

JOSEPH NEALE'S LECTURESHIP AT CHOLESBURY

ARNOLD H. J. BAINES

AMONG our county historians, Lysons¹ and Lipscomb² devote nearly half of their respective articles on the parish of Cholesbury to a description of its lectureship, established in 1705 by Joseph Neale of Dean³ in Bedfordshire and of Gray's Inn,⁴ who made a skilful and determined attempt to introduce the contemporary Presbyterian polity into an Anglican parish. The resulting records, kept by his trustees and by the first six lecturers, throw much light on two centuries of social change, and thanks are due to the present trustees and lecturer for allowing access to them.

In the Church of England, the patron of a living who has exercised his right of presentation is *functus officio*. Only the ecclesiastical courts can censure or remove an incumbent, and in the eighteenth century the resulting "parson's freehold" was almost absolute. In contrast, a Congregational or Baptist pastor is called to his charge by the whole body of members of the local church, the fellowship of covenanted believers who have regular communion *in sacris*; he can be removed by them, but not normally by the trustees, who are servants of the church. The English Presbyterians adopted neither system. They were nonconformists against their will; forty years after their ejection in 1662, they still favoured a parochial establishment, and tended to subordinate the "gathered" church to the congregation, the wider body of hearers and subscribers. They wished ministers to be reasonably independent of local pressure, yet subject to some oversight. They could not replace diocesan episcopacy by a hierarchy of church courts, as in Scotland, but another way was found, suggested by the lectureship trusts with which Puritan gentlemen had counteracted Laudian influences in their parishes.⁵ These in turn followed the latest of the chantry foundations, which had often provided for supervision by lay trustees. A Presbyterian minister was appointed by a body of trustees, renewed by co-option, men of substance, benefactors of the cause, who could call him to account. In 1705 Presbyterian congregations thus organized existed at Chesham, Marlow, High Wycombe, Chalfont St. Giles, Aylesbury,⁶ Uxbridge, Beaconsfield, Colnbrook, Windsor, Thame and Princes Risborough. Of these, the first six were reconstituted on the Congregational plan in 1724, 1777, 1802, 1812, 1816 and 1833 respectively; that at Beaconsfield merged with a Congregational church, and the others became extinct c. 1710, c. 1730, c. 1750 and c. 1780 respectively.⁷ Their negative theology and subsequent decline have been attributed, perhaps unjustly, to their subjection to opulent bodies of co-optative patrons: but the Presbyterian malaise was hardly apparent by 1705.

This, then, was the system which Joseph Neale sought to introduce at St. Lawrence,⁸ Cholesbury. When he acquired the advowson from Richard Seare in 1704, the endowment had long been inadequate to maintain a priest. The status of the benefice is curiously uncertain. The first known incumbent, Abel, called "capelanus", was presented in 1230 by Geoffrey le Breton. The nave can hardly be much older than that date, and one suspects that Cholesbury is an 11th- or 12th-century settlement in the woodland swine-pastures of Drayton Beauchamp. The name *Ceolwaldes burh* suggests occupation by Ceolwald⁹ in the 640's; but continuity of name does not imply continuous occupation, since the Belgic hill-fort, though abandoned since the second century,¹⁰ was conspicuous enough to retain its new name. Until 1877 the Cholesbury glebe included Priest Grove in Drayton parish, surrounded by land of other proprietors, with no right of way except for cartage; a terrier of 1709 describes it as "lying amongst the Ld Cheyney's woods". This looks like a very early endowment, before the parishes were severed. By 1247 Cholesbury was a distinct manor¹¹, though it was joined with Drayton for taxation until the seventeenth century.¹² The new hilltop villages around the Chess valley needed a market, and the fourth Earl of Oxford supplied it. His market and fair at Chesham date from 1257, and he may well have laid out the High Street and Market Square at the same time.

From 1259 onwards presentations to Cholesbury were made by the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, who already held St. Bartholomew, Wigginton.¹³ It has been suggested¹⁴ that the Priors of St. John ordained a vicarage of Cholesbury, but one Ralph died Rector in 1305. Lipscomb records thirty institutions between 1259 and 1416; on three occasions the Bishop collated to the living after prolonged lapse. Robert fitz Martin de Norfolk, who was so instituted in 1355, remained for 21 years and may well have undertaken the rebuilding of the chancel; but after his resignation there were twenty-two incumbents in forty years, of whom at least fourteen soon exchanged the living for another church, chapel or chantry. Thomas in le Wroo obtained Cholesbury in return for Lodington Chapel, Warwickshire, in July 1402, and by September had exchanged it for Horton. Contemporary satires on "chop-churches" were not groundless.

After 1416 the Hospitallers gave up the attempt to find resident clergy for so poor and remote a village. The Knights of St. John appropriated the tithes and either served the church themselves or saw that it was served from Drayton, Hawridge or St. Leonards. In 1552 this little church among the woods, overlooked in 1549, was as well furnished as most, for its size, though its altar with the hanging pyx had already been replaced by a "tabull in the chorche".¹⁵ There were ten trenchers, eighteen platters of treen and two of pewter; this gives a clue to the population.

Seven incumbents, styled parish priest, curate or minister, are mentioned between 1546 and 1704, but with considerable gaps, for want of maintenance.¹⁶ A threat in 1650 to annex the parish to Hawridge was averted, and it was served by William Dyer (d. 1696), "Preacher of the Gospel at Chesham and Chouldsbury", ejected in or soon after 1662, one of the heroic Puritan divines who ministered in the City during the Plague. Lipscomb compared his style with

Bunyan's; this is unfair to Bunyan. His successor Nathaniel Anderson was presented to the free chapel of Cholesbury in 1664¹⁷ and is last mentioned in 1703,¹⁸ though John Wood occurs as curate in 1669 and 1688. In 1709 the church had one Bible, one prayer book, one silver chalice of 1577 and one bell inscribed *Com and praye*, cast c. 1620 by an unknown founder and hung in a small tiled turret.

