

HISTORY OF ST.BOTOLPH'S CHURCH GRIMSTON, NORFOLK  
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

KING'S LYNN

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1923

DEDICATED TO  
MY PARISHIONERS

ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE PISCINA AND SEDILIA (V.Elwes drawing)

GENERAL VIEW (V.Elwes drawing)

THE FONT (V.Elwes drawing)

THE LOWER ARCH (V.Elwes drawing)

THE EAST WINDOW (photo)

THE SOUTH TRANSEPT (photo)

THE NORTH TRANSEPT (photo)

St.Botolph's Church Grimston

The ancient parish, like the present parish, though little more than a mile in width was seven miles long. At the extremities the land was poor, but in the centre it was good and there was an unfailing supply of water. It was in the midst of this good land that the ancient village stood; and it was in the midst of the village that the earliest church arose. Erected on a slight eminence, it looked down upon a tiny pool fed by the waters of perennial springs.

The earliest church ! How far does that take us back ? Undoubtedly to days before the Norman Conquest. Since that time many centuries have passed, bringing in their train change after change. In this way the sacred structure has grown both in size and beauty, and gathered round itself many a hallowed memory. And so to-day from every part there springs some story. No church could be more eloquent. It tells its own tale, 'here a little, and there a little'. We begin with the present structure.

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

Early in the 13th century it was decided to enlarge the small church then existing, and, as was often the case, an aisle was added – the present SOUTH Aisle. The extent of this addition is clearly marked by the continuous string-course under the windows.

Hitherto the villagers had worshipped in a small building of carr-stone, dark in colour and rude in workmanship. But the new addition was to have pillars and shafts and quoins and mouldings of white stone from Barnack near Peterborough, and the stone was to be beautifully worked. We can imagine the interest aroused, especially when the ox-drawn waggons arrived from Lynn. And we can imagine the joy when all was complete. There was the new entrance doorway with its rich, deep mouldings. There were the pillars, and the shafts and hood-moulds of the windows, just as we have them to-day. And there were the windows—now, alas, removed — which were doubtless somewhat similar to those in the lowest stage of the tower of St. Nicholas, a stage erected about 1200 to 1210. Our own south aisle is undoubtedly later than this. It may be dated approximately between 1220 and 1240, and belongs to the 'Early English' period. The doorway is remarkably similar to that in the west front of Binham Abbey — a doorway which like ours shows tooth ornament with only two 'leaves' instead of four, and is known to have been erected between 1226 and 1244.

On the south wall there is an interesting CONSECRATION CROSS painted in red and black. Such crosses were placed on the wall to mark the spots anointed by the Bishop when the whole fabric or part of it was dedicated.

On the outside of the same wall we find fragments of ROMAN BRICK. These were obtained from the remains of the Roman Villa which stood in the meadow a few hundred yards from the foot of Church Hill. They must have been made before the year when the Roman power in Britain came to an end, that is before the year 410.

The FONT seems to be of the same period as the South Aisle. Like many fonts of the 13th century it is supported by five shafts. The capitals of these shafts agree closely with those of the adjacent pillars in the south arcade.

The NORTH AISLE is later than the South Aisle. The windows, however, like those of the South Aisle, are later insertions, and belong to the Perpendicular period. If we may judge by the hood-moulds the original windows consisted of three lancet lights. There are no shafts to either windows or door. The termination of the hood-moulds is the well-known 'buckle'.

Adjacent to the NORTH DOOR there is a HOLY WATER STOUP. With the consecrated water placed therein the people signed themselves as they entered God's House, praying that they might be accepted as pure in the sight of the Almighty.

#### THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

We come next to an enlargement far more important and far more beautiful, an enlargement which must be associated with the names of Sir Benedict de Breccles and his wife Alice. This consisted in the lengthening of the Nave by one bay, and the erection of the present CHANCEL and TRANSEPTS. The work was carried out in the 'Decorated Period', a period described as 'one of the great glories of our country's art'. Let us examine some of its details.

First, the WINDOWS. These are noteworthy because of the beauty of their tracery and the variety in their designs. The window in the North Transept is wonderfully attractive in its simplicity; but its companion in the South Transept is usually more admired. In the chancel two windows have 'Kentish tracery'. This form of window is 'usually later than 1315' We must note that the tracery in the East Window is modern — but none the less beautiful.

The NICHES on either side of the East window are richly canopied, and show the 'ogee arch', a form which only came into general use after 1315. Before the Reformation each niche had doubtless a statue, one of St. Botolph, the other of St. Mary.

The PISCINA and SEDILIA, also richly canopied, show other examples of the 'ogee arch'. The channel in the basin of the piscina carried away the water in which the priest washed his hands, and the sedilia provided seats for those who ministered at the altar — the celebrant, deacon, and sub-deacon. There is a piscina in the south transept, good evidence that an altar formerly stood near.

The work just described cannot be later than 1349, the terrible year of the Black Death. But, as we have seen, we shall be justified in placing it in the period after 1315. Most probably, however, the work was carried out between 1320 and 1335, when Edmund de Breccles was Rector, and when the Manor House was occupied by Sir Benedict de Breccles, or by his widow and son.

It was about the year 1316 that Sir Benedict, who is described by Blomefield as 'a very wealthy and influential man', became Lord of the Manor. We hear of him in various ways until about 1327, when he seems to have died. Later, in 1335, when a new Rector was appointed, the nomination was made by Sir Benedict's widow, for the son and heir was a minor. Two years later, when another appointment was made, the widow also was dead, and the heir being still a minor the nomination was made by his guardian, Alexander Falstolff. We cannot but see here a moving story — a happy marriage, the birth of a son, the early death of the father, the death of the widow before the son became of age, and in the midst the erection of our chancel and transepts, followed by the erection of a beautiful tomb in memory of Sir Benedict, a tomb — as we shall see later — destroyed by iconoclasts in the year 1619. As the tomb was a memorial of Sir Benedict only, we may be sure it was the work of his widow, and was erected in her lifetime.

We must now consider what was the object of the extension just described.

Our churches consisted in the earliest days of two parts, a nave for the accommodation of the faithful, and a sanctuary for the accommodation of the altar. The mark of division was the chancel arch, and the underlying thought was that of deep reverence.

