

CLIFTON REYNES PARISH ACCOUNT BOOK.

Clifton Reynes is a small parish of 1,443 acres of land and 11 acres of water; it is situated in the north of the county on an eminence south of the river Ouse and overlooking the river which separates it from the town of Olney, distant about a mile.

The old book of Churchwardens' Accounts consists of 85 paper leaves in a parchment wrapper; it is $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches high by 6 inches wide, and in a good state of preservation.

The entries extend from 1665 to 1723. From 1674 to 1722 every item of expenditure was entered and the accounts carefully kept in the beautiful handwriting of Richard Kitchiner, of Olney. During the last few years of his life the writing falls off a little from the earlier excellence; it becomes smaller, and the tremulousness of age is manifest. The payment for writing is usually the last item in the year's accounts, and varied from one to two shillings. Occasionally the accounts were of extra length, and then a larger sum was paid, $\frac{2}{8}$ in 1684, $\frac{3}{6}$ in 1675 and 1709. Extra money was also paid for writing terriers and other occasional documents, usually about 2/-.

From Olney register, which begins in 1665, the following details are extracted. Richard Kitchiner was probably the Richard who married Elizabeth Assaby 25th July, 1669. She had a son Richard and daughter Elizabeth, and was buried 15th August, 1672. Apparently the widower married again, as six children are registered as offspring of Richard and Mary, the first—Mary—being baptised 13th December, 1674, and the sixth baptised in 1687. Mary Kitchiner was buried 27th April, 1717; and Richard Kitchiner, senr., buried 6th July, 1723, the year following the cessation of his writing at Clifton Reynes.

The briefs and occasional notes in this book are in the handwriting (much inferior to Kitchiner's) of the Rector, the Rev. Samuel Pepys; he also signs the accounts annually down to 1702. He died and was buried in the church 15th April, 1704.

The population of the parish during the period

covered by these accounts was probably rather more than 200; not more than 240.

More than a hundred briefs are entered in the book, the last one being on 8th February, 1703, when 10/- was collected for "hur maiesties Brief," and a list of 34 names with subscriptions recorded.

In 1668 ten briefs realised only 12/9. The amount usually collected by these methods was from 2/- to 3/-. There were, however, a good many exceptions when the nature of the appeal or a special effort evoked a generous response.

In 1665 collections for sufferers from the plague were made: 2 Aug., 10/9; 6 Sept., 10/-; 4 Oct., 8/11; and 8 Nov., 6/2. On two occasions relief was sent to Lavendon, 7/- each time. Lavendon is north of Clifton Reynes, and separated from it by the Ouse. This parish suffered severely, there being 76 deaths from the plague entered in its register.

On 10 Oct., 1666, 3/4 was collected for the "fire of London;" and in 1669 a fire at Stony Stratford was relieved by 4/6 from this parish.

During the 17th century Algerine pirates not only ranged in the Mediterranean, but cruised in the Atlantic, occasionally landing on our coasts, sacking towns and carrying off captives for the sake of ransom. About 1615 a Sallee rover was taken in the Thames, and between 1609 and 1616 Moslem corsairs took 466 English ships. Swanage was in terror of the Turks, in 1640 Penzance was sacked, in 1631 Baltimore was sacked and 237 captives taken into slavery, and yet the levying of ship-money was opposed. Briefs for the redemption of "captives under the Turks" were frequently issued. Mention is made of several in this account book, and a generous response was usual.

The brief for captives of 20 Jan., 1670, realised 48/5. A name list of 76 contributors is recorded, which may be regarded as a census of the adults in the parish. Jas. Lowe, Esq., 2/6; seven other members of the family gave 9/6; Rev. S. Pepys and three of his family gave 4/6; Gale (5), 3/-; Thos. Stubbs and family, 1/6; Vessey (3), 1/6; Cardwell (3), 1/6; Thos. Vessey (3), 1/6. Other names are Norman, Shelton, Loughton, Sharpe, Osborne, Ellis, Hoddle, Ingersole, Chandflower,

In 1680, 27 3 was collected from 37 contributors, all named.