Joseph Neale saw that a regular preaching and teaching ministry could not be maintained at Cholesbury without a large augmentation. This enabled him to put a body of trustees in effective and continuous control. He had an estate at Cublington in the same hundred, where in 1685, the year of the western rebellion against James II, he had given to the parish church a high rotating hexagonal lectern (he called it a "desk") to which were chained three volumes of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. By indentures of lease and release dated 12th and 13th July 1705 he vested the advowson of Cholesbury in thirteen trustees, and conveyed to them the Cublington farmhouse with three closes of about 14 acres and three yardlands (about 90 acres) dispersed in the common fields, with common of pasture for 12 horses, 21 cows and 120 sheep, then let to George Stone, yeoman, at £66 p.a.,¹⁹ to support a lecturer at Cholesbury, a grave, good, learned and orthodox Protestant, full seven-and-twenty years of age, of regular and sober life, in priest's orders, qualified to preach. He would normally but not necessarily be the minister, and his duties were "constantly [to] read the Offices in the Common prayer and preach a Sermon in the said Church of Choulesbury als Chollesbury every Afternoon of every Sunday in every yeare and of every Christmas day and Fifth day of November",²⁰ to catechise the children every Sunday after sermon, and to expound the Church Catechism for at least half an hour on every Sunday in Lent and on the first and third Sundays in the month from Easter Day to Michaelmas. On the second and fourth Sundays he was to preach, catechise and expound at the chapel of Wigginton instead, if the incumbent of Tring gave him leave, or at Cholesbury if not. The trustees were to be "the only Visitors and Judges of the Behaviour Misbehaviour performance neglect Life Demeanour and Qualification" of the lecturer, and whether he observed "the orders and Directions above mentioned . . . and be fit to be Continued or removed or not". After such removal, the trustees might reappoint him "if they shall be satisfied that such person will amend such things as they shall think he has misbehaved himself in". If a recalcitrant incumbent chose to remain, foregoing Neale's endowment, the trustees were to set up the lecture elsewhere, until it could be resumed at Cholesbury.

Lipscomb's account of Neale's foundation is at second hand. His source was a pruned and normalized text in a pamphlet, *An Account of the Catechetical Lecture, founded at Cublington, &c. in Bucks, by Joseph Neale, Esq.; 1705* (London, 1783: 8 pp.), which he follows almost verbatim from page 318, line 15, to p. 321, l. 5, thus omitting the names of the original trustees, except for Frederick Slare [of St. Andrew's, Holborn], Doctor in Physick. The others were Whitlock Bulstrode of the Inner Temple, esquire, William Melmoth²¹ of Lincoln's Inn, esq., Samuel Neale of the Middle Temple, esq., Vigerus Edwards of St. Sepulchre's, gentleman, Thomas Bromfield of Chancery Lane, gentleman, Richard Seare of Hawridge [Court], esq. [lord of the manors of Hawridge and

Cholesbury; High Sheriff in 1712;²² died 6th February 1714], John Hodges of London, merchant, Henry Shute of St. Andrew's, Holborn, clerk, John Olyffe, clerk, Rector of Dunton [1693-1717; LL.B.], Richard Mayo, clerk, Vicar of Great Kimble [1686-1707; B.A.; succeeded by George Olyffe], Thomas Wagstaff, clerk, Minister of Cublington [rector 1688-1723; M.A.; succeeded by Matthias or Matthew Mayo, who was presented by William Mayo, clerk] and John Eayre[s],²³ yeoman, the only trustee resident at Cholesbury, who was county treasurer for the Queen's Bench and Marshalsea at the time; his land lay north and east of the glebe meadows. The clerical trustees were a close-knit group. Dunton and Great Kimble were in the gift of Richard Hampden, friend and protector of ejected Presbyterians.

Neale's benefaction was pompously recorded in a long inscription between fluted Corinthian columns on the north side of the nave. His trustees ordered copies of the deed to be entered in their minute book, in the Bishop's registry at Aylesbury and in "a small Folio Book, bound, buffed and bossed" to be kept in the parish chest. Major General R. C. Money, C.B., M.C., kindly directed my attention to this volume, which has outlasted the inscription. Collation with the printed versions suggests the following annotations to Lipscomb's text.

P. 318, l. 17. "The Advowson and Right and Patronage and Presentation of and to the Parish Church" represents "All that the Advowson free Gift Donacon or Right of patronage and presentation of and to the parish Church" This confirms that the living was a donative.²⁴ Instead of the usual type of deed of presentation the patron made a direct grant to the incumbent, the bishop's licence first being had.

— l. 19. "a close of meadow, or pasture, called *Pedler's*" represents "that Close of Meadow or pasture Ground to the said Messuage or Tenements adjoining called pedders Close".

— l. 21. "common of pasture for . . . twenty-four cows" was altered or mis-transcribed from "Comon of pasture for . . . one and twenty Cowes". This was before the Cublington enclosure in 1769.

— l. 30. Clause 2, empowering the trustees to spend 20s. at each of their meetings, has been abbreviated. They were to meet every year or every second, third or fourth year "to consult hear determine and order all things relating to the Charity hereby intended to be settled which Meetings shall be alwayes held in Staple Inn Hall or in some other convenient place in the City of London or Suburbs thereof".

— l. 32. Clause 3 should read, as in the 1783 text, "To lay out Yearly *the Sum of Twenty Shillings* in Bibles, New Testaments, Psalters, Catechisms, Common Prayer Books, Psalm Books and other useful Books . . ."; no more, in fact, than the trustees spent on their own dinner. In 1742 they resolved that the two sums should be kept separate, and in 1800 that both should thereafter be used to purchase books.

— l. 37 is ungrammatical. Under clause 4, the full title is "Preacher in the afternoon or Lecturer of and in the said Parish Church of Choulesbury *als* Chollesbury". Elsewhere, "Preacher or Lecturer" represents "Preacher in the afternoon(s) or Lecturer".

— l. 50 “on” should be “of”. Under clause 8, there was to be an afternoon sermon on Christmas Day and 5th November, but no catechizing.

P. 319, l. 2. “and such of the Children of *Wigginton*, next adjoining, as shall come to the said Church “represents “and also such of the Children of the Inhabitants of *Wigginton* in the parish of *Tring* near adjoining to the said parish of *Choulesbury als Chollesbury* as shall and will come to the said parish church . . . for that purpose”. *Tring* Common extended from *Choulesbury* almost to *Wigginton* Church, and the cottages scattered round its south end were nearer the former than the latter. Today such a common would be beyond price.

— l. 6. “shall expound the Church Catechism in the afternoons after sermon, and on every Sunday in Lent” should read “shall expound the Church Catechism in the afternoon after sermon is ended on every Sunday in Lent”.

— l. 8. “shall read the Office of Evening Prayer, and preach a sermon, at *Wigginton*” represents “shall constantly read the Offices in the Common Prayer and preach a Sermon in the said Church or Chappell of *Wigginton*”.

— l. 31. In clause 14, “in some other parish church or chapel” represents “in some other parish Village or place”, giving the trustees great latitude in translating the lectureship.

— l. 45. “a book” should be “a Book or Books”. Under clause 16, the lecturers were to record the transactions of the trust. They deserve our gratitude.

The printed versions omit transitional provisions for appointments by Neale during his lifetime; an omitted proviso in clause 15 authorizes this omission in renewals of the trust.

