

Our Grimston Rectors By Stephanie Hall © 2021

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Our Medieval Rectors

The rectors of the Middle Ages were rectors but “not as we know them”. These men, who were ordained clerics, were appointed by the lord who bestowed the parish as a living i.e. to give the recipient an income. They were very likely to be of the gentry or nobility, quite probably a younger son, and they gained income from the parish church rather than from tenant’s rents. The rector may have held more than one parish and he probably did not serve the parish in person. There were some rectors who were local men and may have been more likely to serve in person but as they would have had to pay for training they were probably of the better sort. The rector appointed a deputy, a vicar, to serve in the parish and paid him a stipend. The vicar could be of a lower class although neither villeins nor men with a “physical defect” e.g. blindness or disability were allowed. Priests were ordained by the bishop and had to be over twenty-four years of age.

The job encompassed many roles. We may believe the pastoral aspect of priesthood to be a modern invention but in the Middle Ages priests were expected to be teachers (of basic religious beliefs and liturgy) and to guide the congregation on subjects ranging from motherhood to magic neither of which they were presumably expert on. The pay was not large and money from the church land, the glebe, went to the rector. The vicar’s stipend was augmented by small amounts of alms payable on different occasions in the year. Although some medieval writers, William of Malmsbury for instance, described the clergy as inebriate, Chaucer’s parson is described as a genuinely good man, living in poverty but rich in holy thoughts and deeds, making sure to practice what he preaches. He is the only devout churchman in the company and is perhaps Chaucer’s idea of an ideal parish priest. It is to be hoped that Grimston was blessed with some of these.

Our medieval rectors were :

1242 (approx) – Walter de Thorp
1286 – William de Waleynes
1312 – Edmund de Breccles
1335 – Edmund de Breccles
1337 – Hervey Falstolf
1361 – Adam Pyk
1397 – Henry Wells
1399 – Roger de Schypdam
1407 – John Burgony
1417 – Nicholas Flint
1420 – Thomas Belers
1428 – Richard Vele
1431 – Thomas More
1439 – Thomas Brigge
1444 – Robert Appulby
1459 – Walter Wyndesore
1467 – William Lathum
1470 – Ralf Danyel



Chaucer’s Parson. After an illustration in the Ellesmere manuscript of Chaucer’s (c1345–1400) work,

Our knowledge of the medieval rectors is due to research carried out by Rev. Armitage Goodall in the early twentieth century.

Walter de Thorp is the first rector whom we know by name. Around that time, in 1275 the manor of Grimston was held by James de Thorp and thus the living was obviously given to Walter by a senior family member. The value of the living in 1254 was twenty-eight marks (a mark was worth around 66p). Out of this money tithes to a value of seven marks had to be paid to the Priors of Castleacre and Wymondham so Walter may well have felt disinclined to offer much of a stipend to his vicar. The second rector, William de Waleynes also received the living through a relation who was lord of the manor. Rev Goodall found a reference to William in 1294 because he paid a tithe towards the war in the Holy Land.

The de Breccles family took over the manor at the end of the thirteenth century and the living was in their hands for the next fifty years. There are two Edmunds of the de Breccles family and Hervey Falstolf was presented by a relation (Alexander) who was the guardian of John de Breccles the underage heir of the family. The de Breccles family carried out a vast amount of work in St Botolph's which is described in details in Rev Goodall's history. Possibly the most important work for church liturgy was the creation of the large and elaborate tomb built for Sir Benedict (who died in 1327). In many churches an altar tomb on the north side of the chancel was used as the Easter Sepulchre and it is more than likely that this would have been the case with Sir Benedict's tomb which sadly was destroyed in 1619. Around 1370 Sir Benedict's son sold the living of Grimston to the Abbott of West Dereham so the four rectors following Hervey Falstolf were appointed by him. Henry Wells was noted as being a "good benefactor" of the Abbey and was buried in the abbey church. He is an example of a medieval churchman wearing more than one hat as he was also an archdeacon at Lincoln and the dean of St Mary's College Norwich.