Briefs for those suffering on account of their religion were liberally supported. The persecution of the Huguenots which accompanied the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 is indicated in this account book by appeals in 1682, 1686, 1688, and 1699.

In 1682 "for French protestants" realised £2:10 from 56 subscribers; in 1686 from 24 contributors 13 10 was received. On 20 April, 1699, £1:4:6 was collected from 42 people "for the Vaudois." The Waldenses of the Pays de Vaud, whose persecution on account of their faith had been nearly continuous since the 14th century, were at this date about at the end of their troubles.

The most generous response to any brief here recorded was the £3:1 subscribed to the "relief of Irish protestants" 2 July, 1689, the rector heading the list of 55 names with a gift of 10s.

Other noticeable briefs are:

1672. Sept. 1, for the refiners of sugar in London	5 3
1679. Towards the building of St. Paul's (Cathedral)	1 0 0

The "brief," wasteful and extravagant as it was as a means of charity, had one useful end. In days when newspapers were very rare and inter-communication difficult remote places were by this means kept informed of events happening, not only in their own country, but abroad. Its charitable function replaced by the "Mansion House Fund," the daily press now performs the brief's publicity or news end.

The usual expenditure of the churchwardens was from £7 to £10 a year, some years only £4 to £6. The heaviest expenditure was in 1684, when extensive church repairs were carried out and £23:6:10½ was spent. The only certain source of income was the rent of the "towne land," which was let for 24/- a year. In 1713 Joseph Gale was the tenant. On 26th Dec., 1688, it was agreed that James Laughton, in consideration of money due to him from the town, shall quietly hold, enjoy and possess the towne balke in the upper field for five years.—Signed, SAM. PEPYS, JAMES LOWE, and nine others.

Money was raised by levy. Only once—in 1709—is the rate recorded, and then it was 11d. in the pound, and produced £15:5:2.

In 1669 a levy produced 23/2. A list of 23 payers is given, headed by the Earl of Peterborough, 1/3; Sam. Pepys, 3d.; Widow Vessey, 4/4; etc.

A levy was not required every year, a balance in hand not infrequently being enough for the next year's expenses. In 1700 over £6 was raised, and there was more than £3 balance from 1699; the expenditure was £6:4:6. In 1701 the expenses were £4:10:4½; the balance from 1700, with the rent of the town land, amounted to £4:10:0½. The item, expense of making the levy, is usually 1/-.

Visitation fees and expenses occur annually. The Bishop's visitations were held at Aylesbury and Buckingham, and caused larger expense than those of the Archdeacon. In 1685 attendance at the "synod at Aylesbury" cost 11/10, and 27/- at Buckingham in 1709.

The Archdeacon's visitations were held at Newport Pagnell and Stony Stratford; the usual fees and expenses were 10s. to 15s.

The Apparitor appears to have driven a thriving trade in special forms of prayer, etc., if one may judge from the frequent payment of small sums to him: *e.g.*—

1683. for the King's declaration and form of prayer and thanksgiving	1	0
1686. the King's order concerning the evil.		
1688. for the declaration of liberty of conscience	1	0
„ for prayers and thanksgiving for the birth of ye Prince of Wales	1	6
„ for the direction to pray for ye Prince of Wales		6
„ for a book of prayers and thanksgivings for our deliverance from Popery and Slavery, etc.	1	0
1689. for a proclamation and a form of prayer for ye ffast	1	6
1703. for a proclamation for punishing vice	1	0
1705. for a proclamation and prayer for thanksgiving	1	6