Joseph Neale died on 23rd April 1710. The trustees met on 4th December and appointed the Revd. Mr. Peter Hill as first lecturer. The statement at iii, 320, l. 1 (*An Account*, p. 7, l. 3) that Neale had presented Hill in his lifetime [in 1706] is confirmed by the Lincoln registers, though Lipscomb states two pages later that Peter Hill was nominated to the curacy in 1702 by Joseph Hill, esquire, then patron. Peter Hill, who witnessed the trust deed in 1705, enjoyed the benefaction for 44 years after Neale’s death. In 1720 Hill noted that there were twenty families in *Choulesbury*, one Presbyterian, one described as Anabaptist.²⁵ Forty shillings a year from the Poor’s Land was distributed by the churchwarden, and 20s. from a house and orchard [$\frac{1}{4}$ acre]

for the repair of my Church [is] put by him into his Rate. As to my Residence it is in the parish of *Buckland* which is the next to my own; and the reason of my abode there is because I can’t reside in the house belonging to my cure without turning house Keeper myself, which will not suit with my present circumstances, nor can I meet with any lodgings so convenient for me in my own parish as in that where I am. The public service I read in my Church as often as any of the Parishioners can come to joyn with me, which I find they cannot doe but on some particular festival fast & solemn days, since they all depend, both men and women, upon the labour of their hands for their subsistence. 12 or 14 communicants; no more than half that number did communicate last Easter.

At a meeting at the *Rose Tavern* in *Cursitor Street* on 12th July 1734, the first

for which the minutes have survived, the trustees (then William Melmoth, Vigerus Edwards, Thomas Blencowe, John Neale, Thomas Clendon, Thomas Bromfield and Henry Newman)

Agreed that Mr. Hill be desir'd to give the Trustees an Acct of the Duty he has done at Choulsbury and the Articles of Receipts & Disbursmts on the Cublington estate to Lady Day last agreeably to what was desir'd by the Trustees the 17th of Aug. 1725 & answer'd by Mr. Hill the 4th of Sepr. following.

A year later they considered two letters from Hill and upon reading the last and comparing it with the Duty requir'd by the Deed of Trust, it did not appear to the Trustees but that Mr. Hill has done his duty according to the Trust.

But on 10th December 1736 they enquired

who presented Hill to the Church at Cholesbury and when? Whether there is any Parsonage or Vicaridge House, & if there be, in what condition it is? And what Glebe Lands belong to it, and what are the Annual or Casual Profits of the Living, exclusive of the Farm?

Hill replied that he had been presented to Cholesbury by Neale in 1706 [23rd April], obtained a licence²⁶ to preach there from Dr. Wake, Bishop of Lincoln, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and took possession on 24th June. There was

a smal House²⁷ belonging to the Church, which was in a poor condition when he first came to it, but the Sum of about 50 l. having been laid out upon it, the same is now in good Repair: That the Glebe Lands belonging to it contain about 3 Acres of Meadow Ground, & about 4 Acres of under-wood²⁸ Ground & 2 Roods.

The annual profits, including rents, tithes and fees (customarily a shilling for burials, though some gave mortuaries) were about £12 10s., but in addition Mr. Neale was pleas'd to add for his encouragement 30 l. a year out of his pocket from the time he was presented to the Church of Cholsbury, till he dy'd in the Spring of the year 1710.

In 1739 Hill reported that he had let the house for 30s. a year

to Mary Trumpet & her Daughter Sarah (who get their living by Lace-making) reserving to himself an upper Room & a Parlour in the said House. Among the "useful Books" distributed by Hill were the Whole Duty of Man, Bishop Fleetwood's and Bishop Gibson's Tracts on the Lord's Supper and the Christian Monitors. In 1739 he was "well provided with Smal Tracts of the old Stock left on his hands". From 1744 he sent to the trustees, meeting at the Mitre in Fleet Street, a yearly account of "ye Number of the Children, their names & Ages, whom he catechises, & a like Accot of his disposal of the Books".

In 1746 Vigerus Edwards of Bedford Row was "desir'd to make an Abstract of the State of Mr. Neale's Charity, in order to its being Printed". The Trustees paid £1 13s. 6d. for a hundred copies in 1749, but apparently none survives.

Hill managed the Cublington estate, and in 1752 the trustees gave him letters of attorney to receive the rent. In 1736 the timber of decaying trees there was used to repair pales, and in 1740 he demanded a new barn floor, as "corn can't be thrashed without loss".

Lipscomb took his account of the trustees' proceedings up to 1783 from *An Account*, pp. 7, 8; in giving the annual values of woodlands, tithes and glebe he even retained the present tense. The following paragraph should be inserted after p. 320, l. 14.

In 1754, soon after the death of Mr. *Peter Hill*, Dr. *John Ramsey* was presented by the Trustees, to the Living of *Choulesbury*, and appointed Lecturer, with Authority to receive the Rent of the Farm at *Cublington* [leased to George Stone for 21 years from Lady Day 1752 at £66 p.a.].

Ramsey, chosen by ballot from among three candidates who brought "Testimonies of their good Life and Conversation", was a Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and the first of the learned lecturers whom Neale intended, but the "Dr." is an anticipation; his degrees were M.A., 1752; B.D., 1763; D.D., 1781. During the vacancy the curacy had been supplied by Hill's executors, Samuel Baldwin (1692–1760), attorney-at-law of St. Leonards, and William Eayers of Buckland Wood, both Neale's trustees since 1751. The resulting dispute about half a year's rent was resolved at the Mitre in 1763, but the trustees did not meet again for twenty years.

Ramsey distributed Bibles, Testaments, prayer books and spelling books to 39 children in 1755–56 and various books to 70 grown persons and children in 1757–61. He became vicar of Abbots Langley in 1760 and of Bushey in 1782. On 7th May 1783 he met the two remaining trustees, Peter Holford and John Blencowe jr. (William Melmoth jr. having retired to Bath) and claimed that he had taken upon himself the expense and trouble of completing the enclosure at Cublington. "Had it been his own private property He cou'd not have acted with more care & Attention". The Inclosure Commissioners had executed a mortgage by demise of the allotment of 85 ac. 3r. 1p.; he had executed the counterpart and sent both to William Lane, clerk to the trustees [since 1749, at a guinea a year] who died soon after, in 1770 or 1771, and "never Appriz'd the Trustees—nor have they executed any such Deeds—nor are the Deeds in the Box with the other writings relating to the trust or otherwise forthcoming." Ramsey's claim amounted to £239 19s. 0½d.; the trustees admitted £170, with interest at 4 per cent for the future, including £123 14s. 10d. for making and planting fences, and an additional £12 10s. for a cowhouse erected in Upper Dean. *An Account*, printed at the trustees' request, emphasizes Ramsey's advances to the trust. He resigned the living and lectureship early in 1784 and died the following year, having assigned his mortgage to his successor, appointed at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand on 21st April 1784.