But in the middle ages, owing to the popular devotions which came into being, there was an increase in the number of altars, and at the same time an increase in the number of chapels to receive them and chaplains to serve them. When our transepts were erected the object was to provide worthily for two additional altars; and when the chancel was designed nearly fifty feet long the purpose was to give space for the stalls of chaplains and for the ceremonies of such days as Good Friday and Easter Day.

One of the most important of these ceremonies was connected with the Easter Sepulchre. In churches where no such sepulchre existed an altar tomb on the north side of the chancel was sometimes used. This was perhaps the case at Grimston, for the tomb of Sir Benedict de Breccles was probably just what was needed.

If we may judge by what took place elsewhere, every year, early on the morning of Easter Day, the Blessed Sacrament was taken with great ceremony from the sepulchre, and while an anthem was sung was brought to the High Altar. Afterwards, under a rich canopy, and surrounded by 'great store of lights', it was carried in procession round about the church 'all singing, rejoicing, and praising God'. And so it was brought again to the High Altar, there to remain until Ascension Day.

It was doubtless on occasions like this that the Rood-loft was lighted with scores of lights. Perhaps singers were stationed there high above the congregation. In any case access to the loft was possible by means of a staircase behind the north pillar of the chancel arch; signs of the staircase are still to be seen. The loft received its name because it bore the 'rood' — the crucifix. It also bore the figures of St. Mary and St. John standing at the foot of the cross.

In addition to the Chancel and Transepts this period gave us the PORCH. In olden days the porch had far greater importance than to-day. It was in the porch that the Churching Service took place, and the beginning of the office of Holy Baptism. It was in the porch that the Marriage Service proper took place — the old phrase was 'marriage at the church door'. It was in the porch that after the marriage ceremony the bridegroom presented the bride with her dowry. Sometimes the porch was the meeting place of guilds and societies, and there is at least one instance where meetings for public business are still held in the porch. The seats provided and the notices exhibited to-day are neither more nor less than survivals from the customs of the past.

Meetings 'in the church porch at Grimston' were, I find, provided for in the award of the Commissioners under the first Enclosure Act, an award dated 1780.

#### THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

It was left for the 15th century to crown the work by adding a CLERESTORY to the Nave and erecting the TOWER.

Seen from the Gayton Road on a bright morning the tower has rare attractiveness. Simple, dignified, and graceful, a structure of two stages, faced with flints, and capped by an enriched battlement and four slender pinnacles, it rises by virtue of its 91 feet far above the surrounding trees.

Both Tower and Clerestory are good examples of the work of the 'Perpendicular' period.

It is interesting to note the way in which the work was carried out. To give space for the clerestory the sides of the roof were raised, and at the same time the ridge was lowered. The transepts were dealt with similarly, witness the two kinds of work, one of flint, and one of carr stone. In order to sustain the west walls of the transepts an arch was erected at the east end of each aisle, and for the sake of harmony windows were inserted in the aisles like those in the clerestory. As for the chancel, not only was the ridge lowered and the roof made almost flat, but the east window was reduced in height and its tracery assimilated to that of the Perpendicular period.

At a subsequent date SCREENS were erected to separate the chapels from the aisles. We have good evidence of this in the mutilated figures and the patched-up pillars where the aisles meet the transepts.

Before the Reformation a large place in the life of our villages was filled by societies called GUILDS. A will dated 1504 makes plain that our parish had at least two such guilds. The will is that of Henry Sympton, Rector of the Church of St. Andrew, Congham. Among his bequests there were these: 'to the High Altar of Grymston 3s. 4d., to the Guild of Corpus Christi there 2s. 0d., to the fabric of Grymston Church 6s. 8d., to the Guild of St. Botolph of Grymston 3s. 4d., and to the light of the Blessed Virgin Mary 20d.'

Every guild wherever located, laid stress on the principle of brotherly love and charity, and no guild was without its religious observances. The members were drawn from all classes. They were bound to help one another in life and in death. On the day of the patron saint all attended mass. They attended the funeral of every member, and on the following Sunday they attended church. The larger guilds had chaplains of their own, and every guild had its officers and its annual feast.

There can be little doubt that some of our Grimston guilds were able to support a chaplain, and in consequence we find in our church STALLS for several priests. The six stalls adjacent to the chancel screen are interesting on this account. But they are interesting also as examples of 15th century woodwork and for the carvings on the movable seats misereres as they are sometimes called. The bracket attached to the lower side of these seats was used as a secondary seat. It was provided for the relief of the infirm. Note the ornament called the Tudor flower. Note also that one of the carvings is a portrait and very striking in character.

It was not until the 15th century that fixed seats for the congregation became common. Throughout the Middle Ages the people at worship knelt or stood, as they often do still in churches abroad. Yet for the aged and infirm one or two benches were provided. Perhaps the BENCH-ENDS near the font represent the earliest seats set up in our church. They seem to belong to the 15th century, and among them there are some quaint specimens of carving — a man in the stocks, for example, and a fox and goose.

As thus completed more than 400 years ago, the church was substantially what it is to-day. Its length was nearly 130 feet, and its width at the transepts over 60. But in one respect the interior was very different from what it is now, for it was bright with colour. There were three altars, all richly adorned. There were three screens, all decked with colour. In the transepts there were wall paintings. In the niches there were painted statues. There was colour even on the pillars.

Among the remnants of this ancient colouring the best is seen to-day on the lower part of the chancel screen. But there are traces also on some of the pillars, and in each transept there are signs of the wall-paintings.

#### REFORMATION CHANGES.

We cannot but ask what took place in our church at the Reformation. The answer is both interesting and illuminating. The chapels lost their altars and screens; the rood was removed, and with it the attendant figures; the niches and sedilia were mutilated and covered up. Such at any rate are the inferences to be drawn from the facts as we know them.

But the most interesting stories are those of the wall-paintings and the tomb of Sir Benedict de Breccles.