1707.	for a proclamation and prayer for thanksgiving	1	6
,,	for a proclamation and prayer for a fast	1	6
1712.	for a book of prayers and thanksgiving for peace	1	0
	etc., etc.		
<p>The Church required small repairs very often, glazing, plumbing, and mason's work. In 1684 more extensive reparation cost over £12.</p>			
1684.	John Wilde's bill	8	18 9
	Henry Wilby, mason	2	11 0
	William Swan, 19 days work	16	2
1686.	paid toll for 9 load of stone going over Olney bridge	1	6
	(This was for church repairs.)		
1692.	paid Jeremiah Assaby for mending the lock and key of the north door		8
1700.	John Wild for glazing	8	6
1702.	John Goodwin for 5 days work repairing the church porch and pointing the church windows and for 4 Bush. of lime	8	6
	for tyles, pins and nailes	4	2
1704.	repairs to porch, various items	1	14 3
	John Wild, plumbing and glazing	4	9
1706.	John Wilde, glazing and plumbing (2 items)	8	1 5
1709.	unusual repairs this year, amounting to	14	10 4 $\frac{1}{4}$
	for carrying down the old lead and bringing up the new		5 0
	John Wild's bill	7	5 7
	John Stampford plaisterer 3 days work		3 8
	William Leaper for stufte and worke etc.	17	4
1715.	Geo. Wild plumber	1	5 8
1719.	„ „ „	1	3 0
1721.	mending the church door key		4

THE BELLS.

Examples from the many entries are:

1666.	to the belfounder	7	10
	to the belfounder	5	0 0
	for carrying the bells paid to the townsmen	8	0
1675.	mending great bell clapper	6	6
	paid William Gale for work about the bells	6	8
1679.	iron work about the third bell	1	0
1681.	repairing bell wheels	3	6
1689.	2½ days work about ye bells	4	8
	Keyes and ferrills and work on bells	2	0
1697.	leather for bell clappers	2	2
1700.	to Richard Smith for iron work about the bells	4	2
	to John Phillips and Edward Bradford for work and materialls about the Bell frames and wheels as appears by their bill and acquittance	1	3 2
1704.	to Thomas Herbert repairs to bell wheels	9	7
1707.	ffor ale to the men that helped up with the bell	1	2
1711.	for keying up the 4th bell	1	0
1712.	for iron work and keying up the least bell	1	6
1713.	repairing the great bell wheel	10	1
1719.	repairs to the 4th bell and great bell		
1722.	paid to John Bailey for work about the bells	1	8 10
	expenses in bread cheese and ale for the workmen at doing ye bells etc., etc.	5	1
BELL ROPES.			
1666.	Robert Aspray belropes	18	4
	to Robert Aspray for belropes when he destrained	10	8
1684.	to William Crosse for 32 lb. of belropes at 7d. per lb.	18	8
1705.	to Samuel Aspray for shooting and lining a bell rope	1	6

1707. to Samuel Aspray bell ropes	9	0
1710. to Widow Aspray for 3 new ropes weighing 17lb. at 6d. per lb.	8	6
,, for six shoots	1	0
1716. Wm. Aspray new bellropes	9	0
1722. to Goodman Aspray for 3 new bell ropes weight 19lb. at 6d. per lb. and for 2 new shoots	9	10

The Aspray family was of Olney for about a century. Robert Aspray issued a token in 1662. The register entries of this family are comparatively few, and difficult to identify.

The many entries about the bells show the amount of use made of them, and the records of payments to the ringers for specific services annually show how events of national interest and importance were observed—*e.g.*: “to the ringers on the day of thanksgiving,” usually 2/6; this was on the 29th May, and celebrated the Restoration.

1723. gave to the ringers at gunpowder treason 2 8
This event is always entered merely, “Nov. 5. ringers,” 3/- usually.

Non-recurring entries are:—

1685. Feb. 6. and gave then to ye ringers 2/- (death of Charles II.).
1688. Feb. 14. spent upon ye ringers 5/- (Crown accepted by William and Mary).
1690. Sep. 19. to ye ringers on ye day of thanksgiving (Battle of Boyne).
1691. Nov. 26. gave to ye ringers being a day of thanksgiving (taking Limerick, etc.).
1692. to the ringers upon the news of a victory obtained over the French at sea (Battle of La Hogue), 2/6.
1694. for tolling the bell for ye Queen’s Buriall (Queen Mary), 1/-.
1697. to the ringers upon the newes of peace 2/6 (Peace of Ryswick).
1702. to the ringers at the Queen’s coronation 2/6 (Queen Anne).
,, Oct. to the ringers at Newes coming from the sea 2/6 (the fleet at Vigo).
1703. then in memory of the Queen’s proclaiming 2/6.