David Roderick, M.A. of Queen's College, Oxford, third Neale lecturer and perpetual curate from 1784 to 1830, was a Greek scholar, a master at Harrow, an amateur local historian and, like Ramsey, a pluralist, being vicar of Sherborne and Windough and curate of Hawridge. Lipscomb's account of his time came from a good source, but can be supplemented from the trustees' minutes and Roderick's notes on the blank pages of a copy of *An Account* kept in the buffed, bossed book. Roderick resided at Choulesbury and officiated twice every Sunday, preaching once. From May to Michaelmas he performed the alternate evening duty at Wigginton. He enlarged the parsonage in 1800 for £154 3s. 1d., built a barn and stable in 1806 for £76 6s. 3d., rebuilt the cottage for £64 1s. 5d.,

laid out £160 in repairs at Cublington and spent £30 9s. on the chancel in 1814 (the nave and part of the churchyard fence being a charge on the parishioners). The living received several augmentations. In 1787 Lady Godolphin gave a perpetual rentcharge of £8 p.a. secured on Joseph Howell's estate at Emneth in Norfolk.²⁹ Simultaneously the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty gave £400, which with £10 remaining from their first augmentation in 1757³⁰ was eventually used to buy Weal[d] Field³¹ and 2½ acres of underwood adjoining the Lectureship Farm.

The trust was renewed on 6th August 1800, the lecturer's mortgage having been paid off. The continuing trustees, Peter Holford, Edward Da[y]rell [of Richmond; lord of the manors of Cholesbury and Hawridge, and a director of the Bank of England] and Robert Darell were joined by Thomas Dorrien, Samuel Bosanquet of Forrest House, Essex, Robert Holford, George Downing and Robert Capper, all three of Lincoln's Inn, and the Revd. John Jeffreys [rector of Barnes; son of Dr. John Jeffreys, a canon of St. Paul's, trustee from 1783; nephew of Edward Darell, who left him both manors in 1814]. The next reconveyance, at Roderick's expense, was on 14th June 1828, following a meeting at his parsonage on 6th June. Dorrien, Capper and Robert Holford withdrew from the trust, Jeffreys continued and the following were added: Thomas Dorrien the younger, the Revd. John Tyrwhit[t] Drake, Thomas Byron, M.P., John Boufoy Roper, Marmaduke³² Robert Jeffreys, the Revd. John Batt Brigham, Charles Henry Moore and William Dowdeswell [M.P.]. At this date the glebe at Cholesbury was let at £12 p.a., Weal Field at £16, the cottage at £3; the tithes, valued at £24, had been given up because of the rates assessed on them. With Lady Godolphin's rent-charge, and fees of about 30s. (the poor being excused), the living was worth £40 10s. gross, about £27 net, besides the parsonage house and grounds, valued in 1821 at £12 15s. p.a., and five acres of woodland. The Cublington farm, let after the enclosure at £90 p.a., since raised to £100 (tithe free), was revalued in 1828 by James Field of Ashley Green and relet to the old tenant, Robert Stevens, at £120 p.a. The lecturer received the former rent, the advance being deducted to pay off repairs, directed by Mr. Field, of about £50 (amended in pencil to £70).

At the Archdeacon's instance, Roderick made a terrier of his curacy, which his successor transcribed with variations. Alternative field-names in square brackets are from an 1862 valuation list.

The Great & small tithes, now unproductive from the rates assessed on them. A parsonage house; Barn and Stable built in 1806.

	ac. r. p.
Orchard of about	0 2 0
South Close or Moat Meadow [Home Meadow]	1 0 24
North Close or Church Meadow [Wood Meadow]	1 0 18
Priest Grove, an Underwood in the Parish of Drayton, of about	4 0 0 ³³
	6 3 2

Augmentations by Queen Anne's Bounty [1757; then let to Joseph Batchellor for £7 p.a.]:

A Cottage and Garden	[ac. r. p.]
A Meadow or Orchard [Cottage Meadow] about	0 2 0
Cole Hole a Meadow [Coal Hole, Coleshold Meadow] about	0 3 0
Pond Meadow of about	0 3 0
Two Arable fields [in one by 1862] about	3 2 0
An Underwood [Bury Banks] which lies between Pond Meadow and North Close, about	1 0 0
	<hr/>
	6 2 0

[Augmentations by Queen Anne's Bounty, 1787 and 1788:]

Weal field and an Underwood in the Parish of Cublington (Purchased in 1802) of about	10 2 0
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David Roderick died on 21st August 1830 at Cholesbury, where he was buried. His successor, the fourth Neale lecturer, was Henry Playsted Jeston, M.A., curate of Aldbury and Brent Pelham, born at Henley on 25th January 1797, the son of Dr. Humphrey Jeston, headmaster of the grammar school there. Jeston, educated by his father and at Worcester College, Oxford, was curate to his father at Avon Dassett in 1821, married in 1824, sailed to Barbados at the invitation of the first Bishop, became domestic chaplain to Sir Ralph Woodford, governor of Trinidad, and ministered to an African church there until his health failed. He was licensed to the cure of Cholesbury on 4th November 1830, and held it for nearly 50 years.

Jeston found the parsonage in "a most wretched state of repair" and was allowed £120 for dilapidations by Roderick's executor, but spent £194 8s. 4d., to such effect that Sheahan thought in 1861 that "the Parsonage House was built about 30 years ago".³⁴ Jeston raised the old front wall five feet, built a new wall at the back, raising it to the height of the west end built by Roderick, raised the bedroom floors two feet, put on a new roof, sunk a tank, put down a pump, set a new kitchen range and copper in the back-house, made a kitchen garden and planted and enclosed an orchard. He itemized his expenses down to an afterthought of 16s. for thatching the privy. At the end of 1831 Jeston found himself £14 5s. out of pocket from his living and lectureship; but he had allowed £8 off Stevens' rent "in consideration of the badness of the season and rot of sheep" and the Norfolk annuity had not arrived. He should have ended his first full year 35s. to the good, or say 32s., since remitting £8 by letter from Wisbech cost 3s. He put up the rent of the parish clerk's³⁵ cottage from £3 p.a. to £4.

On 26th April 1833 Jeston met the trustees at Mr. Moore's chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields. His report fills a gap in the well-known story of Cholesbury's parochial bankruptcy.³⁶ The glebe had produced £15 p.a., but £13 of this went in poor's rates, and Ezekiel Osborn had surrendered his tenancy of £12 p.a. at Michaelmas. Jeston then gave up the glebe for the use of the poor, who had no employment on the two farms. Ninety-four of the 110 cultivated acres were abandoned, the fences broken down and the gates removed to exonerate the land from poor's rate. In November 1832 the magistrates enforced a £50 rate-in-aid on Drayton Beauchamp, and in February 1833 Cholesbury received £15 from the parish of Grove and £35 from Aston Abbots. Jeston also received and spent various subscriptions amounting to nearly £70. His letters to *The*

Times and his evidence before the Poor Law Commission had some influence on Poor Law reform.

With evident satisfaction, Jeston entered the King's taxes as £0 0s. 0d. Next year they caught up with him; he was charged 16s. for window tax. His net income in 1833 was £129 17s., and his poor rates were down to £6 10s., as Cholesbury was being supported by other Cottesloe parishes. In 1834 he reported £104 4s. 4d., after spending £21 4s. on building an oven and a small dairy and installing a chimney to turn "the little room towards the north" into a study. He also spent £8 8s. 1d. on "inclosing a piece of the Common [about half an acre in front of the parsonage] and converting it into gardens &c."³⁷ with the consent of the Revd. John Jeffreys as lord of the manor, and the copyhold tenants.

