ In a publication of 1731, a list of charity

⁹⁴ Evidence collated from various local histories, such as *V.C.H. Warwickshire*.

⁹⁵ J. Woodall, *The Book of Greater Solihull* (Buckingham, 1990), p.77.

⁹⁶ R. Hudson, *Memorials of a Warwickshire Parish* (London, 1904), p.177.

⁹⁷ S. Nicolls, *An Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (London, 1746), p.45. The S.P.C.K. stated that the information included on the number of charity schools in England and Wales is 'according to the best Information that has been given to the publisher'.

schools in Great Britain was included and the section on Warwickshire stated that the schools situated within the Forest of Arden were:

Figure. 3.2

	No. Of Schools
Alcester	1
Atherstone	1
Ausley	1
Badgely	1
Baxterley	1
Berkeswell	1
Castle Bromwich	1
Coleshill	2
Hampton in Arden	1
Sheldon	1
Solihull	1
Temple	1
Water Orton	1
Warwick	3
<u>Total</u>	<u>17</u>

Source: G. Miede, *The Present State of Great Britain, and Ireland. In Three Parts...With Lists of the Present Officers in Church and State; and of Both Houses of Parliament: Also the Present State of His Majesty's Dominions in Germany. The Seventh Edition corrected 1731*, p.33- 4.

The information included in this publication seems to underestimate the number of charity schools in the region at this time. One important omission is the newly established charity school in Birmingham (1724). There is no mention of other schools that were in existence in the early to mid eighteenth century such as at Knowle, Henley-in-Arden, Claverdon, Coughton, Tanworth-in-Arden and Beaudesert. However, it is difficult to assess with any accuracy the number of schools in existence at this time. A more realistic picture of the educational provision that was provided for the lower orders in the Forest of Arden until the mid eighteenth century can be gleaned from Figure 3.3 below.

Figure. 3.3

	No. Of Schools
Alcester	1
Atherstone	1
Ansley	1
Ausley	1
Badgely	1
Baddersley Clinton	1
Baxterley	1
Berkeswell	1
Beaudesert	1
Bickenhill	1
Birmingham	2
Budbrooke	1
Castle Bromwich	1
Claverdon	1
Coleshill	2
Coughton	1
Hampton in Arden	1
Hatton	1
Henley in Arden	1
Knowle	1
Maxstock	1
Meriden	1
Nuneaton	1
Rowington	1
Sheldon	1
Snitterfield	1
Solihull	1
Studley	1
Tanworth	1
Temple Balsall	1
Ullenhall	1
Water Orton	1
Warwick	3
Wishaw	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>38</u>

Source; *V.C.H. Warwickshire, II*; Various Local Studies.

From information extracted from the charity commissioners of the early nineteenth century, it seems that during the period 1661-1733 there were forty-two new charitable endowments for education in the Forest of Arden region.

Nevertheless, although there was expansion in charitable education throughout our period, the number of poor children receiving free education in charity schools remained relatively

small. The Blue Coat School, Birmingham, was built to accommodate 100 children in 1724; however, only fifty-two children were admitted that year. From 1728 to 1740 the number had only increased by twelve to sixty-four, plus seven boys and seven girls supported by the charity of George Fentham.⁹⁸ Although Warwick boasted of having three charity schools which educated fifty-two boys and forty-two girls by 1730, the charity schools were still only educating just less than 1 per cent of the population.⁹⁹ Berkswell, with an estimated population of 1,425¹⁰⁰ in the early eighteenth century, fared slightly better. It had one charity school, educating fifty boys, and an estimated 14 per cent of the population. In the parish of Solihull, no additional free places were created since the Reverend Henry Greswold left money in his will for the teaching of ‘four poor boys and four poor girls’ in 1700;¹⁰¹ this represented approximately 2 per cent of the population at this time.¹⁰²

Prominent lay people were very conscious of the fact that not all parishes had the means to attract money for educational purposes. Proposals were therefore put forward to provide education for the poor in parishes that could not attract subscriptions for charity schools. One such proposal for ‘teaching poor Children in Small Villages to read’¹⁰³ ran:

⁹⁸ *Short Account of the Charity School in St Philip’s Church Yard in Birmingham*, pp. 6, 21.

⁹⁹ In 1730 St. Mary’s, Warwick had approximately 700 families. St. Nicholas had approximately 300 families. Using the hearth Tax multiplier of 4.75, an estimation of the total population can be made. St. Mary’s population totals an estimate of 3,325, St. Nicholas, 1,425.

¹⁰⁰ Sir William Dugdale *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued... by William Thomas, D.D., II*, 1730, p.982; Rev. G. Miller, *The Parishes of the Diocese of Worcester: The Parishes of Warwickshire* (London, 1889), 2 vols, I, p.258.

¹⁰¹ *The Reports of the Charity Commissioners*, p.301.

¹⁰² Woodall, *The Book of Greater Solihull*. The population of Solihull stood at approximately 1,362 in 1676.

¹⁰³ *An Account of Charity Schools Lately Erected in Great Britain*, p.59.

Whereas many Parishes are so small, that they can neither furnish a sufficient Number of Children, nor afford Subscription for a *Charity school*: And whereas in some Places, and At Particular times in the Year, (especially in Harvest) the Parents of many poor Children are unwilling to spare them at School Hours: To remedy these and the like Inconveniencies, and that such Children may not be wholly destitute of a *Christian Education*, but may at least be taught to Read, and to repeat the *Church Catechism*; It is Proposed, That discreet and Sober Persons may be pitch'd upon in each Parish, and an Agreement made with them. *That 2s 6d. shall be paid for instructing each Child, so soon as it can name and distinguish all the Letters in the Alphabet: And the like payment, when the child can spell well: And 5s. More when such child can read well and distinctly, and say the Church Catechism.*¹⁰⁴

Such monetary incentives were another means of encouraging the young to read outside of the school system. Although there was educational provision at Coleshill, where by 1712 the under master of the grammar school was being paid £12 per year to teach 'all the Children of the Parish to read English', the ancestors of Lord Digby had left the rent from a piece of land known as 'Pater-noster Piece' to be used to 'encourage Children to learn and read the Lord's Prayer':

One Child comes every Morning to the Church, at the Sound of a Bell, and on his Knees says the Lord's Prayer in the presence of the said under- master, who immediately rewards him with a Penny. Every House or Family in the Place,

¹⁰⁴ *An Account of Charity Schools Lately Erected in Great Britain*, p.59.

when it's Turn is come, sends a child, for they go in the Order of their Houses, as they are situated in the Town, and never fail, whether they are poor or rich.¹⁰⁵

Apart from charity school teachers, masters and ushers of local grammar schools were often paid a fee for teaching the poor to read. At Solihull in 1712 we are informed that 'the Usher of the Latin School here has £20 per annum allowed him [and he] teacheth the Children of the parish to read English'.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the under-master of the grammar school at Coleshill taught 'all the Children of the parish to read English' and had '£12 per annum allowed him for that service'.¹⁰⁷ It must also be mentioned that the role of the clergy in providing education for the poor must not be underestimated: 'I doe by the importunity of my neighbours teach a few children of my parish', wrote Thomas Pilkington Vicar of Claverdon in the late seventeenth century.¹⁰⁸

Church Courts

The clergy and laity did not view a good Protestant education as some kind of alternative to imposing true virtue and religion; it was to complement the Church's traditional machinery for maintaining order and discipline, the church courts. 'The end of the temporal law is to punish the outward man; that of the ecclesiastical law, being spiritual, is to reform the inward man'. So wrote Alfred Denning in *The Meaning of Ecclesiastical Law* (1944).¹⁰⁹ There were

¹⁰⁵ *An Account of Charity Schools Lately Erected in Great Britain*, p.24.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.44.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p.24.

¹⁰⁸ Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman', p. 88.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in N. Cox, *The Influence of the Common Law on the Decline of the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Church of England* (2001-2003), p.14. Available at www.geocities.com/noelcox/decline.htm. Consulted on 16/11/2005.

two distinct systems of law operating in the early modern period, one secular or temporal and the other, the subject of this study, spiritual. Manorial, hundred and borough courts, petty and quarter sessions, assizes and the royal courts situated in London (the Court of Common Pleas, the Court of Request, the Kings Bench of Request, and the Kings Bench) all dispensed temporal law. Spiritual law was dispensed through numerous ecclesiastical courts scattered through out the country. During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the inhabitants of a given parish could reasonably expect to be summoned to appear in one of the church courts at some point in their lives.¹¹⁰

A newly consecrated bishop of the Church of England was required to promise to correct and punish evildoers, his main function was to correct the manners and morals of his flock *pro salute animae*, for the ‘health of their souls’.¹¹¹ He was given the authority to execute his duties by ‘the Ordinances of the Realm’.¹¹² The ecclesiastical courts were the official means through which the bishop carried out his promise. Aware of this authority, Bishop Stillingfleet told his clergy at his primary visitation in 1690 that:

Every Bishop of this church in the time of his Consecration makes a Solemn Profession among other things that he will correct and Punish such as be unquiet, disobedient and Criminous within his diocese...by the Ecclesiastical Law of this Realm.¹¹³ 2006),

¹¹⁰ R.B. Outhwaite, *The Rise and Fall of the English Ecclesiastical Courts, 1500-1860* (Cambridge, 2006), p.2.

¹¹¹ A. Tarver, *Church Court Records: An Introduction for Family and Local Historians* (Chichester, 1995), p.31.

¹¹² Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon*, p.74.

¹¹³ Stillingfleet, *Charge*, pp.6, 7.

The ecclesiastical court system that was restored with the Ecclesiastical Causes Act in July 1661 was in some respects a throw-back from the medieval period. The aim of the church courts in the Middle Ages was much the same as the reconstructed Church courts of the Restoration, that of ‘making Christians into better disciples and to secure the salvation of souls’.¹¹⁴ Additionally, and as stated by Colin Haydon, the courts’ operation was all part of a quest for ‘the right order locally’.¹¹⁵ Even so, it has been assumed that the ecclesiastical courts ceased to be the moral policemen of our period because church officials were unable to enforce moral standards on a reluctant population. This does not seem to be the case in Norfolk, however, where Dr. Jacob has shown that the courts appear to have been valued by local people.¹¹⁶ Dr. Jacob argues that people were still amenable to the discipline of the established Church, and that the church courts were very active in many places. He stresses that parish government and church government were completely intertwined. The Anglican parish was central to people’s lives.¹¹⁷

Due to the limited survival of archival material this study only had a small body of evidence to draw upon. What has been unearthed, however, does throw into question the assumption that the church courts were in decline by the end of our period. The workings of the ecclesiastical courts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been widely studied by historians.¹¹⁸ Martin Ingram’s *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England 1570-1640*

¹¹⁴ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon*, p.74.

¹¹⁵ C. Haydon, ‘The Church in the Kington Deanery of the Diocese of Worcester, c.1660- c.1800’, in Gregory, and Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church*, p.161.

¹¹⁶ W. Jacob, ‘Church and Society in Norfolk’, in Gregory and Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church*, p.181

¹¹⁷ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion*, pp.135-154.

¹¹⁸ E.R.C. Brinkworth, ‘The ‘Bawdy’ Court of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury 1626-1638’ in R.K. Gilkes, *The Banbury Historical Society*, 26, 1997.

(1987) draws on the Wiltshire records of the diocese of Salisbury, the archdeaconry of Leicester, the diocese of Ely and the archdeaconry of Chichester and Ronald Marchant (1969) gives an account of the work of the courts in the diocese of York from 1560 to 1642.¹¹⁹ Other publications include Ralph Houlbrooke's book *Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation 1520-1570* (1987), which gives a detailed examination of the records of the dioceses of Norwich, and Winchester, and Lawrence Stone's *Road to Divorce, England 1530-1987* (1990). Although the study of the church courts after the Restoration is still in its infancy, the general assumption that the spiritual courts were in decline during our period (the final blow being delivered by the Toleration Act of 1689, by various Acts of General Pardon secured in 1689, 1696 and 1708¹²⁰ and the church courts' reluctance to adapt to the needs of the growing industrial and trading sectors) is now under review.¹²¹ Christopher Hill's claim that the church courts were 'moribund'¹²² is now being challenged.

Church court records only became available to scholars in the 1950s or later,¹²³ and the neglect of the church courts by historians may be in part due to the difficulty of the work; 'the structure of the ancient ecclesiastical courts of England is likely to puzzle the enquirer' wrote

¹¹⁹ R.A. Marchant, *The Church under the Law: Justice, Administration and Discipline in the Diocese of York 1560-1640* (Cambridge, 1969); R.A. Marchant, *The Puritans and the Church Courts in the Diocese of York, 1560-1642* (London, 1960).

¹²⁰ W. M. Jacob, 'Church and Society in Norfolk', in Gregory and Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church*, p.134.

¹²¹ J. Addy, *Sin and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1989), pp. 211-214; J. Spur, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (London, 1991), p. 209; K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1991), p. 313; P. Hair (ed.), *Before the Bawdy Court: Selections from Church Court and other Records Relating to the Correction of Moral Offences in England, 1300-1800* (London, 1972), p. 23.

¹²² Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution*, p. 140.

¹²³ M. Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1987), p.8.

W.E. Tate.¹²⁴ The church courts were renowned for not keeping neat records, more importantly they did not follow the same procedures, and protracted cases are difficult to trace to a conclusion through the surviving documents. Moreover, documents before 1733 were written in Latin. As a result it is difficult to follow even the basic procedures of the courts.¹²⁵ This has been addressed by Dr. Anne Tarver, whose book *Church Court Records an Introduction for Family and Local Historians* (1995) is one of the first to provide a comprehensive guide to these documents. Dr. Tarver examines the consistory court records of the bishops of Lichfield and Coventry. Similarly, Michael Smith's work *The Church Courts, 1680-1840: From Canon to Ecclesiastical Law* (2006) represents an invaluable resource for the historian interested in the development of ecclesiastical law, as practised in the church courts in the period 1680 to 1840. Smith explores in some detail the power of the church courts to censure and punish both the clergy and laity for spiritual offences.

Previously, the debate on the decline of the church courts was centred on the after-effects of the Reformation; however, current work is now centred on the assumption that throughout the eighteenth century English society was more deeply and more conventionally religious than had been thought.¹²⁶ This has led to a reappraisal of the role of the church courts during our period. William Gibson has illustrated the involvement of the church courts in disciplining the parishioners of the diocese of Winchester in the eighteenth century, stating that church court records suggest that disciplinary authority of the Church was not eroded as easily or quickly as is thought, and that moral justice was still sought from the Church. He concludes that the activity of the courts provides evidence of a shared perception of religious duty by the laity

¹²⁴ Quoted in, Tarver, *Church Court Records*, p. xiii.

¹²⁵ Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, pp.209-10; Tarver, *Church Court Records*.

¹²⁶ M.F. Snape, *The Church of England*, p.97.

and the clergy.¹²⁷ However, studies such as John Addy's *Sin and Society* (1989) are still prominent in the historical debate. Addy concluded that the consistory courts in the eighteenth century reveal the failure of the clergy to nurture their parishioners, with the result that the Church of England became a middle and upper-class stronghold. It was this reluctance to enforce standards of morality, he claimed, that encouraged groups of 'responsible citizens' to form societies such as the S.R.M to 'counter the prevalent national sinfulness'.¹²⁸ Dr. Tarver suggests that one reason for the small number of causes appearing in the Lichfield and Coventry consistory courts in the mid eighteenth century may have been that the fight against immorality was now being spearheaded by the Societies for the Reformation of Manners.¹²⁹ However, the range of material issued from the local quarter sessions gives no indication of the activity of the S.R.M. in our region.¹³⁰

Historians are quick to dismiss the lack of Church discipline in the eighteenth century. Though church attendance could no longer be enforced, evidence now being produced shows that sexual offences continued to be reported and tried. It was this preoccupation with matters of morals that caused the ecclesiastical courts to be colloquially known as the 'courts of scolds' or 'bawdy courts'.¹³¹ Dr. Jacob has shown that in Norfolk the consistory court seems

¹²⁷ W. Gibson, "A Happy Fertile Soil Which Bringeth Forth Abundantly": the Diocese of Winchester, 1689-1800', in Gregory, and Chamberlain, *The National Church*, p.116.

¹²⁸ Addy, *Sin and Society*, p. 213.

¹²⁹ A. Tarver, 'The Consistory Court of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry and its Work 1680-1830' (University of Warwick PhD, 1998), 2 vols, I, p, 128.

¹³⁰ S.C. Ratcliff and H.C. Johnson (eds.), *Warwick County Records: Quarter Sessions Records, Easter, 1674, to Easter, 1682*, 1946, 7; H.C. Johnson (ed), *Quarter Sessions Records, Trinity, 1682, to Epiphany, 1690*, 1953, 8.

¹³¹ C. R. Chapman, *Ecclesiastical Courts: Their Officials and Their Records* (Dursley, 1997); Hair, *Before the 'Bawdy Court'*.

to have been busy until the mid 1740's.¹³² The supposed decline after 1680 is now thought to be less dramatic than has been previously assumed. Arthur Warne, in his study of eighteenth-century Devon, demonstrated the vitality of the church courts in that county, pointing out that:

When one turns to the variety of cases with which these courts dealt, and the freedom with which people could bring their rightful complaints to them... one can only conclude that the services they rendered to the community in seeking to guard public morality; in settling disputes; and in upholding the justice of human rights, were of incalculable value to the realm.¹³³

Dr. Jacob also concludes that 'an examination of surviving ecclesiastical court records for the first half of the eighteenth century shows how inaccurate is the assumption that the courts had largely gone out of business'. He makes plain that in the diocese of Norwich the consistory court handled more business in 1744 than in 1507. Not quite Roy Porter's assessment that church courts were reduced to a 'husk'.¹³⁴ On the other hand, Donald Spaeth's work on the diocese of Salisbury highlights the fact that both moral and civil cases were in decline in the Salisbury diocese from 1674 to 1753.¹³⁵ Having a bishop who was openly hostile to the church courts may have been one contributory factor to their decline. Dr. Burnet, Bishop of

¹³² W.M. Jacob, 'Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Norfolk, 1700-1800', in Gregory and Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church*, p.182.

¹³³ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon*, p. 85.

¹³⁴ R. Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1982), p.298.

¹³⁵ D. Spaeth, "'The Enemy Within': The Failure of Reform in the Diocese of Salisbury in the Eighteenth Century", in Gregory, and Chamberlain, (eds), *The National Church*, p.130.

Salisbury, freely declared that ‘Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction were originally derived from Hell; and that thither it ought to be sent again’.¹³⁶

The ecclesiastical courts were supposedly organised in a three-tier system. At the top of the pyramid were the courts of the archbishops of York and Canterbury known as ‘Prerogative Courts’. Next, were the courts of the bishops’ consistories. These encompassed the bishop’s dioceses and were known as consistories or, in the case of a very large diocese, the court’s jurisdiction might be divided into smaller areas and be known as commissary courts. It was mentioned in an address by Sir Nathaniel Curzon, on the subject of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in 1733, that the dioceses of Lichfield and Coventry ‘have their distinct courts, i.e. one in each division of the diocese’.¹³⁷ Below the bishops were the archdeacons whose courts, known as archdeaconry courts, were usually (but not always) the first local courts. Indeed, the courts which had the most immediate impact on the people were the bishop’s (or consistory) court and one or more subordinate archdeacon’s courts in each diocese. The archdeacon’s courts were only finally abolished in 1963, and it has been suggested that they remained active to the late eighteenth century.¹³⁸ Dr. Tarver, however, has suggested that the number of causes heard by the archdeaconry court at Lichfield diminished quickly after the Restoration. In part, she concludes, this was because officers of the archdeacon’s court also held positions in the consistory court, therefore business gradually moved to the higher court.¹³⁹ Research

¹³⁶ W. Bohum, *A Brief View of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, as it is at this Day Practised in England: Addressed to Sir Nathaniel Curzon, Bart. And the rest of the Gentlemen of the Committee Appointed by Parliament, for Inquiring into the Abuses and Corruptions of Ecclesiastical Courts and Jurisdictions* (London, 1733), p. 31.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 8.

¹³⁸ Cox, *The Influence of the Common Law on the Decline of the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Church of England*, p.17.

¹³⁹ Tarver, *Church Court Records*, p.32.

conducted for this thesis has found that the archdeacon's court in the Lichfield and Coventry diocese was still in existence in 1734. Evidence for this can be gleaned from the following. 'Mary Bingly of Ansley, John [?] of Bickenhill, Ann Towey of Baxterley, Moses Gaunt of Curdworth, Sarah Walshall of Coleshill, John Stringer of Lea Marston, Ann Nunn of Nuneaton and James Punlett of Nuthurst' were all excommunicated for 'not appearing before the said Richard Rider Esq¹⁴⁰ in the parish church of Coleshill, 27 April, 1734.¹⁴¹ This was clearly a visitation or archdeacon's court.

The bishop's consistory court at Lichfield was held fortnightly throughout the year from September to July. There were four terms in the year and their dates were: Hilary Term, 23 January to 12 February; Easter Term, Wednesday fortnight after Easter Day to Monday following Ascension Day; Trinity Term, Friday after Trinity Sunday to Wednesday fortnight after; Michaelmas Term, 6 November (if a weekday) to 28 November.¹⁴² The consistory court of the bishops of Worcester was held in the south aisle of the nave of the cathedral.¹⁴³ The bishop sat in the consistory court six times when he was bishop of Worcester, and all of these sittings occurred in the summer of 1705 and were connected with the state of the cathedral chapter in which he believed 'much laxity prevailed'.¹⁴⁴ Although the bishop had ultimate authority over the courts he did not have to appear in person. The chancellor of the diocese, who was considered to act in the place of the bishop, led the consistory. During Bishop Lloyd's time at Worcester this was Chancellor Price.

¹⁴⁰ Richard Rider was 'surrogate' to the Chancellor of the diocese.

¹⁴¹ Lichfield RO. B/V/2/16. Excommunication Book. 1709-1812.

¹⁴² Lichfield RO. B/V/2/16. Excommunication Book. 1709-1812, p.125.

¹⁴³ Robertson, 'Diary of Francis Evans', p.xvi.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

A visitation inhibition from Lichfield, dated 1686, and signed by Nathaniel Hinckes, one of the proctors of Bishop Wood's consistory court, contains a reminder to all churchwardens that they are to:

cyte all persons for fornication for Clandestine Marriage and for wills and Administrations and Endeavour to find out the same crimes and citye [sic] the persons that are gylty of the Crimes aforesaid and likewise once more I doe desire you to bring in your Excommunications and be careful of the Chancellors anger.¹⁴⁵

As the above illustrates, the churchwardens were also under strict discipline and had to respond to a series of printed questions issued by the archdeacon; if all was not well they too could be summoned before the court.

The Church concerned itself with the morals of the community and instigated cases on defamation, some types of slander, unseemly behaviour in church, working or rowdy drinking on a Sunday, neglecting to have children baptised, simony, heresy, witchcraft, usury, adultery, fornication, incest and bearing a bastard child. It is necessary to point out that the courts only dealt with 'moral offences', not criminal acts. Some cases might be referred to as 'criminal', but in the eyes of the church this meant such acts as fornication. At Lichfield until 1733 immorality was usually described as the 'detestable crime of fornication'.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ L.R.O. B/C/5/1686/Visitation Citation. Also quoted in Tarver, *Church Court Records*, p.35.

¹⁴⁶ Tarver, *Church Court Records*, p.2.

It has been stated that civil law and canon law¹⁴⁷ were so interdependent by 1660 that they could scarcely be pulled apart (*Ius Canonicum et Civile Saont adeo connexa, ut unum sine altero uix intelligi posit*). Moreover, it has been suggested that the ‘spirit of the age was very much in favour of the church courts and the common law courts working as part of a unified system of laws’.¹⁴⁸ This view may in part be derived from observations concerning bastardy cases. Bastardy was an area in which the jurisdiction of the spiritual and temporal courts had come to overlap. Local magistrates were first empowered to punish and impose maintenance payments on parents of illegitimate children in a statute of 1576.¹⁴⁹ Laslett, Oosterveen and Smith’s study, *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, concludes that illegitimacy was only partially policed by the ecclesiastical courts at the best of times, as abortion and infanticide ensured that some cases never came to light.¹⁵⁰ Even so, there was always a disgruntled neighbour eager to report any discrepancies to church officials. Still, it was in the interest of the civil authorities that cases of bastardy were pursued in the ecclesiastical courts. The naming of the father during the public confession of the mother was necessary to lift the responsibility for the support of the child from the parish to the father, who would then be called upon by the civil magistrate to contribute to the child’s maintenance.¹⁵¹ Warwickshire quarter session records dating from 1674 to 1690 abound with bastardy cases that were

¹⁴⁷ Canon Law is based on the legal validity of the Canons, or rules of the church. These laws evolved through the medieval period and relate to the life and spiritual discipline of the personnel of the church and their parishioners, and were legally binding upon the clergy. Following the Reformation the canons were re-defined in 1603, to conform to the authority of the Monarchy, whilst maintaining the disciplinary function of the bishop. Canon law ran parallel to the normal laws (civil) of the land.

¹⁴⁸ Cox, *The Influence of the Common Law on the Decline of the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Church of England*, p.2.

¹⁴⁹ P. Laslett, K. Oosterveen and R. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History: Studies in the History of Illegitimacy* (London, 1980), pp. 76-79.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon*, p.77.

brought before the Justices of the Peace, and they highlight that fines were being imposed for the maintenance of illegitimate children.¹⁵² Unfortunately, we cannot tell how many if any of these defendants were pursued in the church courts.

Church courts were more interested in the repentance of the defendant. In Bastardy cases a public confession of the mother was a necessary component. A formal confession was part of the usual form of penance and its pattern was thus:

I [...], do confess and acknowledge that I have been delivered of a Male/Female Bastard child unlawfully begotton on my body by [...] I also entreat the congregation to pray unto God for my forgiveness and better life, that this punishment may be an example and terror to others that they may never deserve the like Amen.¹⁵³

Since the parish was the main provider of relief for the poor from the post-Reformation period down to the nineteenth century, it was deemed important to control bastardy and thus keep the poor rates as low as possible. Lawrence Stone has argued that English justices became exclusively preoccupied with the economic problem of transferring the maintenance costs of a bastard child from the poor rate of the parish to the father, or failing that, to some other person.¹⁵⁴ In 1685, the Easter quarter sessions held at Warwick sent John Hunt of Studley to the house of correction until he gave ‘satisfaction to the two next Justices that he hath secured

¹⁵² Ratcliff and Johnson (eds.), *Warwick County Records: Quarter Sessions Records, Easter, 1674, to Easter, 1682*, 1946, 7; H.C. Johnson (ed), *Trinity, 1682, to Epiphany, 1690*, 1953, 8.

¹⁵³ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon*, p77.

¹⁵⁴ L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1990) pp.34-5.

the parish of Studley from the charge of a bastard child by him begotten on the body of one Margaret Dent'.¹⁵⁵ It was concern over the disruptive nature of fornication (sexual irregularities endangered the family, and it was the family that was the main economic unit), and the economic pressure it placed on ratepayers for the support of illegitimate children, that contributed to the merging of civil and canon law.

Moral lapses were seen as sins to be corrected by the Church and not secular criminal offences. As mentioned above, some of the High Churchmen, like Sacheverell, clamoured for the 'ancient discipline of the Church' to be put in motion to suppress 'vice, immorality, heresy and schism', instead of the new 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners in which laymen and even Dissenters were allowed to take part'¹⁵⁶ and which appealed to lay magistrates instead of to the church courts.¹⁵⁷ Dr. Tarver states that only a small handful of disciplinary causes were brought before the church courts in the Lichfield and Coventry diocese during our period. She states that causes slowed to four a year in Warwickshire in 1707, after which there were two years with no causes.¹⁵⁸ However, by looking at such court records as excommunication books, penances, absolutions and dismissions another picture emerges. There were six schedules of penance prepared at Lichfield for those living within the deanery of Arden who were found guilty of 'the crime of fornication' plus one case of incest in 1714. John Husband wrote at Coleshill on the 7th September 1714 asking that a schedule of penance be prepared for John Wall for incest with Rebecca Wall on successive Sundays at Bickenhill, Coleshill and Meriden. Rebecca also had to perform penance for the 'crime of

¹⁵⁵ Ratcliff and Johnson (eds), *Warwick County Records*, 7, p. 138.

¹⁵⁶ Addy, *Sin and Society*, p.214.

¹⁵⁷ Trevelyan, *English Social History*, pp. 327-8.

¹⁵⁸ Traver, 'The Consistory Courts of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry', 1, p.119.

fornication', again on successive Sundays, at Coleshill, Elmdon and Packington.¹⁵⁹ In addition, there were two dismissions and four schedules of penance drawn up at Lichfield between February and November 1734. Significantly, there were occasions when the discipline of the secular courts had no effect on the morals of certain members of society and church discipline was therefore invoked. The case of Mary, wife of James Paul of Chilvers Cotton, is one such case. In 1711 Mary was accused of adultery with a Henry Beighton and it was alleged that she had urged him to abuse his wife, sell his estate and turn his children out of doors. The notorious Mary had also previously been accused of adultery with two other men, John Bradnock and John Brought. It was stated that she had been put before the court because her scandalous behaviour was of long standing and because she had proved impervious to informal pressures and she had been previously 'sharply chid' by a magistrate at Grinden, to 'no effect'.¹⁶⁰

It has been stated that it was during Bishop Chandler's episcopate at Lichfield and Coventry (1717 to 1730) that the number of immorality causes fell considerably in the consistory courts.¹⁶¹ Edward Chandler was an ardent supporter of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, and Dr. Tarver has suggested that one reason for the decline in numbers may have been a drive by the bishop to use the societies to spearhead the fight against immorality in the diocese.¹⁶² An extract from a sermon preached by the bishop to the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in 1724 clearly illustrates his viewpoint. He stated that:

¹⁵⁹ Traver, 'The Consistory Courts of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry', 1, p.119; B/V/8. Penances, Absolutions and Dismissions 1711-1786.

¹⁶⁰ B/C/5 1711. Chilvers Cotton.

¹⁶¹ Tarver, 'The Consistory Court of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry', 1, p.129.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p128.

It is indeed the proper work of Magistrates to check vice. But if it be the work of Magistrates, it is therefore the duty of private men also to join with them in the same work, because, otherwise it will not be possible for Magistrates to discharge their office effectually.¹⁶³

As mentioned above, seven schedules of penance for the ‘crime of fornication’ were prepared in the deanery of Arden in 1714 and six schedules in 1734. These dates are either side of Bishop Chandler’s tenure of Lichfield and Coventry and might suggest that the S.R.M were active in the deanery of Arden at this time. G.V. Portus, in his work *Caritas Anglicana* (1912), tells us that societies were present in Derby, Tamworth, Coventry, Shrewsbury and Newcastle-Under-Lyme,¹⁶⁴ Coventry and Tamworth being relatively close to parishes in the deanery of Arden. In spite of this, there is no evidence from quarter session records to suggest that the S.R.M were actively engaged in the prosecution of offenders.¹⁶⁵ Churchwardens’ presentments, however, give evidence for the continuing involvement of the church courts in the matter of fornication in the deanery of Warwick. Two presentments for fornication were recorded in June 1708. At that time the churchwardens of St. Mary’s presented a certain woman for fornication with an unspecified number of soldiers. Moreover, another three presentments concerning fornication in the parish were made in 1714¹⁶⁶ and another three in July 1717, including Mary and Timothy Roof (for which they ‘humbly pray[ed] a private

¹⁶³ *A Sermon Preached to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, At St. Mary-le-Bow, on Monday January the 4th, 1724. By the Right Reverend Farther in God Edward [Chandler] Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.* p.7.