If we examine the wall of the south transept we shall find remnants of a picture of the Crucifixion, and fragments of texts. One of these texts was the 14th verse of the 19th Psalm 'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer'. The words 'in thy syght', followed after an interval by the words 'and my redemer', are just readable; and so is the number of the verse. We have here a striking illustration of events which took place between 1547 and 1554. In the former year an order was issued that all wall-paintings should be destroyed. This was obviously carried out — but in an imperfect manner. At a later date in the same reign — that of Edward VI - a further order was issued requiring texts to be painted where the pictures formerly stood. Still later, in the year 1554, when Queen Mary had come to the throne, a command came that the texts should be obliterated. Thus it came about that in 1895, when the outer coats of whitewash were removed, portions of both paintings and texts were revealed.

And now as to the fate of the tomb of Sir Benedict de Breccles. This tomb was destroyed during the year 1619. The act was that of private individuals, and was doubtless due to anti-popish zeal. We may be sure, therefore, that the tomb was of real importance. On the 5th of October, 1619, the Rector, himself a strong Puritan, held an enquiry in the matter, and it was decided that 'diligent search should be made after those who had been guilty of a most flagrant crime and act, in throwing down the tomb of Sir Benedict de Breccles, Knt., here buried in this church'. The loss was irreparable, and our church permanently the poorer.

If we may accept the evidence of a tablet built into the north wall of the vestry, the predecessor of the present vestry was erected in 1631.

From the cover of the oldest register we get the following note: 'The Church was whited and adorned in the yeare of our Lord and the Kynges Armes new put up in the yeare aforesaid 1640. John Harvie and Thomas Rothwell, churchwardens'. The omission of the date in the first sentence is amply atoned for in the second.

#### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

As depicted by Ladbroke in 'Norfolk Churches' the roofs of both nave and chancel were nearly flat. Moreover, the east window was shorter than now and had Perpendicular tracery, while the south-west window of the chancel was blocked up. It seems indeed that in the early days of the 19th century the fabric was greatly in need of restoration, and it is good to know that a beginning was soon made.

In 1814, the year before Waterloo, the tower-roof was re-covered with lead, W. Lofty and R. Matthews being then churchwardens.

In 1832 the church was re-roofed and the windows re-glazed : and in 1845 the present seats were installed instead of the old pews.

A few years later — in 1856 — the vestry was rebuilt. Its predecessor was ‘an old unsightly red-brick cottage, with a red-brick chimney, pantile roof, and a horribly dilapidated brick floor’. Up to the year 1830 this building had been used both as vestry and parish school. It was, however larger than the present structure.

In 1870 the chancel was partially restored and the present tiles laid down. But there was much yet to be done, for in 1888 the chancel had a low ceiling, its east window was shortened, and its walls covered with whitewash.

It was under these circumstances that the Rev. J. Fowler began his great work, a work of restoration and enrichment carried out under the direction of Messrs Bodley and Garner, chiefly in the years 1889, 1890, and 1895. In the former period the restoration of the chancel was undertaken. Here the roof was raised to its original pitch; the windows, niches, and sedilia were restored; and the walls and ceiling decorated. In the latter period, the nave was re-roofed, and the windows were re-leaded and re-glazed. Moreover the church was enriched by the provision of the upper part of the chancel screen, the equally beautiful font cover, and the excellent organ.

There is a tablet in memory of Mr. Bodley near the tower arch; and the generous Rector who did so much for the church is commemorated by the lectern. ‘He, being dead, yet speaketh’.

#### THE EARLIER CHURCH.

At the beginning of the above description an earlier church was referred to. What was that church ?

In a Cambridge handbook we are told that ‘it is not unusual to find Saxon quoins still existing at the angles of naves to which aisles have been subsequently added.’

This is exactly our case. There was an early nave to which, as we have seen, first a south aisle was added and then a north aisle. Of this nave a part of one angle remains and is still to be seen. It consists of several large pieces of carr-stone, rudely worked, in the west wall of the north aisle near the north-east corner of the tower. These stones are obviously the quoins of an earlier nave. They belong to the Saxon period, and are similar to the quoins in the tower of Monkwearmouth church as shown in a drawing by Prof. Baldwin Brown. They are undoubtedly very early; the tower at Monkwearmouth goes back to 674.

Three things seem quite clear : (1) The church to which the quoins belonged was early Saxon; (2) it was erected of stone; (3) the stone was carr-stone, quarried but a few miles away — probably at the delph near Warren Farm.

But there is evidence, I think, which carries us further. The pillar in front of the pulpit has a capital like those in the chancel arch, and unlike its companions in the south arcade. The inference is that before the 14th century the nave had four bays only, and represented the Saxon nave. The only other explanation possible — the fall of a central tower — has in our case nothing to recommend it.

But if there was a Saxon church why is it not mentioned in Domesday Book ? The answer is that only those churches were mentioned which had glebe. In this neighbourhood the Domesday Survey mentions churches at Appleton and Congham, at Flitcham and Gaytonthorpe and East Walton; but there is no mention of a church at Castle Rising or Dersingham, at Gayton or Middleton or Massingham. All the churches named, except Congham, had glebe; and we may be sure that Congham was not really an exception.

From the year 673 to the year 1078 the parishes in Norfolk were under the Bishops of Elmham, and the earliest mention of Grimston occurs in the will of one of these Bishops, viz., Alfric, who died in the year 1038. Here is the exact text as far as our parish is concerned :

‘ic gean leofstane dæcane thæt land at Grimas-tuna swa ful & swa forth swa ic hit ahte.’

This is a specimen of our language as written 900 years ago. The translation is as follows :

‘I give Leofstan, deacon, the land at Grimas-tun as fully and as continuously as I have had it.’

It was impossible for the Bishop to bequeath the land as we can to-day. All he could do was to bequeath the rights he enjoyed. Other people had rights in the same land, and obviously some of the Bishop’s rights extended to only part of the year — the lands were perhaps half-year lands.

#### THE DEDICATION.

Our church has the distinction of being dedicated to an English saint, St. Botolph. Norfolk has ten such churches, and in the whole country there are sixty. Who then was St. Botolph ?