On 8th April 1835 Jeston told the trustees that

a very considerable Improvement had taken place in the parish through the exertions of the Agricultural Employment Institution who had purchased nearly half the [cultivated] land in the parish . . . that the whole of the Parish . . . had been again brought into cultivation, and was to the extent of about 40 Acres occupied by the Labourers themselves [in allotments of one to four acres] who are the Tenants of the above Institution.

The improved state of the Parish has enabled the Incumbent to demand and obtain a year's Tithes to Michas. 1834 amounting to £5 from the occupier of the Braziers End Farm, consisting of about 50 acres . . . With respect to the Tenants of the Agricultural Employment Institution Mr. Jeston has consented to demand no tithes until by the improved state of the land they are capable of paying them.—In 1834 the Glebe again became productive and is now in occupation of the Incumbent who valued it at Xmas last at £5, the Rates having been so reduced as to afford him a prospect of holding it with advantage.

Like Roderick, Jeston spent 40s. a year on books for the poor (now bought from the S.P.C.K.) but from 1835 the trustees' pound went to a master at the newly established Sunday School. Braziers End doubled its payment of tithe in 1836; no one else paid anything, though Jeston reported on 8th July that the labourers' allotments "in general are covered with very excellent crops". The poor's rates had been reduced from the impossible level of 32s. in the pound at rack rent to about 10s. at two-thirds; this reduction would have been greater, had not the "average" which regulated Cholesbury's payment to the new Aylesbury Union embraced the period when the farms were abandoned. Jeston's own rates were now around £5 and his net income was buoyant: £125 4s. 3½d. in 1836, £134 6s. 3d. in 1837, £145 5s. 9d. in 1838, when at last he let the Cholesbury glebe. The Cublington farm with Wheal field was let to Robert Stevens for 5 years at £130 p.a. from Michaelmas 1836. Jeston raised £30 3s. by felling oaks in Priest Grove and spent it on "partitions, floors, &c. in two new Bedrooms for servants; with Back Staircase &c." The servants' remuneration is not recorded.

At Christmas 1837 Jeston distributed the rent of the Poor's Land, then 45s., and the Revd. John Jeffreys' charity of 50s. to 23 beneficiaries, of whom 13 were men; twelve received 5s., two 4s. 6d., three 4s., one 3s., four 2s. 6d. and the village reprobate 1s.

Jeston again reported to the trustees on 26th July 1839 on the state of the labouring poor. The Institution's land had passed into private hands, but the allotment system continued, enabling the labourers to support their families and to pay rents of 25s. an acre, the landlord paying tithes. The poor rates were down to 8s., and the tithes had been commuted in 1838 for rentcharges of £33 2s. 6d., subject to changes in the price of corn. With Lord Robert Grosvenor's assistance, Jeston had established a parochial lending library, which has been much appreciated by such of the Poor as can read—it has also induced many of them to become weekly subscribers for books for their own private use.

The poor also subscribed 2d. to 6d. a week to wood and clothing clubs. Over seventy children attended Sunday School, and congregations had increased until almost every Sunday afternoon many went away for want of room. Previously they had been Dissenters "or attended no place of Worship at all". Jeston modestly attributed the changes in some degree to the attention paid to church psalmody.

Much pains have been taken to teach the children to sing & they are now able to sing remarkably well & to chant the Communion Responses but the leader of the little quire is frequently prevented by indisposition from attending church & then the singing is often & the chanting of the Responses always necessarily omitted. A small organ would remedy this evil. [Jeston offered £5 and William Judd, farmer, of Chesham but a constant attendant, £2 towards this.]

The trustees approved Jeston's plans for repairing the church. The Church Building Society had promised £30 to pay for a gallery. Jeffreys promised £25 as soon as £100 was raised; the other trustees then gave £18 10s., Lady Bridge-water and R. A. Fellowes £10 each and six other donors £18 18s. 10d. The work cost £122 2s. 1½d., so Jeston paid £9 13s. 3½d. himself. This was among the last church restorations carried out without an architect, and before the impact of the Gothic revival. On Jeston's instructions, James Honor of Tring, carpenter, altered and moved the pulpit, made a new floor for the reading desk, altered and renewed the communion rails, refloored and wainscotted the pews in the chancel, put wainscot under the east window, took up and relaid on new oak joists the flooring of all the pews and new-wainscotted the backs of most of them, and broke through the north wall to make a new opening opposite the great door. J. C. Knight, painter and glazier, then made a new window for it and others in the chancel, repaired and lowered the west window and glazed and fixed two new casements. Two iron casements, bought from Joshua Brackley, were an afterthought; Robert Sutton of Rossway (1771–1848) paid for glazing and setting them. Knight painted the interior three times, painted the altarpiece and did some graining and varnishing. New pulpit and communion cloths from a Chesham linen-draper cost £5. The stove needed new piping (17s. 11d.) Only 7s. 3½d. was spent on beer, and the work was completed and paid for in July 1840. A comparison with Lipscomb's description (iii, 323) written before that date, raises certain questions. Did the new window opposite the south door take the place of the old north door, closed with masonry? What happened to the medieval glass in the chancel, the royal arms, and the

table of Mr. Neale's benefaction, which was in good repair in 1828?

The need for a new gallery in a declining parish of some 125 souls demonstrates the success of Jeston's ministry within and beyond its boundaries. On 14th December 1843 he told the trustees that the church was regularly filled. Two hundred from Buckland [Common] had attached themselves to it, and he visited weekly throughout that district as well as his own parish. (From 1842 to 1846 he also held Wigginton in plurality).

It is with satisfaction he can state that with one single exception no complaint during the last 7 years has been made of misconduct of any of the Parishioners of Cholesbury.

The allotment system and the clubs continued; since 1833 there had not been one able-bodied pauper, the poor rates in 1839-42 were down to 5s. and the tithe was paid.

In 1851 the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln offered £10 p.a. if Buckland Common, with a population of not less than 260, were annexed for ever to Cholesbury. Jeston wished to accept, but the trustees thought the remuneration quite inadequate and rejected the proposal.³⁸ Jeston left England in 1853 and held chaplaincies on the Continent, paying a curate at Cholesbury. His return in 1861 was marked by a confirmation which the Bishop of Oxford considered the most satisfactory he had had that year, and by a new trellised verandah at the parsonage.³⁹

For this period the buffed, bossed book fails us, but in 1863 Jeston reported to the trustees on the previous twenty years. The Sunday School, superintended by a schoolmaster and a teacher as well as his own family, had fallen from 66 to 37 children. The glebe cottage, converted into a day and Sunday school for infants, was repaired and restored to its original use following the erection of St. Leonards National School in 1851. Extensive felling in Priest Grove and elsewhere in 1849 helped to provide a new dining room, bedroom and other additions to the parsonage, including two water-closets.