¹⁶⁴ G.V. Portus, *Caritas Anglicana, or, An historical inquiry into those religious and Philanthropical societies that flourished in England between the years 1678 and 1740* (London,1912).

¹⁶⁵ Johnson, *Warwick County Records, Quarter Sessions Records, Trinity, 1682, To Epiphany, 1690*, 8; Ratcliff and Johnson (eds), *Warwick County Records*, 7.

¹⁶⁶ W.R.O. BA 2289/807(ii) Churchwardens’ Presentments, St. Mary’s Warwick.

pennan[c]e'). Furthermore, the belief that the S.R.M would be able to control immorality was entirely unrealistic; indeed, William III wrote in a letter to the Bishop of London in 1689 of the absence of 'sufficient provision made by the statute law for the punishing of adultery and fornication'.¹⁶⁷

Ecclesiastical law, on the other hand, had for many centuries punished sexual misconduct. In the Middle Ages offenders were whipped or sentenced to do penance. After the Reformation corporal punishment was abandoned and the normal practice became public penance or excommunication¹⁶⁸ for the contumacious.¹⁶⁹ The public penance for someone deemed guilty of illicit sexual activity was:

To make a public Confession of his Fault in the Church, which is done after this manner. Upon a *Sunday* he stands first in the Church-porch, in a white Sheet, bare-footed, and with a white Rod in his Hand. Thus he bewails his Crime, and begs of every one that passes by to pray for him. This done, he enters the church, falls down upon his knees, and kisses the Ground. Then he is placed in the middle of the Church, over against the Minister; who makes a Discourse upon the

¹⁶⁷ K. Thomas, 'The Puritans and Adultery: The Act of 1650 Reconsidered', in Pennington and Thomas (eds), *Puritans and Revolutionaries* (Oxford, 1978), 257-282 at p. 282.

¹⁶⁸ G. Miede, *The Present State of Great Britain, and Ireland. In Three Parts... With lists of the Present Officers in Church and State; and of both Houses of Parliament: also the Present State of His Majesty's Dominions in Germany* (London, 1731). Excommunication is not only an exclusion from the company of Christians in Spiritual Duties, but also in Temporal concerns; a person so excommunicated being disabled from being Plaintiff, or Witnes, in any Court, Civil or Ecclesiastical. And if he continues 40 Days excommunicated, without acknowledging and giving Satisfaction for his Offence, a Writ comes against him out of Chancery, *De Excommunicatio capiendo*, to cast him into Prison without Bail, and there to lie till he has fully satisfy'd for his offence, p.288.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas, 'The Puritans and Adultery', p. 263.

Foulness of his crime, and pronounces the *Absolution*, upon his humble Acknowledgment of it, and his solemn Promise (with God's help) to watch more carefully for the Time to come against the *Temptations of the World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*. The Penitent on his side humbly beseeches the Congregation to pardon him, and receive him into their Holy Communion; and in Testimony thereof, to say with him aloud the *Lord's Prayer*.¹⁷⁰

In causes of pre-or ante-nuptial fornication where the couple had later married, the accused only had to appear in a single church. Thomas and Ellinore Ray only had to perform their penance in the parish church of Barton in 1714 for this misdemeanour.¹⁷¹ The more serious crimes of illicit sexual behaviour had to be carried out in three different churches on three consecutive Sundays, each minister signing the schedule of penance, which was then returned to the registry of the court.¹⁷² Evidence from excommunication books, penances, absolutions and dismissals clearly illustrate that this form of penance was being enforced in the deanery of Arden. Richard Rider wrote at Lichfield on 19 February 1735:

Let a schedule of penance be granted to Sarah Bains of the parish of Saint Martins in Birmingham for having committed the crime of fornication with William Anson. To be performed in her own parish Church on Sunday next, in the parish

¹⁷⁰ Miege, *The Present State of Great Britain, and Ireland*, p.289. 'If the Crime be not very notorious, the said Penance may be commuted, at the Delinquent's Request, into a pecuniary, for the poor of the parish, or some other pious use; provided this appears to be the more probable way to reclaim the offender.'

¹⁷¹ L.R.O. B/V/8 Penances, Absolutions and Dimissions 1711-1786.

¹⁷² Tarver, *Church Court Records*, p.42.

Church of Handsworth on Sunday fortnight and in the parish Church of Sheldon on the next Sunday.¹⁷³

Evidence from the diocese of Worcester confirms that a similar form of penance was being used there. Francis Evans recorded in his diary the judgment of Chancellor Price of Worcester:

I shall not attempt to revive the exemplary discipline of former times, when they punished crimes of this kind with thrice surrounding the Parish Church for 3 several Sundays, and sometimes thrice round the Market place on 3 Market days in high Market time bare foot in the then strict habit of penitents, covered with a sheet, and carrying a white wand. But I do decree that you should make a public confession of ye fault in a form agreeable to the case. In a white sheet before the congregation immediately after the Nicern Creed, in the Cathedral Church of Worcester, on Sunday the 26th and in the Parish Church of Salford, on Sunday the 2nd Oct next.¹⁷⁴

There were those, however, who were willing to pay a fine rather than stand up and perform a penance. James Taylor of Birmingham, for example was granted an exemption from performing a penance for fornication with Mary Haking upon payment of £2 12s 6d.¹⁷⁵ The more prosperous were more likely to have their penance commuted, a practice, according to

¹⁷³ L.R.O. B/V/8. Penances, Absolutions and Dismissions 1711-1786.

¹⁷⁴ Robertson, 'Diary of Francis Evans', pp. xvi-xviii.

¹⁷⁵ L.R.O. B/V/8 Penances, Absolutions and Dismissions, 1711-1786.

John Addy, that brought excommunication into disrepute.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, there were contemporaries who believed that the granting of absolutions and commutations for penances added to the already corrupt ecclesiastical court system. In an address to Sir Nathaniel Curzon and the committee appointed to 'inquire into the abuses and corruption of Ecclesiastical courts' it was stated that:

By granting Absolutions and Commutations for penances, wherein there is generally a Regard had to the Ability of the Sinner. For if he be rich, a good round sum is expected to free him from the Chain of the Devil called Excommunication; but if the Wretch be poor, he is delivered to the Devil of course; and though he performs his Penance both body and Soul, yet neither can be delivered, either from Hell or the Ecclesiastical Court, 'till he has paid his Fees'.¹⁷⁷

While at Worcester Bishop Stillingfleet was 'not insensible, what scandalous Imputations our Ecclesiastical Courts lie under'. He was at pains to point out that he 'knew no Courts, but are liable to Abuses; but there is a difference to be made, between such as arise from the Rules and Orders of the Court, and such which come only from the personal Faults of those who are employed in them'. The bishop was aware that:

The most sensible Complaint hath been that money, which Governs the World too much, hath great an influence on these Courts, that any Criminal offenders may be excluded from doing Penance, by a pecuniary Commutation. If there have been scandalous offenders, which through neglect of the Clergy, or the proper officers

¹⁷⁶ Addy, *Sin and Society in the Seventeenth Century*, p.207.

¹⁷⁷ Bohun, *A Brief view of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction*, p.7.

have not been presented, let the blame lie, where it ought to do; the Ecclesiastical Courts have no Reason to be charged with other Men's Faults.¹⁷⁸

The bishop must have been aware that monetary payments were being made in his diocese; he therefore wished that 'upon any just complaints, effectual care will be taken to punish the transgressors and to prevent the like for the future'.¹⁷⁹

Although abuses may have been evident to contemporaries, these courts could not have operated without the support of the local population and the courts were quickly resurrected at the Restoration. It has been shown that the bishop's consistory court at Lichfield began working before Parliament officially restored ecclesiastical courts in July 1661.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, two inhabitants of Sutton Coldfield were excommunicated as early as 18 November 1662.¹⁸¹ The courts were an important instrument in upholding the right of every person to his/her good name. Slander was a matter for the civil courts, but when questions of morality were involved it was dealt with in the church courts as defamation.¹⁸² Defamation causes comprised a large portion of business in the spiritual courts during the eighteenth

¹⁷⁸ *The Restoring of Fallen Brethren: Containing, the Substance of two Sermons, on Gal. VI. 1,2. Preched at the Performance of Public Penance, by certain Criminals, Mid-Lent Sunday, 1696: In the Parish-Church of Old-Swinford in Worcestershire, By Simon Ford, DD and Rector there. With a Preface bt the Right Reverend Farther in God, Edward Lord Bishop of Worcester.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ R. Clark, 'Why was the Re-establishment of the Church of England in 1662 possible? Derbyshire: A Provincial Perspective', *Midland History*, 8,1983, 86-105 at p.99.

¹⁸¹ L.R.O. B/V/2/15 Excommunication Book 18 September, 1661-2 July 1667.

¹⁸² 'Church Court Records and the Local Historian', in *The Local Historian: Journal of the British Association for Local History*, 24-25, 1994-95, p.13.

century.¹⁸³ Significantly, John Addy has shown that consistory records after 1700 illustrate a steady flow of defamation causes.¹⁸⁴ These causes have been shown to have been an important part of church court business until the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁸⁵ In part, this may have been because they offered plaintiffs the chance to inflict revenge in the form of public penances.¹⁸⁶ The accused would retract the defamation formally in the presence of the minister and churchwardens and, more importantly, in the presence of the plaintiff. In the parish of St. Martin's, Birmingham, in 1714 the court instructed Anne Cotton to 'repair to the house of William Daggett [minister] on Sunday the second day of May' and in the presence of 'the minister, the churchwardens of the said parish and the said Anne G [...] [the plaintiff] to make her humble confession'.¹⁸⁷ People used the courts to clear themselves of accusations of misbehaviour, contesting an alleged remark made by some individual that they were fornicators, or adulterers. To bring to justice those guilty of defamation was one of the commonest reasons people used the courts.¹⁸⁸ Significantly, as Dr. Jacob has pointed out, 'there is considerable evidence, for the first half of the century that offenders appeared willingly before the courts'. This he attributes to 'the large number of instances cases, brought before the courts on the complaint of an individual, for defamation'.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Outhwaite, *The Rise and Fall of the English Ecclesiastical Courts*, p. 7; Jacob, 'In Love and Charity with your Neighbours...' p.208.

¹⁸⁴ Addy, *Sin and Society*, p.214.

¹⁸⁵ Jacob, 'In Love and Charity with your Neighbours...', p.208.

¹⁸⁶ M.F. Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society: The Lancashire Parish of Whally in the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2003), p.110 ; Addy, *Sin and Society*, p.114.

¹⁸⁷ L.R.O. B/V/8 Penances, 1714.

¹⁸⁸ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-century Devon*, p.79.

¹⁸⁹ Jacob, 'In Love and Charity with your Neighbours...', p.208.

Martin Ingram, when pointing out the proliferation of defamation causes brought before the courts in the early seventeenth century, stated that ‘such cases reflected the small-scale tensions and rivalries characteristic of local communities which were relieved if not resolved by legal action’.¹⁹⁰ It has been shown that a majority of cases were initiated by women¹⁹¹ and that usually the complaint had sexual overtones, in particular the defendant referring to the plaintiff as a ‘whore’. Of the local cases involving defamatory remarks, none illustrate these characteristics more than Anne Cotton’s confession of defamation in Birmingham in 1714. On Sunday 2 May 1714 Anne Cotton, before the minister, William Daggett, the churchwardens and the plaintiff, Anne G[...] spoke the words:

Not duly considering the duty which I owe to my neighbour [and] to the rules of Christian Charity, [I] slandered the above named Anne G[...] by saying she was a Whore with other Scandalous words to the injury of the said Anne G[...].¹⁹²

Significantly, out of four defamation cases recorded in the excommunication book for Lichfield in 1734, three cases were brought by women¹⁹³ and these women resided in Birmingham, St. Philip’s, Aston and Sutton Coldfield. The prominence of defamation causes brought by women in these urban areas suggests they may have been wives of ‘tradesmen’ or ‘artisans’¹⁹⁴ and therefore had the funds to defend themselves against ‘gossip, loss of reputation and suggestions of sexual impropriety’.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Jacob, ‘In Love and Charity with your Neighbours...’, p.208.

¹⁹¹ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon*, p79.

¹⁹² L.R.O. B/V/8 Penances 1714.

¹⁹³ L.R.O. B/V/2/16. Excommunication Book 1709-1812.

¹⁹⁴ Jacob, ‘In Love and Charity with your Neighbours...’, p.208.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Throughout the period under study the education of the poor was a concern for the clergy and laity alike. There were few places of any size in the deaneries of Arden and Warwick that did not have some form of schooling by the mid-eighteenth century. The absence of a school in one parish did not necessarily mean that children could not be sent to be educated in a neighbouring parish. Although it has been stated that the increase in the provision of education witnessed during the first half of the eighteenth century owed much to the charity school movement encouraged by the S.P.C.K, in the Forest of Arden the foundation of schools (or the continuation of existing schools) depended primarily upon the support of local patrons and clergy who encouraged the laity to contribute funds and to supply tuition, books and clothing for the children. Significantly, the spirit of charity in our region seems to have outstripped the spirit of educational conservatism which was sweeping the country at this time. Furthermore, and more importantly, the central role played by Anglicanism in the life of catechetical schools cannot be overstated. Their school masters were licensed by the Church of England to ensure conformity with Anglican beliefs and these schools would promote Anglican values by increasing the ability to read and interpret the Bible. The work of educating the poor was carried out by the established Church. It was work that contained a moral agenda according to the spirit of the day. However, the Church's influence in matters of personal behaviour was not only restricted to education. The church courts would complement education to secure the salvation of souls.

William Gibson asserts that 'Church courts have been written off too hastily as dead by the end of the seventeenth century'.¹⁹⁶ This study has shown that it would be wrong to assume

¹⁹⁶ W. Gibson, *The Church of England, 1688-1832: Unity and Accord* (London, 2000), p.143.

that the corrective powers of these courts were in decline. Although this study only had a small body of evidence to draw upon, what it has unearthed throws into question Ann Tarver's verdict that the number of causes heard by the archdeaconry court at Lichfield diminished quickly after the Restoration. The courts were not irrelevant even to the parishioners of Birmingham and there is evidence to show that defamation remained a highly contentious issue. The courts (archdeacon and consistory) were the machinery for upholding people's rights, as well as the guardians of the people's morals. J.A. Sharpe has shown that it was slander of a sexual nature which was most likely to end up before the courts.¹⁹⁷ A good reputation in society was, in part, dependant upon sexual conformity. Significantly, and as Dr. Jacob has concluded, 'the courts could not have operated without a wide degree of popular support and co-operation'.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the influence of the common law was beginning to have an increasing effect, in particular on the shared jurisdiction of bastardy. This in the long term may have been more harmful to the ecclesiastical courts in the concluding half of the eighteenth century than has been previously thought. However, the role of guardian of the people's morals fell to the Church of England during the late Stuart and early Hanoverian period. This was a joint effort for the 'reformation of their souls' through education and for the 'correction of their manners' by the church courts.

¹⁹⁷ J.A. Sharpe, 'Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: the Church Courts at York', *Borthwick Papers*, 1980, p.15.

¹⁹⁸ Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the early Eighteenth Century*, p.136.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Parish Clergy: incomes, pluralism and patronage

The effects of clerical poverty and the gross inequality of clerical incomes created a situation in which clergy were forced into pluralism or into secular trade to stay afloat, or were at the mercy of unscrupulous patrons.¹

This was the view of Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, on the situation of the clergy that prevailed at the beginning of the eighteenth century. His comments were delivered in an address at a service in Westminster Abbey in 2004 to mark the 300th anniversary of Queen Anne's Bounty. But how far does this statement represent a true reflection of the situation of the local clergy at the time of this study?

From the early history of the Church of England the payment of its clergy has been a contentious subject. Indeed, glaring disparities of income persisted until comparatively recent times,² the existence of 'good livings' and 'bad livings' being something of a scandal until the middle of the twentieth century. By the same token, manoeuvrings on the part of clergymen to transfer from one category of living to another were key preoccupations until recent times. Beneficed clergy (those in permanent employment) were mainly vicars or rectors, the distinction being that rectors (since they received the revenues, or tithes, on all produce within the parish) were likely to be richer than vicars, who only received 'small' tithes. The office of

¹ R. Williams, *Address at the Service to Mark the 300th Anniversary of Queen Anne's Bounty in Westminster Abbey* (2004). Available at, www.inclusivechurch.net/article.

² Canon, J.S. Leatherbarrow, 'Financing the Eighteenth-Century Clergy,' *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 8, 1982, p. 67-71

vicar had emerged out of the medieval habit of ‘appropriating’ parish churches to institutions like monasteries which received the parish tithes. In return, the monastery sent one of its monks as a substitute (or ‘vicarius’) to perform the duties of the nominal rector. One third of the tithes were set aside to support the vicar, while the rest were reserved for the monastery. After the dissolution of the monasteries, the appropriated tithes owned by the monasteries and by ecclesiastical foundations later dissolved by Edward VI passed to the Crown. Much of it was granted to laymen (courtiers, servants of the crown, and the gentry). These laymen are said to have ‘impropriated’ the tithes, and are described as lay impropiators or lay rectors; it was their duty to retain a vicar to serve the parish, and since the vicarial or ‘small’ tithes were often inadequate to support him, the impropiators were obliged to pay an extra stipend out of their tithes.

John Spurr has suggested that it was probable that there were more clerical rectors than vicars across the country.³ Leicestershire had 115 rectories to seventy-nine vicarages⁴ while the diocese of Salisbury had 219 rectories to 145 vicarages.⁵ The deanery of Warwick contained about fifteen rectories to fourteen vicarages.⁶ Apart from the two kinds of cures mentioned above, there were also ‘perpetual curacies’ where the incumbent received a stipend and none of the tithes (Hatton has been regarded as a perpetual curacy throughout its history).⁷ Both Leicestershire and the diocese of Salisbury had fourteen perpetual curacies

³ J. Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (London, 1991), p. 174.

⁴ J.H. Pruett, *Parish Clergy Under the Later Stuarts: The Leicestershire Experience* (Chicago, 1978), p. 7; Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, p. 174.

⁵ Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, p.174.

⁶ M. Ransome, (ed), ‘The State of The Bishopric of Worcester 1782-1808’, *Worcestershire Historical Society*, New Series, 6, 1968.

⁷ D.M. Barratt, (ed), ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire, Parishes A to Li’, *Dugdale Society*, I, 1955, p. xxvii.

whereas the deanery of Warwick contained three perpetual curacies, Hatton, Temple Grafton and Sherbourne. There might, also, be one or more chapels of ease served by curates, normally appointed and paid by the rector or vicar of the mother church. The deanery of Warwick contained eight chapels of ease. Finally, a few cures were unusual in that an incumbent could be appointed to them without the bishop's institution or licence, and these are normally referred to as donatives whatever the form of their endowments.

Up to the eighteenth century it has been assumed that the clergy, like their parishioners, acquired the majority of their income from the land. Many of the clergy were cultivators or landlords of the glebe (a piece of land assigned as part of a clergyman's living). It is important to ask, however, to what extent did these late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century clergymen supplement their income from private farming? Documentary evidence for this is lacking and it is therefore difficult to assess their total income. Nevertheless, most rectories and vicarages were endowed with a house for the incumbent, glebe land, tithes and offerings. In addition, the clergy could also supplement their income by becoming schoolmasters. One of the most common means of guaranteeing extra income, and potentially the most harmful from a pastoral point of view was taking a second living in plurality.

Residence in a parish was seen as important by devout lay people. Having the clergyman readily available to his parishioners was an advantage. However, not all clergymen lived in their parishes. A majority of them took up residence nearby, with some preferring to reside in small market towns within easy reach of their livings. This might suggest that they felt more at ease living in relatively vibrant communities. The eighteenth century is often held up as notorious for the non-residence of the clergy. Non-residence is often classed as a consequence

of pluralism and both were branded as responsible for the decline of the popularity of the Church of England at this time. However, as Viviane Barrie-Curien has pointed out in her study of the eighteenth-century London clergy, pluralism was not just an eighteenth-century problem. It was commonplace before and after the Reformation.⁸ As a matter of fact pluralism is still very much a concern for the Church of England in the twenty-first century and ‘the idea that every parish can have its own parson was dismissed as ‘a hopeless pipe dream’⁹ as recently as 2004. In fact the twenty-first century ‘union of parishes’ had its equivalent in eighteenth-century pluralism and, as now, this provided a partial remedy for the Church of England’s structural problems. Pluralism, the practice that Victorian commentators and reformists abhorred, is now under review. Nevertheless, the practice of appointing lowly paid curates to do the work of rich non-resident pluralists is still decried by critics of the eighteenth-century Church. Smollett’s curate, in his novel *Roderick Random*, which was published in 1748, expressed the feelings of these lower-paid clergy thus:

There the old rascal goes... You see how the world wags, gentlemen. By Gad, this rogue of a vicar does not deserve to live; and yet he has two livings worth £400 *per annum*, while poor I am fain to do all his drudgery, and ride twenty miles every Sunday to preach; for what? Why truly, for £20 a year.¹⁰

⁸ V. Barrie-Curien, ‘The Clergy in the Diocese of London in the Eighteenth Century’, in J. Walsh, C. Haydon, and S. Taylor, (eds.), *The Church of England c. 1689-1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1933), p. 91.

⁹ *Parson and Parish: Magazine of the English Clergy Association*, Number 161, Epiphany, AD, 2004.

¹⁰ Quoted in; J.H. Bettey, *Church and Community: The Parish Church in English Life* (Bradford-on Avon, 1979), p. 100.

However, pluralism cannot be seen as a straightforward ‘performance indicator’ of the health of the church at this time. As will be shown below, the neglect of souls could easily be prevented if incumbents resided close to their cures or if satisfactory deputies or curates were provided.¹¹

Incomes and the value of livings

Although out of the period of this study, in the *State of the Bishopric of Worcester* (a general survey of the diocese between 1782 and 1802) it was stated that a considerable amount of pluralism was caused by ‘genuine economic necessity’ in forty-three out of sixty-four cases; in other words, pluralism was being cited as a way to supplement poor benefices.¹² From Bishop Hurd’s *State of the Bishopric* we also find that, in 1782, the poorest parishes in the diocese of Worcester were mostly in its two Warwickshire deaneries.¹³ This seems to have been the position throughout our period as well. Bishop Lloyd, in a letter addressed to *The Clergy of the Diocese of Worcester* (1699) lamented that ‘too many of yourselves are so slenderly provided for, that you have scarce enough for your own Families’.¹⁴ Similarly, Dr. Thomas Bray, rector of Sheldon from 1690 to 1723, wrote of his ‘spiritual agony about the hopelessness, ignorance and poverty of the poor priest’.¹⁵ It is interesting, therefore, to examine the incomes of the Anglican clergy from the Restoration to the mid-eighteenth century when the episcopal Church of England was becoming an accepted feature of English

¹¹ W. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), p.98.

¹² Ransome (ed), ‘The State of the Bishopric’, p.10, 13.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.10.

¹⁴ Rev. D. Robertson, (ed), ‘Diary of Francis Evans, Secretary to Bishop Lloyd, 1699-1706’, *The Worcestershire Historical Society*, 1903, p.16.

¹⁵ A. Middleton, *Eminent English Churchmen: Thomas Bray, 1656-1730* (2003), Available at, <http://justus.anglican>. p.1.

life. As mentioned above, the fact that the ordinary clergy suffered because of their poverty was widely asserted at the time. *Necessitas cogit ad turpia*, alleged one pamphleteer.¹⁶ Macaulay described the clergy as a whole in the late seventeenth century as ‘living in poverty’.¹⁷ Donald Spaeth’s research on the diocese of Salisbury confirms the generalisation that many clergy lived in poverty. He concluded that, by the 1740’s, about one in four of the livings in the diocese of Salisbury produced incomes below the poverty line, and the trend was one of general decline in value.¹⁸

An estimation of the poverty of the clergy is not as simple as it may first appear. We must first ask what was considered a ‘fair’ income for a beneficed clergyman at this time. Swift wrote that an ‘English country parson with his dues paid, a house and barn in repair, a field or two to graze his cows, and a garden and orchard, could live on £40 per annum’ and Goldsmith’s village parson was ‘passing rich on £40 a year’.¹⁹ On the other hand, the Commonwealth Parliament, in an Act of 1649, considered £100 a year a reasonable sum.²⁰ Overton cited a letter written by Charles II to his bishops in 1660 which specified that a ‘sufficient maintenance’ for vicars was £80 to £100 per annum.²¹ This lower amount was invoked by the Charter of Queen Anne’s Bounty in 1704, which directed the Governors, as

¹⁶ Quoted in A. Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne’s Bounty* (London, 1955), p.8.

¹⁷ T.B. Macaulay, *History of England*.

¹⁸ D. A. Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger: Parson and Parishioners, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2000), p.34- 40.

¹⁹ J. Swift, *Prose Works*, 2nd edition (1909).

²⁰ C.S. Firth, and R.S. Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum* (1911). The Act of 8 June 1649, which disposed of first fruits and tenths and tithes due to the (abolished) hierarchy of the church, ruled that ‘so much of the latter as with tithes paid to ordinary beneficed clergy would make up £100 a year should be annexed thereto’.

²¹ J.H. Overton, *Life of the English Church, 1660-1714* (London, 1885).

one of their first steps, to identify those livings worth less than £80 a year. Figure 4.1 below outlines these findings:

Figure 4.1

Livings under	
£10	471
£20	1,216
£30	2,122
£40	3,043
£50	3,826
£60	4,446
£70	4,871
£80	5,082

Source: *The Creation of Queen Anne's Bounty: A Short Anecdotal History*, p. 6, Available at, www.cofe.anglican.org.

Investigations into the state of clerical incomes were a common concern for contemporaries, for it was believed that widespread clerical poverty hindered the effective maintenance of the established Church. Gregory King, 'the first great economic statistician', calculated from Hearth Tax returns in 1688 that the incomes of 8,000 'lesser clergymen' were approximately £50 with 2,000 'eminent clergymen' on £72 per annum.²² Gilbert Burnet was less optimistic in his appraisal of the state of clerical incomes. He concluded that there were 'some hundreds of cures that have not of certain provision, £20 a year, and some thousands that have not £50'.²³

²² G. King, *Estimate of the Population and Wealth, England and Wales in 1688*. Available at, www.york.ac.uk/depts/math/king.

²³ Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne's Bounty*, p.13.

It also appears from Ecton's²⁴ investigations that there were 1,975 livings, mostly curacies and chapelries, not charged to tenths in the King's Book, most of them not exceeding £50 in value. In addition, the returns made to the House of Lords in 1736 of 5,666 benefices gave them an average annual value of £50.²⁵ These may sound a pitifully small income to our modern ears but in the economic conditions of the early eighteenth century this figure was seen as quite adequate. A survey of a Warwickshire village (Fenny Compton) conducted by Philip Styles shows that 'the most important person in the parish in 1698, and the only one whose estate was worth more than £50 a year, was the rector, Matthias Unitt.'²⁶ Similarly, a 1671 valuation of estates in the parish of Sutton Coldfield places William Wattson, 'rector of ye parsonage', as one of the principal landholders with a valuation of £120.²⁷ However, in a survey of livings conducted in 1669, the average living in the diocese of Worcester was worth £45 per year.²⁸ Figure 4.2 below is drawn from Dr. Salter's research on the Warwickshire clergy and gives the values of all livings within the county of Warwickshire.

Figure 4.2. The value of all livings in the county of Warwickshire

	All Livings	Rectories	Vicarages	Curacies & Chapels
Total Value	£10,777.11.5½	£6,055.11.5½	£4,012.8.8.	£709. 19. 4.
Mean Value	£57.33	£94.63	£45.59	£19.73.
Median Value	£44.1.11½	£80	£40.10.0.	£15.10.0.

Source: J.L. Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy, 1660-1714' (University of Birmingham PhD, 1975), 1, p.22.

²⁴ Ecton's *Liber Valorum et Decimarum*, first published by John Ecton in 1711. This is an account of the valuations and tenths of all benefices still charged with fruits and tenths, and of all the small benefices discharged in 1707. This work, which he claims in the preface to be a correction of various 'spurious editions of a book of this kind' was a guide to benefices and their incomes which Ecton hoped would show that many small livings needed to be augmented, and so help the cause for which the Bounty was founded.

²⁵ Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne's Bounty*, pp.8, 9.

²⁶ P. Styles, 'A Census of a Warwickshire Village in 1689', in P. Styles, *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 1951-52.

²⁷ W.K. Riland Bedford, *History of Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1891), p.32.

²⁸ G. Miller, *The Parishes of the Diocese of Worcester: Parishes of Warwickshire* (London, 1889), 1, p.1x.

The evidence obtained by Dr. Salter shows that 75 per cent of livings in the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry fell into the category of £60 per annum as compared to 64 per cent for the diocese of Worcester. This evidence, therefore, places Warwickshire livings slightly above the national average. Salter states, however, that livings in the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry are more likely to be over valued, since they are based on diocesan valuations and not the certified and net values for Queen Anne's Bounty which only survive for the diocese of Worcester.²⁹

The picture of clerical poverty is complicated by the presences of a visible clerical proletariat, consisting of incumbents of the poorest livings who held one benefice (or two or three very small ones), curates (perpetual and assistant), domestic chaplains, and the preachers receiving a pittance from lay impropiators. Bishop Hacket, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry from 1661 to 1670, felt concerned that 'till better provision was made in this kind, he never hoped to see Christian religion flourish in the remote parts of his diocese'.³⁰ What is more, the assistant curate had, as a matter of course, to do all the drudgery in the parish, was in many cases made the scapegoat in any unpleasantness that occurred with the parishioners and might expect to be turned adrift on the world whenever it suited the convenience of his employer. He could hardly expect more than £10 or, at most £20, per annum in hard cash.³¹ The following extract is an example of the attitude of a proportion of ministers who employed curates during our period. It was found among the bundle of petitions addressed to Bishop Lloyd as William III's Lord Almoner and it concerns a curate, Gabriel d'Emilliance, who was

²⁹ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p.22.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 25.

³¹ A. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717: Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet* (London, 1952), p. 261.

complaining about Dr. Nicholas Onely, when he was curate in charge of St Margaret's, Westminster:

When Dr. Onely desired me about four years and a half ago to come to be his curate, his agreement with me was that he should allow me £40 a year, but yet so, that he should pay but 7 pounds quarterly in money, and give me my lodgings for payment of the rest in [the] Vicarage house which he enjoys gratis from the Parish. To which I consented, hoping that some perquisites which are seldom wanting to such places would be a further help to my subsistence, there being no kind of compact or agreement between us to the contrary. But I was very much surprised when a matter of ten months after, the Dr. sent for me, and told me, he had two things to say, which if I would not mend, I could not hold the place any longer. The first, that I ought not to say that he allowed me but £28 in money yearly and my lodgings, but simply that he gave me 40 pounds, for the former expression did cast a reflection upon him. The second thing was that he understood that I took now and then for myself some money offered to me by way of gifts, whereas he ought to have all that money himself.³²

According to Norman Sykes the normal stipend for a curate was from £10 to £40 per annum.³³ Studley, however, was valued at £8 in glebe and tithe in 1535 and, in the latter seventeenth century, the income was still said to be a stipend of £8.³⁴ Furthermore, Dr. Salter's research concluded that the value of the majority of curacies in Warwickshire

³² Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd*, p.261-65.