1704. a day of thanksgiving 3/- (Battle of Blenheim).
 1705. good news from the sea 2/6 (Defence of Gibraltar).
 1706. good newes from Flanders 2/6 (Battle of Ramilies).
 1708. a day of thanksgiving 2/6 (Battle of Oudenarde).
 1713. at peace proclaiming 2/6 (Peace of Utrecht).
 1714. proclaiming the King 4/-.
 „ at His Mat^{ies} Coronation 2/6.
 1717. at the King's Coronation 2/6.
 „ at the Prince's birth 2/6 (George William, son of the Prince of Wales, born 3rd Nov., died 6th Feb. following).

SERVICE OF THE CHURCH.

Sample entries are:

1671. for communion. Easter	2	8
1686. ffor a bottle of wine and bread for the Communion	2	1
1691. bread and wine for Easter	6	3
(The usual cost of a communion was about 2/6.)		
1666. washing surplice twice	2	0
1674. for the communion cloth	6	9
1686. paid for the Hood and Typpet	15	6
„ washing and mending surplice	3	0
1704. ffor $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of holland and mending the surplice therewith	3	7
„ ffor washing the surplice and Communion table cloth	3	0
1714. for cloth and mending and washing the surplice	6	1
1690. two plates for the communion table		3
1692. paid upon exchange of the Communion Cup	19	0
1697. for canvass to repaire ye pulpit cushion and wax for same	1	4
ffor 3 pounds of feathers for ye same at 8d. per lb.	2	0
to Jeremiah Chandflower for work done at it		8
1700. paid for ticking for the Pulpit cushion and for making up the same	2	5
1711. To Jeremiah Chandflower for mending the pulpit cushion		6

SERVICE BOOKS.

1682.	a Common Prayer book	8	6
	a Prayer Book for the Clarke	7	0
1692.	ffor repairing the church bible	7	0
	ffor conveying the church Bible to Northampton		10
1699.	paid for a Prayer Booke	12	0
1715.	paid for a Common Prayer Book and a Register Book	18	0
1723.	paid for new binding the church bible	16	6
1675.	mending the church chest	2	0
1698.	repairing the bier and church chest	2	8

VERMIN.

The entries are very numerous recording payment for the destruction of vermin, the first being in 1671, "for hedghogs 10d."

1673. to the mouldewarp catcher (first entry) 4 6

Many entries up to 1693, sometimes small sums to the mole catcher. Occasionally the number is recorded, *e.g.* :

1681.	July 18. paid Henry Fletcher for 13 doz. and 4 moles	13	4
	paid Henry Fletcher for 12½ doz.	12	6
1682.	" " " " 14 doz.	14	0
1683.	" " " " moles etc., etc.	14	11

Sparrows are as frequent an item in these as in other parish accounts. Up to 1693 the payment is always entered as the bird-catcher, sparrow-catcher, bird-killing. In 1693 the number paid for is first recorded.

1673.	to the birdcatcher (first entry)	6	
1680.	" "	2	9
1687.	to the sparrow catcher	6	0
1693.	to William James 5 doz. of sparrows about 20 doz. paid for.	1	3
1700.	to Wm. Sharp and Thomas Vessey for 1½ doz. sparrows		4½
1701.	to the sparrow catcher for catching 18 doz.	4	6
	etc., etc.		

Hedgehogs were paid for at the rate of 4d. each, if adult; juveniles realised less. Some years record heavy slaughter; in 1696 two dozen were paid for, and 19 in 1705.

1679. 5 hedghoggs (first entry)	1	8
1689. for 2 hedghoggs		6
,, for 2 old hedghoggs		8
,, for five young hedghoggs		10
1690. William Davy for hedghoggs	3	0
1700. to John Chandflower for 2 hedghoggs		8
etc., etc.		

POLECATS.

The sum, 4d., paid for a polecat seems small when compared with a hedgehog. The destruction of 42 is recorded, distributed over 19 years. The highest number paid for in one year is 5 in 1699.