He was one of two brothers, Botwulf and Adwulf, who were born in England about the beginning of the 7th century. The two brothers were sent for instruction and training to a Benedictine monastery on the continent. On his return to England Botwulf founded a monastery in 654 at Icanho, \*doubtless the place now called Boston — Botwulf's ton. There he laboured for the rest of his life, a quarter of a century, training men as he had himself been trained, and sending forth a continual stream of Christian teachers. His fame for piety and learning spread throughout the land. Men visited his foundation to learn about the way of life he taught, and to see the saint himself. He was spoken of as 'unique in life and teaching', and when he died about the year 680 the country was greatly the poorer. His day is kept on June 17th.

But why was our church dedicated to this saint ? In his honour, of course, and on account of his singular piety and godliness. But perhaps there was a further reason. Boston is not far away, and some of St. Botolph's disciples may have been the evangelists who first brought the gospel message to Grimston. Perhaps the saint himself may have laboured in our parish. We do not know. Yet there can be little doubt that the 'pond' was used for the first baptisms, and the site of the church immediately opposite may well represent the place of the earliest preachings.

There is an early reference to Grimston and St. Botolph's day which may well be mentioned at this point.

On the 20th of October in the year 1254, Henry III was at Bordeaux in France, and signed there a charter by which he granted a yearly fair to 'Walter de Thorpe, parson of the church at Grimston, co. Norfolk'. This fair was to be held at Grimston, 'on the eve, the day, and the morrow of St. Botolph', that is, on the 16th, 17th, and 18th of June every year. June 17th was a great day in the parish. It was one of the chief holidays of the year, and the day was begun by the gathering together of a great congregation in the Parish Church to celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

#### THE PLATE

A Venetian traveller, who visited England about the year 1500, declared that the riches of England were 'greater than those of any other country in Europe'. He went on to say that these riches were displayed above all in the church treasures, 'for', said he, 'there is not a parish church in the Kingdom so mean as 'not to possess crucifixes, candlesticks, censers, patens, and cups of silver.'

Before another century had passed, this was all changed. The 'Great Pillage' had taken place, and banners, hangings, crucifixes, candlesticks, and vessels had well nigh all disappeared. An enquiry was made in 1569 whether the Holy Communion was administered 'in a decent communion cuppe provided and kept for the same purpose only', and many cups and patens still in use were provided in consequence and bear the date 1569.

Our own most ancient piece of plate is a chalice of the time of Queen Elizabeth. It is somewhat similar to one at Gaywood, and bears the inscription 'The Tovnshyp of Grimston.'

Next in antiquity are two flagons and a 'silver salver' — a large paten — all mentioned in an inventory dated 1709, and made about that date. The flagons are inscribed 'This given to the Church of Grimston in Northfolk', and the paten has the same inscription except that Norfolk is substituted for Northfolk.

A small paten inscribed 'Given to Grimston Parish Church, 1716' has the year-mark 1715.

The chalice at St. Luke's describes itself as 'Presented to Grimston Church by J. Rowlands, Rector.'

#### THE BELLS

Two inventories, the first dated 1709 and the second dated 1763, throw a flood of light on the history of the bells.

The number of bells in 1709 was four, and the weights were, then believed to be 6 cwts. 3 qrs., 9 cwts., 12 cwts. 3 qrs., and 19 cwts.

In 1763 the number was five, and the approximate weights were 4 cwts. 2 qrs., 6 cwts. 3 qrs., 9 cwts. 1 qr., 12 cwts., and 15 cwts. A note in the inventory says the bells were 'made to this weight in 1753'. There seems little doubt that the old tenor — with perhaps a little weight from its neighbour — provided material for the new treble and new tenor.

To-day we have six bells, and their story is briefly outlined by the inscriptions which read as follows :

1. These bells were cast in the year 1816.
2. The Rev. J. Brett, rector, Robert Matthews and William Lofty, churchwardens.

3. William Dobson, founder, anno domini 1816.
4. William Dobson, Downham, Norfolk, 1816.
5. Fear God and honour the King.
6. Give no offence to the Church.

The weights are approximately 4 cwts., 4½ cwts., 5 cwts., 5½ cwts., 7 cwts., and 9 cwts. It seems indeed that the bells were entirely re-cast, and their weights considerably reduced.

There is one step more to record, viz., the re-hanging of the bells in the year 1894.

#### THE MEMORIAL CROSS

The Memorial Cross, erected in the south-west corner of the churchyard, was unveiled and dedicated by the Rev. A. H. Ellaby, formerly Rector, on Saturday, the 7th of February, 1920, in the presence of a large and representative gathering of parishioners and others. On the front of the base of the cross is the following inscription

‘In honoured memory of all who went forth from this parish and gave their lives in the Great War, 1914-1919.’

and on the opposite side of the base is a second inscription: ‘Their name liveth for evermore,’

words taken from the chapter of Ecclesiasticus which begins ‘Let us now praise famous men.’

On the remaining sides of the base are the names of the men commemorated : Alfred E. Barnes, William Bird, John Blake, Stanley C. Blake, William H. Boldero, Frederick Brinkley, Charles Bunting, Edward Bunting, Frederick H. Cobb, Frederick C. Cooper, Cecil A. Ellaby, Lloyd F. Franklin, Walter W. Hammond, George W. Hardy, William H. Hooks, Walter M. G. Humphrey, Reginald King, Arthur Matsell, Ernest E. Mayes, George W. Mayes, Arthur Padgett, William Padgett, Stephen Rudd, William Rudd, Alfred Rumbles, Albert Sayer, Albert Seaman, Reginald V. Sheppard, James T. Smith, Robert S. Smith, Samuel Smith, Frederick Spooner, William Stebbings, Arthur Symonds, Arthur W. Todd, Thomas E. Turvey, Jonathan W. Twite.\*\*

#### THE BENEFICE AND RECTORS.

The Domesday record mentions neither our church nor its endowments. It makes plain, however, that in 1086 William de Warrenne and the Bishop of Bayeux both held manors in the parish.

Now about the year 1088 William de Warrenne founded the Priory at Castleacre, and among other endowments granted to the Priory two parts of all his tithes in Grimston. The rest of his tithes were doubtless given to the Rectors.