About £200 was rais'd by the sale of timber cut off the Glebe—the remainder by myself among my friends . . . [In 1858] the wooden barn erected by Mr. Roderick was removed by me from its then objectionable site, to the back of the parsonage house; to the great improvement of the premises. In October 1864 the trustees received a report on the Lectureship Farm from William Brown of Tring, surveyor, who described it as

. . . an ancient brick and tiled Farm House, containing in the front a Lumber Room Parlor & Dairy with pantry kitchen and wash house at the back: adjoining is a meal house Piggeries Cowhouse for 8 cows, 3 bay wheat barn 2 bay bean Barn Stable & colthouse Large Barley Barn, Henhouse Bullock house & 4 bay Cattle Shed & sundry Inclosures of arable & pasture land, as under

		a.	r.	p.
Homestead Garden Orchard & Pellys Close	grass	8	3	17
Broad Close	"	11	2	2
Weald Leys or Copse Furlong	"	23	1	21
Park Corner	"	7	2	33
The Dean (with Cow house for 10 Cows)	"	16	0	32

Great Ploughed Field	Ar[able]	29	3	13
Clover piece	„	5	2	37
		<hr/>		
		103	0	35
	a. r. p.			
Weal-field or Moores piece	9 2 0			
Spinney adjoining road	0 2 0			
	<hr/>	10	0	0
		<hr/>		
	Total A[rea]	113	0	35

. . . the Farm Buildings, which are all old and timber built & thatched, very much exceed the requirements of a farm of this size, there being three Barns for the produce of 35 acres of arable land. 45 Elm Oak and Abele⁴⁰ trees were felled last season and about half of these have been used in repairs of boarding, fences &c. The elm & oak remaining I recommended being used in further repairs, but the ash with about 15 others still standing should be sold . . . The Yard is far too large, badly formed, & unfit for cattle in winter, as well as for making manure [the bottom was merely clay] . . . The tenant [John Stevens] appears an honest & industrious man with ample capital & the land fairly cultivated & stocked. . . . My Estimate of the Annual Value is as under

	£	s.	d.
Homestead & Land—Neales Charity	163	0	0
Weal Field & Spinney	16	0	0
	<hr/>		
together	179	0	0

At the time the gross rent was still £130 p.a., the net receipts for 1864 being £111 13s. 4d. The trustees met on 5th July 1865 at Mr. Richard Ryder Dean's chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and in spite of Jeston's pencilled suggestion "Wealdfield rent say 14 L" they and Stevens accepted the new terms. Under Brown's supervision Stevens embarked briskly on a programme of work including a new chaise-house, bull-house, hen-house, shed and cart-hovel, and draining two rough meadows, The Dean and Park Corner. Despite the cattle plague and a "cattle rate" the following year, high farming had come to stay, it seemed. Jeston's net income in 1866 was £171 17s. 11d., including £29 9s. 6d. tithe rentcharge; his rates had crept back to £10 7s. 8d., and he now paid £1 5s. 6d. income tax.

At Wigginton, the Revd. Mr. Snell was performing the duties on Jeston's behalf, but not satisfactorily. The Charity Commissioners insisted on maintaining the Wigginton lecture, but by a scheme of 28th April 1866 empowered the trustees to appoint a separate lecturer there, receiving a quarter of the income; Jeston, however, remained sole lecturer for his lifetime.

Jeston reported on 15th July 1867 that the parsonage was in good repair but that the church would soon require substantial repairs or rebuilding, for which he would appeal to the trustees as patrons. The Vestry had asked him to raise a fund, but it was not until July 1872 that he felt able to advertise for

tenders. That of G. Cooper, though not the lowest, was accepted in the sum of £615, as he had restored other churches in the diocese. The architect, M. M. Glover, found the church past repair. The start was delayed, and on Sunday night, 8th December 1872, "a furious gale of wind with a heavy rain caused almost the whole of the walls just built to fall". Ultimately the church was rebuilt (using the old materials) "with the exception of south and north nave walls".⁴¹ Of the cost of £974 11s. 4d., Henry Anthony Jeffreys, rector of Hawkhurst, lord of the manor of Cholesbury and chairman of Neale's trustees, contributed £200, others of his family £40, Jeston £51 15s. 8d., his relations £22 1s., the two Church Building Societies (Diocesan and Incorporated) £50, Captain J. B. Parkinson of Braziers End House £40, and, mysteriously, "L. Miller and friends of the Oriental Steam Navigation Company" £100. Subscribers included the Bishop of Oxford, Archdeacon Bickersteth and neighbouring clergy, gentlefolk and farmers. Belated subscriptions from the architect, the Duke of Buckingham, Lady Louisa de Rothschild, Lord Carrington and others at a distance suggest that the net was then cast more widely. Not much could be expected from Cholesbury itself, though the church choir contributed £3 5s. 6d. and £24 2s. 8d. was collected at the reopening on 16th July 1873. The 110 sittings were all made free, and the Bishop consecrated about a rood of glebe given up to enlarge the churchyard. The last few pounds were raised by selling churchyard elms.

While St. Lawrence's was being rebuilt, Cholesbury and Hawridge were faced with the Education Act. Whitehall called on them to unite to provide a District School, but H. A. Jeffreys as lord of both manors averted a School Board by building a school and mistress' house, which he conveyed to the rector and churchwardens of Hawridge on 8th August 1874 as a free gift. Under no circumstances was it to become a Board School or to be appropriated for any other purpose. The Neale trustees were represented on the managing body.

In 1876 Jeffreys presented the living with two little meadows of 2 ac. 1 r. 32 p. lying close to the Cublington homestead and intersecting its fields. They cost him £368 and were "a great accommodation to y^e tenant" who paid £11 p.a. for them, a return of under 3 per cent; there was no loss of confidence yet. Another augmentation of £100 from the Oxford Diocesan Poor Benefices Society in May 1877 was invested to produce £3 2s. 6d. p.a. That year Jeston's income was £252 6s. 6d., over six times a labourer's wage. The Poor's Land of 1 ac. 1 r. 21 p., described as the Poors piece or Tow Platt, had just been sold to Mr. Butcher of Tring for £165; the incumbent and churchwarden invested the proceeds for the Sunday School and Clothing Club. Next year Priest Grove was sold to Baron Lionel de Rothschild for £462 10s. (£100 an acre).

When the trustees met on 2nd April 1878, Jeston was over eighty and too ill to attend, but sent a long report recalling his 47½ years incumbency. Finding himself unequal to three services, and so as not to deprive his own people of a second service on his Wigginton Sundays, he had arranged for the incumbent there to perform his lectureship service at 3 o'clock for £1 a Sunday. The trustees allowed this "for the short remainder of his life", but the severance proved permanent.

By the next meeting on 18th July 1881, Jeston had attained his golden

jubilee. His report recalled that

in 1830 the Rates exceeded 30s. in the £ and the number of applicants for parochial Relief were 59. Now there is but one pauper an aged widow in her youth a Camp follower in the peninsular War.