1684. for a polecat to Turvey Tinker (first entry)		4
1690. John Carvell for polecatts		8
,, Mr Pryer's shepherd for a polecat		4
1718. to Richard Smith for a polcat		4
1720. for a young polecat (last entry)		2

FOXES.

Vulpicide is recorded eight times, and the name of the assassin is usually entered.

1675. paid Mr Catesby for killing a fox 1 0

The Catesby family owned the Hardmead estate (adjoining Clifton Reynes), and about this date sold it.

1705. to Job Newman for a ffoxe's head	1	0
1708. to Weekly Mitchell, Tho. Vessey, Wm. Sharp and Joseph Newman for foxes heads		4 0
1708. to a man of Lavendon for a ffox	1	0
1716. to Richard Nicolls for a fox's head	1	0

OTTERS.

1700. To Mr Farrer's man for an Otter's foot w ^{ch} he brought	2	6
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Mr. Farrer owned Cold Brayfield, the parish on the other side of the Ouse.

1708. To Rich ^d Brice for an Otter	1	0
1710. to a man for an otter's head	1	6
1711. to Wm. West of Olney and others for an Otter	1	0
etc.		

There is one entry only of a badger, in "1691 to Fowler's son of Hardmead for a Badger 1.-"

Though Clifton Reynes was a small and secluded village, and not on the direct road to any place of importance, it was nevertheless visited by a considerable number of needy wayfarers or "tramps," who begged assistance or relief. In 1678 about 50 passengers received relief, and in 1681 an even larger number. The amount given by the churchwardens was nearly always 1d. to each, though there are a few instances of 2d. and even 3d. Occasionally they came in droves; *e.g.*: 1675, to Captain Crowe's and his company 2/6; and in 1682, Jan. 20, gave to 15 travellers of one company 1/6.

Mentions of "letters of request" abound with the usual donation of one penny. These licences to beg were presented probably by soldiers and seamen. By the 39 Elizab., justices were enabled to furnish seamen and soldiers upon landing in England, especially after shipwreck or other misfortune, with a species of license, which set forth name, occupation, and reason for issue, and permitted the bearer to ask and receive relief during a specified period while making his way to his home. It is noticeable that the years when increased numbers of "letters of request" were presented and more passengers, etc., bear some relation to increased military activity: *e.g.*, 1692, Siege of Namur and Battle of Steinkirk; 1694, Battle of Landen in preceding summer; 1697, much fighting 1696-7, etc.

Sample entries are:

1694. to a poor man that came from sea	2
to six soldiers who came from Flanders	6
to four women that came out of Flanders	6
to a maimed soldier	2
1696. April 16. to 5 men from Flanders	6
„ 5 maimed soldiers from Flan- ders	5

1697. 29 letters of request, 1d. or 2d. each	
1702. gave to 4 seamen	2
1707. to a maimed soldier (one arm shot off) and his wife	1 0
etc., etc.	

The above soldiers cannot have been parishioners, as an Act of 1593 made each parish provide maintenance for the disabled men who had legal settlement in it. There was also a County fund for the "maymed soldiers," and receipts are contained in the Quarter Sessions Treasurer's rolls (1711-24) for pensions with certificates of identity.

1677. given to a minister's wife distressed	2 0
1678. given to a distressed minister that preached twice	2 6
1697. gave to a distressed minister	4

The above entries refer to some person who either failed or neglected to benefit by the Toleration Acts of 1672 and 1689. The Test Acts were so often evaded by means of an annual Indemnity Act that one may suppose the distressed minister to have been a voluntary victim.

Other entries of minor interest are:

1688. spent on ye stonegatherer	2 0
1692. ffor 2 sticks for studds in the Darke House	2

Dark-house, an obsolete term for a mad-house (Shak.), but doubtful if used in that sense in the above entry.

1760. ffor ingrossing a Terriar of the Glebe Land	2 0
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Finally, the following show the amount of the parish clerk's remuneration:—

1700. Paid to Richard Smith, clarke $\frac{1}{2}$ a years wages	12 0
1723. Paid to Richard Smith, clarke wages $\frac{1}{2}$ year	12 0

WILLIAM BRADBROOK.