Some years later William d’Albini, who held the manor previously held by the Bishop of Bayeux, made a similar grant to the Priory he had founded at Wymondham; and in 1242, Walter, Rector of Grimston, agreed to pay the Priory the sum of 40s. in lieu of the tithes thus granted by the founder. This Walter is the first Rector whose name we know. He is the Walter de Thorp mentioned as we have seen in 1254, and he comes first to our notice in 1238 when Philip, son of Walter de Thorp, made a grant to Walter, Rector of Grimston, his brother. We know that in 1275 the manor of Grimeston was held by James de Thorp, and it appears that the living was presented to Walter de Thorp by one of his own family, probably Walter de Thorp senr.

The value of the living in 1254 was 28 marks, that is £18 13s 4d., and the tithes paid to the Priors of Castleacre and Wymondham in that year were respectively 4 marks and 3 marks, in other words, 53s. 4d. and 40s.

The second Rector whose name we know was called William. He held the living in 1286, and he is most probably the William de Waleynes who in 1294, was ‘parson of Grimeston and Cley’. Hobert de Valeyns was, we know, brother of Agnes, the wife of the lord of the manor, Thomas de Grimeston; and we cannot but believe that William de Waleynes was another relative, perhaps another brother. Moreover, as Thomas de Grimeston was dead in 1288, the appointment of William de Waleynes most probably took place before that date.

William de Waleynes was mentioned in 1294 because he had paid to the King’s Treasurer the sum due on account of ‘the taxation made for a tenth for the Holy Land’. We know that the sum paid was £2, one tenth of the income of the living. We know that the Priors of Wymondham and Castleacre were then receiving annual payments of £2 and £2 13s. 4d. All these payments went on for centuries, and one of them, the £2 paid to the King’s Treasurer, is still paid by the Rectors; it is paid however, to Queen Anne’s Bounty.\*\*\*

Some time after the death of Thomas de Grimston the chief manor passed into the hands of John de Breccles by right of his wife, Alice de Grimston, and we come to a series of Rectors presented by members of the de Breccles family :

1310 Benedict de Breccles, presented by John de Breccles and Alice his wife.

1312 Edmund de Breccles, presented by John de Breccles.

1335 Edmund de Breccles, presented by Alice, widow of Sir Benedict de Breccles.

1337 Hervey Falstolf, presented by Alexander Falstolf in the minority of John, son and heir of Sir Benedict de Breccles.

The Falstolfs were members of the famous family then resident at Kimberley, but later at Caister by Yarmouth. Before the next presentation the patronage had passed into other hands, sold, as it seems, by Sir Benedict's son, and in 1374 it came into the possession of the Abbot and Convent of West Dereham. The four incumbents who come next are

1361 Adam Pyk, presented by John of Wesenham.

1397 Henry Wells, L.L.B., presented by the Abbot.

1399 Roger de Schypdam, presented by the Abbot.

1407 John Burgony, presented by the Abbot.

Henry Wells became Dean of St. Mary's College, Norwich, and Archdeacon of Lincoln. He was buried in the abbey church of West Dereham - he had been 'a good benefactor' of that religious house. The patronage again changed hands; owing to an informality in the original transfer the Lords of the Manor became patrons once more. Succeeding Rectors were

1417 Nicholas Flint.

1420 Thomas Belers.

1428 Richard Vele.

1431 William More.

1439 Thomas Brigge.

1444 Robert Appulby, LLB.

The last-named had been Rector of Little Massingham, and was a Prebendary of Norwich. In his day the Lord of the Manor was John Compton, son of Alice de Breccles. This Alice de Breccles was the last of the name connected with Grimston. In 1458 we find John Compton declared an outlaw, and the patronage granted by the King to Sir Thomas Tudenham. In the following year commissioners were appointed to arrest both John Compton and his wife, as well as fifteen others, 'who daily commit riots and congregations in the county'. Among the fifteen names we find Denys Vele, doubtless a son of a former Rector. We also find two chaplains—possibly chaplains of Guilds—Thomas Goodwyn and Stephen Redyswell. The three Rectors next in succession were

1459 Walter Wyndesore.

1467 William Lathum.

1470 Ralf Danyel.

Ralf Danyel was a Prebendary of Norwich from 1476 until his death. The next incumbent was presented by the Abbot :

1508 Thomas Hare, LLB

And the next by the Bishop on the grant of the Abbot:

1520 Nicholas Carr, LLD.

Each of the two Rectors last named was Chancellor of the Diocese and Dean of St. Mary's College, Norwich. Succeeding holders of the living were :

-- Edward Rochester.

1560 William Pordage.

1585 William Thorowgood, M.A.

1625 Thomas Thorowgood, B.D.

1646 John Brocket, M.A.

1663 Thomas Cremer.

1691 John Cremer.

William Thorowgood held the living of Bickerston as well as that of Grimston, but he resided at Grimston and his ten sons were baptised there. One of his sons succeeded him as Rector. Another, Edward, became Rector of Little Massingham. A third, Robert, was Mayor of Lynn in 1656. \*\*\*\* And one of his grandsons was the Sir John Thorowgood whose name we know as a benefactor of the Free School.

Thomas Thorowgood, like his father a strong Puritan, was born in Grimston and buried there. He was a man of considerable learning, and became a member of the Assembly of Divines, a body appointed by the Long Parliament 'for settling the doctrine, liturgy and government of the Church of England'. In 1644, when Sir Roger le Strange was a prisoner in Lynn under sentence of death, Thomas Thorowgood visited him in the hope of persuading him to sign the Covenant.

From 1621 to 1643 Thomas Thorowgood was Rector of Little Massingham. He resigned the living of Grimston in 1646 in favour of his son-in-law, and died in 1699 as Rector of Great Cressingham.

The Cremers, father and son, were members of a well-known West Norfolk family. They are commemorated by a memorial slab near the organ. John Cremer held the living longer than any other incumbent; he was Rector for 51 years. It was during his time that the President and Fellows of Queens' College became patrons. The funds required were bequeathed by Dr. James, President of the College from 1675 to 1717. The Rectors presented by the College are as follows :

1742 Morley Unwin, B.D.

1768 Robert Cooper, B.D.

1777 John Brett, M.A.

1816 George Barnes, B.D.

1846 William Dixon Rangeley, B.D.

1853 John Rowlands, M.A.

1883 John Fowler, M.A.

1902 Alfred Hall Ellaby, M.A.

1918 Armitage Goodall, M.A. \*\*\*\*\*

Morley Unwin lived in Grimston for but a few years. Afterwards his duty was taken by Curates, and one of them, Edward Bunting, laid to rest in Grimston three of his children; their memorials are to be seen close to the Font. It was in the house of Morley Unwin at Huntingdon that the poet Cowper found a happy home in 1765; and it was under the devoted care of Mrs. Unwin that the afflicted poet gave to the world almost all his works.