³³ N. Sykes, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1934), p.189.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

between 1660 and 1740 fell within the category of £1-20 per annum. Indeed, many lay impropiators of church benefices paid Sunday preachers no more than £5 or £6 a year. Lady Carrington gave ‘four pound pr Annum’ for a preacher to preach at the chapel at Bearley³⁵ and, at Astley in 1693, the Crown gave £10 for a curate to serve the chapel with, it was hoped, ‘some augmentation by [the] impropiator, Sir Richard Newdigate’. We are informed that this donation from the crown proved worthless for the living as ‘no person will accept of it without Sir Richard’s charity.’³⁶ Furthermore, the laity could even withhold money previously put aside for the maintenance of a minister. The chapel at Hatton was vacant for four years after the second marriage of Lady Throckmorton in 1680: Twenty nobles³⁷ per annum were wont to be paid by Lady Throckmorton, relict of Sir Clement Thockmorton of Haseley: shee is since married to Mr Edward Gwinne, a counsellor of Hereford, who denys payment of the said moneys’.³⁸

On the other hand, the laity could also be generous in their benefactions. Humphrey Lowe gave £35 in 1677 for the ‘maintenance of a sober minister or chaplain to the chapel of Deretend’, increasing the value of the living to £38.³⁹ Sir Roger Burgoyne, impropiator of

³⁵ Barrett (ed), ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers’, 1, p.38.

³⁶ W.C.R.O, CR 136/ B35/3503. Sir Richard had attempted in 1665 to secure an agreement between ‘tenants and other inhabitants to charge a levy, as for the poor levy, to provide £40, P.A. for the curate’. This agreement does not seem to have been established.

³⁷ One Noble was worth 6s 8d.

³⁸ P. Morgan (ed.), ‘Inspection of Churches and Parsonage Houses in the Diocese of Worcester in 1674, 1676, 1684 and 1687’, *Worcester Historical Society*, New Series, 12, 1986, p.92. In 1674 we are informed that ‘there never was any house which did of right belong to the vicar, for the place is a donative, and the revenue of it is but twenty nobles per annum, but there is a house wherein the incumbent did formerly reside, by the courtesy of Clement Thockmorton esq.’ Lady Throckmorton sold the advowson of Hatton in 1703.

³⁹ Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued... by William Thomas*, D.D., 2, 1730, 2, p.877.

the living of Wroxhall, was said to provide a substantial allowance to the clergyman there. It was stated that ‘the patronage being in Sir Roger, he usually presents his own chaplain and makes the revenue worth £40 which of right is but 16 nobles’.⁴⁰ In addition, and as Dr. Gregory has stressed, the blight of clerical poverty was ameliorated by the fact that many poorly paid curates were in the early stages of their careers and would move on to more settled and more lucrative employment.⁴¹

On first reflection the evidence from the deanery of Warwick seems to confirm that the majority of the deanery’s curates undertook a life of toil with only a modest reward. The curate of Oulnall chapel in 1674 was receiving only £6 per annum. In the *Inspection of Churches and Parsonage Houses in the Diocese of Worcester Conducted in 1674, 1676, 1684 and 1687*, the salaries paid to curates within the deanery of Warwick are given in seven instances in the 1684 returns. These were, two under £10, three between £10 and £20 and two between £30 and £35.⁴² The amounts paid varied from £5 for fortnightly services at Claverdon,⁴³ 20 nobles⁴⁴ to the curate at Hatton, £10 per annum to the curate at Ullenhall, £14 per annum at Weethly to £30 per annum at St. Mary’s, Warwick.⁴⁵ An Act of 1714 did attempt to fix a living wage for curates, providing for stipends of £20 to £50 according to the income of the benefice concerned. This, however, did not help the curate of Ullenhall, where a payment of £15 per annum was fixed in 1715. Similarly, the vicar of Haselor still received a

⁴⁰ Morgan, ‘*Inspection of Churches*’, p. 50.

⁴¹ J. Gregory, ‘The Church of England’, Chapter Seventeen, in H.T. Dickinson, *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland c.1688-c.1815*. Available at, www.history-compass.com.

⁴² Morgan, ‘*Inspection of Churches*’, p.92-93-94-95.

⁴³ *Ibid.* ‘Mr Sympson preacheth there (Claverdon) once a fortnight, and the vicar pays him £5 per annum’, p 92.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.92. In 1714 the curate of this living was still only receiving £6.13s.4d.

⁴⁵ Morgan, ‘*Inspection of Churches*’, p. 93. St. Mary’s Warwick, ‘Mr Jonah Phipps, the curate, hath £30 a year salary’.

stipend of only £6 13s 4d in 1714, the sum allotted in 1394.⁴⁶ The curate at Sherbourne was only receiving £11 6s 8d, paid by Sir John Burgoyne, the impropiator, as ‘kindness, not as a legal due’.⁴⁷ The officiating curate of Norton-Lindsey, a chapelry of Claverdon, was receiving only £4 per-annum.⁴⁸ Finally, Richard Mashiter, an assistant curate to Richard Taylor of Knowle (1735 to 1769), was said to draw a ‘salary of £20’.⁴⁹ Norman Sykes has mentioned that, in the latter years of the eighteenth century, curates’ salaries rose to an average of £70, stimulated by an Act of Parliament of 1796 which empowered bishops to appoint a maximum stipend of £75 for curates serving the parishes of non-resident pluralists, though the minimum was not raised from the £20 of 1714. When Bishop Hurd was bishop of Worcester in the late eighteenth century there were only forty cases recorded of curates receiving £50 or over with 113 curates receiving between £30 and £50.⁵⁰

These figures, however, do not represent a true reflection of the income of a curate living in the Forest of Arden from the Restoration to the mid eighteenth century. It is clear that a salary of £10 to £15 per annum would, in relative terms, have been a miserable stipend for any curate to live on, placing him below the level of a typical village labourer (who in 1700 was said to earn 1s 1d a day).⁵¹ Indeed, at this level even bricklayers or carpenters, who earned two shillings a day, or a footman on £7 per annum plus board and lodgings, were

⁴⁶ Morgan, ‘Inspection of Churches’, p. 93.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*; Church of England Record Centre (hereafter cited as C.E.R.C) QAB/7/2/1/25/3, 1730, Certificate confirming the annual value of the curacy of Sherborne.

⁴⁸ Morgan, ‘Inspection of Churches’, p.93.

⁴⁹ A. Upton, *The Collegiate Church of Saints John the Baptist, Laurence and Anne of Knowle Warwickshire* (Portsmouth, 1966), p.78.

⁵⁰ Sykes, *Church and State*, pp. 208-9.

⁵¹ Miller, *The Parishes of the Diocese of Worcester: Warwickshire*, 1, p.lxxxvii.

better off than the curate.⁵² As we will see below, such figures do not take into account the fact that the majority of curates in the deanery of Warwick held livings in plurality; many were rectors or vicars of neighbouring parishes. John Moore, vicar of Wooton Wawen, undertook the duties for the chapel at Henley-in-Arden in 1707, securing £16 per annum for ‘himself’. This, he noted, ‘raised my income to £72 10s 8d’.⁵³ Indeed, the grouping of two livings, made possible by the custom of alternating divine service with sermon in the morning and afternoon, was a feature of most dioceses and enabled incumbents of poor livings to eke out their meagre incomes by taking services in other churches. Similarly, curates may also have held the position of master or usher at a local grammar school. The above-mentioned Richard Mashiter, assistant curate at Knowle, was also headmaster at Solihull grammar school from 1735 to 1769.⁵⁴

The situation of the clergy as a whole, therefore, was probably much better than the above figures would suggest because, as J.H.Pruett observed in his study of the Leicestershire clergy under the later Stuarts, these ‘statistics are only the value of the benefices, not the total revenue of incumbents.’⁵⁵ The clergy as a whole were not without resources to supplement their stipends. All the same, many contemporaries viewed secondary employment as the downfall of the Church. In a commemorative booklet produced in 2004 by the Church Commissioners, with whom Queen Anne’s Bounty merged in 1948, there is a contemporary description of the lot of the eighteenth-century clergy. More importantly, though, it indicates the feeling that contemporaries had about the pastoral consequences of clerical poverty:

⁵² *The Creation of Queen Anne’s Bounty: A Short Anecdotal History*, Available at, www.cofe.Anglican.org, p. 6.

⁵³ Barratt, (ed), ‘*Ecclesiastical Terriers*’, II, p 193. In 1707 Moore noted: Memorandum in ye Beginning of Feb this year I undertook ye Chapel of Henley at 16li per Annum secured to me by ye Bailiff & Alderman’.

⁵⁴ Upton, *The Collegiate Church of Saints John the Baptist, Laurence and Anne of Knowle, Warwickshire*, p.78.

⁵⁵ Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Later Stuarts*, pp. 95. 7.

There are a vast many poor Wretches, who's Benefices do not bring them in enough to buy Cloaths. This obliges them to look for other Ways, and those often-sordid ones, to get their Bread; and thus the ministry grows scandalous.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, there was considerable demand for the clergy's various services. Incumbents could be paid for writing up churchwardens' presentments and churchwardens also paid the clergy's expenses on occasions. The clergy could also supplement their income through surplice fees. Although surplice dues were subject to considerable variation, 2s 6d was the usual payment for a marriage with banns in Warwickshire, with 5s being charged for a marriage with a licence. Burials were also a good source of income and, as shown below, in certain circumstances so were payments from all the pews and seats in the church. Baptisms, combined with the churching of women, could also contribute to the clergy's coffers. A terrier submitted by William Higgs, rector of St. Philip's, Birmingham, in 1718 gives a clear indication of how an incumbent might supplement his income:

The Rector receives the Annual Rents by Quarterly payments of all the Pews and Seats in the Church. Receives from every Communicant of ye age of 16 years for his Easter Offering four pence. Receives all Tithes in kind, has one pig in seven, allowing 6d. Receives for every Burial in the Vault one Guinea, for every Burial in the Church Yard 2/- 6d. If Paupers only 1s. For every wedding by licence 5s. By Banns 2/- 6d. For every Churching 6d.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ G. Austin, *Queen Anne's Bounty* (2005).

⁵⁷ C. Feeney, *St Philip's: An Eighteenth-Century Church and Parish* (Birmingham, 1984) p.7e.

The living of St. Philip's, Birmingham, was a valuable living with the rector enjoying £300 per annum in 1734 together with the interest from £20 from the will of John Harrison to be paid per annum 'for ever'.⁵⁸ Moreover, when St. Philip's was created in 1708, there was no income available, and so one had to be made up out of what was disposable within the diocese. To augment the living, the bishop of Lichfield and Coventry gave the rector of St. Philip's the Prebend of Sawley and 'any Lease or Leases as heretofore has been usual'.⁵⁹ More importantly, the authorities were not blind to the fact that the rector of St. Martin's would be affected by the creation of a new parish and the Act of 1708 made arrangements for compensation to be paid by the rector of St. Philip's. The sum of £15 was stipulated, and an entry in a terrier of 1733 for St. Martin's demonstrates how this was to be paid.

Fifteen pounds a year Appointed by the same Act of Parliament which divides the parishes to be paid as a consideration to the Rector of the old Church, (St Martin's) by the Rector of S. Philip's (that is) the New Church at two half yearly payments (that is to say) Seven Pounds on the fifthday of April and a like sum on the fifth day of October.⁶⁰

The poorer and middling sections of the clergy in the Forest of Arden were not without resources to supplement their incomes. Churchwardens' accounts reveal payments to incumbents for various purposes, which could include the writing of transcripts and

⁵⁸ Feeney, *St Philip's*, p 7c; A. Baynes, *Two Centuries of Church life, 1715-1915: St. Philip's, Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1915), p, 34.

⁵⁹ *An Act for Building a Parish Church and Parsonage House, and Making a New Church Yard and New Parish in Birmingham, to be called the Parish of St Philip, in the County of Warwick* (London, 1710).

⁶⁰ L.R.O. B/V/16 B13.

registers.⁶¹ In other cases, the parishioners paid for the incumbent's visitation expenses. The churchwardens' accounts for the parish of Ansley indicate that this practice was a common one, stating on many occasions that they paid for 'the Parsons charge at Visitation'.⁶² Accounts also indicate that money was paid for the entertainment of visiting preachers or for the entertainment of their curates. At Astley the accounts reveal a 'loyne of veal' provided for the minister on sacrament day.⁶³ Ansley parish accounts from 1672 to 1722 reveal payments to both the incumbent and his wife for their services. These included 2s 4d to Mr Bacon (the minister) for 'two registers and for parchment' and 1s paid to 'Mrs Bacon for washing the surplice'.⁶⁴ Joseph Potter, vicar of Coughton from 1684 to 1710 and curate of Studley from 1665-66, had remunerative arrangements with his churchwardens. Salter informs us that the account book was well kept and mainly in Potter's hand.⁶⁵ Moreover, it paints a picture of parishioners and churchwardens who 'freely paid for services from him'.⁶⁶ In 1665 he received 2s 6d 'for making our Accounts'; by 1673 this had become 6s for making the levy, keeping the accounts and entering them 'as usually allowed'. He also received regular payments, from 1671 to his death in 1710, of 10s per annum for keeping the church grounds in repair. He was also paid 2s for writing the transcripts of the register. In addition, a further way of contributing to the clerical economy was by paying the minister's wife for washing the surplice, as was done at Studley. Potter's wife was paid 6s 8d for 'washing the surplice and Table Cloth all the year and for scouring of the flagon and C[h]alice and plate and keeping of

⁶¹ W.C.R.O. DR 127/1, Churchwarden Account Book, 1688-1859, Barford; DR. 536/1 Studley.

⁶² S. Timmins, 'Ansley Parish Accounts, 1672-1722', *Birmingham and Midland Institute Archaeological Transactions*, 17, 1891, p. 10.

⁶³ W.C.R.O. DR. 19.

⁶⁴ Timmins, 'Ansley Parish Accounts', p. 7.

⁶⁵ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, pp. 108, 193.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*; W.C.R.O. DR 536/1, Churchwardens' Account Book. Studley.

the Church things all the year'.⁶⁷ The churchwardens also paid his successor at Studley, Thomas Garratt, for 'services rendered', these including writing the presentments and for his expenses at visitations.⁶⁸ His wife was also paid for washing the surplice from 1711 to 1717.⁶⁹ In short, evidence from numerous churchwardens' accounts indicates that a thriving clerical economy was in operation.

Another source of income for the clergy was to preach additional sermons. Money was often left by the laity in their wills for the preaching of sermons. Benjamin Salvsbury, by his will dated 1726, bequeathed '15s yearly to be paid on the 1st November to the rector of St. Martin's church, Birmingham, and 15s more on the 5th of June to the rector of St. Philip's church, Birmingham, for a sermon to be preached by each of them...each for the benefit of the Charity school'.⁷⁰ Likewise, Lady Bridgman in her will dated 1711 left '20s yearly paid to the minister of Castle Bromwich (Chapel of Aston), in consideration of his preaching two Sermons; one on Ash-Wed. and the other on Good Friday'.⁷¹ Bishop Lloyd was also very generous, helping many a struggling clergyman in his diocese. Lloyd wrote:

I know the Vicarage of Halesowen within my Diocese has a large Cure of Souls belonging to it, and is but meanly endowed, and I have been informed and do believe that Mr Thomas Jukes, Vicar there, who is a diligent Conscientious man, and performs his Duty well, has a charge of seven children and can very ill bear

⁶⁷ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, pp. 108-9; W.C.R.O. DR 536/1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*; W.R.O. BA 2289/19/iv.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*; W.R.O. BA 2289/19/iv.

⁷⁰ *The Reports of Charity Commissioners: Relating to the County of Warwickshire 1819-1837* (London, 1890), p. 397.

⁷¹ *Ibid*. p.502.

the additional charge that is fal'n upon him of repairing the Vicarage House, for wch reason I have contributed towards it, taking it to be a work of Christian Charity. This at his wife's desire I have thought fit to certify under my hand this 22nd day of November, 1705.⁷²

Lay men and women were often generous in their wills, bequeathing significant amounts of money and property to their ministers. Lady Ann Holbourne left £50 per year in her will for the minister of the chapel of Balsall. 'Miss Lea, late of Tanworth,'⁷³ bequeathed a house in her will (1700) to be used as a parsonage for the curate of St John's chapel Henley-in-Arden. This must have been a windfall for the parishioners of Henley-in-Arden for we are told in a terrier of 1714 that they were to 'provide and maintain a minister at their own expense'.⁷⁴ Clergymen could also seek additional employment as schoolmasters; Thomas Pilkington, Vicar of Claverdon, stated that 'I...doe by the importunity of my neighbours teach a few children of my parish'.⁷⁵ Moreover, the more able clergy could also gain a reputation and some financial profit from writing religious works. Dr. Thomas Bray, when rector of Sheldon, wrote the first volume of a work entitled *A Course of Lectures upon the Church Catechism*, which was so successful that two more editions were produced. Bray made a substantial profit, said to amount to £700.⁷⁶

⁷² Robertson (ed), 'Diary of Francis Evans', p.120.

⁷³ W. Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden* (Buckingham, 1992), p.59.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p.64.

⁷⁵ P. Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman: Thomas Pilkington, Vicar of Claverdon.' in P. Styles (ed), *Studies in Seventeenth Century West Midlands History* (Kineton, 1978), p. 88.

⁷⁶ G. Smith, *Dr Thomas Bray* (1910). Available at: www.tracts.ukgo.com/thomas_bray.doc p.2.

Furthermore, for much of our period at least a majority of the parish clergy in the Forest of Arden farmed their glebe themselves. Although it has been suggested that probate inventories were less frequently made in the later seventeenth century,⁷⁷ ones that do exist inform us that a large percentage of the rural clergy in the Warwick deanery were still supporting their income through farming. That of William Caudwell, rector of Lapworth, dated 1662, includes corn and hay to the value of £22, farm animals worth £13.13s 4d in all and farming implements valued at £3.10s.⁷⁸ Terriers from 1707 also inform us that some of the clergy still had glebe lands in their possession. At Rowington we are informed that there were '40 acres of glebe, each acre one with another worth 15s'.⁷⁹ The terrier for Salford Priors mentions '5 lands of arable in the common field, 6 acres of hay, a pleck (piece) in Dunnington Meadow and a little close called New Leasow, £11.10s.'⁸⁰ The rectory of St. Philip's, Birmingham, still had glebe lands in 1718. Its terriers inform us that the glebe lands were:

One Piece of Ground almost half an acre lying contiguous to the North East side of the Church Yard. One other Piece of Meadow Land lying in the parish of St Martin's called by the name of Reynolds's piece, of about seven acres ending at the Meadow commonly called the oak meadow. Also two other pieces of meadow Land lying in the said parish of about three acres and a half, called by the Name of Humfrey's Pieces, lying between the close called ye Long Piece and call'd Reynolds's piece.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Barratt (ed), 'Ecclesiastical Terriers', I, p.xxxiii.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Barratt (ed), 'Ecclesiastical Terriers', II, p.194.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p.196.

⁸¹ Feeney, *St. Philip's*, p.7e.

There is no evidence, however, that the rector of St. Philip's farmed the glebe himself. When an incumbent farmed his glebe himself and collected his tithes in kind, as was normally the custom in the deanery of Warwick in this period, the income of the living would vary from year to year.⁸² Thus, valuations of livings can only be approximate. Glebe owning clergy benefited from the favourable conditions that agriculture was experiencing as the eighteenth century progressed, notably the rising value of land.⁸³ In Warwickshire in 1660 land rent was 3s per acre; however, by the end of the seventeenth century it had risen to 7s.⁸⁴ As mentioned above, not all ministers supplemented their living by toiling on their glebe. In some cases, as with Thomas Pilkington of Claverdon, they leased their glebe to supplement their income. John Moore of Henley-in-Arden received £21.2s 6d in rents for his glebe comprising:

£9 from J. Browne, £2 from F Dent for ye churchyard, £5 from Samuel Whistons for my furlong (which) cost me 20s plowing & sowing, £3 From Sam Johnson for my low pastures in ye hay, and £2.2s 6d. for Egleston's furlong & ye Provost's meadow.⁸⁵

Loss of revenue from allowing parishioners to use the churchyard to graze their animals could be a source of tension as ministers could feel aggrieved if this source of income was suddenly taken away from them. William Eades, the vicar of St. Mary's, Warwick, who in 1687 had unsuccessfully appealed to the mayor and corporation for an increase in his stipend,

⁸² Barratt (ed), 'Ecclesiastical Terriers', I, p.xxx. Tanworth terrier of 1714 states that the practice of 'late years' was to pay 4d in the pound of the rateable value of lands to the vicar in lieu of his tithes, p.xli.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Miller, *The Parishes of the Diocese of Worcester, I, Warwickshire*, p.li. Between 1645 and 1745 the price of stock had doubled and during the seventeenth century agricultural prices increased rapidly, p. ix.

⁸⁵ Barratt (ed), 'Ecclesiastical Terriers', II, pp. 192-3.

apparently disapproved of the churchyard being used as a quarry as he lost rent from grazing.

He wrote to the corporation in 1699 hoping for compensation for his loss:

That since the taking up of the old foundations of the said church and removing the rubbish of the same and by digging severall Quarrys to get stone out of the said Church yard your petitioner hath been at a considerable damage in looseing the benefit which he could have made thereby yearly since the late fire within this Borough and as the Proffitts of the same were to him yearly before the said fire Your Petitioner therefore humbly prays that whereas he was a great sufferer by the said fire and in consideration of the considerable allowance made by him to the Corporation out of his said sallery for the said church yard and the considerable damage he hath sustained by reason aforesaid. This court will take the same into consideration and make such allowance to him for the same, as they in their Jugmt shall think well.⁸⁶

There were, however, more constant factors that affected the value of a living. The possession of the great tithe had a definite economic advantage, reflected, as mentioned above, in the average values of rectories compared to vicarages. How tithes were paid, however, was laid down by the custom of the parish. 'Custom' was very important; a glebe terrier, which provided an unbroken set of customs governing the payment of tithe in a parish, was a valuable asset to an incumbent if a lawsuit was brought against him concerning the

⁸⁶ P. Chatwin, 'The Rebuilding of St. Mary's Church, Warwick', *Transactions of Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 65, 1949, p. 10.

payment of tithes.⁸⁷ At Audley in 1698, the terrier begins: ‘The rate and manner of tything between the Vicar and Parishioners...hath been the use and custom...for a great number of years, as the parishioners affirm’.⁸⁸ There were incumbents, such as Randall Darwall of the parish of Haughton, Staffordshire, from 1726 to 1777, who had little regard for ‘custom’. Darwall struggled to overthrow the ‘easy-going ways of his predecessors’ and to ‘institute a rigorous method of tithe assessment and collection.’⁸⁹

The majority of parishes in the Forest of Arden seemed to have observed the customs of the parish governing the payment of tithe. In a terrier of 1714, concerning the parish of Morton Bagot, we are informed that the custom was to wait for years until a farmer had several lambs or calves and then take one in kind.⁹⁰ The clergy, therefore, had to be aware of the value of their parishioners’ lands and the market value of agricultural products.⁹¹ Maybe because of the clergy’s interest in claiming tithes as part of their income, agricultural historians have tended to view the clergy as ‘greedy tax collectors of the worst kind’.⁹² Indeed, the tithe system was not only inefficient but was unpopular with both the laity and the clergy.⁹³ This can be illustrated from a statement made by the Rev. William Jones, Vicar of Broxbourne and Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, in the early nineteenth century:

⁸⁷ E.J. Evans, *Tithing Customs and Disputes: the Evidence of Glebe Terriers, 1698-1850*. Available at, www.bahs.org.uk, p.29.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.31.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

⁹⁰ Barratt (ed), ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers’, 1, p. xxxviii.

⁹¹ Evans, *Tithing Customs*, p.17; Barratt (ed), ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers’, 1, pxli.

⁹² Barratt (ed), ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers’, 1, p. xliii.

⁹³ Evans, *Tithing Customs*, p.17.

I am confident that I am defrauded by many of my parishioners of various vicarial dues and rights to which the laws of Heaven and earth entitle me...for the very word 'tithes' has ever been as unpleasing and odious, to farmers especially, as cuckoo to the married ear. Those who pay them, pay them partially and I may say, grudgingly and of necessity.⁹⁴

Dr. Spaeth's research on the county of Wiltshire makes the point that poverty drove some vicars to use the courts to obtain the tithes that were due to them; this, however, rendered them even more unpopular and hence unable to carry out their pastoral duties. The clergy, therefore, were often faced with the difficult task of attempting to fulfil two contradictory roles: those of pastor and tax collector.⁹⁵ We can be sure it was not poverty that drove Andrew Archer, rector of Solihull to have John Bissell of Fulforth-heath prosecuted for non payment of tithes in 1715. Bissell was prosecuted for a demand of about '£21 for two years Great, and Ten Years Small Tithes' we are informed that he was committed to prison on the '28th of the month called January 1715, and lay there about twenty Weeks'.⁹⁶ Likewise, John Hawksford and Samuel Harper were prosecuted in the 'Ecclesiastical Court for Four Pence per Annum for three years tithes, at the Suit of William Dagget Parson of Birmingham'.⁹⁷

Therefore, tithes of every sort were significant elements in the value of a living. The importance of tithes can be illustrated by the part they played in giving value to the richer livings in the region such as Solihull and St. Martin's, Birmingham. An account of the great

⁹⁴ Evans, *Tithing Customs*, p.17.

⁹⁵ D.A. Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger: Parsons and Parishioners, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2000), p.149.

⁹⁶ *Jura Ecclesiastica: OR, A Treatise on the Ecclesiastical Laws and Courts* (MDCCXLII) p.141.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 143.

tithe belonging to the rectory of St. Martin's in 1755 states that 'Tythe in kind of All manner of Grain Tillage and Garden Stuff in all the parish is due to the Rector'.⁹⁸ Changes in the value of livings can be attributed to changes in the lesser tithes. At Budbrooke and Claverdon tithed flax increased the value of the livings in the late seventeenth century. Thomas Pilkington, vicar of Claverdon from 1629 to 1685, made notes in his register of the prices per bushel of barley, wheat, oats and maslin (this was probably in an attempt to work out the real value of the rectorial tithe). Wheat in 1653 was fetching 21s 4d a quarter; figures which fell in subsequent years to 16s. In 1655, the price of oats fell at Warwick from 11s to 8s 8d a quarter.⁹⁹ We can imagine Pilkington feeling somewhat disappointed on finding that he was not so well off as he had expected to be.

The poorer clergy, however, also felt the burden of first fruits and tenths, that is, the first year's revenue of a benefice and a tenth part of the annual income, which had been originally paid to the Pope, but was annexed by Henry VIII to the crown. Only vicarages under £10 per annum and rectories under £7 per annum had been exempt. In July 1703 Sydney Godolphin, Lord Treasurer, wrote to Bishop Lloyd informing him that 'Her Majty has been pleased to sign a Warrt for the passing a Privy Seal to authorize me to discharge the arrears of tenths due upon small Rectoryes and Vicarages...not exceeding thirty pounds per Annum by the most improved valuations of the same'. This was on condition that these livings were occupied and their ministers were 'true objects of her Majty's Royal Compassion'. Lloyd in reply made the point that where the benefices were under £30 in value, it was extremely difficult to get anyone to accept them. This problem was addressed by the creation of Queen Anne's Bounty the following year.

⁹⁸ Feeney, *St. Philip's*, 7b.

⁹⁹ Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman', p.83.

Queen Anne's Bounty

'Without Queen Anne's Bounty and all that flowed from it the Church of England would have been stuck with the arbitrary, uneven and distorted patterns imposed by both local and national rapacity' stated Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 2004. The archbishop believed that the 'bounty began to make it possible for the church to understand itself properly again; to make its own decisions about doctrine and pastoral deployment, to regain self-respect as a supernaturally grounded body, not a badly funded department of state'. Williams clearly believed the bounty was an important step forward for the Church of England but perhaps he was a little naive when it came to the part it played in church politics at this time. J.H Overton referred to the establishment of Queen Anne's Bounty in 1704 as 'an Act of Royal justice, rather than Royal bounty', concluding that it was only right that the Crown should restore to the Church that that had been taken away from it and wrongly devoted to secular purposes in 1534.¹⁰⁰

The Bounty was founded and bore fruit in a climate of lay intervention. Educated and influential Anglican laymen were playing an increasingly active part in the religious life of the nation. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was set up in 1698 and there were also various societies for the Reformation of Manners. In part, it was the formation of these societies that perpetuated the belief that widespread clerical poverty hindered the effective maintenance of the established Church. Historians, however, have been sceptical of the efforts of Queen Anne's Bounty to alleviate the poverty of the neediest clergymen. Norman Sykes in particular stated that Queen Anne's Bounty did not produce any immediate improvements in

¹⁰⁰ J.H. Overton, *Life in the English Church, 1660-1714* (London, 1885), p. 229.

the general standard of poor livings.¹⁰¹ Alan Savidge maintained that the Bounty was never large enough to solve the problems of clerical poverty and inequality.¹⁰² Dr. Jacob, on the other hand, has argued that clerical poverty was being abated by the 1730s.¹⁰³

On balance, though, the establishment of Queen Anne's Bounty in 1704 was the result of more than a century's efforts to secure a system that would improve the incomes of less well-endowed parishes. A scheme to rectify the financial concerns of the clergy in the eighteenth century was first devised by Bishop Burnet of Salisbury. He came to the conclusion that if the Crown could be persuaded to restore the First Fruits (this required clergy to pay the first year's income on entering a new benefice) and Tenths (which required the payment of one-tenth of the benefice income in tax) that had been appropriated by Henry VIII as state income,¹⁰⁴ it could provide a fund to supplement clerical incomes. For some years the cross-currents of party politics contrived to obstruct it but to curry favour with the parish clergy, whose political influence was not to be taken lightly, both Whig and Tories were prepared to give time to the legislation.¹⁰⁵ Archbishop Sharp of York, who stood on the other side of the political spectrum from Burnet,¹⁰⁶ also advocated the plan. Reassured of its wisdom, Queen Anne assented. In 1703 Anne agreed to write off the debts of those benefices worth less than £30 per annum that had not paid their Tenths and the Treasurer informed Archbishop Sharp that she was willing to support the proposed Bounty. The Bounty's charter of 3 November consisted of a preamble, which outlined the ill effects poverty could have on clergy:

¹⁰¹ Skyes, *Church and State*, p.226.

¹⁰² Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne's Bounty*, pp.107-115.

¹⁰³ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 178.

¹⁰⁴ The church had been stripped of its assets by monarchs and gentry before and since the Reformation.

¹⁰⁵ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 177.

¹⁰⁶ *The Creation of Queen Anne's Bounty: A Short Anecdotal History*, Available at www.cofe.anglican.org. p.7.

Divers mean and stipendiary preachers... depending for their necessary maintenance upon the good will and liking of their hearers have been... under temptation of too much complying and suiting their doctrines and teaching to the humours rather than the good of their hearers.¹⁰⁷

In the course of researching his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, Dr. Thomas noted the effects of ‘resent’ legislation referring to the discharge of small livings from the payment of tenths, and also the amounts at which others had been returned to the Governors of Queen Anne’s Bounty. When referring to ‘Bikenhill’ in the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry he wrote ‘The tenths 15s 8d were discharged by Act of Parliament in 1706 and the clear yearly value of the vicarage returned to the Governours of Q[ueen] Ann’s bounty was £40 per annum’.¹⁰⁸ The income from the First Fruits and Tenths released to the Bounty was worth some £17,000 per annum. Unfortunately, thirteen pensions had been granted out of this and the first task of the Governors was to redeem them.¹⁰⁹ Although it took many years before the Bounty’s income was free of encumbrances, it was seen as a major step towards relieving clerical poverty. In the short term, as Dr. Jacob points out, clergy in poor livings were also relieved from the crippling tax of First Fruits on coming into a benefice.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ For the origins of Queen Anne’s Bounty see G. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne’s Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), Chapter 1; Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne’s Bounty*; I. Green, ‘The First Five Years of Queen Anne’s Bounty’, in R. O’Day, and F. Heal, (eds), *Princes and Paupers in the English Church, 1500-1800* (Leicester, 1981).

¹⁰⁸ Dugdale, *Antiquities*, 2, p.975.

¹⁰⁹ Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne’s Bounty*. Chapter. 2.