Thirty children were "carefully instructed in Church Catechism" as the trust required, and two had won Bishop's prizes.

Jeston was still building; in 1879 Jeffreys had allowed him to pull down the old tithe barn and paid half the cost of a stable and coach-house in its place with a tank adjoining. In 1887 he cut down timber from the glebe to pay for a new roof and chimney for the rectory, and sold the oak bark in Chesham. He enjoyed good health and unimpaired faculties, save that he was hard of hearing. He preached earnestly and impressively until a week before his death on 24th June 1889, a year short of his diamond jubilee. On the 27th, in the stillness of one of the loveliest evenings of that summer, he was borne on the shoulders of six parishioners to lie beside his wife Elizabeth, who had died in 1867. He was long remembered by Cholesbury people for his endeavours to promote their welfare, his keen interest in things to the very last, and his unfailing kindness and generosity. He was an active magistrate in Bucks. and in Herts.

The incumbencies of the first four Neale lecturers spanned 183 years. On 30th October 1889 the trustees appointed the fifth, William Green Marsden, of Queens' College, Cambridge, curate of Wilstone; a quarter of the income went to the vicar of Wigginton. The trustees continued to visit Cublington, charging horse-hire and dinner to the lectureship; but disaster was near. In 1882 Albert White had succeeded his grandfather John Stevens as tenant. He resumed the drainage of the meadows, using five or six thousand pipes a year, but in March 1891 he failed; his crops realized only £85 16s. 6d. at auction, and for the first time in memory the farm was to let. Canon H. A. Jeffreys insisted on trying to recover the arrears, without success. Yet there were many applicants; five were shortlisted, and eventually James Reed, butcher and churchwarden of Cheddington, agreed to pay £195 p.a. against White's £190; of this £27 p.a. was again assigned to the living, which on insolvency ranked before the lectureship. Jeffreys spent over £90 on repairs himself. The trustees were advised that Reed's offer was £20 more than the fair annual value; he soon asked for remissions, and did no draining. His rent was reduced to £177 in 1894, and he left at Michaelmas 1896. The new tenant, Thomas Read (no relation) paid £170, with a further remission of £12 10s. in 1898, when he lost four cows and four ewes. He farmed the land better than for many years, drained the glebe fields, laid down the Clover Piece to permanent pasture and resumed improvements, but the necessary loan was exhausted by 1903. Another loan, needed to put the house and buildings in repair, would have swallowed up the income for years; in any case the tenant could not pay more than £150 p.a. W. G. Marsden and H. A. Jeffreys had both died in 1899, and John Jeffreys of Canterton Manor, Lyndhurst, who had taken over the Cholesbury Box as secretary in 1894, sold the lordship of Cholesbury to Canon Jeffreys' successor as trustee, Henry John Turner of Braziers End (d. 1929). The trustees and the sixth lecturer, Henry Edward Ferry (presented 15th February 1900) gave up the struggle and sold the lectureship estate for the reserve price of £3,000 (no more than £29 per acre)

to G. J. Harwood. The adjoining glebe fields remained unsold. The net proceeds, invested in Consols, produced a meagre £81 3s. 8d. a year, of which the vicar (as he was now called) of Cholesbury received £60 2s. 9d., the vicar of Wigginton £20 0s. 11d. and the poor of Cholesbury 20s. in books.

This is almost the end of the story. On 18th January 1904 Ferry received his first quarterly dividend and made the last entry in the buffed, bossed book. The 3 : 1 division of the income was made permanent in 1906, when both preachers were directed duly and regularly to read the afternoon service, preach and catechize in their respective churches; but after Ferry's resignation in October 1912 the trustees no longer received regular reports. The presentation lapsed to the Bishop, who collated J. Alfred Walker, then vicar of St. Leonards. The trustees thereupon elected him seventh lecturer on 3rd September 1913 and allowed him to let the parsonage. The livings of Cholesbury and Hawridge were united on 1st April 1921, Turner dissenting; Walker was appointed, and the Neale trustees have since presented every third turn. The Cholesbury parsonage was sold, despite a protest from the parish meeting, signed by all parishioners except three.

Neale's lectureship thus faded into an ordinary augmentation of two livings. It hardly survived the agricultural distress of the nineties, caused by the townsman's demand for cheap food. If only Neale's farm had been in Knightsbridge instead of at Cublington! Yet the Gospel preached by St. Birinus to Ceolwald, which was good news when Ceolwald's bury itself was new, is still proclaimed and taught in Geoffrey le Breton's church within the Bury banks; and for this the people of Cholesbury are indebted, under Him from whom all good counsels and just works proceed, to the Order of St. John, to Joseph Neale's charity and to Henry Playsted Jeston.

¹ D. and S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia*, I, iii (1813), 541-2.

² G. Lipscomb, *Hist. and Antiq. of the County of Buckingham* (1847), iii, 314-323.

³ The manor of Nether Dean was acquired in 1545 by Richard Neale, whose family held it for five generations. Joseph Neale, a cadet member, also endowed a village school at Dean in 1702 with land at Great Catworth and Easton in Hunts. See *Vict. C. Hist. Beds.* (1908) ii, 182 n. 18; (1912) iii, 132-6, 156-7.

⁴ The librarian of Gray's Inn informs me that there is no record of Joseph Neale's becoming a member of the Inn, although Timothy Neale of Nether Dean was admitted in 1647 and Noah Neale of Upper Dean in 1675. "Of Gray's Inn" sometimes denoted residence, rather than membership; there was much sub-letting, to which the Inn was not party.

⁵ There was an earlier local precedent. In 1585 Sir John Cheyne[y] of Drayton Beauchamp established a lectureship of £40 p.a. at Tring. He was a Puritan of Lollard antecedents. See W. K. Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England 1480-1660* (1961), 36, 65.

⁶ See R. Gibbs, *Hist. of Aylesbury* (1885), 442-4. In 1716, "Presbyterian bitch" was the mildest of the terms of abuse which the Jacobite Agnes Tuckwell applied to Anne Meade.

⁷ W. H. Summers, *Hist. of the Congregational Churches in Berks., S. Bucks. and S. Oxon.* (1905) *passim*.

⁸ St. Lawrence, martyred on a gridiron in 258, was specially popular in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire; his feast was retained in the 1662 calendar at 10th August. The church of St. Lawrence at West Wycombe is also inside a hill-fort.

⁹ Ceolw[e]ald, grandson of the Cuthwine killed at *Fethanleag* in 584. He was the grandfather of King Ine and of Ingeld, from whom descends our present royal house, which is therefore "Woden-born". The house of Wessex alliterated assiduously on C throughout the sixth and seventh centuries. Some two dozen personal names in C occur compounded in Bucks, place-names, more than for any other initial letter except H. Four of them include the element Ceol which was popular in the houses of Wessex and Mercia.