Robert Cooper who died at the age of fifty-nine, lies buried in the south-east corner of the chancel. His epitaph reads as follows :

'This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,

May truly say, here lies an honest man.'

John Brett, Fellow and Bursar of Queens', became Rector just before the first Enclosure Act was passed. Some of his correspondence about the matter is still in existence. More-over, there is an interesting memento of the Act on the west wall of the Vestry—a map of Grimston made in 1786 which shows the roads, houses, streams and properties as they then existed. This map is much faded, but fortunately we possess a clear copy of a similar map made in 1860 by Francis Beets, the then schoolmaster.

George Barnes lies buried beneath the altar. He had been Fellow and Tutor of Queens'. His widow, who lived at Gayton for several years, founded the charity which bears her name.

The tomb of William Dixon Rangeley stands in the churchyard near the east window. He graduated as 5th Wrangler, and like his predecessor, had been Fellow and Tutor of his college. He died at the early age of fifty-two.

His successor, John Rowlands, will be remembered as the builder of the present Rectory\*\*\*\*\*. He laid out the Rectory grounds, and carried out a restoration of the Chancel. In 1883 he exchanged for the living of Newton Toney, and died there in 1888.

In the days of the succeeding Rector, John Fowler, not only was the Church restored, but the Mission Church of St. Luke was erected, and the adjacent Club-room with its Caretaker's house, Curate's room and Class-room. Mr. Fowler resigned on account of ill-health in 1902 and passed to his rest before the close of the year.

After holding the living for sixteen years, Alfred Hall Ellaby resigned in 1918 to become Vicar of Thornham.

In a letter comparing past with present a former inhabitant says of the circumstances to-day "It's a little bit different to what it was when the Rev. Rowlands used to say 'Common Metre', and Schoolmaster Beets started the tune with his pitch-pipe, and Bannell used to walk up and down the church with his stick to wake the sleepers up."

#### THE RECTORY HOUSE.

On the site of the present house—an area of nearly two acres surrounded by a moat—there stood the ancient Manor House. But a terrier dated 1709 in describing the Rectory house of that date refers to 'the mote', and so makes plain that the Rectors have resided on this spot for more than 200 years.

What the residence was then like we can gather in part from the description given by the terrier. It consisted, we are told, of 'a Hall, a Parlour, a Kitchen, a Larder, two Panterys, all planshered, with chambers over them'. The windows were small about 2 ft. by 2 ft. 6 ins.—as we can see from the part of the old house still preserved; and the rooms were boarded—that is the meaning of 'planshered.'

Among the outbuildings there was a 'brewhouse', and in the grounds there was a hopyard', In those days the breakfast beverage was neither tea nor coffee, for the price was prohibitive. The wages of a labourer amounted to less than a shilling a day, yet coffee could not be got for less than 5s. a pound, or tea for less than 10s.

The present house was erected by the Rev. J. Rowlands, the chief part in 1855-6, and the western wing in 1868. The level is three feet above that of the former house, and the front is twenty-four feet further from the moat.

As we have seen, the Manor House had become a Rectory as early as 1709. It probably ceased to be Manor House in the preceding sixty years, and it is a little astonishing to find that no tradition exists as to the site of the former Rectory.\*\*\*\*\*

In the century before it became the Parsonage the house was the residence for a longer or shorter period of several persons known to history.

If we may accept statements in Gleanings from Gayton and elsewhere, it was at one time the residence of Colonel Waller, one of the most successful leaders of the Roundheads in the earlier engagements of the Civil War. And if we may accept further statements on the same authority, Colonel Waller was visited here by Oliver Cromwell. A search in the Parish Registers shows that in 1674 a certain Thomas Waller was buried at Grimston. This may prove to be a corroboration of the story, for Colonel Waller had a son called Thomas.

In the previous century the house was for a time the residence of a man of very different type.

The story begins in October, 1588, soon after the defeat of the Armada. In that month a young Jesuit priest, sent on a mission from Rome, landed secretly on the east coast of Norfolk. He was a Lancashire man of good family named John Gerard. Having made his way to Norwich he met there the Lord of the Manor of Grimston, a zealous Roman Catholic called Edward Yelverton. After a two days' journey on horseback, Gerard—now Mr. Thompson—settled down quietly in the Manor House at Grimston as an honoured guest. He was in great danger, but his retreat was believed as safe as any south of the Humber.

Gerard was no ordinary man. He had indeed strange powers of attraction and fascination. He was introduced to the chief families of the neighbourhood, Walpoles and Woodhouses among others, and though only twenty-four he had extraordinary influence among them. His stay in Grimston lasted seven or eight months. After that he lived for some time at Lawshall, near Bury St. Edmunds. Later, when on a visit to London, he was betrayed, and found himself shut up in the Tower as a political prisoner. There we are told he was subjected to torture — suspended by the wrists for hours — a terrible experience. After three years however, he escaped, and with characteristic courage continued his labours, though a price was set on his head and he was hunted by spies. At length after the Gunpowder Plot, he crossed the narrow seas, and from 1606 until

his death in 1637 he laboured for the cause he loved, sometimes in Rome, sometimes at Liege, sometimes in Ghent or Louvain.

Mrs. Unwin, already mentioned, lived at the Rectory for some years, and her son, William Cawthorne — afterwards the ‘chief confidant of Cowper, and the recipient of some of the most delightful letters in the whole range of literature – was born and baptised at Grimston. Mrs. Unwin is described by one who knew her as ‘a person of lively talents, with a sweet serene countenance’. She was the first to realise Cowper’s need for variety of occupation, and it is largely to her wise counsel that we owe his poems. She died at East Dereham, where there is a monument to her memory, and an epitaph which declares that ‘all who read his verse, revere her name.’