¹¹⁰ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 176.

The Act advised the bishops to certify to the Exchequer before 25 March 1708 the true value of all benefices in their diocese eligible for relief. This information was to be given on oath, through a commission if necessary, by two or more persons familiar with each living. In the Worcester diocese individual commissioners were appointed for each deanery and they were recruited from amongst the local gentry and clergy. The commissioners for the deanery of Warwick included William Worth, Archdeacon of Worcester from 1705 to 1742; William Thomas, rector of Exhall from 1698 to 1723; William Eades, rector of Kinwarton from 1705 to 1725 and John Winslow, vicar of Snitterfield from 1703 to 1712. Other commissioners included William Colmore and Thomas Newsham, both of Warwick, and Edward Welchman, rector of Lapworth.¹¹¹ The commissioners were instructed to consider ‘of what Value the Living may have been one Year with another for the last seven Years, and what reasonable Persons would judge it worth, to be let with all its legal Profits one Year with another’.¹¹² Moreover, no voluntary contributions were to be included and they were only to deduct certain specified charges on the benefice. The returns described and valued separately each source of income. An example of a return is shown below:

Coughton. Joseph Potter, vicar. House and backside valued at and set for, £1.10s; privy tithes, Easter offering and all other dues (no glebe lands), £12. 10s 5d. Procurations and synodals, 9s. 1d; acquittance and visitation fee, 1s 4d. Value of living; £13. 9s. 6d.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Barratt (ed), ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers’, 2, p.189.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p.192.

Figure 4.3. A Calendar of the Returns of the Value of Livings in Warwick Deanery worth less than £50 a Year, 1707.

Tanworth	£41.16s.04d
Coughton	£13.9s.6d
Studley	£8
Wooton Wawen	£33.8s.3d
Henley in Arden	£9.16s.
Temple Grafton	£5.5s
Oldberrow	£44.1s.8d
Spernal	£37.9s.8d
Alcester	£32.14s.6d.
Haselor	£10.1s.4d.
Rowington	£45.13s.4d
Budbrooke	£49.'The commissioners, being informed by the deponents that the tithe flax, which belongs to the vicar, for the space of 5 years last past has advanced the vicarage above the yearly sum of £50, yet the deponents not knowing whether the said flax may continue, refer it to the Bishop's judgement whether the said vicarage ought to come under the benefit of the Act or not'.
Claverdon	£36.18s.10d
Billesley	£12.8s.
Salford Priors	£28.10s.8d

Source: Barratt (ed), 'Ecclesiastical Terriers', II, p. 189-196.

The Bounty's first aim was to augment the very poorest benefices. It began with those whose income was below £10 per annum. As well as converting the tax revenue into augmentation grants, from the outset the Bounty also urged private donors to give money. The Bounty offered matching grants and allowed a higher eligibility threshold to encourage them to do so. Initially, benefices with £35 per annum or less could receive grants if a private donation were also available. It has been suggested, however, that in a number of cases the returned value seems much lower than the value as known from other sources. Ian Green has made the case that the clergy were often tempted to present under-assessments of their livings in order to qualify for Bounty augmentations.¹¹⁴ The value of the curacy of Knowle in 1705 was said to have been £40, made up of a payment of £9.6s 8d from the Crown, £10 value of house and land, £10 from Lord Brooke and other sources. This contrasts with the returned value of

¹¹⁴ Green, 'The First Five Years of Queen Anne's Bounty', pp. 243, 246.

£25.13s 4d.¹¹⁵ As Figure 4.3 illustrates, in 1707 Wooton Wawen was valued at £33.8s.3d. However, the accounts of John Moore, vicar from 1703 to 1722, tell a very different story. In 1707 he wrote in his personal accounts that he was ‘clear to myself £71.1s 2d.’¹¹⁶ A return made to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, gives the reputed value of the living of Claverdon as £40; the returned value made to the commissioners of Queen Anne’s Bounty in 1707 was said to have been £36.18s 10d. Figure 4.4 below is a detailed statement, made to the commissioners, and lays down the living’s various forms of income:

Figure 4.4

Vicarage house, churchyard and about 5 acres of glebe:	£5 0s 0d
Privy tithes:	£19 15s 8d
Pension out of the rectory:	£12 0s 0d
Tithes of wood:	15s.0d
Subtotal:	£37 10s 8d.
Less synodals and procurations:	11s 9d
Total:	£36.18s 10d

Source: Syles, ‘A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman’, p.84

Contemporaries were certainly aware of this ploy. Gregory King, who advised the governors on the quality of their data, felt that there was a tendency for incumbents to lie about the value of their livings.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, there were those who understood that there was no system for calculating a true value for livings. Thomas Bateman, vicar of Whaplode in Lincolnshire, wrote that:

¹¹⁵ Salter, ‘Warwickshire Clergy’, 1, p.169.

¹¹⁶ Barratt(ed), ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers’, 2, p192

¹¹⁷ J.A. Taylor, ‘Gregory King’s Analysis of Clerical Livings for John Chamberlagne and the Governors of Queen Anne’s Bounty’, *Historical Journal*, 39, 1996, p. 243.

As to the annual value of any livings, whether yet remaining in charge, or discharged from payment of first fruits and yearly tenths, no accurate judgment can be formed, nor any certain rule laid down.¹¹⁸

Although Bishop Hurd's survey of the Worcester diocese in 1782 is out of our time scale it does serve to illustrate that the practice of returning a lower value for a living was both common and persistent. Figure 4.5 below gives the certified and reputed values for livings augmented by Queen Anne's Bounty in 1782 in the deanery of Warwick, and shows that the certified values were much lower than the reputed values.

¹¹⁸ T. Bateman, *The Ecclesiastical Patronage of the Church of England* (London, 1783), p. xi.

Figure 4.5

PARISH	CERT. VALUE.	REP. VALUE
ALCESTER	£32. 14s 6d	£150. £200
ASTON CANTLOW	£35. 6s 2d	£50. £80
BIDFORD	£20. 15s 2d	£35. £50
BILLESLEY	£12. 8s	£50
BREARLEY	£7. 16s 4d	£46
BUDBROOKE	£49. 9s	£80. £120.
CLAVERDON	£36. 18s 10d	WITH NORTON LINSEY £120. £200
COUGHTON	£13. 9s. 6d	£30. £45.
HASELOR	£9. 13s 4d	£20
HATTON	£6. 17s. 4d	£150. £126.
HENLEY IN ARDEN	£9. 16s	£34. £42
NORTON LINSEY	£17. 4d	£20.
OLDBERROW	£44. 11s. 8d	£80. £100.
ROWINGTON	£45 13s. 4d	£70. £100.
SHERBORNE	£3	£25. £90.
SPERNALL	£37. 9s 8d	£80. £130.
STUDLEY	£8	£35.
TANWORTH	£41. 16s 4d	£60. £130
WOOTON WAWEN	£33. 8s 3d	£100. £300.

Source: Ransome (ed), 'State of the Bishopric', pp.188-213

The majority of livings throughout the country were augmented by lot but if a member of the laity was willing to donate £200 towards any living, the Bounty governors were obliged to match their benefactions pound for pound under the terms of the legislation. The lump sum donated was handed over to local commissioners and laid out in the purchase of property or land. Providing there were no delays in acquiring the land the clergy in question were in an ideal position to benefit from the increase in land values, which was pronounced from the middle years of the eighteenth century. Annual rentals therefore would bring in new money to enhance the income of the poorer beneficed clergy and their livings. Dr. Gregory estimates

that if the rate of return were between three or four per cent, this would mean that a benefice's income could be expected to increase by £6-8 per annum as a result of a £200 donation.¹¹⁹ Dr Jacob, however, concludes that a rate of return of three or four per cent could increase the benefice income by £12 to £16 a year, an improvement of 25 per cent.¹²⁰

In practical terms the living of Hatton was augmented with an £800 benefaction in 1727 and an estate was purchased with it in 1745. Billesley was augmented in 1724 and 1725 by a benefaction of £400 by Bishop Thomas Sherlock, which was then matched by Queen Anne's Bounty.¹²¹ An estate was purchased with the £800 in 1738. In 1738 Rev. William Cummings, of Claverdon, gave £200 to the parish, this was doubled by Queen Anne's Bounty to buy land at Ipsley.¹²² Likewise, Tanworth was augmented in 1725 with £400 from Queen Anne's Bounty plus a benefaction; an estate was then purchased in 1726. In 1725, Sir Richard Gough of Edgbaston gave £200 to the Bounty to augment the living. Dr Thomas wrote in his edition of Dugdale's *Warwickshire* that:

Sir Richard... resolved to augment the Living, by obtaining the Queen's bounty, and accordingly gave his Bond in due form to the Commissioners, to secure the payment of £200 as soon as they should appropriate the like sum, according to the Statute.¹²³

¹¹⁹ J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000), p. 163.

¹²⁰ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 177.

¹²¹ C.E.R.C. QAB/7/2/1/25/3 1727 Certificate confirming the annual value of the Parish of Hatton.

¹²² E. Wheler-Galton, *Claverdon* (Long-Compton, 1934), p.44.

¹²³ Dugdale, *Antiquities*, 2, p.904.

Figure 4.6 and 4.7 below expands on the list of benefactors in both deaneries from 1715 to 1737 and illustrates that Tories as well as Whigs were active benefactors.

Figure 4.6 Deanery of Warwick.

Benefactor	Benefice	Monetary value
1724. Rev Dr Thomas Sherlock	Billesley	£200
1725. Andrew Archer Esq.	Tanworth	£200.
1725. Dr Godolphin and Rev Dr Hare	Billesley	£200
1726. Henry Neale	Wotton Wawen	£200
1726. William Bromley Esq. Kings college, Cambridge, William Somerville Esq., and the parish	Wotton Wawen	£200
1727. Provost of Kings College.	Wotton Wawen	£200
1738. Rev William Cummings	Claverdon	£200

Figure 4.7 Deanery of Arden

Benefactor	Benefice	Monetary Value
1715. Lord Digby	Over Whitacre	£200
1721. Hon Dodington Grevile Esq.	Knowle	£200
1722. Sir Richard Newdigate, Bart.	Astley	With lands and Tithes of the full value of £400.
1726. Sir Richard Gough, Kt.	Edgbaston	£200
1727. Sir Richard Gough.	Edgbaston	£200
1727. Mrs Edwards	Hatton	£200
1728. Mrs Edwards	Hatton	£200
1732. Earl of Sunderland	Wormleighton	£200
1732. Rev. Mr William Reading	Water Orton	£200
1732. William Norcliffe, Esq.	Astley	£200. 17s 6d

Source: Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued... by William Thomas, D.D.*, 2 Volumes (1730).

As some benefactors also restored the impropriated tithes to the benefice income, this was a serious attempt to improve the value of livings. Lord Digby restored the impropriated tithes at Coleshill, prompting Bishop Lloyd to note that Lord Digby was ‘an excellent patron’.¹²⁴ Indeed it has not always been appreciated that, in the first thirty years of the Bounty’s

¹²⁴ Salter, ‘Warwickshire Clergy’, 1, p. 29.

operation, private benefactors from both laity and clergy gave almost as much as the governors, £195,000 as against £227,000.¹²⁵ Dr. Jacob estimates that up to 1750 there were 359 clerical benefactors, with 906 lay benefactors including women.¹²⁶ However, Lord Hervey's¹²⁷ insinuation in 1736 that the Bounty was using Church money to help patrons and other affluent laymen to build up the endowment of benefices for the advantage of their own relatives and nominees may have some foundation. There is evidence in our region of the transfer of advowsons by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty to benefactors. With respect to Edgbaston, William Dugdale, when referring to Sir Richard Gough's resolve to augment the living, wrote that:

In consideration of which Charity and Benevolence to the Church, the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield [who held the Advowson], by consent of the Bishop, agreed to grant the perpetual Advowson of the Curacy of Edgbaston to the said Sir Richard Gough and his heirs forever.¹²⁸

Alan Savidge implies that Lord Hervey's quarrel was really with the system of private patronage as a whole.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, by attracting an additional £200 benefaction from the Bounty a patron could increase the income of a living and hence its market value if he or she wished to sell its advowson at a future date. No evidence has been found to implicate any patron of the deaneries of Warwick or Arden in this kind of profiteering, however. In short, the benefice gained and the endowment would not have been secured without the Bounty's

¹²⁵ Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne's Bounty*.

¹²⁶ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 177.

¹²⁷ Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne's Bounty*, p. 109.

¹²⁸ Dugdale, *Antiquities*, 2, p.905.

¹²⁹ Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne's Bounty*, p. 109.

encouragement. Even so, Bounty augmentations could prove problematical; communications between the Board and its beneficiaries were sometimes poor. There were also delays such as those caused by the unavailability of land for purchase, which the clergy were often expected to find. The frustration felt can be gleaned from a letter sent by Henry Montague, secretary to the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, to Sir Richard Newdigate, patron to the parish of Astley in the deanery of Arden, in July 1741. The letter read:

The Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne having reason to hope, that a purchase will speedily be found for investing the sum of £200 appropriated by them so long ago as the year 1722 for augmenting the vicarage of Astley in the county of Warwickshire and the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry. And a proposal having been executed on the 8th of August 1722, whereby you propose and promise for yourself your heirs and assigns well and sufficiently to convey... Land and tythes in Astley aforesaid of the value of £400 and upward upon receiving £200 from the said Governors to and for the use and benefit of the vicar of Astley and his successors for a perpetual augmentation of the vicarage, the Governors find it necessary to desire that the Land and tythes thereby proposed to be conveyed may be accordingly settled and conveyed as soon as conveniently may be in order to complete the intended Augmentation thereof.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ W.C.R.O. CR/B/3606.

Pluralism

In his primary visitation charge of 1690, Bishop Stillingfleet, lectured his clergy on the practice of holding more than one living:

The Question is whether the subsistence of the Clergy can lawfully be improved by *Plurality of Livings*? Truly, I think this (if it be allowed in some cases lawful) to be the least desirable way of any; but in some Circumstances it is much more excusable than in others. As when the Benefice are mean, when they lie near each other, when great Care is taken to put in sufficient Curates with good Allowances; when Persons take all Opportunities to do their Duties themselves, and do not live at a distance from their Benefice in an idle and careless manner: But for Men to put in Curates merely to satisfy the law, and to mind nothing of the Duties of their Place, is a horrible Scandal to Religion and our Church, and that, which if not amended, may justly bring down the Wrath of God upon us.¹³¹

Dealing with the practice of the holding of pluralities, Overton claimed that the bishops could not remonstrate against the evil, because the chief offenders were among their own order. It is 'perfectly astonishing to observe the lax views, which even really good men seem to have held on this subject in the middle part of the century.'¹³² On initial examination the figures for pluralism do much to support the claim that the parochial system was weakened in the eighteenth century. Alan Gilbert has calculated that over 1,000 parishes were 'simply

¹³¹ Edward Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester's Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese: In his Primary Visitation* (1691), p.49.

¹³² C.J. Abbey, and J.H. Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century* (1878), p.11.

unattended by ministers of the established Church'.¹³³ The state of debate now suggests that, although pluralism might have been high, there was in most cases an ingenious grouping of livings and interrelationships of benefices and curacies, which were designed to try to give parishes as much service as possible.¹³⁴ This seems to have been the case in the deanery of Warwick and will be discussed below. Many strategies were deployed for dealing with non-resident pluralist incumbents; for example, the employment of assistant curates to perform divine service on Sundays and holy days.¹³⁵ Evidence from the diocese of Oxford in 1778 reveals that in thirty-three out of 100 cases of non-residence the incumbent lived nearby and performed the duty himself, a resident stipendiary curate was employed in twenty-seven parishes, and the remaining forty were served by neighbouring clergy.¹³⁶ In the diocese of Worcester at about the same date the provision was very similar. Twenty-three were served by the incumbent living out of the parish but elsewhere in the neighbourhood, fifteen by an incumbent holding several neighbouring livings of small value. Moreover, it was stated that in thirty-seven of the fifty-two parishes served by stipendiary curates that the curate was resident.¹³⁷

When Bishop Gibson published *Some Considerations upon Pluralities* in 1737, he pointed out that abuses connected with pluralities had been far greater in pre-Reformation times than

¹³³ A. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (London, 1976), pp. 6-7.

¹³⁴ Jacob, *Lay People*; W. Gibson, *Church, State and Society, 1760-1850* (New York, 1994), pp. 20, 25.

¹³⁵ J. Albers, "'Seeds of Contention': Society, Politics and the Church of England in Lancashire, 1689-1790", (Yale PhD. 1988); W.B. Maynard, 'Pluralism and Non-Residence in the Archdeaconry of Durham, 1774-1856: the Bishop and Chapter as Patrons', *Northern History*, 26, 1990, pp. 122-23.

¹³⁶ D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777-1869: A Study of the Established Church and the role of its Clergy in Local Society* (1960), pp.31-3.

¹³⁷ Ransome (ed), 'The State of the Bishopric', p.14.

in any subsequent century.¹³⁸ The view that pluralities in the eighteenth century were made necessary by the existence of many poor livings has now been challenged. It has been shown, for example that the Bishop of Ely tended to ‘make fat livings fatter’.¹³⁹ In addition, it must also be remembered that a number of clergymen were eligible to hold livings in plurality irrespective of their means. Still, and as a safety net, Canon 47 required that pastoral provision had to be made by supplying the parish with a licensed resident curate. Bishop Stillingfleet made this clear in his primary visitation address to his clergy in 1691:

The canon law strictly obliges every one that hath a parochial cure to perpetual residence; and accepts only two cases, when the living is annexed to a Prebend or Dignity; and then he who hath it, is to have a perpetual Vicar instituted, with a sufficient maintenance.¹⁴⁰

Significantly, Francis Evans’ diary abounds with Bishop Lloyd’s petitions to Archbishop Tenison for dispensations to enable deserving clergymen to hold two or more benefices at once:

To the Most Reverend Father in God, Thomas, by Divine Providence Lord Archbp. of Canterbury. These are to certify your Grace that Erasmus Saunders, Clerke, B.D., is possessed of the Vicarage of Blockley, in the County and Diocese of Worcester, valued in the Queen’s Books at £54, and of the real value of £120 per annum, and is presented to the Rectory of Helmdon, in the County of

¹³⁸ Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne’s Bounty*.

¹³⁹ Maynard, ‘Pluralism and Non-Residence’, pp.103-30.

¹⁴⁰ Stillingfleet, *Charge*, p.14.

Northampton and Diocese of Peterborough, valued in the Queen's Books at £13 10s. 11d. and said to be of the yearly value of £100, and distant from his other living twenty miles. I believe him to be a very deserving man both for his life and learning, and good affection to the Government, and do therefore hold him worthy of your Grace's favour in granting him a Dispensac'on to hold these Livings. And I will take care that he shall serve the Cure of Blockley in his own Person, except at such times as by his Dispensa'on he shall be obliged to be at Helmdon, and that during such times he shall serve the cure of Blockley by a sfficient Curate.

Witness my hand the 4th day of January 1706.

W. Worcester.

Dr. Moses Hodges was the subject of a similar letter to the archbishop, Hodges seeking the Rectory of Harvington (worth £80 per annum) with the Vicarage of St. Mary's, Warwick, worth about £90 per year, 'to which he was presented, twelve miles distant'.¹⁴¹

There was, of course, a tendency in the eighteenth-century Church of England to reward the more able or well-connected parochial clergy with bonus livings. As Chancellor Price of Worcester put it, 'take away pluralities, and you take away worthy priests, take away those and you overthrow the Church'.¹⁴² This way of thinking could be justified with reference to a number of pluralists in the Forest of Arden region. For example, Thomas Bray, John Riland, Edward Welchman, William Holyoake and Samuel Jemmatt were all worthy incumbents who were active both parochially and within their diocese but, more importantly, they all took care to secure the adequate serving of their livings. Indeed, on further investigation one might

¹⁴¹ Robertson (ed), 'Diary of Francis Evans', p.79f.

¹⁴² Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1.

argue that the relationship between poverty and pluralism was to some extent a red herring. Peter Virgin has pointed out that in the eighteenth-century Church of England the increasing incidence of pluralism reflected the growing career aspirations of the clergy rather than their poverty. He states:

The discovery that the clergy were holding more and more livings says much about the Georgian church. If poverty had been the main reason for pluralism, the rising clerical wealth that characterised the eighteenth century would have gradually reduced it. The plea of poverty assiduously used by the eighteenth-century clergy was often no more than a convenient alibi. The cloth was tailored to fit the times.¹⁴³

There can be no question that poverty was not the issue for Edward Welchman and John Riland, both of whom had fairly valuable livings (Lapworth and Sutton Coldfield) and who made a great success of their careers. Even so, a degree of neglect can be discerned in certain cases. The diocesan officials of both dioceses were certainly concerned with the neglect of cures which pluralism sometimes entailed and they could show considerable persistence in dealing with those clergy whose pluralism led to pastoral abuses. Rev. Boun held the rectory of Elmdon with the vicarage of Foleshill from 1673 to 1691. He was cited in 1683 for the neglect of Elmdon, claiming that he officiated at Foleshill and, although he employed a curate at Elmdon, neither he nor the curate was resident. As a consequence of the case against him, Boun appointed a clergyman who was ‘to be resident in the Parsonage House there...& [I] do promise to give him a Salary better than I gave Mr Nan because he hath nothing else to

¹⁴³ P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 194.

depend upon'.¹⁴⁴ It could be a grave mistake to assume, however, that neglect of cures was restricted to pluralists: R. Owen, for example, the vicar of Tanworth from 1678 to 1683, appears to have completely neglected his parish even though 'he was resident and did not hold another living'.¹⁴⁵

What we are able to see is that, while pluralism was a spring-board for certain sections of the clergy to further their careers and extend their sources of income, the incomes of some parishes were insufficient to support a resident clergyman. What is more, the smallness of congregations, as in today's united parishes, required the informal union of parishes. This was particularly so in the deanery of Warwick, where absentee and pluralist clergy generally lived close to their parishes and curacies. This seems to have been a tradition in this part of Warwickshire. William Dugdale informs us in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* that from about 1633 the church at Temple Grafton was served by 'some neighbouring clergyman once a fortnight, for which he is allowed the small tithes, which are valued at about £6 per annum'.¹⁴⁶

Patronage

It was not only church finances that were viewed as detrimental to the effectiveness of the pastoral care provided by the Church of England during this period. It has often been stated that a more damaging factor was the nature and configuration of ecclesiastical patronage. Ecclesiastical patronage was part of a much wider system for making appointments in eighteenth-century England. People who had secured their positions by means of patronage

¹⁴⁴ L.R.O. B/C/5.

¹⁴⁵ Salter. 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1.

¹⁴⁶ Dugdale, *Antiquities*, 2, p.721.

also filled the army, the navy and the civil service. The right to nominate a clergyman to a benefice, the patron's right of presentation or the 'advowson', as mentioned above, was a property right that could be bought and sold. For example, Henry Tristram mortgaged the rectory of Belbroughton to a John Hill for £300 in 1697. His widow then sold the advowson to St John's College, Oxford, for £1,300 in 1732, thus passing the right of presentation to the college.¹⁴⁷

It has already been noted that the majority of patrons were laymen or lay institutions during our period. Geoffrey Best has estimated that around 5,000 rectories and vicarages lay within the gift of this group throughout the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁸ Likewise, Peter Virgin mentioned that a survey of 1830 showed that individual laymen held 48 per cent of all advowsons and next presentations, a far greater share than that of the crown, the clergy, the bishops and the university colleges.¹⁴⁹ Figure 4.8 below is drawn from Dr. Salter's research on the Warwickshire clergy from 1660 to 1714 and gives the makeup of patronage in Warwickshire as a whole. It clearly shows that the majority of the patronage in Warwickshire was held by the laity and, in particular, by the gentry class.

¹⁴⁷ Robertson (ed), 'Diary of Francis Evans', p. 47. It was stated in the will of Dr Gibbons, of St John's College that: 'The person to be presented from time to time shall be one of the fellows of the College, who has been, or is at such time, Dean of Divinity in the said College'.

¹⁴⁸ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, p. 47.

¹⁴⁹ Virgin, *The Church in an age of Negligence*, p. 173.

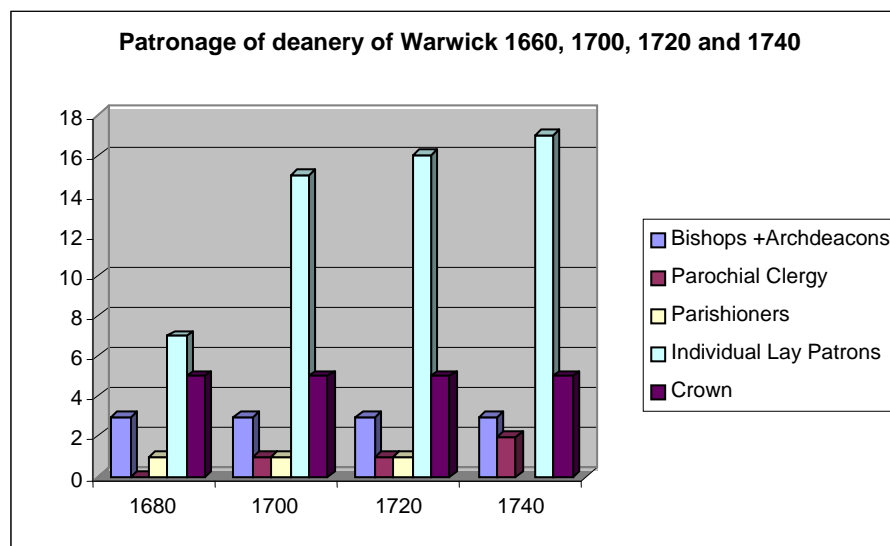
Figure 4.8

Classification	Number	Percentage
Varied	18	10.1
Ecclesiastical	24	13.1
Acquired by Warwickshire Clergy	3	1.6
Warwickshire Nobility	15	8.4
Warwickshire Gentry	70	39.5
Gentry and Nobility outside Warwickshire	16	9
Crown	28	15.8
Corporation	3	1.6
Total	177	100

Source: Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p.20.

Figure 4:9 below is a sample analysis of patronage during the years 1666, 1700, 1720 and 1740 which confirms that the laity held a majority of the livings in the deanery of Warwick during our period.

Figure 4:9

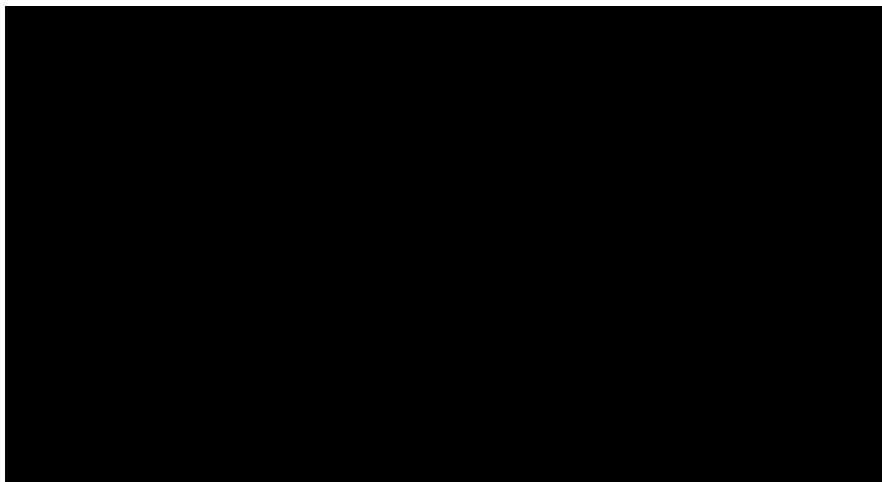


Source: Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued...* by William Thomas, D.D., 2 vols (1730); *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, Volumes 2-8 (London, 1904-1969); Various Local Studies.

When Bishop Hurd of Worcester surveyed his diocese in 1782, 43 per cent of the patronage in the deanery of Warwick was still in the hands of individual lay patrons.¹⁵⁰

Like the deanery of Warwick, patronage in the deanery of Arden was also concentrated in the hands of lay patrons. Although not a comprehensive survey of all the parishes in the deanery of Arden, Figure 4:10 below does illustrate that throughout our period the majority of livings in the deanery of Arden were in the hands of the laity with a low percentage in the hands of the crown. From the early eighteenth century, however, a growing proportion of the clergy were also acquiring the patronage of certain livings.

Figure 4:10



Source: Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued... by William Thomas, D.D.*, 2 vols (1730); *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, Volumes 2-8 (London, 1904-1969); Various Local Studies.

¹⁵⁰ Ransome (ed), 'Bishopric of Worcester', pp.188, 213.

Colin Haydon has shown that patronage in the Kineton deanery of the diocese of Worcester was concentrated in aristocratic hands.¹⁵¹ Undeniably, the aristocracy were patrons in the Arden region; for example, the Lords Digby held the livings of Coleshill and Sheldon. The majority of patronage, however, in the deaneries of Arden and Warwick was in the hands of private individuals, with the gentry class holding the greater part of the livings. The Archer family, for example, held two livings, Tanworth in Arden from the mid seventeenth century and Solihull throughout the eighteenth century. Sir Robert Throckmorton held the living of Coughton, in the deanery of Warwick, but was unable to nominate personally because he was a Roman Catholic. The Royalist Holt family held the living of Aston from the Restoration.

Although the gentry were in the majority, a number of other bodies also held livings in the Forest of Arden. John Ecton informs us that the Bishop of London, Sherlock, held Billesley in the deanery of Warwick from about 1715, 'in his own right'. However, there had been no institution there since 1624, when Sir Robert Lee presented.¹⁵² The crown also controlled fourteen livings, although it only had the right to present alternately at Baxterley. The benefices of Lapworth and Wooton Wawen were held by Magdalen College, Oxford, and Kings College, Cambridge, respectively. The Mayor and Corporation of Warwick held St. Nicholas, Warwick, with the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of Warwick holding Budbrooke. In addition, in a small number of cases parishioners also had the right to present.

¹⁵¹ C. Haydon, 'The Church in the Kineton Deanery of the Diocese of Worcester, c.1660-c.1800', in J. Gregory and J. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003), p.151.

¹⁵² J.Ecton, *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum: Being an Account of the Benefices in the several Dioceses in England and Wales* (MDCCLIV), p.450.

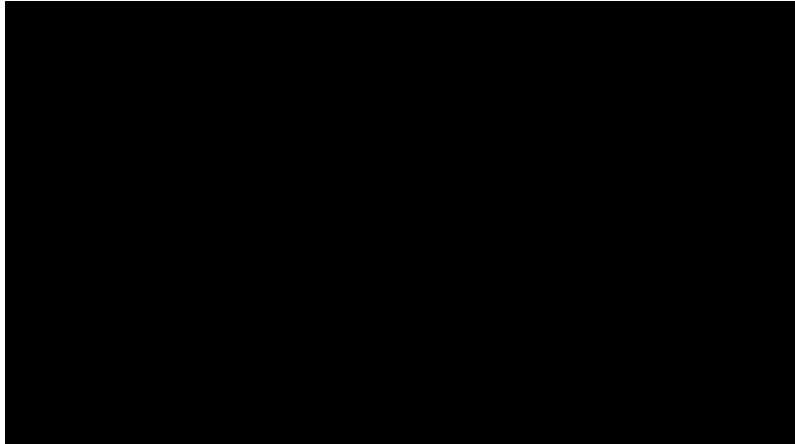
The parishioners of Henley-in-Arden, for example, were given authority by the bishop to 'provide and maintain a fitting priest'.¹⁵³ Likewise, the denizens of Deritend, a chapel belonging to the parish of Aston, had the privilege of choosing their own minister. Here, the parishioners had established the right not only to intervene and express their views, but also to nominate their curates, and had their nominations accepted in the same way as individual patrons. This rendered the parishioners independent of the mother church.¹⁵⁴ The Dean and Chapter of Worcester held Packington and the Archdeacon of Worcester held Claverdon. The lack of patronage in the hands of the bishops of Lichfield and Coventry and Worcester in the deaneries of Arden and Warwick meant that their choice of men to present to parishes was limited. The bishops of Worcester only held two livings in the deanery of Warwick throughout the period, Kinwarton rectory with Great Alne and Wethley chapels and the parish of Snitterfield. The bishops of Lichfield and Coventry only held one living throughout the period, that of St. Philip's, Birmingham. In 1714 the then Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, John Hough, was given the advowson of St. Philip's, 'That the Patronage, Advowson, Donation or Presentation of and the said Rectory of the said New Church shall appertain and belong to, and be hereby vested in the Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield for the time being and his successors forever'.¹⁵⁵ This lack of patronage meant that the bishops of both dioceses had very little influence on the selection of clergy presented to benefices, and unless there was some canonical disqualification they were obliged to institute the men presented by the patrons.