¹⁰ Cf. K. Branigan, *Archaeol. Journal* (1968) cxxiv, 130–134, 155; *Records of Bucks.* (1967) xviii, 141, 146. The inhabitants may well have been moved into the Chess valley after the tribal revolt of 117–19. Hadrian “set many things right in Britain” in 121 or 122 during his “walking-tour”. The regular spacing of second-century occupation sites in the valley suggests a close relation between them; did they form a single *fundus*?

¹¹ See *Feet of Fines*, ed. M. W. Hughes (1942), 55, 88. An earlier final concord of 1227 records an exchange of holdings of 5 acres and 4 acres at Chelewoldesbyric. The smaller, rendering 21 pence a year, was formerly held by Richard de Hodenhale; this carries Hudnall back another generation or two, and suggests that not all Cholesbury settlers came from Drayton.

¹² Cholesbury was called on to pay a quarter of the ship money assessed on Drayton and Cholesbury, though it comprised only a tenth of the joint area; C. G. Bonsey and J. G. Jenkins, *Ship Money Papers* (1965), 73 n. 1. Hawridge was assessed with Marsworth.

¹³ At least since 1217. The living of Wigginton was annexed to Tring in 1328: *Vict. C. Hist. Herts.* (1908) ii, 317.

¹⁴ *Vict. C. Hist. Bucks.* (1925) iii, 335.

¹⁵ F. C. Eeles, *The Edwardian Inventories for Buckinghamshire* (1903), 63–4.

¹⁶ Ecton's *Thesaurus* gives the yearly value of the living as £12 6s. 10d.

¹⁷ Calendar of Presentation Deeds (Lincoln), P.D. 1664/25.

¹⁸ Liber Cleri 1703, f. 107–8.

¹⁹ George Stone also paid a quit rent of 2s. 6d. p.a. to the Turney family at least from 1698 to 1734, when Neale's trustees told him not to pay without their consent.

²⁰ The anniversary of the landing of William of Orange as well as of the Gunpowder Treason. Significantly, Neale did not mention the anniversaries of the death of Charles I and of the Restoration, which also had special offices. He even omitted Good Friday, which became the day on which Cholesbury folk planted their potatoes.

²¹ William Mellmoth of Addington was a dissenter in 1678.

²² Misprinted as 1702 in Lipscomb, *op. cit.*, iii, 373; cf. iii, 375, and see E. Viney, *The Sheriffs of Buckinghamshire* (1965), 50. In 1697 Seare's fine for non-attendance as a juror was remitted because of “some extraordinary calls of his private affairs”.

²³ Indexed in the Sessions Records under Ayres. In 1723 he signed the oath of allegiance as John Eyres, Robert Eares was constable of Cholesbury in 1636.

²⁴ See Bishop Gibson's *Speculum*, I, 535.

²⁵ The nearest Presbyterian congregation was at Chesham, the nearest Baptist meetings probably at Tring and Chartridge. The Chesham [Broadway] General Baptist church appointed fasts at both places in 1719, “to begin at Nine of the Clock in the forenoone”.

²⁶ Hill's licence to perform the offices of priest and prelector is dated 5th April 1706: Bishop's Register 36, p. 13.

²⁷ The 1709 terrier describes the house as “built mostly of oak elm & brick, being covered with tiles; it contains a parlour floord with oaken boards, a kitchin & a wash or brewhouse floord with brick, & 2 chambers above stairs, the one laid with oaken boards, the other with beechen boards. There's also a barn consisting of 2 bays with a carhouse at one end & a little stable at the other, all of them built with oak & beech & covered with thatch.”

²⁸ The trustees enquired in 1741 whether by “underwood” Hill meant coppice ground.

²⁹ In 1836 this estate belonged to trustees under the will of John Wing.

³⁰ The printed sources say 1761.

³¹ Called West Field in Lipscomb, *op. cit.*, iii, 321. Also known as Queen Anne's land (1831), Moores piece (1864). The land tax of £1 7s. on this field and that of £11 8s. on the farm were redeemed in 1814, that of 5s. on Priest Grove having been redeemed by Queen Anne's Bounty in 1803.

³² Entered as “Marmion” when he helped to repair the church in 1839. Was that name current before Sir Walter Scott's poem?

³³ Actually 4 ac. 2 r. 20 p., according to a terrier of 1739 and *An Account* (1783), p. 7. The total of 4 ac. 0 r. 28 p. there given for the rest of the old glebe includes the two Closes (then of pasture), the churchyard lying between them, and “Church Lane Platt [26 p.] and Barn Platt [1 r. 20 p.] with a Barn in it”, which had been planted with fruit trees by 1739 as “Barn and Church Lane Orchard”.

³⁴ J. J. Sheahan, *Hist. and Topog. of Buckinghamshire* (1862), p. 844.

³⁵ In 1709, Peter Hill had noted that “the Clark, who is also Saxton, is appointed by the Minister; something is allowd him by the people, & a shilling for every grave”.

³⁶ See *Records of Buckinghamshire* (1961) xvii, 57–71.

³⁷ Cf. Lipscomb, *op. cit.*, iii, 583; “In 1826, a labourer, in trenching a piece of garden-ground, which he had taken from the common near Hazlemore Turnpike-gate, turned up a small urn . . .” [In 1828] “one Cox, a labourer . . . stated that in digging in that part of Wycombe Heath, called *Deadman-Danes Bottom* . . . he accidentally struck upon the crown of an arch of flints without mortar”.

³⁸ A few years later a small chapel of ease was built at Buckland Common and served from St. Leonards, but the Baptist church founded in 1860 has outlasted it.

³⁹ In 1862 Jeston noted "Priest Grove in Drayton Beecham parish, cut hard lately for improvement of Parsonage—no timber to cut now".

⁴⁰ The Abele is a poplar, said to have been introduced from Flanders. "It makes beautiful floors and turners' ware. Some of the finest Abeles in England are at Hariwell"—Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Plants*, p. 840. Cf. J. K. Fowler, *Records of Old Times* (1898), p. 108. "The brook side [by the White Hart orchard, Aylesbury] was edged by large silvery-leaved Abele trees of more than a century old"; but a Sherington furlong name (*juxta le Aubeles*, later Cross Albans: A. C. Chibnall, *Sherington* (1965), 11, 274) shows that the *abel* was established in North Bucks by 1312.

⁴¹ The Royal Commission's *Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Buckinghamshire* (1912), i, 108, accepts only the south wall as original, but N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* (1960), p. 96, lists the north as well as the south windows.

POSTSCRIPT:

Mrs. David Hay points out that John Wood was curate of St. Leonards 1666-97, and that the Bishop's transcripts show that he also officiated at Cholesbury, at least until 1691.

In an undated letter, Dr. Slare wrote to Newman: "I am well pleased with the candid answer & account of honest Mr Hill He is a man who fears God and dares not to give under his hand a fals report. I wish that not only his neighbours but all the land were stocked with Persons of equal Integrity".