#### THE PARISH REGISTERS.

The first volume describes itself as a ‘Register booke of all the Christnings Burialls and Mariages within the parish of Grimstone made the thre and twentie day of october anno dni 1598 but begining at the yeare of our Lord God 1552’. In the early years the entries were probably made on loose sheets of parchment or on paper, but in 1598 an order was issued that all entries should be copied into parchment books.

The first entry in the Register of Mariages is that of Richard Marre and Alice Barwicke who ‘were married the xith of June Anno Dni 1552’. It is not until we come to the fourteenth entry that we find a surname now to be found in the parish. There we read that ‘Thomas Jarves and Johan Crane wear married’ on the 15th January, 1553. Other surnames, well-known to-day, are Codling, found in 1554, Greene in 1558, Rust in 1566, and Rudd in 1644. Many, however, like Philister and Nippe and Pyght, have entirely disappeared.

It is interesting to find that in the days of Queen Elizabeth the favourite name for girls was Margaret, with Elizabeth next in popularity, followed by Mary, Alice, Joan and Agnes. In the case of boys Thomas, Richard, John and William take the lead, with Humphrey and Edward following.

A remarkable point in the Marriage entries is the fact that John Harvie and Thomasine Ives are described as married againe the 18 daie of March, 1653, by John Meye, one of the Justices for the County’. They were first married on February 14th, but the ceremony had not been carried out in accordance with an Act recently passed by ‘Cromwell’s little Parliament’, an Act providing that marriages were ‘not to be performed by the Minister, but by Justices of the Peace’. Against this Act Cromwell’s own daughters rebelled.

We can obtain from the Registers a very clear insight into the way in which the population has grown. Taking periods of forty years we get the following totals from the Marriage Register :

1560 to 1599 — 125 marriages.

1600 to 1639 — 135

1640 to 1679 — 135

1680 to 1719 — 132

1720 to 1759 — 150

1760 to 1799 — 151

1800 to 1839 — 259

Thus there was a slight increase of population in the 17th century, followed by a further increase in the 18th, and a phenomenal increase in the 19th. We know that the population in 1821 was 918, and we shall not be greatly in error if we estimate the total in 1580 at about 450.

A return made in 1603 provides an interesting comment on these figures. What we find is this : In 1603, while the number of communicants at Middleton was 300 and the number at Congham 140, Grimston had only 115, a smaller number than at Gayton, East Walton, West acre and East Winch. Practically the whole adult population were then communicants, so that we may conclude that in 1603 our population was quite small—perhaps no more than 400.

The Register of Burials throws a vivid light on the periods of plague and pestilence by which our ancestors were so often visited.

There was a time of exceptional mortality almost throughout the reign of Queen Mary. In the four years from 1555 to 1558 the number of burials was 121, though the number of baptisms was only 49. From time to time, as we know, the country was attacked by ‘strange fevers’. There was such a visitation we are told in 1557 and 1558, and Queen Mary, who died in the latter year, was one of the victims. This sickness is believed to have been similar to our present-day influenzas. In any case the rate of mortality in Grimston was appalling—121 deaths in four years, though the population was less than 500.

In the summer of 1585 four members of one family were buried in two months—father, mother and two sons. A note written on the margin of the register, apparently in 1598, says ‘These are supposed to have died of the plague.’

But of all the attacks of the plague the most terrible was that known as the Black Death in the years 1348 and 1349. At that time in a single twelvemonth half the people in England were carried away. But there were other attacks later. In and about the year 1603 our parish suffered severely. It suffered again in and about the year 1665. But the most serious visitation was in 1624, 1625 and 1626, when the total number of burials was 86. Out of this number 41 were those of young people living with their parents, doubtless mostly children. Twenty years later—between 1645 and 1652—there were only eight marriages in eight years, whereas the ordinary rate was three a year.

One more note. The burials from the cholera ninety years ago are marked in the register for 1832 with a C. There were twenty-six of them, all between June 29th and July 29th. An explanatory footnote says ‘Those marked C died of the Blue Oriental Cholera.’

It is plain that in years gone by the petition ‘From plague, pestilence, and famine, Good Lord, deliver us’ had a depth of meaning we have never realised. We have to thank God, indeed, for wonderful progress in the arts and sciences which make for our physical well-being.

#### SOME WARDENS AND PARISH CLERKS.

A note in the oldest register tells us that ‘Thomas Rothwell came on to be Clark in the year of our Lord God 1637’, and a further note says ‘William Drake entered the office the 7th of July, 1644’. After the early years of the 18th century our list of Clerks is probably complete :

1712 Francis Fretwell.

1722 Thomas Hall.

1743 William Scott.

1750 Thomas Scott.

1751 Matthew Whitheved.

1767 Thomas Ward.

1791 Thomas Raven.

1817 John Cross.

1867 William Cross.

Thus, our present Clerk holds the record for length of service. For over 56 years he has faithfully performed the duties of his office. Between them the grandfather and grandson have been Clerks for 106 years.\*\*\*\*\*

Thomas Rothwell, who ‘came on to be Clark’ in 1637, was warden in 1640, when, as we have seen, his colleague was John Harvie. In 1706 the Wardens were Robert Smith and Daniel Riches; in 1740 Gilbert Cremer and John Swanton; in 1747 John Swanton and John Tooke; in 1814 and 1816 Robert Mathews and William Lofty. It would be possible without great difficulty to add many other names. We must be content, however, to mention those who have held office during the present century, viz., Mr. R. Ashley, 1882-1907, Mr. R. H. Spragg, 1895-1923, Dr. Laver, 1907-1909, Mr. F. M. Birch, 1909-1920, Mr. H. H. Hammond, 1920-1923, and Mr. A. F. Culham, 1923.

#### ENVOY.

Slender as this booklet is, it represents the co-operation of quite a number of people. We have to thank Miss V. Elwes for her pen-and-ink sketches, Mr. Freeman Lee for his photographs, the Rev. A. R. V. Daubeney for helpfulness in many ways, Mr. R. H. Spragg, Mr. W. Cross and Mr. H. H. Hammond for various items of information, and the Subscribers for their kind interest. But we owe also a great debt to half-a-hundred writers, authorities in history like Blomefield and Jessopp, and authorities in architecture like Bond and Cox and Hamilton Thompson, writers without whose help this adventure would have been impossible. If the booklet is helpful to those who peruse it, if it adds links to bind them to their Parish Church, I shall be deeply grateful.