¹⁵³ Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden*, p.43.

¹⁵⁴ B. O'Connor, *Places of Worship in Digbeth and Deritend* (Birmingham, 1988), p. 28; A.T. Jenkins, *The Story of St Martin's, Birmingham's Parish Church* (Birmingham, 1925), p. 32.

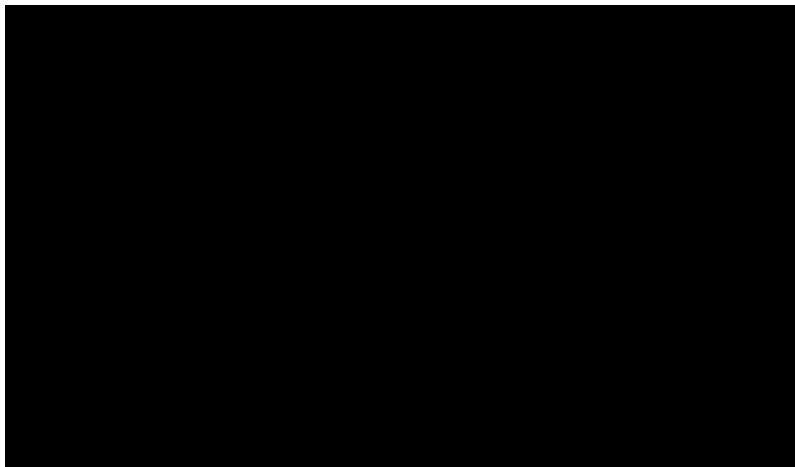
¹⁵⁵ *An Act for Building a Parish Church and Parsonage House, and making a New Church Yard and New Parish in Birmingham, to be called the Parish of St. Philip, in the County of Warwick.*

Figure 4:11



Source: Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued... by William Thomas, D.D.*, 2 vols (1730); *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, Volumes 2-8 (London, 1904-1969); Various Local Studies.

Figure 4:12



Source: Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued... by William Thomas, D.D.*, 2 vols (1730); *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, Volumes 2-8 (London, 1904-1969); Various Local Studies.

Figures 4:11 and 4:12 above show the distribution of lay patronage in both deaneries from 1680 to 1740. From the statistical evidence it would appear that, on the whole, gentlemen and esquires formed the majority of patrons in both deaneries. Women also held a high percentage of the patronage in the deanery of Warwick, often acquiring the advowson on the deaths of their husbands or fathers. The patronage of the living of Tanworth in Arden was entrusted to the coheiresses of Lord Archer from the mid eighteenth century;¹⁵⁶ likewise, Maria and Jane Brearley held the patronage of Elmdon in 1739. Aristocratic control (baronets and lords) was stronger in the deanery of Arden. Earls, on the other hand, held more livings in the deanery of Warwick throughout the period. Even so, lay patronage in both deaneries was widely diffused between social groups. More importantly, there does not appear to be much fluidity in the patronage of livings. The same families retained the advowsons throughout the period under study. Members of the Marrow family held the patronage of St. Martin's Birmingham, from as early as 1578 until the mid eighteenth century.¹⁵⁷ The Wheate family retained the right to present to the living of Meriden from about 1617 to the mid eighteenth century and the Archer family held Tanworth in Arden from about 1642 to well into the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁸ From the dissolution of the Monasteries to 1886 the living of Rowington was almost continually in the gift of the Crown. The only break was from 1553 to 1604, when the advowson was granted, with the manor, to the Duke of Northumberland, Ambrose Dudley, the gift reverting to the Crown in 1604. More importantly, however, the fact that the clergy were acquiring the patronage of some livings throughout the period may reflect their improving position during the eighteenth century.

¹⁵⁶ Hon Ann Elisabeth Archer, Maria Archer and Harriet Archer (spinsters).

¹⁵⁷ Dugdale, *Antiquities*.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*; Also see various local studies such as Cooper, *Henley in Arden An Ancient market Town*: J. Hannett, *The Forest of Arden, its Towns, Villages and Hamlets* (London, 1894).

The acquisition of the patronage, especially for the clergy, could be the basis on which to secure a family fortune; clerical ownership could be a good move, as will be shown in the next chapter, when sons tended to follow fathers into the profession. John Riland became the rector of Sutton Coldfield in 1689. He went on to marry the patron's daughter and eventually acquired the advowson himself, thus starting a remarkable family tenure of the living.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, there was the financial incentive of not having to share the tithes with a third person.¹⁶⁰ Less dramatically, the purchase of an advowson or 'turn' could also prove the foundation for an individual's clerical career. R. Unett was presented to Barford after his mother paid £200 for the next turn; likewise, John Noxon was presented to Ipsley, a living valued at £80 per annum, after the patron had undertaken to present the nominee of Mr Noxon of Hartlebury in a bond of £400.¹⁶¹ Holding the patronage also gave the clergyman greater freedom of political and theological expression. In addition, as one would expect, relatives of the patrons were also presented to some of their livings. The Rev Edward Welchman acquired the advowson of Preston Bagot in 1714; he presented his nephew, William, in 1731. Thomas Archer, the Whig patron of Tanworth in Arden and Solihull, presented his cousins, Simon Archer to the living of Tanworth in Arden in 1676 and Andrew Archer to Solihull in 1705.

It has been stated that a more sinister aspect of patronage was the possibility of undue pressure, socially and politically, on the clergy. Certainly, the clergy were ideal spreaders of propaganda. And the role of the sermon as a principal vehicle of communication in a pre-literate society cannot be overstated. Politically ambitious patrons were clearly aware of the potential influence to be gained from the pulpit. Dr. Salter has shown that in Warwickshire the

¹⁵⁹ Riland, Bedford. *Three Hundred Years of a Family Living*, p.19.

¹⁶⁰ J. Albers, "Seeds of Contention", p. 306.

¹⁶¹ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p.35.

majority of clerical votes, 60 out of 74 in the 1705 election, went to Tory candidates, a result which indicates the influence of Tory patrons such as Sir John Mordant, Sir Charles Shuckburgh¹⁶² and Lord Digby. Although there is no evidence that patrons in the period under study in the Forest of Arden put pressure on their clergymen to resort to electioneering, it is worth noting that a contributor to the *Weekly Miscellany* (1735), a known mouthpiece for High Churchmen,¹⁶³ insisted that ‘patrons are obliged to dispose of their preferment’s with regard to the great Ends for which they were intended, and [are] not at Liberty to serve private views, to promote the interests of a party’.¹⁶⁴

Patrons could not guarantee that their views would be heard, heeded or even accepted by clerics or parishioners alike. The case of Bishop Lloyd’s attempt to prevent Sir John Packington from standing for parliament is one example that illustrates that a political view could not necessarily be imposed or dictated from above. Bishop Lloyd made a threat to Sir John (a known Tory) that if he stood for parliament ‘he would speak against him to his clergy’.¹⁶⁵ This he duly did, dispatching letters through his secretary, Francis Evans, and making use of confirmations and visitations to persuade his clergy to vote and work against Sir John if they hoped for future promotion. Yet, in spite all of this, Sir John Packington found himself returned by a larger majority. Packington went on to institute proceedings against the Bishop of Worcester. The clergy were called as witnesses to give evidence against

¹⁶² Salter, ‘Warwickshire Clergy’.

¹⁶³ Walsh, and Taylor, ‘Introduction’, in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor (eds) *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833. From Toleration to Tractarianism*, p.33.

¹⁶⁴ *The Nature of Patronage and the Duty of Patrons, 1735*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ A. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717: Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet* (1952), p.158.

their spiritual father and it was found that he had instituted a campaign of ‘violence, unscrupulous, dictatorial and illegal methods’ to persuade them to vote as he wished.¹⁶⁶

Significantly, the role of the clergy in politics was an extension of their relationship with their patrons and other local gentry. The clergy of the Forest of Arden, by virtue of the university they attended, tended to be more Tory than Whig by inclination. Their religious fervour was perpetuated in the area by a network of Tory patronage. There were those patrons who appointed clerics who shared their own political beliefs. John Riland, son of John Riland, rector of St. Martin’s, Birmingham, was a known High churchman and was appointed to the living of Sutton Coldfield by its patron John Shilton. It was said that from the 1660’s ‘the prevalent tone of the town and neighbourhood was veering round to the High Church party. This was occasioned in no small degree by the sentiments of the patron and rector’.¹⁶⁷ John Riland became patron as well as rector in 1706 and his political views may have been strengthened by the society in which he moved. Thomas Thynne, afterwards Viscount Weymouth, was high steward of the corporation, a decided Tory and was said to have had ‘Jacobite leanings’.¹⁶⁸ In addition, Riland was a friend of the notorious Dr. Sacheverell who resided in Sutton Coldfield during the years of his suspension from preaching. Ralph Hodges, ‘a man of moderate views’ retained his position as vicar of Tanworth in Arden after the Restoration. In part, this was through the influence of the patron and his family, the Cromwellian Archers.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd*.

¹⁶⁷ Riland Bedford, *History of Sutton Coldfield*, p. 29.

¹⁶⁸ Riland Bedford *Three Hundred Years of a Family Living*, p. 20.

¹⁶⁹ J. Burman, *The Story of Tanworth in Arden, Warwickshire* (Birmingham, 1930), p. 31.

In spite of this, many contemporaries saw appointment by patronage as a trust. It was even stated that ‘patrons are trustees, not only for the clergy and the constitution, but for the people who are committed to the care of the clergy’.¹⁷⁰ It was seen as the duty of the patron to favour men that were worthy and merit was usually a prerequisite for preferment. It was believed that ‘the people have a right to demand of the patron a proper pastor, one that is able and willing to discharge the duties of his function among them’.¹⁷¹ Bishop Lloyd noted that Walter Chetwynd, the patron of the living of Grendon, was ‘a good patron’ for he ‘chooses very good Churchmen’.¹⁷² Likewise, it was noted that Simon, Lord Digby, and subsequently his brother, William, Lord Digby, ‘always sought the best priests for preferment to the livings in their gift’.¹⁷³ A patron might socialise with certain members of the clergy but not all were the type they would recommend for preferment. The case of Abraham Kent illustrates this point, for Kent confided to a gentleman then in his company that:

It was very hard that after a parson had whored with him, bin drunk with him, got pox’d and clapt with him yet if a parsonage fell in his gift he would give it to some other.¹⁷⁴

William, Lord Digby appointed Dr. Thomas Bray, co-founder of the S.P.C.K, to the living of Sheldon where he was patron. Dr. Bray had attracted the notice of Lord Digby when he

¹⁷⁰ Generousus, *The Nature of Patronage and the Duty of Patrons, Consider’d in Three Letters Published in the Weekly Miscellany*, 1735, p.17.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Salter, ‘Warwickshire Clergy’, p. 30.

¹⁷³ A. Middleton, *Eminent English Churchmen: Thomas Bray (1656-1730)*, p. 2. Available at, <http://justus.anglican>.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in Salter, ‘Warwickshire Clergy’, p.114.

preached an assize sermon at Warwick, Digby being so impressed with him that he offered him the rectory of Sheldon when it became vacant in 1690 by the then rector, Digby Bull, refusing to take the oaths. Lord Digby was also patron of Coleshill, where he appointed John Kettlewell. It was said that:

For so truly public was your Lordship's spirit in filling of that Church, that you pitched upon a person whose face you had never known, and who never knew of it; only because you believ'd that he would make it his Care to promote Religion, and to Benefit whose Souls, which were to be committed to him.¹⁷⁵

In fact John Kettlewell was the epitome of the right sort of clergyman for preferment; he was described as 'one who served at the altar without covetousness or ambition'.¹⁷⁶ During the lifetime of William, Lord Digby, Coleshill became noted as a centre of significant parochial activity.

Conclusion

Pluralism and clerical non-residence have been described as the 'most flagrant abuses of the age' in the Church of England. Yet a careful analysis of both pluralism and non-residence in the Forest of Arden refutes the suggestion that they were necessarily indicative of clerical abuse during our period. The pluralist clergy of the post-Restoration period in the deanery of Warwick resided in adjacent parishes with the majority of them serving both parishes at once. What is more, neighbouring incumbents also acted as curates in these parishes.

¹⁷⁵ *The Life of John Kettewell: His Ministry While Vicar of Coleshill, Till His Deprivation*, II, p.25.

¹⁷⁶ Middleton, *Thomas Bray*, p.1.

Pluralism was frequently justified on the grounds of financial necessity. By the end of the period under study only a handful of livings in both deaneries were worth less than the £50 minimum seen as necessary. Nonetheless, in order for some clergy to achieve a suitable living pluralism and the performance of other duties, such as school mastering or the writing of transcripts and registers, had to be accepted by the Church. As the eighteenth century wore on, the injection of funds through the foundation of Queen Anne's Bounty helped to alleviate the poverty of those curates eking out a living at the bottom of the pile. In fact, remunerative augmentations not only increased clerical incomes but also brought the laity in closer contact with church affairs.

The greater part of patronage in the Forest of Arden was in the hands of lay people. The lack of patronage in the hands of the bishops of Lichfield and Coventry and Worcester in the deaneries of Arden and Warwick meant that their choice of men to present to parishes was limited. Still, they were sensible of their duty to ensure that nominations by patrons followed due process. More importantly, patrons in the region were conscious that they should bestow the livings in their gift on deserving men. This would not only enhance their reputation but ultimately it would secure their 'accountability to god'.¹⁷⁷ Significantly, as the eighteenth century continued a growing percentage of clergymen were acquiring patronage, sometimes building a family interest. But what of the men who lived and worked in the parishes of the Forest of Arden? The next chapter will survey their ministry and contribution to the pastoral work of the established Church, together with an evaluation of their educational and social backgrounds.

¹⁷⁷ Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, p.93.

CHAPTER FIVE

Clergy: Lives and Ministry

Apart from the excellent work by Dr. Ann Hughes,¹ chronicling the godly pastors of the Civil War and Interregnum periods, studies of the local clergy, particularly in the Arden region of Warwickshire, are notable by their absence. In fact, the study of the Restoration Church and its place in the life of the local community in Warwickshire as a whole has not been fully explored by historians. The studies that have been made mainly cover the south of the county, namely the rural deanery of Kineton, in the diocese of Worcester.² Those clergymen who attended to the fledgling ‘urban’ areas contained within the diocese of Lichfield have, again, yet to be fully examined. In addition, J. L. Salter’s thesis on the Warwickshire clergy³ has placed the clergy within the framework of the ‘county community’⁴ and has not fully addressed the complication of ecclesiastical division and regional diversity.

Study of the Anglican clergy (and in particular the figure of the country parson) from the Restoration to the mid eighteenth century helps to form a vital link in our understanding of the impact of the established Church upon the approximately 9,500⁵ parishes in England at this time. As Dr. Jacob has suggested, the attitudes of people towards the Christian faith ‘as

¹ A. Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1660* (Cambridge, 1987); Also A. Hughes, ‘Godly Reformation and its Opponents in Warwickshire, 1640-1662’, *Dugdale Society Occasional Papers*, 35, pp, 1-29.

² C. Haydon, ‘The Church in the Kineton Deanery of the Diocese of Worcester, c. 1660-c. 1800’ in J.Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003), p.145.

³ J. L. Salter, ‘Warwickshire Clergy, 1660-1714’ (Birmingham University PhD, 1975).

⁴ The ‘County Community’ as described by Professor Everett in *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion* (Leicester, 1966), pp.41-4; For an alternative view see A. Hughes, ‘Warwickshire on the Eve of the Civil War: A ‘County Community’?’ *Midland History*, 1979, pp. 42-67.

⁵ R. Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1982), p. 188.

embodied in the Church of England is partly revealed by their attitudes towards the Church's ministers'.⁶ We must not generalise, though, for the performance of individual clergy varied greatly. As Alan Gilbert pointed out; 'the parochial system... was only as effective as the vocational commitment of its individual incumbents'.⁷ Many factors, therefore, must be taken into consideration when considering the efficiency of the incumbent: the size and population of the parish, the personality and energy of the incumbent and/or his curate, his residence or non-residence within the parish, the strength of Dissent, the attitude and influence of a resident landowner, plus many other factors which played a vital part in the community life of the parish.

The Anglican clergyman's ministerial role is delineated in the ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer. This clearly stated the duties and expectations of a parish clergyman. The parson was obliged to instruct the 'people committed' to him of the necessity of 'eternal salvation'; to 'banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word' and to be 'punctual in the conduct of worship and a good preacher'. He was also to regularly catechise and teach the young that they might be able, in time, to benefit from 'understanding the true grounds of religion'. It was expected that the parson should be readily available to his flock and to know them so he might praise or scold them as cause demanded.

⁸ Bishop Stillingfleet, in his charge to the clergy of Worcester in 1690, made it clear that his clergy should not be 'strangers to his flock', pointing out that:

⁶ W. M. Jacob, *Lay people and Religion in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 20.

⁷ A. D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change 1740-1914* (London, 1976), p. 94.

⁸ A. Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London, 1980), p. 53.

He that is a stranger to his flock, and only visits them now and then, can never be said to watch over it; he may watch over the fleeces but he understands little of the State of his flock, of the Distempers they are under, and the Remedies proper for them.⁹

It was expected that a high standard of personal conduct should characterise the parson's ministry, Bishop Stillingfleet encouraging his clergy to 'lead your flock by example, as well as by Doctrine, and then you may much better hope that they will follow you'.¹⁰ Additionally, the parish priest was expected to visit the sick and be on hand to comfort their parishioners in their hour of need, with absolution and communion.

Historians, however, have written in reproachful terms of the rural clergy of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, not only pouring scorn on their alleged 'coarse manners and little learning'¹¹ but accusing them of complacency and of being negligent in their pastoral duties.¹² As J.R.H. Moorman has asserted, 'pluralism, non-residence, nepotism, all flourished with disastrous results for the spiritual life of the Church'.¹³ Likewise, Eric Evans proclaimed that 'from the mid-seventeenth century, and probably earlier, it becomes clear that the cosy picture of devoted Anglican clerics ministering to the needs of both rich

⁹ Edward Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester's Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, in his Primary Visitation, September* (1691), p.12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, p. 30; H. M. Jenkins, 'An Address Delivered to the Dugdale Society, July 1930, on Dr Thomas's Edition of Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*', *The Dugdale Society Occasional Papers*, 3, 1931, p. 4.

¹² V. Barrie-Curien, 'The Clergy in the Diocese of London in the Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh, S. Taylor and C. Haydon. (eds.), *The Church in England c.1689- c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge1993), p. 89.

¹³ J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church of England* (London, 1967), p. 285.

and poor and reconciling their contrary interests for the general harmony of society will not do'.¹⁴ In addition, contemporary writing also indicates that there was hostility towards the clergy. The poet William Cowper (1713-1800), expressed the severe opinion that the clergy were:

Loose in morals, and in manners vain, In conversation frivolous, in dress extreme,
at once rapacious and profuse; Frequent in park with lady at his side, ambling and
prattling scandal as he goes; But rare at home, and never at his books, or with his
pen, save when he scrawls a card; Constant at routs, familiar with a round of
Ladyships - a stranger to the poor; Ambitious of preferment for its gold, and well-
prepar'd, by ignorance and sloth, by infidelity and love of world, to make God's
work a sinecure; a slave to his own pleasures and his patron's pride:¹⁵

It is, of course, easy to find examples of clerical apathy, of incumbents purely in pursuit of their own comfort and welfare. Surviving diaries, such as that of William Cole of Bletchley¹⁶ and the more celebrated Parson Woodforde, have been cited as examples of ministers enjoying worldly comforts at the expense of their pastoral obligations. There is, however, no evidence to support the contention that these men neglected their professional duties. Although Parson Woodforde's diary was apparently more concerned with the pleasures of country life than with his clerical functions, he did, however, know his duty. The entries in

¹⁴ E. Evans, 'Some Reasons for the Growth of English Rural Anti-Clericalism c.1750- c.1830', *Past and Present*, 66, 84-109 at, p.108.

¹⁵ Quoted in S. Goodenough, *The Country Parson* (Newton Abbot, 1983), p.31.

¹⁶ F. G. Stokes, *Bletchley Diary of the Rev. William Cole, 1765-7* (London, 1931).

Woodforde's diary confirm that he visited the sick and supported the poor with donations.¹⁷ Clearly, we must not discard contemporary opinion or indeed early historical scholarship for, in part, they provide us with knowledge of some value concerning the parochial ministry. All their underlying assumptions, however, are now open to debate. Our images of the clergy still remain derived, in part, from satirists such as William Hogarth. 'The starting point', declared Dr Gregory is 'a Hogarth cartoon of a corpulent curate and a snoozing congregation'.¹⁸ Satirical prints, therefore, which sold in very large numbers, depicting the clergy as more interested in the high life than in matters spiritual, may have contributed to the anti-clerical attitude of the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁹ Dr. Peter Virgin, in his study of the eighteenth-century Church, concluded that 'Satire and ridicule, rather than a careful examination of the truth, were the order of the day in the contemporary Radical presses'.²⁰

Educational, Social, and Geographic Backgrounds of the Parish Clergy

It has been the received opinion of many historians that the clergy of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were lowly and ill-educated figures. Many defects of the old Church were restored at the Restoration (wrote Barry Coward in his book *The Stuart Age*), resulting in a 'badly paid clergy who too often had been appointed with no reference to their qualifications for their positions'.²¹ Contemporaries were often critical of the social position of the clergy. Dr. John Eachard²² has left us a picture of the rather unsatisfactory position

¹⁷ J. Beresford (ed.), *The Diary of a Country Parson: The Rev James Woodforde* (Oxford, 1926).

¹⁸ 'Voluntary Anglicans', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 4. 977-990 at, p. 977; See also J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000), p. 355.

¹⁹ Jacob, *Lay People*, pp. 44-51.

²⁰ P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 91.

²¹ B. Coward, *The Stuart Age: A History of England 1603-1714* (London, 1980), p.252.

²² J. Eachard, *The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy* (1670).

occupied by some of the inferior clergy after the Restoration, which he attributed to the 'poverty of their livings and the faults of the educational system then in vogue'.²³ Swift's satire of the 'insolent, illiterate Vicar' has contributed to our stereotypical view of the clergy at this time. Equally, early Church historians, in particular Macaulay, described the clergy in the latter seventeenth century as having 'low social status'. He asserted that the clergy were regarded as a plebeian class, 'for one who made the figure of a gentleman, ten were mere menial servants'.²⁴ This view was amplified by the generation of historians after Norman Sykes. In his appraisal of the parochial clergy of the early eighteenth century, J.R.H. Moorman argued that there 'still remained a small class of wealthy clergy side by side with a large mob of ill-trained, ill-paid priests who were hard put to it to make a living for themselves and their sometimes very large families'.²⁵ On the other hand, during the 1960's Lawrence Stone presented valuable evidence which shows that by the later seventeenth century the clergy were held in much less contempt than they had been a century earlier, concluding that the lesser clergy were 'better educated, better paid and of more genteel social origins'.²⁶ Additionally, the social and educational background of the parish clergy during the period under study has been the subject of recent historical debate. Stephen Taylor has argued that the status of the clergy was rising during the eighteenth century.²⁷ Jeffrey Chamberlain, moreover, painted a positive picture of the parish clergy of Sussex, describing them as

²³ Quoted in G. Smith, *Dr Thomas Bray*, Available at www.tracts.ukgo.com/thomas_bray.doc. Consulted on, 10/03/03.

²⁴ T. B. Macaulay, *History of England*, Chapter III.

²⁵ Moorman, *A History of the Church of England*, p. 285.

²⁶ L. Stone, 'Social Mobility in England 1500-1700' *Past and Present*, 33, 1966, 16-55 at, p. 53.

²⁷ Quoted in, J. S. Chamberlain, 'A Regular and Well-Affected' Diocese: Chichester in the Eighteenth Century', in J. Gregory, and J. S. Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 84 (footnotes).

‘extremely well educated’.²⁸ Dr. Jacob’s *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (2007) challenges the received view that the majority of the clergy were inappropriately educated. He maintained that the clergy emerge as the most carefully recruited and educated of the ‘learned professions’.²⁹

Qualifications for ordination were largely governed by the Canons of 1603 and by later episcopal regulations.³⁰ The ordinand had to be of canonical age,³¹ he also had to have a title for a curacy and evidence of his academic standing and moral life. An ordinand, according to Canon 34, should be a graduate ‘or at least...able to yield an account of his faith in Latin’ according to the Thirty-nine Articles and ‘to confirm the same by sufficient testimonies out of Holy Scriptures’.³² Yet, it has been suggested that the possession of a university degree for a clergyman from the Restoration to the mid eighteenth century was not an outstanding achievement, and that the two universities were ‘slothful and corrupt’.³³ Still, the only obvious sign of the education of the clergy was the possession of an academic degree. This, John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, concluded was a fact that ‘set even the poorest clergyman apart from their parishioners’.³⁴ In fact, Dr. Jacob asserts that ‘during the period after the

²⁸ Quoted in, Chamberlain, ‘A Regular and Well-Affected’ Diocese: Chichester in the Eighteenth Century’, in Gregory, and Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church*, p. 84 (footnotes).

²⁹ W.M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007), p. 1.

³⁰ W. Marshall, ‘Episcopal Activity in the Hereford and Oxford Dioceses, 1660-1760’, *Midland History*, 8, 1983, 106-120, at p.108.

³¹ Canon 34 lay down that no man should be made deacon until the age of twenty three or a priest until he ‘is four and twenty years complete’.

³² Marshall, ‘Episcopal Activity in the Hereford and Oxford Dioceses’, p. 108.

³³ Quoted in A. Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon* (Newton Abbott, 1969), p. 37.

³⁴ J. Walsh, and S. Taylor, ‘Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the ‘long’ Eighteenth Century’, in J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), p.7.

Restoration the English Reformers' ambition to achieve a graduate clergy was achieved.'³⁵ In Leicestershire in 1670, 95 per cent of incumbents possessed degrees.³⁶ Arthur Warne, in his study of Devon, has shown that of thirty-one men ordained in 1702 only one was a non-graduate.³⁷ This, however, is in contrast to Dr. Snape's study of the clergy of the Lancastrian parish of Whalley. Dr. Snape has established that out of ninety-six clergymen whose educational qualifications can be ascertained for the period 1689 to 1789, fifty-four were non-graduates.³⁸

Dr. Salter, in his study of the clergy of Warwickshire, has shown that from the sixteenth century there was an increase in the proportion of the clergy who were graduates and by the end of the seventeenth century it was an exception for a Warwickshire clergyman to be a non-graduate.³⁹ Although this study concurs with Dr. Salter, there were a few cases of non-graduate clergy officiating in both the deanery of Warwick and the deanery of Arden. Thomas Man, schoolmaster at Berkswell for thirty-four years in the late seventeenth century, did not possess a degree; he was also curate at Elmdon in the deanery of Arden where his parishioners described him as 'a very illiterate but pleasing man'. In 1691 he was appointed rector of Elmdon.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, from the known incumbents of the deanery of Warwick in

³⁵ Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, p.43-4.

³⁶ J.H. Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Latter Stuarts: The Leicestershire Experience* (Chicago, 1978) pp. 23, 39, 48.

³⁷ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon*, p. 37.

³⁸ M.F. Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society: The Parish of Whalley in the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 178.

³⁹ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p.19.

⁴⁰ L.R.O. B/C/5; J. Woodal, *The Book of Greater Solihull* (Buckingham, 1990), p. 76.

the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries only three non-graduates can be identified.⁴¹

Salter concluded in his study of the Warwickshire clergy that the clergy of the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry were marginally less well educated than those from the diocese of Worcester; this, he believed, was because it was more likely for a clergyman from the diocese of Worcester to gain an M.A. On the other hand, as Figure 5:1 below illustrates, a higher percentage of higher degrees (D.D or B.D) were obtained by incumbents from the Deanery of Arden.

Figure: 5:1 Percentage value for degrees obtained in each deanery by known incumbents from the Restoration to the mid eighteenth century.

	BA	MA	DD	BD	NON-GRADUATE
Deanery of Arden	35%	38%	18%	6%	3%
Deanery of Warwick	39%	54%	2%	2%	3%

Source: Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated...Revised...and Continued...by William Thomas, D.D.* 2 (1730); P. Morgan, 'Inspections of Churches and Parsonage Houses in the Diocese of Worcester in 1674, 1676, 1684 and 1687', *Worcester Historical Society, New Series*, 12, 1986; Various local Studies.

On the whole, clergy from the Forest of Arden region of Warwickshire seem to have achieved at least a B.A. and more usually, an M.A. While, Dr. Salter concluded that the majority of clergymen in the deanery of Warwick were more likely to have obtained an M.A; yet, the up-and-coming livings in the deanery of Arden (such as Solihull, Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield and Nuneaton) had a series of incumbents from the Restoration who possessed a

⁴¹ Dugdale, *Antiquities* ; Morgan, 'Inspections of Churches'. John Field, non-graduate vicar of Rowington 1660-1684. John Shelton, non-graduate curate of Weethly from 1665 until after 1702, also school master of Salford Priors from 1665. Thomas Avenant, non-graduate curate of Hatton, 1671.

D.D.⁴² In most cases curates had a B.A; but there were also those who obtained the more prestigious M.A.

Dr. Gregory has suggested that the parish clergy's academic credentials were much higher than historians such as Macaulay have asserted. This is evident, wrote Gregory, 'by the proportion of those who managed to get their work into print'.⁴³ The clergy of the Forest of Arden produced individual works of scholarship in abundance. Over a period of eighty years the rectors of Solihull alone published many works. These included manuals for the souls of the sick, explanatory notes on the Books of Job, Proverbs and Wisdom and works on the Thirty-nine Articles.⁴⁴ Contemporaries, however, did not always appreciate these tracts. In 1736 Edward Welchman published a pamphlet on the Oath of Allegiance which was characterised as 'one of the most foolish and silly things that ever was penned'.⁴⁵ Eminent churchmen were also vicars of Nuneaton; John Inett (1678 to 1681) was a Church historian. His successor, William Wyatt was also known as a scholar.⁴⁶ Dr. Thomas Bray, rector of Sheldon (1690 to 1730) is, of course, well known as a founding member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. At Sheldon, Bray wrote the first of many works establishing him as one of the most able men in the Church at this time. What is more, he occupies an important place in Church history for producing a scheme for the founding of parochial libraries in the interest of

⁴² The living of Solihull had a succession of incumbents that had obtained a D.D degree. Henry Greswold, D.D. 1660-1700. Zacchaeus Isham, D.D. 1701-1705. Andrew Archer, D.D. 1705-1728. Joseph Stockwell, B.D. 1728-1736.

⁴³ J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000), p. 80.

⁴⁴ R. Pemberton, *Solihull and its Church* (Exeter, 1905), p.74.

⁴⁵ Pemberton, *Solihull and its Church*, p.193.