The living once again came back to the lords of the manor at Grimston. We do not know a great deal about the early fifteenth century rectors but do know that Robert Appulby was another multi-tasker who was also rector of Massingham and a prebendary at Norwich Cathedral. During Robert's time the manor had its last link with de Breccles family through a female relative. In 1458, despite the false reconciliation known as the "Love Day" the two factions of York and Lancaster continued to dispute. It seems that at some time during that year the lord of Grimston manor, John Compton, found himself on the wrong side and was declared an outlaw. One year later he was arrested with fifteen others including Denys Vele, son of a previous rector of Grimston, and two Guild Chaplains Thomas Goodwym and Stephen Redyswell. They were charged with "committing riots and congregations". Sadly the Rev Goodall did not discover their fate.

Of the final three medieval rectors the Rev Goodall did not find much to tell. Ralf Danyel was, like Robert Applebuy, a Prebendary of Norwich. This meant they were awarded a prebend, an amount of money, from the cathedral. Thus they had two income sources or in the case of Robert Appulby, three.

The village and the church had undergone a great deal of change in the four hundred years since Domesday but there were even more sweeping changes ahead as the Tudors ascended the throne and another new century began.

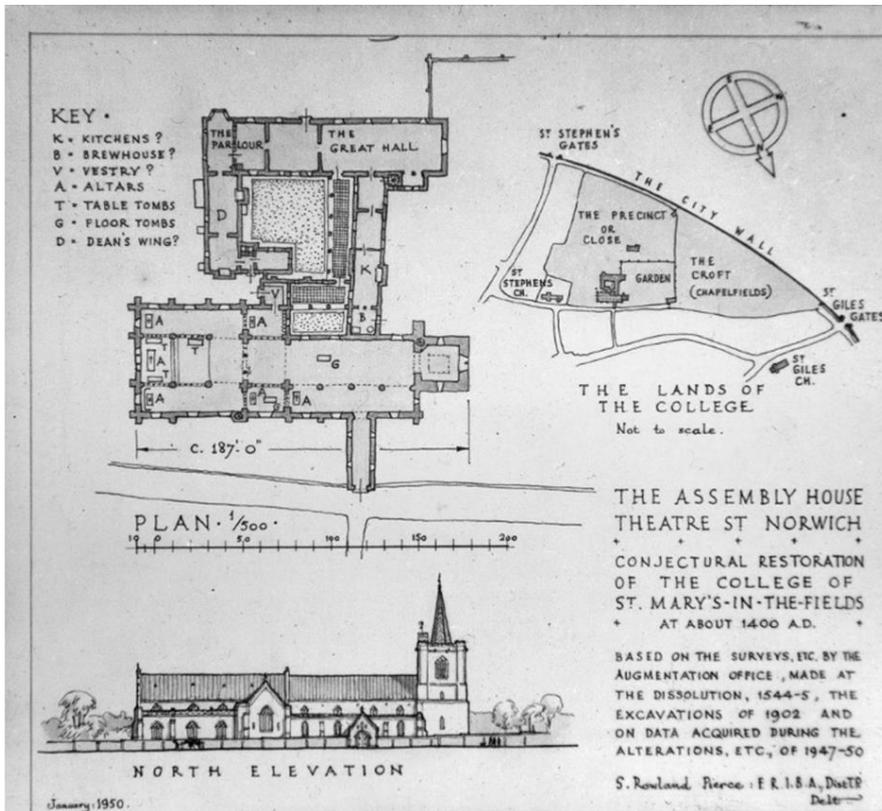
Rev Thomas Hare
Rector of Grimston 1508 – 1520