Grimston Rectory,        A. GOODALL,

King’s Lynn.    Rector.

20th April, 1923.

A Few Corrections Must be made...

\* 'doubtless... Boston' – scholars now think Icahoe near Aldeburgh was the site of Botolph's monastery, though clearly Boston has an important connection with him – perhaps a daughter abbey

\*\* Albert Sayer's name was later scrubbed out, and two more added for the 1939-1945 war

Information given on the decorated Roll of Honour which hung in church until it became too damp to leave there gives a little more details, and some of these have been later corrected. The full list follows...

1914

Alfred Rumbles : Royal Navy - went down in HMS Pathfinder September 5th

1915

Lloyd F. Franklin : 1st Norfolk Regiment - killed in action Hill 60 Flanders April 21st

George W. Mayes : 1st Norfolk Regiment - killed in action Flanders July 12th

Cecil A. Ellerby : 5th New Zealand Regiment - killed in action Gallipoli August 8th

Frederick C. Cooper : 7th Suffolk Regiment - killed in action France October

William Padgett : 7th Norfolk Regiment - killed in action Loos France October 13th

Arthur Symonds : Royal Fusiliers - killed in action Balkans November 7th

James T Smith : 1st Essex Regiment - Wounded in Gallipoli, died in hospital November 28th

William Rudd : Norfolk Regiment - killed in action Dardanelles December 4th -

However he is not listed on the Norfolk Regiment's List of those who died in the Great war

1916

Stephen Rudd (on churchyard war memorial but not on framed list) : 2nd Norfolk Regiment - died

Mesopotamia July 27th

Charles Eggleton (not on churchyard war memorial) : 1st Norfolk Regiment - died from wounds July 29th

1917

Ernest E. Mayes : Royal Engineers - killed in action France January 4th

Albert Sayer : Norfolk Regiment - killed in action France January 27th - However he is not listed on the Norfolk Regiment's List of those who died in the Great War and his name was erased from the war memorial (so perhaps he was later found alive)

William Stebbings : Royal Sussex Regiment - killed in action France March 15th

Jonathan W. Twite : Royal Garrison Artillery - killed in action France April 12th  
 John Blake : 5th Norfolk Regiment - killed in action Palestine April 19th  
 Reginald King : King's Shropshire Regiment - wounded in France died at Rouen May 15th  
 William Bird : Royal Engineers killed in action France July 13th  
 Charles Bunting : 5th Norfolk Regiment - Died of wounds Alexandria August 3rd  
 Alfred E Barnes : 8th Norfolk Regiment - wounded at Ypres died Poperigne August 3rd - This was a mistake: he was wounded near Inverness Copse Zillebeke, and died at the casualty Clearing Station at Brandhoek on August 16th  
 Frederick Spooner : Middlesex Regiment - killed in action near Ypres Flanders August 17th  
 Walter W. Hammond : 8th Norfolk Regiment - killed in action France October 22nd - Actually it was at Poelapelle, Belgium  
 Frederick Brinkley : Royal Fusiliers - killed in action France October 30th  
 Arthur Padgett : Royal Garrison Artillery - died from wounds Etaples France November 17th  
 George Hardy : 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment - killed in Flanders September 26th  
 1918  
 Albert Seaman : Rifle Brigade - killed in action France March 24th  
 William H. Boldero : Royal Navy Division - killed in action March 24th  
 Samuel Smith : 9th Norfolk Regiment - died on or after April 15th  
 Arthur W Todd, 17892 (military medal holder) : 9th Norfolk Regiment - died on or after April 15th  
 Thomas E. Turvey : Royal Garrison Artillery - wounded in France died at Edinburgh May 3rd  
 Robert S. Smith : Essex Regiment - killed in action September 21st  
 Arthur Matsell : Sherwood Foresters - killed in action October 3rd  
 Walter M.G. Humphrey : King's Royal Rifles - killed in action October 23rd  
 William Hooks : Lancashire Fusiliers - died in hospital November 4th  
 Stanley G. Blake : Devon Regiment - died in hospital November 6th  
 Frederick H. Cobb : Died in Prisoner of War Camp Germany November 1st  
 1919  
 Reginald V. Sheppard : Army Service Corps - died in hospital February 13th  
 Edward Bunting : 9th Norfolk Regiment - died in hospital February 17th - In fact it was on the 7th.

\*\*\* This ceased in about 1945 when clergy pensions were introduced

\*\*\*\* Mention must be made of Adam, William's youngest son, who went out to Virginia in 1620 for three years of indentured service, returned to marry Sarah Offlett, of another family with Virginia connections, and then recruited 105 men of Lynn to take to Virginia, for which he was awarded several thousand acres of land. He became a leading citizen, naming Norfolk City after his come country and is well known in Virginia Beach, where part of the city is named Thoroughgood after him, and a house he or his family built is a museum.

\*\*\*\*\* Old Rectory in Massingham Road. The present one was built in 1957 after Thomas Daniels Rector of Congham since 1951 was given the living of Grimston to combine with Congham.

\*\*\*\*\*Subsequent rectors to Armitage Goodall have been:

1930 Ernest William Selwyn

1938 Eric Cyril Corke

1946 Eric Walton Rogers

1952 Thomas Winston Daniels (Rector of Congham from 1951 so presumably not a Queens appt)

1957 Eric Leslie Fuller

1964 Albert Robinson(presented by the Bishop of Norwich), the living now combined with Roydon

1974 Esdaile Barnes, ALCD

1976 Andrew H R Thomas (pres by Bp of Norwich)

1984 William Howard BA (pres by Greville Howard, patron of Roydon, though nominated by the Bishop as Mr G.Howard's time had elapsed)

\*\*\*\*\* Aerial photos have revealed a house some way to the North of Massingham Road which probably marks the older rectory.

\*\*\*\*\* George Cross, William's grandson, was Clerk from 1926-1986 further continuing the family's long service.