⁴⁶ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, 1V, p.165.

better clerical education. J.H. Overton even claimed that he must be ‘ranked amongst our post-reformation saints’.⁴⁷ In fact many, of the region’s clergy were referred to as ‘learned’. John Riland, rector of Birmingham from 1665 to 1672, was known as a ‘very learned, humble and pious man of unwearied Industry in studying the Scriptures, Fathers and Philosophers in their original, Languages’.⁴⁸ John Kettlewell, vicar of Coleshill, 1682 to 1689, was referred to as the ‘scholarly Kettlewell’.⁴⁹ Indeed, Kettlewell was a friend of Thomas Bray, who included his publications in the libraries he set up, both in England and America.⁵⁰ A tantalizing glimpse into the growing reputation of an incumbent can be gleaned from the preaching of a visitation sermon. John Kettlewell was ‘pitched upon to preach the Visitation Sermon Two Years successively’.⁵¹

An attempt to improve the standard of clerical education in our region is also quite evident. Dr. Thomas Bray of Sheldon put forward a scheme to enhance the learning of the clergy by the founding of parochial libraries, believing that ‘one-third of the Parochial Clergy were too poor to be able to purchase a fourth part of those books it was absolutely necessary every pastor should peruse.’⁵² Bray’s scheme envisaged convenient centres where the clergy might meet for theological discussion, instead of meeting in public houses.⁵³ He therefore proposed that lending libraries should be formed in every Deanery throughout England and Wales, in

⁴⁷ A. Middleton, *Eminent English Churchmen: Thomas Bray (1656-1730)*. Available at, <http://justus.anglican>, p. 1.

⁴⁸ W.K. Riland, *Three Hundred years of a Family Living: Being a History of the Rilands of Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1889), pp.14-15.

⁴⁹ *The Life of Mr John Kettlewell: His Ministry while Vicar of Coleshill, till his Deprivation*, II.

⁵⁰ Middleton, *Eminent English Churchmen*, p. 4.

⁵¹ *The Life of Mr John Kettlewell*, II, p. 27.

⁵² G. Smith, *Dr Thomas Bray*, p.1.

⁵³ Middleton, *Eminent English Churchmen*, p.1-2.

order to supply a store of theological books which were to be loaned to the clergy. For an outlay of '£30', well chosen books, 'sufficient to make a good foundation', could be obtained and 'Each Clergyman should subscribe some small matter proportionable to the value of his Living or Circumstances in the world.'⁵⁴ In accordance with this scheme, William Thomas, continuator of Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, noted that he (with others) was taking turns to serve Haselor once a fortnight and that 'The profits' were being given towards buying books for a standing library for the deanery at Alcester.⁵⁵ Bray himself assisted with funds to establish a library at St. Mary's, Warwick, in 1701.⁵⁶ In his will dated 1730 he also bequeathed his library at Sheldon to his successors in that living. Similarly William Higgs, the first rector of St. Philip's, Birmingham, left in his will dated 1733 the sum of £200 and a collection of books as the basis for a parochial library for the use of 'local clergymen'. The aim of this library was to 'promote learning and promote the cause of Christianity'.⁵⁷ Likewise, the parish of Coleshill was known as a centre of learning under two successive vicars, John Kettlewell and C. Newburgh, before both were deprived as Nonjurors.⁵⁸ This commitment to ongoing scriptural and theological study and debate indicates that the clergymen of the Forest of Arden were not the 'silent Clerical proletariat' envisaged by John Spurr.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Smith, *Dr Thomas Bray*, pp.3, 4.

⁵⁵ W.R.O, BA. 2616.

⁵⁶ Smith, *Dr Thomas Bray*, p. 9.

⁵⁷ C. Feeney, *St Philip's: An Eighteenth Century Church and Parish* (Birmingham, 1984), p.6a; A. Baynes, *Two Centuries of Church Life, 1715-1915, St Philip's Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1915), p. 26. For many years the library was housed in the vestry, but in 1792 the Rev. S. Madan, rector, built a room attached to the rectory to contain the books.

⁵⁸ *V.C.H. Warwickshire*, 1V, p. 52.

⁵⁹ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, p. xv.

During the period between 1662 and 1740, the clergymen of Arden were mainly from the Midlands and the graduates were mainly Oxford men, as Figure 5:2 illustrates.

Figure: 5:2. University affiliation of the clergy of the Forest of Arden 1662 to 1740.

<u>University</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Oxford	70%
Cambridge	20%
Attended Both Oxford and Cambridge	5%
Incorporated an Oxford degree at Cambridge	2%
Incorporated a Cambridge degree at Oxford	3%

Source: Clergy of the Church of England Data base (hereafter cited as CCEd). Consulted on 23/08/2008; Dugdale, *Antiquities*; Morgan, 'Inspections of Churches'; various local Studies.

The statistics for the Arden region as a whole clearly show that the graduates were overwhelmingly from Oxford. The Oxford monopoly did not decline in the Forest of Arden during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁶⁰ From this evidence we may deduce that the clergy tended to be more Tory than Whig. Oxford produced High Churchmen such as John Kettlewell, vicar of Coleshill, John Riland, rector of Birmingham, and his son, John Riland, rector of Sutton Coldfield. Colin Haydon's research on the Kineton deanery in the Feldon region of Warwickshire also points to the fact that the clergy there were more likely to have attended Oxford.⁶¹ During the period under study it has been shown that Oxford maintained its predominantly High Church character, in particular Magdalen College.⁶² Bray, himself a prominent High Churchman, received his Doctor of Divinity from Magdalen

⁶⁰ Ransome (ed). 'Bishopric of Worcester'.

⁶¹ Haydon, 'The Church in the Kineton Deanery', p. 150, in Gregory and Chamberlain (eds) *The National Church*; See also Morgan, 'South Warwickshire Clergy'.

⁶² P. Langford, *Polite and Commercial People* (Oxford, 1989), p. 258.

in 1696 and John Riland junior was presented to the rectory of Sutton Coldfield in 1689 upon completion of his degree at the same college.⁶³ Oxford during the period was a school of the Church, its privileges, its property, and its doctrines. To the dominant High-Church faction in Oxford, Church and university were ‘inseparable members of a political organism whose authority derived from God Himself; the mechanistic doctrines of the Whigs were a betrayal of all things sacred’.⁶⁴ Significantly during the Sacheverell crisis in 1710, the University assailed both Whigs and Jacobites in abhorring ‘that Popish Republican Doctrine of Resistance of Princes’.⁶⁵ Cambridge, on the other hand was still essentially Whig in character yet a stubborn Tory presence persisted in several colleges.⁶⁶ Significantly, the origins of ‘Latitudinarians’ can be traced to a group of Cambridge university scholars known as the ‘Cambridge Platonists’.⁶⁷

Regarding their geographical origin, Table 5:3 below clearly shows that the majority of the Arden clergy were from the Midlands region. Edward Welchman (rector of Lapworth from 1689 until 1739) was born in Banbury and was a fellow of Merton College, Oxford.⁶⁸ There were exceptions such as Standford Wolverstan, incumbent at Wooton-Wawen in 1676, who had Suffolk origins and was a graduate of St. John’s, Cambridge. Thomas Pilkington, vicar of Claverdon from 1629 until his death in 1685, was said to be from a ‘good north-country family’ and his father, Abraham Pilkington, was described as a ‘county Durham,

⁶³ Rev. W.K. Riland Bedford, *History of Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1881), p. 30.

⁶⁴ W.R.Ward, *Georgian Oxford: University Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1958), p.1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.24.

⁶⁶ Riland Bedford, *History of Sutton Coldfield*, p. 30.

⁶⁷ B. Coward, *The Stuart Age* (London, 1980), p.421.

⁶⁸ R. Hudson, *Memorials of a Warwickshire Parish* (London, 1904).

gentleman'.⁶⁹ Richard Jago, rector of Beaudesert from 1709 to 1741, was from Cornwall⁷⁰ and William Phelps, incumbent at Meriden in 1705, hailed from Gloucestershire. John Kettlewell, vicar of Coleshill in 1682 until he was deprived as a Non-juror, was said to have had no Warwickshire connections (son of John of North Allerton, Yorkshire).⁷¹ Some came from nearby Worcestershire, such as William Thomas rector of Exhall and the continuator of Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, who was born in Worcester in 1670.⁷² On the other hand, many came from other parts of Warwickshire, such as Ralph Hodges who was a native of Tachbrooke. He was vicar of Tanworth from 1646 to 1676 and was a graduate of Oxford.⁷³ Some were, indeed, Forest of Arden men, such as John Moore, who was born at Studley and became the rector of Sperrall and curate of Wooton-Wawen; the parishioners who wanted 'no stranger for our Vicar' supported him.⁷⁴ More importantly, as will be discussed below, the majority were locally-born, second-generation sons of clergymen. Additionally, in the average and better livings, once instituted, the incumbents usually remained till death. Thomas Pilkington was inducted to the vicarage of Claverdon on 10 October 1629. This was his sole preferment. He survived the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and the Restoration and he died and was buried at Claverdon in 1685.⁷⁵ Similarly, Henry Greswold had a forty-year incumbency at Solihull while William Malines and Edward Welchman both held the living of

⁶⁹ P. Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman Thomas Pilkington, Vicar of Claverdon', in P. Styles, *Studies in Seventeenth Century History* (Kineton, 1978), p. 71.

⁷⁰ There is a monumental tablet out side the east side of the church that states that Richard Jago was a native of St Mawes, in Cornwall.

⁷¹ CCEd.

⁷² Jenkins, 'Dr Thomas's Edition of Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*', p. 4.

⁷³ Morgan, 'Inspections', p. 70.

⁷⁴ W.R.O. B.A. 2289/807.

⁷⁵ Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman', p. 71.

Tanworth; the former for twenty-four years from 1683, the latter for thirty-eight years from 1726.

Figure: 5:3. The geographical origins of known clergymen who held livings in the Forest of Arden, 1660 to 1740.

Cheshire	5%
County Durham	2%
Cumbria	2%
Forest of Arden	34%
Gloucester	5%
Hampshire	2%
London	5%
Northants	5%
Oxford	5%
Salop	9%
Staffordshire	2%
Suffolk	2%
Warwickshire	16%
Wiltshire	2%
Worcestershire	5%
Yorkshire	2%

Source: CCEd. Consulted on 23/08/2008; J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1891-92); J. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses... Part I: From the Earliest Time to 1751*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1922-27); Various Local Studies.

Some readings of the social origins of the clergy have suggested that they came from humble backgrounds and, as a consequence, they were less likely to have been out of touch with ordinary parishioners.⁷⁶ On the other hand, Dr Salter estimates that at the Restoration only twelve per cent of Warwickshire clergymen were from very poor origins and this percentage only rose slightly in the period 1680 to 1699.⁷⁷ Figure 5:4 below cites further statistical evidence from Paul Morgan's analysis of the clergy of the rural deanery of Kineton 1662 to 1700 which corresponds with Dr. Salter's evidence for Warwickshire as a whole, showing that the majority of the clergy in this deanery were sons of the gentry. Significantly, as Figure

⁷⁶ J. Gregory, 'The Church of England', in H.T. Dickinson, *A Companion to Eighteenth Century Britain and Ireland c. 1688-c.1815*. Available at, www.history-compass.com.

⁷⁷ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p 35.

5:5 illustrates, the social origins of clergymen from the Arden region from 1662 to 1740 were that of men from respectable families, sons of gentlemen or clergymen.

Table 5:4 Social origins of clergymen holding livings in the deanery of Kineton, Warwickshire, 1660 to 1700

Sons of Gentry	30%
Sons of Trades Men or Farmers	25%
Sons of Professional Men	20%
Scholarship Boys	20%
Unknown	4%

Source: Morgan, 'South Warwickshire Clergy', p.5.

Table 5:5 Social origins of clergymen holding livings in the Forest of Arden 1662 to 1740

Sons of Clergy	36%
Sons of Plebians	18%
Sons of Gentlemen	36%
Scholarship Boys	9%

Source, CCEd.

Whatever the clergy's social background, their education might bring them into close contact with the lower gentry and the professional class in any case. In spite of this, the outlook of many rural clergymen probably mirrored the view of William Pestell, of Coleorton, Leicestershire, when he replied to the Heralds' Visitation in 1682:

For my parte, I have no pedigree nor coate of arms nor ever had, nor do I pretend to any, nor am I ambitious to blazon'd for any thing but honesty & Loyalty. I am a master of Artes and that makes me a Gentleman & that a wonderful one & I care not to goe higher.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Quoted in P. Styles, *The Heralds' Visitation of Warwickshire 1682-3, Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 1955, p. 130.

The trend, however, was pointing towards sons succeeding fathers as incumbents. Research has shown that in Canterbury, London and Norwich over a quarter of the clergy were sons of clergy. Lawrence Stone identified family succession in the Church during the seventeenth century, stating that it was an inevitable by-product of clerical marriage and growing respect for the 'dignity of the cloth'. He concluded that, by the 1660s, the clergy of the Church of England were well on their way to becoming a 'hereditary profession'.⁷⁹ In addition, Professor Stone also noted that the proportion of the parish clergy who were the sons of clergymen in the diocese of Worcester rose from five per cent in 1640 to twenty three per cent in 1660.⁸⁰

The research for this study indicates that a high proportion of local men were following their fathers into the ministry. For instance, John Wright junior succeeded his father, John Wright senior in 1674 as rector of Exhall. John Wright's father had been the minister at Bidford and his grandfather had also been a rector of Exhall. Richard Keyt took over from his father, Thomas (deprived as a Nonjuror), at Binton in 1690.⁸¹ Although Richard Jago, rector of Beaudesert, 1709 to 1741 hailed from Cornwall his son went to a local grammar school (Solihull School) and became a local clergyman. Richard Riland succeeded his father, John Riland, as rector of Sutton Coldfield in 1720; indeed, sons of the Riland family were rectors of Sutton from 1689 until the twentieth century.⁸² R. Jennings's advancement to the living of

⁷⁹ Stone, 'Social Mobility in England 1500-1700'; Also see W.R. Owens (ed.), *Seventeenth Century England: A Changing Culture*, Volume 2, Modern Studies (Open University), p. 17.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 17.

⁸¹ W.R.O. B A. 2302/49/10/99.

⁸² Riland, Bedford, *History of Sutton Coldfield*, p. 34; *Rectors of Sutton Coldfield*, p.74.

- **1689**-John Riland. M.A.
- **1720**-Richard Riland. M.A.

Arrow in 1695/6 helped his son Joshua become rector of Exhall and then Arrow in succession to his father.⁸³ William Eades was instituted at St. Mary's, Warwick, in 1705 on the death of his father, John Eades (1687-1705). Edward Welchman, rector of Lapworth from 1689 until 1739 and again not locally born, produced a son, John, who was born at Lapworth. John Welchman was vicar of Tanworth-in-Arden from 1726. Indeed, the Welchman family were a notable clerical family in Warwickshire in the eighteenth century, holding the livings of Tanworth, Lapworth, Solihull and Preston Bagot. As mentioned above, Edward Welchman's son, John, was the vicar of Tanworth from 1706 until 1761 and his nephew was rector of Preston Bagot. What is more, in the long term J. Inett's presentation to the living of Nuneaton served as the basis for a clerical career for at least two of his sons.⁸⁴ Salter concluded that clergymen with clerical fathers comprised a significant part of the clerical body; twenty-one per cent in 1662 rising to thirty-two per cent by 1740.⁸⁵ Without a doubt, a self-perpetuating clerical class seems to have been emerging in the Forest of Arden.

It may have been no accident that educational provision was quite substantial in our region. The Forest of Arden had several flourishing grammar schools (Solihull, Warwick, Sutton Coldfield and Birmingham). These were church foundations and were nearly all presided over by clerical headmasters, providing the universities with numerous well-qualified candidates for the ministry. Richard Jago, son of the rector of Beaudesert, went to Solihull school and

-
- **1758**-Richard Bisse Riland. M.A.
 - **1790**-John Riland. M.A.
 - **1822**-William Riland Bedford. M.A.
 - **1850**-William, Kirkpatrick Riland Bedford. M.A.

⁸³ Salter. 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p. 35.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 35.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*. p. 53.

‘owing to his father’s lack of means he was entered as a servitor⁸⁶ at University College, Oxford, taking his M.A degree from there on 9 July 1739’.⁸⁷ Once a graduate, family connections could prove the basis for a flourishing career. William Vyse received his M.A. from Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1733, the same year that he became rector of St. Philip’s, Birmingham. He was made Archdeacon of Salop in 1735 at the early age of twenty-six. His rapid promotion may have been due to family connections; his wife was the daughter of the then Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, Richard Smallbroke.⁸⁸ Similarly, Simon Archer, born in Edgbaston, succeeded Ralph Hodges as vicar of Tanworth-in-Arden in 1676, no doubt through the benign interest of the patron, his cousin Thomas Archer. Finally, William Thomas’s advancement to the rectory of Exhall in 1698 was made possible by his family’s connections to Lord Chancellor Somers.

Dr Jacob’s study of Church and Society in Norfolk concluded that significant numbers of clergy lived in market towns where they might gain intellectual, social and perhaps spiritual stimulation and from whence they might satisfactorily serve their country parishes.⁸⁹ The evidence from the Forest of Arden during the period covered in this study indicates that the majority of clergymen in both the deanery of Arden and Warwick lived in or close to their parishes. Those that did reside in towns, such as Edward Welchman of Lapworth, who went to live at Solihull in his dotage, and Thomas Gibson of Grendon, who found Oxford more to his taste left their parishes in the hands of a curate. There were also those, like Thomas Bray of Sheldon, whose other work took them away from their parishes and again curates were put

⁸⁶ A servitor was a student who was prepared to act as a menial in exchange for his tuition.

⁸⁷ W. Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden: An Ancient Market Town* (Buckingham, 1946), p. 119.

⁸⁸ Feeney, *St Philip’s*, p. 6b.

⁸⁹ W.M. Jacob, ‘Church and Society in Norfolk, 1700-1800’, in J. Gregory and J.S. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church*, p. 195.

in charge. On balance, though, these incumbents were from the more prosperous parishes and could by means of their financial independence afford to pay for a resident curate to perform the duties of the parish.

Although Bishop Lloyd sometimes ordained a man deacon one Sunday, priest the next Sunday, and instituted him to a living 'before a week was out', he was very particular as to whom he ordained into the priesthood.⁹⁰ Like other bishops at this time (Gibson and Wake at Lincoln, Kidder and Hooper at Bath and Wells and Kennett at Peterborough)⁹¹ Lloyd had high standards. The bishop seems to have examined his candidates thoroughly⁹² and this may be one reason for the low number of non-graduate incumbents among his clergy during his years at both Lichfield and Coventry and Worcester. At almost every ordination he refused certain candidates. In his diary, Francis Evans gives a clear indication that the bishop scrutinised his ordinands thoroughly: 'Thomas Green, Deacon by Bp Gardner Mich[allmas], [16]98, B.A. of Christ's Coll[ege]. In Camb[ridge]. Aged 26, curate of Stratford-upon-Avon, desired to be ordained Priest, but upon his Examina'on my Lord found him insufficient and refused to admit him'.⁹³ Likewise, 'Gyles, Schoolm[aster] of Great Witley, desired to be admitted into Deacon's orders, but was refused for insufficiency'.⁹⁴ Bishop Chandler of Lichfield and Coventry was just as particular; in a letter dated 1719 he voiced his concerns to Archbishop Wake about one Jonas Elwood who, upon enquiry, was suspected of irregularity:

⁹⁰ A. Tindal Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717: Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet* (London, 1952) , p.202-3; Rev. D. Robertson, 'Dairy of Francis Evans, Secretary to Bishop Lloyd 1699 to 1706', *Worcestershire Historical Society*, 1903 , p.x,

⁹¹ W. Marshall, 'Episcopal Activity in the Hereford and Oxford Diocese, 1660-1760', *Midland History*, 8, 1983, pp. 109-10.

⁹² Robertson, 'Dairy of Francis Evans', p.x.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 101.

I have lately driven one Elwood out of my diocese. He pretended deacons' orders from the last bishop of Meath in Ireland, and came last from Newport Pagnell where he was curate whilst your grace was at Lincoln. He was only deacon, and his orders bore great marks of forgery, I therefore consulted the present bishop of Meath about him, and having no satisfaction from him that he was ever ordained, (his name not being in the register, which yet was deficient about the time he said he was ordained), and certain proofs that he was a very ill man in Ireland, I inhibited him and he is now gone Londonwards to herd, as he gives out with Dissenters.⁹⁵

Evans' diary illustrates Bishop Lloyd's anxiety that men should be sufficiently well read before taking charge of a parish. Lord Plymouth presented a certain Mr Bell to the living of Tardebigge. Although he was a graduate, the bishop would not institute him until he had solemnly promised to apply himself to the study of the 'Holy Scriptures and such books as the Bishop should think necessary'.⁹⁶ It seems clear that Bishop Lloyd was determined to maintain academic standards at the time of ordination and afterwards. The Church hierarchy was not ignorant of the criticisms levelled at the type of training given at the universities. Nineteenth-century commentators often quoted John Eachard,⁹⁷ who in the 1690s criticised the lack of pastoral instruction given to the clergy at the universities. However, as has been shown above, after the Restoration the M.A (where theological studies were pursued) became the most common degree among the clergy of the Forest of Arden. Likewise, Episcopal visitation charges, particularly those of Lloyd and Stillingfleet, stressed that a clergyman's

⁹⁵ Quoted in N. Sykes, *Church and State in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1934), p. 224.

⁹⁶ Robertson, 'Diary of Francis Evans', p. x.

⁹⁷ J. Eachard, *The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy* (1670).

commitment to ongoing scriptural and theological study was vital to the success of his pastoral work.

Pastoral Duties

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Church was once a byword for pastoral neglect. The standard of pastoral care provided by the eighteenth-century Church of England received a notoriously bad press both from its contemporary critics and from its Victorian successor. Modern historians, however, less partisan than their nineteenth-century predecessors, have taken a kinder view. Recent studies, in particular, those of Dr. Jacob and Viviane Barrie-Curien, suggest that most clergymen at this time were conscientious in their pastoral duties. Although acknowledging the survival of 'long-lamented evils' such as pluralism and non-residence in the country parishes, in her study of the clergy in the diocese of London Viviane Barrie-Curien suggested that solutions were found to ensure a degree of pastoral care and that, in the diocese of London at least, the close proximity of livings, the small number of inhabitants and a great number of curates mitigated many structural problems. She did, however, conclude that this model did not, or could not, have functioned in other parts of the country, for example the northern England or Wales.⁹⁸

Arthur Warne, in his study of Devon, also shows that, in the diocese of Exeter, there was no evidence that the parishes were pastorally neglected according to the standards of the day. Dr. Warne, indeed, demonstrated that in the rural areas of Devon the pastoral care was excellent

⁹⁸ V. Barrie-Curien, 'The Clergy in the Diocese of London in the Eighteenth Century', in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England*, pp. 86-109.

in relative terms.⁹⁹ The rehabilitation of the pastoral record of the eighteenth-century Church of England also owes something to the publication of primary sources and records, in particular the work of Mark Smith for the Hampshire Record Society entitled 'Doing the Duty of the Parish: Surveys of the Church in Hampshire 1810' (2004). In the light of such conclusions, Dr. Jacob has suggested that, in the country as a whole, the majority of clergymen demonstrated 'genuine devotion to duty, charity, and likewise a clear understanding of their parishioners' wishes.'¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to note that John Wesley paid tribute to the Church of England clergy of his day. He wrote:

It must be allowed, that ever since the Reformation, and particular in the present century, the behaviour of the clergy in general is greatly altered for the better...Most of the Protestant clergy are different from what they were. They have not only more learning of the most valuable kind, but abundantly more religion.¹⁰¹

There is, nevertheless, a lingering temptation to point to the pastoral failures of the parish clergy, for, as mentioned above, it was in their pastoral work that the eighteenth-century Church was most criticised, being viewed as generally 'lethargic and somnolent'.¹⁰² To combat negative attitudes towards the clergy of his diocese Bishop Stillingfleet of Worcester suggested that:

⁹⁹ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁰ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 21; Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon*, p. 50.

¹⁰² Walsh, and Taylor, 'The Church and Anglicanism in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century', in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor (eds), *The Church of England*, p.13.

The best thing we can do to recover the Honour of Religion, and to set our Profession above *Contempt*, is to apply ourselves seriously and conscientiously to do our Duties. For if others find that we are in earnest, and make it our great Business to do all the Good we can, both in the Pulpit and out of it: If we behave ourselves with Gravity, Sobriety, Meekness and Charity which becomes so holy a Profession, we shall raise ourselves above the common Reproaches of a spiteful World: And do what lies in us, to stop the Mouths at least, if not to gain the Hearts of our Enemies.¹⁰³

The Forest of Arden certainly did have some incumbents who would be regarded as failures in their pastoral duties. For example, the churchwardens of the parish of Elmdon presented their rector, Abraham Bourn, in 1674 for ‘not catechising young people not for all ye time’ and also ‘for not having one Sacrament in all ye whole year and for not saying divine service upon the [30th] of January being the day of the late Kings Martyrdom’.¹⁰⁴ The notorious behaviour of Bourn led him to be presented again in 1678 for neglect of the ‘parsonage house’, not keeping a ‘registor book’ and not celebrating the Holy Communion of the Lords Supper in the church of Elmdon ‘against 21st cannon’.¹⁰⁵ The Worcester diocese can also claim its share of negligent ministers. In 1684, Timothy White, vicar of Alcester, could not pass up the opportunity of commenting on John Whittell of Coughton. He believed he was ‘a vicar of very ill repute’.¹⁰⁶ At Ipsley in 1693, the rector, T. Haughton, was cited for non-residency, the churchwardens claiming that the cure of souls there ‘has bin much

¹⁰³ *Directions for the Conversation of the Clergy: Collected from the Visitation Charges of the Right Reverend Father in God, Edward Stillingfleet, DD: Late Lord Bishop of Worcester* (1710), p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ L.R.O. B/V/5/1.

¹⁰⁵ L.R.O. B/C/5/1.

¹⁰⁶ Morgan, ‘Inspections of Churches’, p. 15.

neglected'.¹⁰⁷ Thomas Keyt, minister of Binton, 1674 to 1690, was said to have lived 'three miles away; he performs no weekday services and no celebration of Holy Communion since he came'.¹⁰⁸ Both Keyt and Whittell were later deprived of their livings.

In spite of this, we can also shed a more favourable light on the clergy in pursuit of their pastoral duties. From the registers kept by men such as Thomas Dugard, minister of Barford,¹⁰⁹ and his neighbour Thomas Pilkington, vicar of Claverdon, we get a picture of dedicated men who knew their parishioners well.¹¹⁰ Both men made personal comments at the burial services of many of their parishioners, which we may assume reflected a close relationship between the incumbent and his flock.¹¹¹ What's more, until his deprivation as a Nonjuror, John Kettlewell:

Visited the sick and assisted them, both Corporally and Spiritually, and besides Preaching, Catechising, Visiting, and all other Duties of his Place; he Dispersed Books of Religion and Devotion into poor families, which were in a short time supplied with Bibles and the whole Duties of Man, with other Pieces adapted to their Necessities and Capacities.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ W.R.O. BA 2302/59/11920.

¹⁰⁸ Morgan, 'Inspections of Churches', p. 48.

¹⁰⁹ Barford officially fell in the Kineton Deanery, but was a close neighbour of Claverdon in the Deanery of Warwick.

¹¹⁰ Salter 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p. 102.

¹¹¹ B.R.L. 177/434. Sermon preached for Lady Alice Lucy, 1648; W.C.R.O. DR1/1. Funeral comments made by Thomas Pilkington vicar of Claverdon 1629-1685; See also Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman', pp. 71-89.

¹¹² *A Complete Collection of the Works of Reverend and Learned John Kettlewell, B.D: Formerly Vicar of Coleshill in Warwickshire*, 1, 1739, p. 24.

Nevertheless, although Kettlewell was ‘much esteemed and Reverenced among the Better Sort’ in Coleshill, he did incur the ‘displeasure of some who hated to be reformed; or not to suffer for the Truths Sake’.¹¹³

Churchwardens’ presentments can also throw light on how successful the clergy were in the pursuance of their pastoral duties. The archdeacon visited his deaneries every year and episcopal visitations took place in the bishop’s first year in office and (at least notionally) every third year thereafter. The churchwardens would travel to a nearby town to answer questions about Church matters including the conduct of their minister. Favourable answers ranged from the straightforward (as in the presentment for Arrow in 1702, which stated that their minister was ‘very well qualified and very well approved [of] by all [in] our said parish’),¹¹⁴ to the more elaborate (as at Claverdon, where in 1714 their minister was said to be ‘qualified according to the laws of this Realm, lawfully inducted, preaches every Lords Day...he is in all things conformable to the Church of England with the Ceramonises there of and is a man of a ...peaceable and emply life’).¹¹⁵ The incumbent had no real place in the parish unless he won the support and the confidence of the community. Churchwardens’ presentments for both the deaneries of Arden and Warwick indicate that the majority of the region’s ministers were performing in line with their parishioners’ expectations of them.

In addition, Dr. William Thomas, who produced the second edition of Sir William Dugdale’s *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1730), provided ample evidence of many rectors and vicars who dedicated their working lives to the service of many a country parish in the Forest of Arden

¹¹³ *A Complete Collection of the Works of Reverend and Learned John Kettlewell*, p. 27.

¹¹⁴ W.R.O. B.A. 2289/1 807 (xi).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* 2608 807 (x).

region. Thomas included tombstone inscriptions that testify not only to the good works of the majority of Arden incumbents¹¹⁶ but also to their virtues. On a cautionary note, however, it must be added that Thomas was writing at a time of heightened anti-clerical feeling and had found Dugdale's account of the Warwickshire clergy 'very imperfect', noting that 'there was a necessity of going over the Work again... correcting the Mistakes of those inserted'.¹¹⁷ Thomas' sympathies were, no doubt, with the Tories and thus, in Thomas' edition, the clergy and the Church of his time were portrayed in a very favourable light. The language of Thomas's edition might have been adulatory, but Thomas maintained that 'I have stuck as close to Truth as I could'.¹¹⁸ Still, an inscription on a tombstone can give us an insight into what the laity actually thought of a clergyman. For example, on a flat stone within the rails of the communion table of Aston parish church is the inscription:

William Pershore, MA. Vicar of this church, here where he spent his life in pious, diligent and learned labours, fell a sleep sooner than all good men desired- Whose conversation men of letters, Whose wise counsels his friends, Whose most holy advise his parishioners, Whose singular benevolence the poor now greatly miss. He died 27th June 1696, aged 32.¹¹⁹

The Sunday service was only one of the many duties a conscientious clergyman was expected to perform. Thomas Secker, whose charges were a pastoral handbook for ordinands

¹¹⁶ Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued... by William Thomas*, D.D. 2 vols (1730).

¹¹⁷ Jenkins, 'Dr Thomas's Edition of Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*', p. 18.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ Rev. V. Eliot, *Aston Parish Church: Its Ancient History and Modern Restoration* (Birmingham, 1889).

until well into the nineteenth century, emphasised this fact. According to Secker, parishioners had a right to expect that their incumbent would be:

Always at hand, to order the disorderly, and countenance the well-behaved, to advise and comfort the diseased and afflicted, to relieve or procure relief for the necessitous, to compose little differences, and discourage wrong customs in the beginning, to promote friendly offices, and to keep up an edifying and entertaining conversation in the neighbourhood.¹²⁰

Churchmen in all periods considered the visitation of the sick an especially serious duty. The fourth Canon of 1603 required that ‘when any person is dangerously sick in any parish the minister or curate, having knowledge thereof, shall resort unto him or her to instruct and comfort them in their distress.’¹²¹ It was not only the Evangelical clergy of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who appreciated the unique opportunities provided by the Prayer Book’s order to visit the sick. Clearly, this was an ideal opportunity to save the souls of their parishioners by enabling them to make a full confession of their sins and to receive absolution. This was pointed out by the author of one clerical handbook, who directed the clergyman to:

¹²⁰ Quoted in Walsh and Taylor, ‘The Church and Anglicanism in the ‘long’ Eighteenth Century’, in Walsh, Haydon and Taylor (eds), *The Church of England*, p.14.

¹²¹ Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, pp. 121-2.

Watch for the hour of sickness or sorrow; seasons which are directed by a gracious Providence to soften the stony heart and give us an opportunity of making some impression.¹²²

The case of the Hon Henrietta Knight, Lady Luxborough, sheds light on the importance placed on the saving of souls. Lady Luxborough had lived in Ullenhall (in the deanery of Warwick) from 1736, when she was removed from London for ‘improper conduct’. She was classed as a ‘free thinker in religious matters’, known locally as a ‘female Bolingbroke’. However, William Holyoake, rector of Oldberrow and curate of Ullenhall, who attended her the night she died, confirmed that she died in the Christian religion. Relating to a friend her last hours, he wrote:

The night she died I read the Recommendatory Prayer to her; and I hope she is perfectly happy though she had so great troubles and afflictions in this life...Not long before her death she had received the Sacrament with great devotion.¹²³

As Dr. Jacob has pointed out, lay people very much expected the clergy to visit the sick and pray with them.¹²⁴ At Hatton, a poorly endowed living in the diocese of Worcester, the churchwardens reported with satisfaction that their minister, T. Heywood, was ‘very frequent

¹²² Russell, *The Clerical Profession*, p. 122.

¹²³ Quoted in, Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden, an Ancient Market Town* p.144. Lady Luxborough was the half-sister of the statesman Henry, First Viscount Bolingbroke, and is said to have inclined to her brother’s way of thinking in religious matters: that of a free thinker. She had caused a scandal in 1736 by having an affair outside marriage. The consequence was her removal to Ullenhall. She lived there separated from her husband, for the remainder of her life. She was not very complimentary in her appraisal of the local clergy, referring to Thomas Hall, curate of Henley as ‘the little fat, oily man of God’.

¹²⁴ Jacob, *The Clerical Profession*, p. 210.

in visiting the sick'.¹²⁵ The clergy, however, might not always be so diligent in discharging their obligation to visit the sick. In a letter of January 1712 to an unknown correspondent in Worcester, the curate of Ullenhall and Henley-in-Arden, J. Parry, wrote that, 'I have been very much employed in visiting the sick'. This letter, however, contained further significant details. Parry continued by stating that his great employment was on account of:

Many of the neighbouring clergy are very much afraid of the sickness and smallpox. I have been sent for as far as Sambourn, though it was five miles from Henley and myself not well. I thank God I walked so far with the greatest comfort and alacrity, and administered the sacrament to a man and his wife... I thank God I am not afraid to visit the sick and bury the dead.¹²⁶

Clearly complaining that his clerical neighbours were not willing to take on such duties, Parry concluded his letter thus: 'if you please to order two or three of the neighbouring clergy to visit I shall be obliged to you'.¹²⁷ What Mr Parry's colleagues would have made of his comments is open to conjecture. It must be stressed, however, that in the deanery of Warwick it was common practice for incumbents to serve adjacent parishes as curates and, at a time of great distress, their resources may have been stretched.

Although not a prescribed duty in the Prayer Book, clergymen were also commonly interested in their parishioners' state of health. George Herbert's comments in 1652 that a

¹²⁵ W.R.O. BA 2289/10/V11.

¹²⁶ Quoted in Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden*, pp. 82-3.

¹²⁷ Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden*, pp. 82-3.

parson should ‘desire to be all to his parish, and not only a pastor, but also a physician’¹²⁸ serves to illustrate the importance of gaining the support and confidence of the community. From the diary of John Ward, vicar of Stratford in the latter part of the seventeenth century, we have an insight into a clergyman who had a considerable local practice as a physician.¹²⁹ An interest in medicine, therefore, could only enhance the clergyman’s local standing. The epitaph of Standford Wolferstan, vicar of Wootton Wawen in 1676, reads: ‘To souls and bodies too, he medicine gave: Like his great master, willing to save’.¹³⁰ From the beginning of his incumbency in 1629 until his death in 1685, Thomas Pilkington of Claverdon also showed an interest in medical matters. Pilkington noted in his parish register not only the cause of death of many of his parishioners, but also any peculiar bodily infirmities, such as Samuel Bacon, ‘taken of a black cataract in the eyes’, or Richard Rogers, who suffered from a ‘lame hand’.¹³¹ It is also interesting to note that Bishop Lloyd of Worcester also granted licences to surgeons, an example being ‘Henry Chance of Mary Cleeve, in the parish of Bidford, [who] was licensed by the Chanc[ellor] to practise chirurgery by letting of blood and drawing of teeth, having subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles’.¹³²

Another aspect of voluntary clerical benevolence that helps us to gain a real insight into the ministry of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century incumbent is that of alms-giving. One can find evidence that this duty could be treated very seriously from the example of John Ryland, rector of Birmingham from 1665 to 1672. Ryland, known in Birmingham as ‘that

¹²⁸ G. Herbert, *The Country Parson, his Character and Rule of Life* (1652).

¹²⁹ Styles, ‘A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman’, p. 74.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Robertson, ‘Diary of Francis Evans’, p. xix.

holy man', was quick to support his parishioners and was always on hand to help out his flock both financially and spiritually. It was said of him that:

He was such a lover of peace, that if his Parishioners at Variance could not be brought to an Agreement, he would make up the Difference of his own Pocket. He carried a poor Man's Box always about him, and did not call himself Poor, but when that was empty; what he got for them he distributed with such wholesome Admonitions, that by relieving their bodies, he made way to save their souls.¹³³

Similarly, parishioners might ask their incumbent to act as a mediator if their disputes could not be resolved. John Kettlewell was said to have 'made up differences among his parishioners, who made frequent Applications to him upon that Account, he used a great deal of Plainness, in reproofing those whom he knew to deserve it'.¹³⁴

Clerical misbehaviour

There were many temptations to which a clergyman might be exposed. Bishop Burnet urged the clergy not to indulge in 'taverns and raillery' as both were likely to cause gross scandal.¹³⁵

Indeed, Bishop Stillingfleet stressed that his clergy must:

Lead your flock by example, as well as by your Doctrine...for people are naturally spies upon their Ministers, and if they observe them to mind nothing but the World all the week, they will not believe them in earnest.¹³⁶

¹³³ Bedford, *Three Hundred Years of a Family Living*, pp. 15, 16.

¹³⁴ *The Life of Mr. John Kettlewell*, II, p. 24.

¹³⁵ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p. 91.

Clearly, the minister had no real place in the parish unless he could win the support and confidence of the community. Drink and illicit sex were seen as the most discreditable temptations to which a clergyman might be exposed,¹³⁷ the diocesan authorities treating such cases extremely seriously. Walter Blandford, Bishop of Worcester from 1671 to 1675, once showed ‘a desire to do a kindness to the town of Alcester [namely] to remove a minister from amongst you, who hath too long bin a scandal to the parishioners and a reproach to his Function’.¹³⁸ Although the letter does not name the incumbent in person it was probably referring to the vicar of Alcester at this time, Henry Teonge, who had a file of depositions against him mainly concerning his drinking,¹³⁹ Teonge resigned Alcester in 1675 to become a naval chaplain. Similarly, a letter written by Bishop Lloyd of Worcester to a Mr Vernon, pluralist Vicar of Pillerton in Warwickshire and recorded by Francis Evans in his diary, illustrates that drunkenness would not be tolerated in his dioceses:

At my Visitation at Stratford in July 1702, appeared no curate for Pillerton. But the day after there came to me one that called himself Thomas Woodcock, and showed me Deacon’s orders to one of that name, telling me that you had hired him in Leicesters[hire] for the serving of that cure. But having had an account of him from several of that neighbourhood, that he was an idle drunken fellow, company for any Tinker or Cratcarier, and particularly that at Easter last he was

¹³⁶ Stillingfleet, *Charge*, p. 34.

¹³⁷ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 43.

¹³⁸ W.R.O. BA 2677/14.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* 2638.

drunk 4 days in Passion Week, and 4 days again in Easter Week; which charge he could not answer, I therefore forbade him serving any Cure in my Diocese.¹⁴⁰

Parallel research in other regions suggests that there were few presentments of clergy for drunkenness and sexual misconduct.¹⁴¹ Yet, it has been presumed that the laity had low expectations of the clergy and condoned their waywardness. The complaints above indicate that the laity viewed an excessive fondness for drink with particular disgust, especially when this weakness interfered with the performance of their liturgical duties. Amongst the complaints made against the Rev. Teonge was that his drinking caused his Alcester parishioners to ‘go tomorrow for Divine service’.¹⁴² Another well documented case mentioned in the consistory court records was that of William Sherman, vicar of Monks Kirby, who was petitioned against by his parishioners for his drunkenness, which was ‘frequent and publick’ and which sometimes prevented him from reading the service.¹⁴³

Dr. Jacob has rightly stressed that the laity had high expectations of their clergy, especially in the area of sexual probity.¹⁴⁴ In line with other local studies, Dr. Salter has indicated that the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Warwickshire clergy were, on the whole, well behaved in these matters, the consistory court records for the period up to 1714 revealing only a small number of accusations. The sexual morals of the notorious William Sherman,

¹⁴⁰ Robertson, ‘Diary of Francis Evans’, pp. 97, 8.

¹⁴¹ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon*; Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Latter Stuart*. In Devon Arthur Warne has shown that immorality charges were very infrequent and there were few cases of drunkenness, which involved the clergy. Dr Pruett indicates that only a small minority of clergy were charged with moral offences in Leicestershire.

¹⁴² W.R.O. B.A. 2638.

¹⁴³ L.R.O. B/C/5 Petitions.

¹⁴⁴ Jacob, *Lay People*, p. 42.

vicar of Monks Kirby were among those called into question. It was stated that a woman lived with him as his servant until 'her great belly beginning to appear', she was then entertained as his wife. The parishioners, however, complained that 'wee had no satisfaction that they were ever lawfully married, but violent presumptions to the contrary'.¹⁴⁵ Sherman was suspended at the insistence of the Earl of Denbigh and other local dignitaries,¹⁴⁶ a clear indication of the seriousness of sexual impropriety.

Accusations of this sort, however, must be treated with caution as personal feuds could be at the back of complaints against the clergy. The parish of Aston Cantlow supplied an example of this in 1697 when the Young family presented their vicar, Thomas Langley. It was alleged that Langley had fathered a bastard child on one Mary Young. The girl maintained the truth of these allegations and Mary's brother provided much of the circumstantial evidence to support her. As a consequence, there was much local pressure to press the case. In Langley's defence, a local worthy supplied evidence that 'because they mayn't have their Tythes at their own Rate... I do really belive this to be the ground of all their displeasure'. Indeed, it appears that there was a longstanding feud between the Young family and Langley over the payment of tithes. The petition was eventually withdrawn and the vicar was awarded costs.¹⁴⁷ It is always prudent, therefore, to look for some other reason than that cited against the incumbent as the real cause of complaint. If parishioners wanted to take a little revenge on their incumbent it was only a simple matter to find a minor rubric or canon to provide ammunition. The case of William Wight, incumbent of Arley (1704) in the deanery of Arden, illustrates this point. Wight had to answer to the charge of 'striking' and 'quarrelling' in the churchyard of

¹⁴⁵ L.R.O. B/C/5 Petitions; See also Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p.112.

¹⁴⁶ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p.112.

¹⁴⁷ W.R.O. BA 2638.

Arley.¹⁴⁸ Brawling and quarrelling in the churchyard was a serious offence for a clergyman, for it was punishable by suspension according to a sixteenth-century law. As Dr. Warne states, ‘nothing could be easier then to trap a parson by raising his wrath in the churchyard, produce a witness, and present him in court’.¹⁴⁹ An examination of the records reveals that these charges were brought against the background of an altercation between Wight and a number of his parishioners; however, the real source of complaint seems to have been exchange and enclosure of land.¹⁵⁰

The performance of a clandestine marriage¹⁵¹ was also a nasty trap for an unwary parson, for if he was discovered he could be punished heavily for the offence.¹⁵² John Goodwin, rector of Morton Bagot, serves to illustrate this point. Bishop Lloyd suspended Goodwin for conducting several clandestine marriages. It was said that he:

Marryed John Fisher, an Inhabitant of Evesham, and Mary Hobday, an Inhabitant of Henley, without any license so to do, tho’ neither of them were of his Parish; and tho’ Mary Hobday’s Banes were published at Wootton, which was mother

¹⁴⁸ L.R.O. B/C/5/1704.

¹⁴⁹ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁰ Salter, ‘Warwickshire Clergy’ .1, p.122.

¹⁵¹ T. Sharp, *The Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer and the Canons of the Church of England, so far as they Relate to the Parochial Clergy: Considered in a Course of Visitation Charges By Thomas Sharpe, D.D. Archdeacon of Northumberland*. MDCCLIII. Canon 62 states that, Ministers are not allowed to marry any persons without banns or licence. Neither shall any minister upon the like pain, under any pretence whatsoever, join any persons, so licensed, in marriage at any unreasonable times, but only between the hours of eight and twelve in the forenoon; nor in any private place, but either in the said churches, or chapels, where one of them dwelleth, and likewise in time of Divine Service. Nor when banns are thrice asked, and no licence in that respect necessary, before the parents or governors of the parties to be married (being under the age of 21) shall either personally, or by sufficient testimony, signify to him their consents given to the said marriage.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* A suspension of three years.

Church of Henley, yet Fisher's Banes were never published at Evesham, as they ought to have bin, therefore this was plainly a Clandestine marriage; and it was so much the worse, because, as I am informed, he marryed them before 8, tho' he had a License. He also marryed John Needs of Henley to a woman of Bromicham[Birmingham] Aston, neither of them being in his Parish, and tho' the Banes were never published at Aston, where the woman was an Inhabitant.¹⁵³

Although several local clergymen¹⁵⁴ petitioned the Bishop requesting that 'John Goodwin be freed from a suspension of three years which my Lord caused him to be put under and restore him to his Livelyhood',¹⁵⁵ Bishop Lloyd was adamant that the Goodwin's suspension be upheld for he had to give an account to the 'great Shepherd of Souls' and added sarcastically that:

It would do him hurt rather than good. For having done this in compassion to him, as you desire, I must afterwards, in justice to the Soules of the People, appoint him a Coadjutor, and that must be done by an Act of the Ecclesiastical Court, which will put him to much greater charge. The sparing of this charge by continuing the Suspension is really a favour, whatever he thinks of it.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Robertson, 'Diary of Francis Evans', p. 62.

¹⁵⁴ In a letter dated 13 December 1701 and included in Francis Evans diary, a list of the names of the clergymen who petitioned on behalf of John Goodwin is included. They are; Devereux Wilson, Rector of Oldburrough. Joshua Noxon, Rector of Ipsley. James Powell, Rector of Beoly. William Malines, Vicar of Coughton. Thomas Allen, Rector of Spennall.

¹⁵⁵ Robertson, 'Diary of Francis Evans', pp. 60-62.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

As bishop of Lichfield and Worcester, Lloyd was well known for disciplining his clergy; however, his no-nonsense approach was deeply resented and the bishop became very unpopular in both dioceses. Indeed, parishioners were known to intercede on behalf of their parson. Salter has shown that the parishioners of Sherbourne intervened on behalf of their curate, William Eades (Eades was also vicar of St. Mary's Warwick) in 1698. They stated that they had 'been little better than sheep without a shepherd' and that they could not 'sufficiently express the comfort and satisfaction we have had in his ministry'. Furthermore, they wished they 'might not loose him, in spite of him being unfortunately drawne into an unlawful marriage'.¹⁵⁷ Two inhabitants of Ullenhall made a similar petition in 1697, after their curate had been suspended. They asked that 'after he had acknowledged his offence [clandestine marriage] he should be licensed again'.¹⁵⁸

Although clandestine marriage was an offence that could be financially rewarding for the church courts,¹⁵⁹ Dr. Salter has shown that, in Warwickshire, churchwardens did not always produce evidence against guilty parishioners.¹⁶⁰ In part, this may have been due to extenuating circumstances, especially the fact that the parties involved were marrying to conceal a premarital pregnancy. Also, the clergymen who obliged tended to be poorly paid curates or those who held poorly endowed livings; thus, the temptation to pocket a substantial payment which might ease their straitened finances was considerable. The examples cited

¹⁵⁷ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, p.148.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*; W.R.O. BA 2302/31/6828.

¹⁵⁹ A. Tarver, *Church Court Records: An Introduction for Family and Local Historians* (Chichester, 1995), p. 41.

¹⁶⁰ Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy', 1, Reference 137, p. 193; Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Latter Stuarts*, p. 131.

above illustrate this point. The curates of Sherbourne received stipends that were well below average; by 1709 their payment was still only £11 6s per annum.¹⁶¹

Anti-clericalism

It must be noted that anti-clerical feeling was strong in many quarters throughout much of our period. In particular, it was running high in the 1690s when, within fashionable society, there was a move towards the new theology of Deism, and in the 1730s contributing, in the opinion of Norman Sykes, to an outbreak of ‘anti-clericalism in Parliament unparalleled since Henry VIII’s Reformation Parliament’.¹⁶² Dr. Jacob has emphasised that some eighteenth-century governments, much like their mediaeval predecessors, manipulated anti-clericalism for their own ends.¹⁶³ Grass roots opposition towards the clergy in rural areas is, however, less apparent. The picture typically painted concludes that ‘it was for the tithe-consuming clergy that the especial hatred of the rural community was reserved’.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, agricultural historians have perpetuated the myth of the clergy as being greedy tithe-collectors of the worst kind.¹⁶⁵ It is true that the Church was determined to preserve its ancient rights. Episcopal charges to the clergy contained frequent references to the need to preserve the rights of the incumbent. Richard Smallbroke, bishop of Lichfield and Coventry from 1731 to 1750, urged the clergy of his diocese to make meticulous terriers of their lands and tithes. New incumbents, he insisted, must quickly ensure that they discover what tithes were due to them so that they would not be defrauded by:

¹⁶¹ D.M. Barratt (ed) ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire Parishes’, *Dugdale Society*, 1, A-Li, 1955, p.xxx.

¹⁶² Quoted in N. Sykes, *Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, 1669-1748* (1926), p.149.

¹⁶³ Jacob, *Lay People*, pp.45-51.

¹⁶⁴ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), p.233; See also E. Evans, ‘Some Reasons for the Growth of English Rural Anti-Clericalism c.1750-c.1830’, *Past and Present*, 66, 1975.

¹⁶⁵ Barratt, ‘Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire Parishes’, 1, A to Li.

Those that are ready to make use of so an inviting an opportunity; who though very ignorant in other respects, are often very knowing in those affairs within the narrow limits of their own Parish, to which they have been bred and have confined their thoughts.¹⁶⁶

Tithe litigation was clearly an underlying tension within the parish and the quickest way to poison relations between clergy and parishioners. Dr. Warne, in his study of Church and society in Devon, has shown that disputes over tithes were the underlying cause of the majority of complaints against the clergy.¹⁶⁷ In addition, Eric Evans has pointed out that many clergymen were prepared to sacrifice 'parochial harmony for the assertion of tithe rights'.¹⁶⁸ Churchwardens were not always willing to co-operate with their parson and help produce documents that might strengthen their rector's hand. John Powell, rector of Lapworth in 1668, presented his churchwarden, John Robbins, 'for not producing the book of customs concerning the Rector's dues'.¹⁶⁹ This illustration may serve to highlight the strength of feeling upon this issue. Although dislike of tithes may have been one of the main causes of anti-clericalism in rural communities, we cannot by any means assume that all incumbents would have been viewed as parasites on their parishes. Indeed, by 1714 in the rural deanery of Warwick in the diocese of Worcester, regular offerings were only those due at Easter.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ R. Smallbroke, *Charge to the Clergy of Lichfield* (1732). Copy in the William Salt Library, Stafford. Quoted in Evans, 'Some Reasons for the Growth of English Rural Anti-Clericalism', p. 87.

¹⁶⁷ Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon*.

¹⁶⁸ Evans, 'Some Reasons', p. 66.

¹⁶⁹ Barratt, 'Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire Parishes', 1, p. xxiv. Illustration of what tithes and other offerings were due to the parish clergy, can give us an insight into one aspect of the relationship between the parson and his parishioners.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.xlii.

Tithe disputes, however, often masked other forms of anti-clerical feeling. Religious Nonconformity was often revealed in an unwillingness to pay tithes and attempts to collect often aroused bitterness. Ecclesiastical taxation was the subject of a great deal of animosity between Quakers and the established Church and many of those who refused to pay Easter offerings were Nonconformists. Disgruntled parishioners often chose to accuse their rector of improper behaviour or expose him for a failure to observe his duty. At Barford, the presentment of William and Frances Ryland by the rector, Thomas Dugard, for withholding tithe payments seems to have poisoned the relationship between Dugard and the Ryland family. It was noted that William made a disturbance in the church at the baptising of his last child and that he put his hat on in church.¹⁷¹ What is more, Frances spread malicious lies about the rector, causing her to be presented by Dugard as being a ‘malicious lyar and slanderer of myself’.¹⁷²

It would be misleading to give the impression that tithe payments were the only factor contributing to anti-clerical feeling, however. Bishop Stillingfleet noted in his visitation charge of 1696 that:

We live in an Age, wherein the conversations of the Clergy are more observed than their Doctrines. Too many are busy in finding out the Faults of the Clergy, the better to cover their own. And amongst such, priest-craft is become the most Popular Argument for their Infidelity... We live, likewise, in an Age, wherein the Contempt of the Clergy is too notorious not to be observed; but the true Reasons are not so well considered as they ought to be some, to increase the contempt of

¹⁷¹ An indication that the Ryland family were Quakers.

¹⁷² W.R.O. B.A. 2289/1/iii.

the Clergy, have given such Reasons of it, as seem to make it a light and testing matter. But truly it is very far from being so: For the contempt of Religion are oft-times both the cause and effect of it.¹⁷³

The local clergyman had to feel his way carefully in order to ensure that, in the course of his duties, he did not fall foul either of the law, his parishioners or the ecclesiastical authorities. There is evidence that some members of the clergy did not always understand this. One such clergyman was William Daggett, rector of St. Martin's, Birmingham in 1693. Daggett was known locally as the 'Priest Militant'.¹⁷⁴ William Hutton, upon writing his history of Birmingham in 1789, revealed that 'he is said to have understood the art of boxing better than that of preaching. His clerks often felt the weightier argument of his hand'. Hutton went on that:

Meeting a Quaker whose profession, then in its infancy, did not stand high in esteem, he offered some insults, which the other resenting, told him, 'if he were not protected by his cloth he would make him repent the indignity'. Daggett immediately stripped. 'There now, I have thrown off my protection'. They fought, but the spiritual bruiser proved too hard for the injured Quaker.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ *Directions for the Conversation of the Clergy: Collected from the Visitation Charges of the Right Reverend Father in God, Edward Stillingfleet, DD: Late Lord Bishop of Worcester* (1710), pp. 3, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Rev. A.T. Jenkins, *The Story of St. Martin's, Birmingham Parish Church* (Birmingham, 1925), p, 30.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p, 30.

It must be mentioned that William Hutton was an active Nonconformist and his views concerning the Reverend Daggett might be somewhat subjective, nevertheless, it does seem that William Daggett was one of a kind.

Conclusion

Part of the problem when assessing the pastoral work of the clergy is knowing what yardstick should be used to view their work. Negative judgements have often arisen from this being measured against nineteenth-century standards. Therefore, it is often claimed that the laity had very low expectations of the clergy and condoned any misconduct that might occur. The evidence, however, suggests that people had high expectations of their clergy and were particularly censorious of any sexual misbehaviour by them. Such lapses, the offences that could arouse the most vehement anti-clerical sentiments, seemed to be quite uncommon. In addition, presentments of clergy for drunkenness were also rare. Parishioners in the rural parishes of the Forest of Arden had clear expectations of the behaviour of their clergy. In the small, close-knit communities of the rural deanery of Warwick, it was difficult for the clergy to get away with much without other people knowing about it. Unpopular clerics, however, were sometimes accused of offences they may never have committed but, given the vulnerability of the clergy to the complaints of disgruntled parishioners over tithes and other issues, it is understandable that they were often treated in this way. These cases, however, were few and far between. Anti-clericalism in the two deaneries examined in this study is not the anti-clericalism of the English Enlightenment or of Whig legislators, but that of local jealousies and family and community conflict. In addition, there is little evidence of complaint by lay people about clergy failing to conduct Sunday service. In the poor parishes of the rural deanery of Warwick where many parishes were held in plurality, there seems to have been

adequate cover. A close grouping of livings and the interrelating of benefices and curacies enabled parishes to receive as many services as possible.

During the period between 1660 and 1740 the clergymen who held office in the Forest of Arden were nearly all Midland men and graduates of Oxford University. We can assume from this that the Forest of Arden clergy tended to be more Tory than Whig in their sentiments. In the average and better livings, once instituted, the incumbents usually remained until death. Plainly, not all the clergymen of our region were as pious as the worthy John Kettewell, vicar of Coleshill, who was said to be a:

Religious Observer of all the Festivals of the Church...He observed likewise the Days of Fasting and Humiliation, both those appointed by the Church, and those which were enjoyed by the Civil Authority. Wednesday and Fridays in Lent, he abstained from Flesh, and Drank small Beer, according to the Canon; he failed not to bid all Public Holy Days, and had Prayers both upon them, and their Eves, also upon Saturdays in the afternoon. .¹⁷⁶

One or two were rogues or misfits, but William Thomas proclaimed to Bishop Hough that the clergy under his authority, both at Lichfield and Coventry and at Worcester, cheerfully went about their labours and insisted that there was 'peace and serenity' amongst them. This may not always have been the case, but on the whole the clergy of the Forest of Arden were worthy men with the advantage of local knowledge of their flocks. They visited the sick and assisted them, both 'corporally and spiritually'; they preached, catechised and administered

¹⁷⁶ *The Life of Mr John Kettlewell*, II, p.24.

the Holy Communion. For the most part the clergy in the rural deanery of Warwick lived quietly in their parishes and ministered to their parishioners without incurring any comment at all, either good or bad. Similarly, the clergy in the emerging urban areas of the deanery of Arden shared a concern about the quality of worship that embraced rich and poor alike.

Conclusion

‘Spiritual lethargy’ and a ‘sluggish calm’.¹ These assertions are fairly typical of Victorian commentaries concerning the established Church from the Restoration to the eve of the evangelical awakening in the mid-eighteenth century. On the whole, Victorian commentators regarded their religious age as one of revival and reform and therefore saw the preceding era as one of stagnation. Arguably, they looked through the lens of their own prejudices and saw what came before as deficient. This thesis has aimed to redress the balance, arguing that the Church in the Forest of Arden at this time was much more effective and intrinsically involved with its parishioners, both spiritually and communally, than Victorian commentators have suggested. The church affected the majority of the people, most parishioners were married in the church and few could avoid burial by it. Indeed, traditions from an earlier period lingered on, such as the intimate involvement of the parish church in the distribution of charity and poor relief. These charities were administered and distributed by church officials and were centred upon the parish church. Church life in the period under review, therefore, was local rather than national but that is not to say that national events did not impinge on local affairs, as was evident during the reign of James II.

Until recently, few historians challenged the prevailing orthodoxy of a moribund Church. Revisionist accounts of the Church of England in the period under study, such as those by Dr. Jacob (*Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century*, 1996), and Dr. Gregory (*Restoration, Reformation and Reform 1660-1832: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese*, 2000) set out a more positive view about the continuing influence and vitality of the Church of England. This thesis supports the largely ‘optimistic’ viewpoint, and has attempted

¹ C.J. Abbey and J.H. Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 Volumes (1878).

to demonstrate the vitality of Anglicanism in the Forest of Arden in the eighty year period between 1660 and 1740.

Victorian commentators often point to the failure of the post-Restoration Church on the grounds that it did not build new churches. They assumed that there was a direct relationship between the vitality of the Church and the number of churches built. This is misleading, because the number of new churches is not a barometer of the health of the Church. However, the rising urban population in Birmingham was a catalyst not only for building a new church (St. Philip's) but creating an entirely new parish, which could only be done by an Act of Parliament. Church historians make little of the fact that a new church and a new parish were created in Birmingham in 1715. Clearly, both the building of a new church and the formation of a parish in Birmingham must be considered as important factors when considering the strength of local Anglicanism during this period.

It was also commonly thought that a further sign of an ailing Church was the poor state of Church fabrics. However, the evidence adduced here suggests that there were considerable efforts to maintain church buildings. The concern of the bishops in both Lichfield and Coventry, and Worcester, for the preservation of the religious fabric of the parish was expressed in their visitation articles, reflecting their keen interest in the maintenance of church property and the fabric of the church itself. It has been illustrated in the preceding chapters that the laity, rich and poor alike, in the rural and emerging urban areas of the Forest of Arden were supportive and generous in maintaining and improving even the poorest of parish churches. By the end of the period, enlargements and additions to church buildings, as well as refurbishing of existing churches and the frequent construction of galleries, show the attempts

not only to accommodate changing religious ideas and fashions, but also to accommodate additional worshippers.

The clergy during the period under study have long been associated with low standards of pastoral care and with the negligent performance of their pastoral duties. The findings of this study suggest that although there were a small minority of 'delinquent' clergymen such as Abraham Bourn, Rector of Elmdon (1674), the majority of the clergy under review were diligent in the performance of their duty, and the laity was well provided for in terms of religious worship. In a substantial number of Forest of Arden parishes, a resident incumbent conducted two Sunday services. Where this was not the case, the appointment of a curate or the use of the incumbent in a neighbouring parish meant that adequate provision for worship was usually made. Indeed, the clergy performed their canonical duties in a manner which was generally acceptable to the church's lay membership. Moreover, the beneficed clergy of the region were overwhelmingly graduates and they were adequate in number to serve the population. Significantly, at the start of the period, the majority of the clergy in the region were able to put down roots which enabled them to deliver pastoral care based upon personal knowledge of their parishioners and their circumstances. Clerical dynasties were emerging in the region as the period commenced, one being at Sutton Coldfield, where the Riland family held the living well into the twentieth century.

Pluralism and non-residence were constant features of the post-Restoration Church in the area under study. However, this is not necessarily an indication of clerical abuse. The picture that emerges of the clerical estate in both the deaneries of Arden and Warwick shows remarkably high levels of clerical commitment. Where direct comparison is possible with

other regions of the country, the Anglican Church in the Forest of Arden was generally performing well in this area. J.L. Salter, in his study of the Warwickshire clergy, did not consider those incumbents who served adjacent parishes as curates to be pluralists. He stated that this way of serving small cures was a 'very common one, and to include such individuals would make pluralism appear even more common a phenomenon than it was'. On balance, this statement is accurate but broader issues are at stake. To get a reliable picture of the state of the Church at this time it is necessary to include what seems to have been a regional tradition dating back to the Middle Ages. It is also significant that the interrelationship of benefices and curacies provided incumbents in the deanery of Warwick with 'backup' in case of illness and short-term non-residence. Many pluralists in the region did take steps to ensure that their livings were properly served. The following parishes may be listed as those where, as a matter of course, at least one curate was employed as an assistant to a minister holding more than one living; Birmingham (St. Philip's), Coleshill, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield and St. Mary's, Warwick. Therefore pluralism was not an insurmountable problem.

Previous commentators have argued, on the basis of limited and rather general evidence, that the post-Restoration period was a time of anxiety, distress and economic hardship for many a diligent clergyman. There is little doubt that those living and working within the two deaneries under examination in this study were not immune from this. However, complaints of the poverty of at least a section of the parish clergy have been made from the Middle Ages to the present day. In order for some clergy to secure a suitable living, the performance of other duties had to be accepted by the authorities. The evidence from this study suggests that the 'clerical economy' described in Chapter Four, enabled clergymen to access a wide range of sources of income and appeared to be successful in augmenting their income from their

livings. In the main, clergymen were deriving an income from occupations that had a traditional association with the Church, teaching for example. More importantly, the long term trend in clerical incomes in the Forest of Arden was upwards. Improvements in the economic position of the clergy through initiatives such as Queen Anne's Bounty made them better off in real terms in 1740 than they had been in 1660.

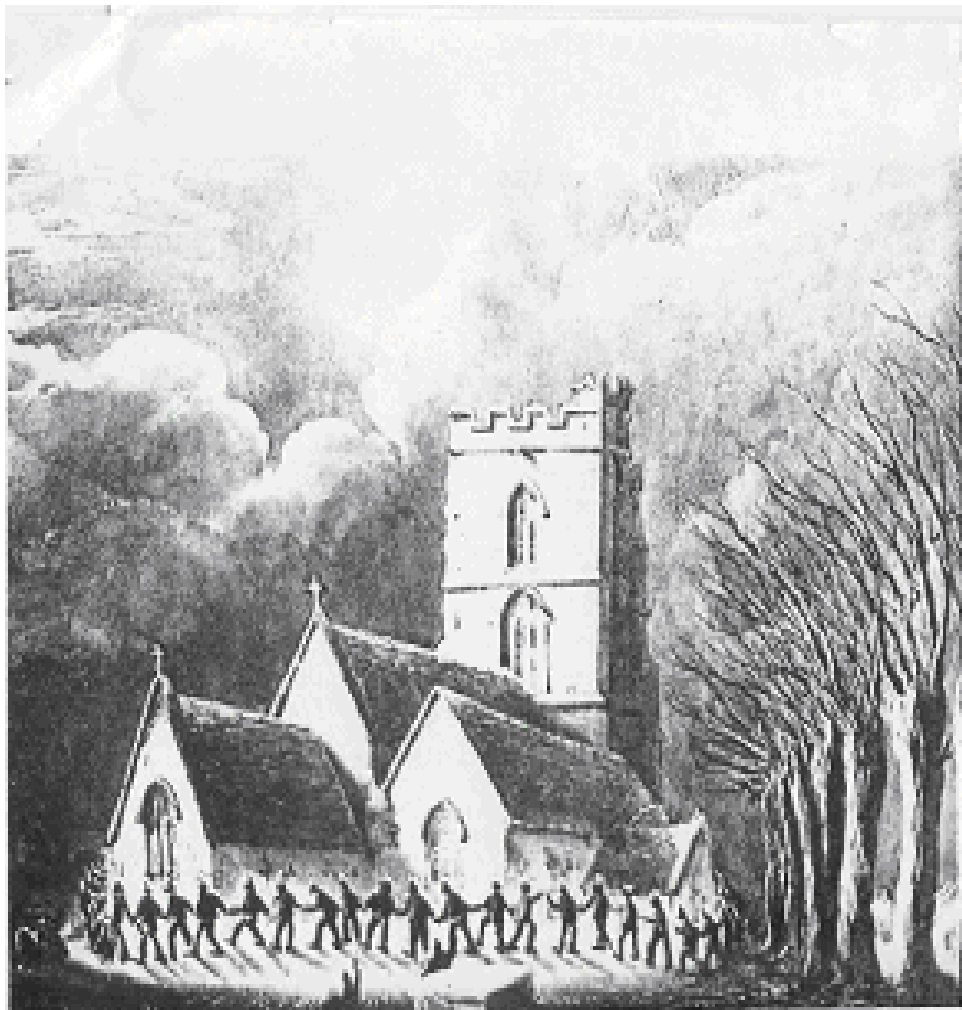
The provision of education was a way of inculcating Anglican principles among the young. Although educating the masses was not uniformly popular, there were those who recognised that they could promote Protestantism by increasing the ability to read and interpret the Bible. The Church of England in the region was well aware of this strategy, and its success in extracting funds from the laity to provide schools for the poor illustrates its strength and vitality. Likewise, the discipline of the church courts was a way of 'saving souls', which in turn would uphold church discipline. The limited evidence suggests that the archdeacon and consistory courts were an integral part of the lives of the people of the Forest of Arden. The courts were a way of upholding their rights and they commanded a good measure of popular support. Indeed, the courts could not have operated without a considerable degree of sympathy and cooperation from the laity.

Finally, this study questions the widespread assumption that the Toleration Act of 1689 led to an expansion of Dissent. At a national level, anti-Catholicism was a binding agent in society at this time, bringing Protestants together. The fear of Rome, which had appeared so menacing from the Reformation, slowly receded as the period came to a close, and might have receded more rapidly if the threat of Jacobitism and the prospect of a Catholic pretender had not kept it artificially alive. The desire to be a member of a unified church remained strong for

most people in the parishes of the Forest of Arden. Moreover, the myth that Nonconformity was mainly, if not solely, responsible for the development of Birmingham as an industrial town, appears to have been fabricated in the nineteenth century. Birmingham harboured a defensive and assertive Anglicanism which, however intolerant at times, succeeded in reconfiguring structures and revitalising educational provision. A Dissenting utopia it certainly was not.

This study of the Church of England in the Forest of Arden cannot provide, and would not presume to offer, definitive answers as to the national state of the Church at this time. It sets out to provide a contrast with and a complement to other local studies, thus adding to our growing store of knowledge about the Anglican Church in the late Stuart and early Hanoverian period. This study has illustrated that the Church of England in the Forest of Arden was a locally managed church and that it was able to accommodate the needs of the local population. More importantly, local Anglicanism in the eighty year period of this study was genuinely popular while also enjoying the considerable benefits of establishment.

**This picture shows the ancient annual ceremony of ‘clipping the church’
or dancing around it.**



Source: *Dancing around the Church*, W.W. Wheatley, 1848, taken from J.H. Bettey, *Church And Community: The Parish Church in English Life* (1979), p.113. This picture was painted at Rode, Somerset, on Shrove Tuesday night, 1848.

VALUE OF LIVINGS IN THE DEANERY OF WARWICK, 1535-1707

Benefice	1535	1586	1665	1707
Alcester R.	£14 2s 10½d	£40 0s 0d, with Beaudesert	£60	£32 14s 6½d
Arrow R	£10 10s 6d	£10 0s 0d	£40	
Aston Cantlow V.	£9 9s 7d	£80 0s 0d, with Kinwarton	£40	£35 6s 2½d
Beaudesert R.	£7 16s 0d	See Alcester	£60	
Bidford V.	£7 10s 7d	£20 0s 0d	£20	£20 15s 2½d
Billesley R.	£5 4s 5d	£20 0s 0d, with Haselor		£12 8s 0d
Binton R.	£7 9s 7d	£50 0s 0d	£80	
Budbrooke V.	£8 0s 0d	£13 6s 8d	£30	£49 0s 0d
Claverdon V.	£5 12s 0d	£25 0s 0d, with Norton Lindsey	£26	£36 18s 10½d
Coughton V.	£9 10s 7d	‘Better than £20 with Studley’	£14	£13 9s 6½d
Exhall R.	£8 17s 3d	£20 0s 0d	£70	
Haseley R.	£4 9s 4d	£20 0s 0d	8s	
Haselor V.	£6 13s 4d	See Billesley	8s	£10 1s 4d
Hatton C.		£10 0s 0d		
Henley-in-Arden C.				£9 16s 0d
Ipsley R.	£11 10s 7d		£46	
Kinwarton R.	£17 10s 11d	See Aston Cantlow	£80	
Lapworth R.	£9 9s 7d	£40 0s 0d	£80	

Morton Bagot R.	£6 0s 0d		£30	
Norton Lindsey C.		See Claverdon		£17 4s 0d
Oldberrow R.	£4 0s 0d	£13 6s 8d	£30	£44 11s 8d
Preston Bagot R.	£3 18s 0d	£20 0s 0d	£40	
Rowington V.	£7 11s 7d	£35 0s 0d	£40	£45 13s 4½
Salford Priors V.	£9 0s 0d	£20 0s 0d	£20	£28 10s 8d
Sherboure C		£9 0s 0d	£10	£3
Snitterfield V.	£8 0s 0d	£40 0s 0d	£60	
Spernall R.	£3 18s 0d	£13 6s 8d	£30	£37 9s 8d
Studley V.	£8 0s 0d	See Coughton	£13	£8 0s 0d
Tanworth V.	£6 13s 4d	£30 0s 0d	£20	£41 16s 4d
Temple Grafton C.	£6 3s 4d	£20		£5 5s 0d
Warwick St Mary V.	£20 0s 0d	£20 0s 0d	£80	
Warwick St Nicholas V.	£13 6s 8d	£13 6s 8d	£50	(1710). £200.
Wolverton R.	£7 10s 7d	£30 0s 0d	£30	
Wooton Wawen V.	£11 9s 7d	£40 0s 0d	£30	£33 8s 3d

Source: Ecclesiastical Terriers; Mary Ransome (ed.) *The State of The Bishopric of Worcester 1782-1808* (1968).

Abbreviations: R. rectory; V. vicarage; C. curacy.

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

Birmingham Reference Library

William Westley's Plan of Birmingham, 1731.

Church of England Record Centre, London.

QAB/7/2/1/25/3, 1727 Certificate confirming the annual value of the parish of Hatton

QAB/7/2/1/25/5, 1730 Certificate confirming the annual value of the curacy of Sherborne

Warwick County Record Office

CR136/B/3595; CR136 /B/3598; CR136/B3599; CR136/B/3600; CR136/B/3601;

CR136/B/3602; CR136/B/3606. Augmentations of Astley vicarage 1708-1780.

DR 133/95 A letter to Mr Henry Newman London, from Moses Hodges 1710.

DR.19/63-120 Astley Churchwardens' accounts

DR275/16, Spennall Churchwarden Accounts 1738-1867.

DR360/3 St. Nicholas, Warwick. Notes by F. Palmer, rector, 1825, about rebuilding the church in 1729-1732.

DR404/48, Fillongley, Churchwardens Accounts.

DRB64/63, Solihull, Churchwardens Accounts

DRB81, Coleshill, Churchwardens Accounts.

Worcester Record Office

BA2289/ 807(ix) Alverston Churchwardens' presentments

BA2289/807 (ii) Wolverton, Wotton Wawen, Warwick, St. Mary

BA2289/807 (iv) Alcester

BA2289/807 (xi) Arrow

BA2608/807 (x) Claverdon

BA2608/807.093 Spennall

Lichfield Record Office

B/C/2/77 A record of a court day, 12 February 1666/67.

B/C/5 /1708/97-109 Churchwardens' Presentments. Austrey, Berkswell, Aston, Coleshill

B/C/5 Chivers Cotton, 1711

B/V/5/1 Marton, Churchwardens Presentments 1673-1693

Elmdon, 1674, 76, 78, 80, 82.

Wasperton, 1673-6.

Arley, 1704.

B/V/2/5 Excommunication Book 18 September, 1661, 2 July 1667.

B/V/2/16 Excommunication Book, 1709-1812.

B/V/8 Penances, Absolutions and Dismissions, 1711-1786.

Published Sources: Periodicals

The Gentleman's Magazine

Published primary sources

An Account of Charity Schools Lately Erected in Great Britain and Ireland: With the Benefactions thereto; and of the Methods whereby they were Set Up, and are Governed. Also a Proposal for Enlarging their Number (London, 1706).

An Act for Building a Parish Church and Parsonage House, and making a New Church Yard and New Parish in Birmingham, to be called the Parish of St. Philip, in the County of Warwick (London, 1710).

V.T.J. Arkell, 'An enquiry into the frequency of the Parochial Registration of Catholics in a Seventeenth-Century Warwickshire Parish', *Local Population Studies*, 9, 1972.

J. Bacon, *Liber Regis, Thesaurus, Rerum Ecclesiasticarum* (London, 1786), 3 vols.

D.M. Barratt (ed), 'Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire, Parishes A to Li', *Dugdale Society*, 22, 1955.

D.M. Barratt (ed), 'Ecclesiastical Terriers of Warwickshire, Parishes Lo to W', *Dugdale Society*, 27, 1971.

T. Bateman, vicar of Whaplode, *The Ecclesiastical Patronage of the Church of England Containing an Alphabetical Register of all the Ecclesiastical Dignities and Benefices in the Gift of all the Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, and Chapter, in England, in each County Separate. Together with their Valuations in the Kings book* (London, 1783).

G.L. Bishop, 'Solihull Parish Book, 1525-1720', *University of Birmingham Department of Extra-Mural Studies*, 1973.

T. Bladon, *A Presbyterian Meeting, where there is a Parish Church there is no Schism: And they that go Thither are no Schismaticks: Being an Answer to Mr Abraham Jeacock, Curate in Birmingham* (London, 1702).

T. Blisse, D.D., *A Sermon Preach'd at St. Philip's Church in Birmingham, August 9, 1724 At the Opening of a Charity School, Built to Receive an Hundred Children* (London, 1725).

W. Bohum, *A Brief View of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, as it is at this Day Practised in England: Addressed to Sir Nathaniel Curzon Bart and the rest of the Gentlemen of the Committee Appointed by Parliament for Inquiring into the Abuses and Corruptions of Ecclesiastical Courts and Jurisdictions* (London, 1733).

Collection of Articles, Canons, Injunctions, Together with several Acts of Parliament concerning Ecclesiastical Matters; Some whereof are to be read in Churches (London, 1724).

Collection of certain Statutes in force...for the better caution of such as are inclinable to Delinquency (London, 1643).

Compleat Collection of the works of the Reverend and Learned John Kettlewell, B.D. Formerly Vicar of Coles-Hill in Warwick-shire, Volume I (MDCCXIX).

S. Degge, *The Parson's Counsellor, with Law of Tything: In Two Books, the Sixth Edition Corrected* (London, 1703).

Directions for the Conversation of the Clergy: Collected from the Visitation Charges of the Right Reverend Father in God, Edward Stillingfleet, D.D. Late Bishop of Worcester (London, 1710).

Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated... Revised... and Continued... by William Thomas, D.D., 2 vols* (1730).

- J. Ecton, *A State of the Proceedings of the Corporation of the Governours of the Bountie of Queen Anne, for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy, from their First Establishment in the Year 1704, to Christmas, 1718* (London, MDCCXIX).
- J. Ecton, *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum, Being An Account of the Benefices in the Several Dioceses in England and Wales, As they now Stand Chargeable with, or Lately were Discharged from the Payment of First-Fruits and Tenths* (London, 1742), third edition.
- A.E. Everitt, 'Aston Church Churchwardens Accounts', *Birmingham and Midland Institute Archaeological Section Transactions*, 1870, pp.17-21.
- Generosus, *The Nature of Patronage and the Duty of Patrons, Consider'd in Three Letters Published in the Weekly Miscellany* (London, 1735).
- E. Gibson, *Directions given by Edmund Lord Bishop of London to the Masters and Mistresses of the Charity Schools within the Bills of Mortality...London...St. Paul's November the 14th. 1724* (London, 1724).
- J. Gregory (ed.), 'The Speculum of Archbishop Thomas Secker', *The Church of England Record Society*, ii, 1995.
- G. Herbert, *A Priest To the Temple, or, The Countrey Parson his Character and Rule of Holy Life* (London, 1652).
- H.C. Johnson (ed.), *Warwick County Records, Quarter Sessions Records, Trinity, 1682, to Epiphany, 1690*, 8, 1953.
- Jura Ecclesiastica: or a Treatise on the Ecclesiastical Laws and Courts by a Barrister of the Middle Temple*, Volume II (London, MDCCXLII).
- T. Kemp, 'Warwick Registers' *Birmingham Archaeological Society Transactions and Proceedings*, XLV, 1919.

- B. Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefit, with an Essay on Charity and Charity- Schools and a Search into the Nature of Society* (London, 1728).
- G. Miede, *The Present State of Great Britain, and Ireland. In Three Parts...With lists of the Present Officers in Church and State; and of Both Houses of Parliament: Also the Present State of His Majesty's Dominions in Germany. The Seventh Edition corrected* (London, 1731).
- P. Morgan (ed.), 'Inspection of Churches and Parsonage Houses in the Diocese of Worcester in 1674, 1676, 1684 and 1687', *Worcester Historical Society, New Series*, 12, 1986.
- S. Nicolls, *An Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1746 and 1756* (London, 1757).
- S. Palmer, *The Nonconformist's Memorial: Being an Account of the Ministers, who were Ejected or Silenced after the Restoration, Particularly by the Act of Uniformity, which Took Place on Bartholomew-day, Aug. 24, 1662* (London, MDCCLXXV).
- M. Ransome (ed.), 'The State of the Bishopric of Worcester 1782-1808', *Worcestershire Historical Society, New Series*, 6, 1968.
- S.C. Ratcliff and H.C. Johnson (eds.), *Warwick County Records: Quarter Sessions Records, Easter, 1674, to Easter, 1682*, 7, 1946.
- Rev. D. Robertson (ed.), 'Diary of Francis Evans, Secretary to Bishop Lloyd, 1699-1706', *The Worcestershire Historical Society*, 1903.
- Sermon Preached to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, At St. Mary-le-Bow, on Monday January the 4th 1724: By the Right Reverend Farther in God Edward Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.*

T. Sharpe, DD., Archdeacon of Northumberland, *The Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer and the Cannons of the Church of England, so far as they relate to the Parochial Clergy, Considered in a course of Visitation Charges* (London, 1753).

Short Account of the Charity School in St Philip's Church Yard in Birmingham, From its Institution in 1724 to 1806 (Birmingham, 1806).

Edward, Stillingfleet, *The Bishop of Worcester's Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, In his Primary Visitation begun at Worcester, sept. 11. 1690* (London, 1691).

J. Talbott, D.D., *The Christian Schoolmaster: Or The Duty of those who are Employ'd in the Publick Instruction of Children Especially in Charity Schools* (London, 1707).

The Life of Mr John Kettlewell, Part II of his Ministry while Vicar of Coles-Hill, till his Deprivation (London, 1739).

The Reports of Charity Commissioners: Relating to the County of Warwickshire 1819-1837 (London, 1890).

S. Timmins, 'Ansley Parish Accounts, 1672-1722', *Birmingham and Midland Institute Archaeological Transactions*, 17, pp, 1-17, 1891.

W. Watson, *The Clergy-Man's Law: or, the Complete Incumbent: Collected from the 39 Articles... and Common-Law Cases, relating to the Church and Clergy of England: ... In Two Volumes* (London, 1712).

I. Watts, *Sermons, Discourses and Essays, on Various Subjects: An Essay towards the Encouragement of Charity Schools, Particularly among Protestant Dissenters, Volume II* (London, 1753).

W. Willets, *Christian Education: Being the Substance of Two Sermons on Tit. I.6. With Familiar Dialogues betwixt a Parent and his Child, on the Plan down in theses Discourses* (London, 1750).

Secondary Sources: Local

- A. Baynes, *Two Centuries of Church Life, 1715-1915, St Philip's Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1915).
- V. Bird, *A Short History of Warwickshire and Birmingham* (London, 1977).
- J.T. Bunce, 'St. Martin's Church', *Birmingham and Midlands Institute Archaeological Section Transactions*, 1870.
- J. Burman *The Story of Tanworth in Arden, Warwickshire* (London, 1930).
- P. Chatwin, 'The Rebuilding of St Mary's Church, Warwick', *Transactions Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 65, 1949.
- W. Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden: An Ancient Market Town and its Surroundings* (Buckingham, 1946).
- W. Cooper, *Records of Beaudesert* (Buckingham, 1931).
- W. Cooper, *Wooton Wawen its History and Records* (Buckingham, 1936).
- W.H.B. Court, *The Rise of the Midlands Industries 1660-1838* (Oxford, 1953).
- C.J. Cox, *Warwickshire*, third edition (London, 1930).
- R.K. Dent, *Old and New Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1953).
- Rev. V. Eliot, *Aston Parish Church: Its Ancient History and Modern Restoration* (Birmingham, 1889).
- C. Feeney, *St Philip's: An Eighteenth Century Church and Parish* (Birmingham, 1984).
- B. Gill, *History of Birmingham, Manor and Borough to 1865*, Volume 1 (Oxford, 1952).
- N. Granville Evans, *An Investigation of Holy Trinity Parish Church, Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1988).
- J. Hannett, *The Forest of Arden, its Towns, Villages and Hamlets* (London, 1894).

- C. Haydon, 'The Church in the Kineton Deanery of the Diocese of Worcester, c. 1660-c. 1800' in J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).
- R. Hudson, *Memorials of a Warwickshire Parish* (London, 1904).
- J. Hurwich, 'Dissent and Catholicism in English Society: A study of Warwickshire, 1660-1720', *The Journal of British Studies*, 16, 1976, pp, 24-58.
- W. Hutton, *An History of Birmingham* (London, 1783).
- H.M. Jenkins, 'Dr. Thomas's Edition of Sir William Dugdale's 'Antiquities of Warwickshire'', *Dugdale Society Occasional Papers*, 3, 1931, pp.3-20.
- Rev. A.T. Jenkins, *The Story of St. Martin's, Birmingham Parish Church* (Birmingham, 1925).
- A. Langley, 'Birmingham Baptists', *Past and Present*, 1939, pp, 17-35.
- Rev. G. Miller, *The Parishes of the Diocese of Worcester*, 1, Parishes of Warwickshire (London, 1889).
- P. Morgan, 'South Warwickshire Clergy in the late Seventeenth Century', *Warwickshire History*, 1, 1970, pp.3-11.
- B. O'Connor, *Places of worship in Digbeth and Deritend* (Birmingham, 1988).
- R. Pemberton, *Solihull and its Church* (Exeter, 1905).
- Rev. G. Potts, *The Story of Birmingham Parish Church, St Martin's in the Bull Ring* (Birmingham, 1957).
- Rev. W.K. Riland Bedford, *History of Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1881).
- Rev. W.K. Riland Bedford, *Three Hundred Years of a Family Living: Being a History of the Rilands of Sutton Coldfield* (Birmingham, 1889).

- M. B. Rowlands, *A Regional History of England: The West Midlands from A.D. 1000* (London, 1987).
- A. Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London, 1980).
- V. Skip, *The Centre of England: Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, East Shropshire, North Gloucestershire* (London, 1979).
- T. Slater, *A History of Warwickshire* (Chichester, 1981).
- P. Styles, 'A Census of a Warwickshire Village in 1698', in P. Styles (ed), *Studies in Seventeenth Century West Midland History*, pp. 90-107 (1978, Kineton).
- P. Styles, 'A Seventeenth Century Warwickshire Clergyman, Thomas Pilkington, Vicar of Claverdon', in P. Styles (ed), *Studies in Seventeenth Century West Midland History*, pp.71-88 (Kineton, 1978).
- A. Tindal-Hart, *William Lloyd 1627-1717: Bishop, Politician, Author and Prophet* (London, 1952).
- A. Upton, *The Collegiate Church of Saints John the Baptist, Laurence and Anne of Knowle, Warwickshire* (1966).
- E.G. Wheler Galton, *Claverdon* (1934).
- S. Whitehouse, *A History of St. Martin's Parish Church, Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1922).
- J. Woodall, *From Hroca to Anne: Being a 1000 Years in the Life of Rowington* (Solihull, 1974).
- J. Woodall, *Portrait of Lapworth* (Solihull, 1986).
- J. Woodall, *The Book of Greater Solihull* (Buckingham, 1990).
- D.L. Wykes, 'James II's Religious Indulgence of 1687 and the Early Organization of Dissent: The Building of the First Nonconformist Meeting House in Birmingham', *Midland History*, 16, 1988-91, pp, 86-102.

Secondary sources: National

C.J. Abbey and J. H. Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 2 (London, 1878).

J. Addy, *Sin and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1989).

V. Barrie-Curien, 'The Clergy in the Diocese of London in the Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh S. Taylor and C. Haydon (eds.), *The Church in England c.1689- c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993).

G. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964).

J.H. Bettey, *Church and Community: The Parish Church in English Life* (Bradford on Avon, 1979).

E.R.C. Brinkworth (1997), 'The 'Bawdy' Court of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury 1626-1638', in R. K. Gilkes, *The Banbury Historical Society*, 26.

F.D. Brossard, 'We live so Far North: The Church in the North-East of England', in J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).

C.W. Chalklin, 'The Financing of Church Building in the Provincial Towns of Eighteenth Century England', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns* (1984), pp. 284-310.

J.S. Chamberlain, 'A Regular and Well-Affected' Diocese: Chichester in the Eighteenth Century', in J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).

P. Corfield, 'Georgian England: One State, many Faiths ', *History Today*, 45, 1995, pp, 14-21.

- J.G. Davis, *The Secular use of Church Buildings* (London, 1968).
- W. Gibson, 'A Happy Fertile Soil which Bringeth Forth Abundantly': The Diocese of Winchester, 1689-1800', in J. Gregory and J. Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).
- W. Gibson, *The Church of England 1688-1835: Unity and Accord* (London, 2000).
- M. Goldie, 'Voluntary Anglicans', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 2003, pp. 977-990.
- I. Green, 'The First Five Years of Queen Anne's Bounty', in R. O'Day and F. Heal (eds.), *Princes and Paupers in the English Church, 1500-1800* (Leicester, 1981).
- I. Green, *Children in Understanding: The Emergence of the English Catechism under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts* (Oxford, 1996).
- J. Gregory, 'Archbishops of Canterbury, their Diocese, and the Shaping of the National Church', in J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).
- J. Gregory, 'The Eighteenth-century Reformation: The Pastoral Task of the Anglican Clergy after 1689', in J. Walsh, S. Taylor and C. Haydon (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993).
- J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese* (Oxford, 2000).
- P. Hair (ed.), *Before the Bawdy Court* (London, 1972).
- W.M. Jacob, '"In Love and Charity with your Neighbours...': Ecclesiastical Courts and Justices of the Peace in England in the Eighteenth Century', in K. Cooper and J. Gregory (eds.), *Retribution, Repentance, and Reconciliation* (2004).

- W.M. Jacob, 'Church and Society in Norfolk', in J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).
- W.M. Jacob, *Lay people and Religion in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996).
- W.M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007).
- P. Langford, *Polite and Commercial People* (Oxford, 1989).
- P. Laslett, K. Oosterveen and R. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History: Studies in the History of Illegitimacy* (London, 1980).
- W.K. Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.* (London, 1959).
- W.M. Marshall 'Episcopal Activity in the Hereford and Oxford Dioceses, 1660-1760', *Midland History*, 8, 1983, pp, 106-120.
- W.M. Marshall, 'The Diocese of Hereford and Oxford, 1660-1760', in J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).
- F.C. Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship 1714-1830', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36, 1985, 255-83.
- D. McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777-1869: A Study of the Established Church and the Role of its Clergy in Local Society* (Oxford, 1960).
- R.B. Outhwaite, *The Rise and Fall of the English Ecclesiastical Courts, 1500-1860* (Cambridge, 2006).
- C. Phythian- Adams, *Local History and Folklore* (London, 1975).
- R. Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1982).

- J.H. Pruett, *The Parish Clergy under the Latter Stuarts: The Leicestershire Experience* (Chicago, 1978).
- C. Rose, 'London's Charity Schools, 1690-1730', *History Today*, 1990, pp, 17-23.
- A. Russell, *The Clerical Profession* (London, 1980).
- A. Savidge, *The Foundation and Early Years of Queen Anne's Bounty* (London, 1955).
- M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society: Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994).
- M.F. Snape, *The Church of England in Industrialising Society: The Parish of Whalley in the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2003).
- D. Spaeth (2003), 'The Enemy Within': The Failure of Reform in the Diocese of Salisbury in the Eighteenth Century', in J. Gregory and J. S. Chamberlain (eds), *The National Church in Local Perspective: The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).
- D. Spaeth, 'Common Prayer? Popular observance of the Anglican liturgy in Restoration Wiltshire', in S. J. Wright (ed.), *Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion 1350-1750* (London, 1988).
- D. Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger: Parsons and Parishioners, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2000).
- J. Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (London, 1991).
- N. Sykes, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1934).
- A. Tarver, *Church Court Records: An Introduction for Family and Local Historians* (Chichester, 1995).
- G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (London, 1973).
- P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989).

J. Walsh and S. Taylor, 'Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993).

J. Walsh and S. Taylor, 'The Church and Anglicanism in the 'long' Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh, C. Haydon and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689 c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993).

A. Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century Devon* (Newton Abbott, 1969).

Unpublished Theses

J. Albers, 'Seeds of contention': Society, Politics and the Church of England in Lancashire, 1689-1790' (University of Yale PhD, 1988).

J.L. Salter, 'Warwickshire Clergy, 1660-1714' (University of Birmingham PhD, 1975), 2 vols.

A. Tarver, 'The Consistory Court of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry and its Work, 1680-1830' (University of Warwick PhD, 1998), 2 vols.

Internet Web Sources

Birmingham, a Political and Administrative History to 1832. Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report. Consulted on: 15/11/2004.

Birmingham, a Religious History: Protestant Nonconformity/Roman Catholicism. Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report. Consulted on 28/01/2005.

N. Cox, *The Influence of the Common Law on the Decline of the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Church of England* (2001-2002). Available at: www.geocities.com/noelcox/d. Consulted on: 16/11/2005.

- E.J. Evans, *Tithing Customs and Disputes: the Evidence of Glebe Terriers, 1698-1850*. Available at: www.bahs.org.uk. Consulted on 20/06/2006.
- J. Gregory, 'The Church of England', in H. T. Dickinson, *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland c.1688-c.1815*, Chapter Seventeen. Available at: www.history-compass.com. Consulted on: 20/06/2005.
- G. King, *Estimate of the Population and Wealth, England and Wales in 1688*. Available at: www.york.ac.uk/depts/math/king. Consulted on: 20/06/2005.
- A. Middleton, *Eminent English Churchmen: Thomas Bray (1656-1730)*. Available at: <http://justus.anglican>. Consulted on, 10/03/03.
- J. Parkhouse, *Shakespeare's County: Warwickshire c-1550-c-1750*. Available at: jonathanpark@warwickshire.gov.uk.
- G. Smith, *Dr Thomas Bray*. Available at: www.tracts.ukgo.com/thomas_bray.doc. Consulted on, 10/03/03.
- J. Spurr, 'Review of Jeremy Gregory, Restoration, Reformation and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and their Diocese': Available at: H-Albion, H-Net Reviews www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi. Consulted on: 20/06/2005.
- The Borough of Warwick: Economic and Social History, 1545-1835*. Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report. Consulted on, 21/01/2005.
- The Borough of Warwick: Nonconformity. A History of the County of Warwick*: Available at: British History online www.british-history.ac.uk/report. Consulted on: 21/01/2005.
- The Borough of Warwick: Political and Administrative History, 1545-1835*. *History of the County of Warwick*: Available at: British History online www.british-history.ac.uk/report. Consulted on: 21/01/2005.

The City of Birmingham: Available at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report. Consulted on: 07/09/2005.

The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion: Available at: <http://en.wikibooks.org>. Consulted on: 11/05/2005.

R. Williams, *Address at the Service to Mark the 300th Anniversary of Queen Anne's Bounty in Westminster Abbey* (2004). Available at: www.inclusivechurch.net/article. Consulted on: 13/07/2005.

Reference Works

J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1891-92)

C.R. Humphery-Smith (ed), *The Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers*, 3rd edition (Chichester, 2003).

R. Sedgwick (ed), *History of Parliament: The Commons 1715-54*, 2, Members E-Y (London, 1970).

J. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses...Part I: From the Earliest Time to 1751*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1922-27)

Victoria County History of Warwickshire, Volumes 2-8 (London, 1904-1969).