We know very little about Thomas Hare except that he was a man who had several jobs or roles which means that he was rarely, if ever, seen in Grimston. He was rector of four parishes – Grimston, Great Massingham, Southwold and a parish in Suffolk and as well as these roles he was Chancellor of the Diocese of Norwich and Vicar-General to the bishop of Norwich. The vicar general was the principal deputy of the bishop and exercised the bishop's power over the entire diocese. He was the highest official in the diocese after the bishop. As Norwich was at this time the second most important city in the kingdom Rev Hare was clearly quite an important man. The bishop of Norwich at this time was Richard Nix. (Nykke) He was the last Catholic bishop (although this was not of course known at the time) and strongly anti Lollard. Consistently he attempted to maintain Catholic orthodoxy against Lollards and the early Protestant reformers. He expressed anxiety about the distribution of William Tyndale's translation into English of the New Testament. Thomas Hare would obviously have followed his boss's line so it is likely that St Botolph's was maintained in a strongly Catholic way and quite probably did not have a copy of Tyndale's translation.

When Thomas Hare died in 1520 he wrote in his will that he wished to be buried at the chapel of St Mary in the Fields in Norwich. The building has now gone, the Assembly House is built over it.

Rev Nicholas Carr - died 1530
Rector of Grimston 1520 – 1530

The only information we have on Rev Carr is supposition. He appears on Rev Goodall's list but nothing is written about him apart from the fact that he was also Chancellor of the Diocese and Dean of St Mary's College in Norwich. He therefore has links with his predecessor Rev Hare who was also Chancellor and was buried at St Mary's.



A conjectural picture and plan of St Mary's which was in the position of the Assembly House.

The Rev Carr would also have been Chancellor to Bishop Nix who in 1531 had the preacher Thomas Bilney burnt in the Lollards Pit in Norwich. Details of something as newsworthy as a burning would definitely have reached the village and this may well have encouraged the villagers to consider their own views on the Church.

As well as the martyrs being burnt there were other signs of change ahead for everyone. During the Rev Carr's time as rector Henry VIII was king; in 1527 Henry petitioned Pope Clement for an annulment of his marriage which was refused. Everyone knew about the King's quest for a son – both he and Queen Catherine had visited Walsingham more than once to pray for a male child – there was probably occasional gossip about it but neither the Rev Carr nor his parishioners could have any idea of what lay ahead.

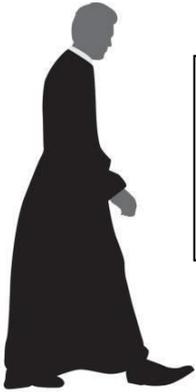
Rev Richard (or Edward) Rochester - died in 1560

Rector of Grimston from 1530 – 1560

According to the Church of England Clergy base the Rev Rochester was called Robert. Rev Goodall however lists him as Edward because he found a document at County Hall with that name on it. We will never know which is correct.

Apparently the Rev Rochester was the first rector for whom responsibility for Grimston was his only job; he could not have undertaken it at a more difficult time. This unfortunate priest had to lead his parishioners through the most turbulent years the church had ever known and I have simplified this journey to show how the changes would have impacted St Botolph's and the congregation.

Rev Rochester 1530 - 1560



Rev Rochester , rector from 1530 – 1560 led his parishioners through the most turbulent years.

King Edward VI
1547 - 1553

Services and Bible in English. All parishes have a Bible in English.

Statues and images removed. The rood removed.

Christmas and Easter services changed or removed.



Prayer Book, Forty-Two Articles and Act of Uniformity repealed.

Queen Mary I 1553 - 1558

All clergy have to subscribe to Cranmer's Forty-two

Communion table replaces altar. Vestments not worn.



Services in Latin again, altars and crucifixes restored.

Vestments returned. Priests again not allowed to marry.

Burnings in Norwich. Owing Protestant literature meant death.



Vestments to be worn but only plain surplice.

Book of Common Prayer back with modifications.

Queen Elizabeth I 1558 - 1603

Rev Rochester died in 1560 before even more changes came in 1563.

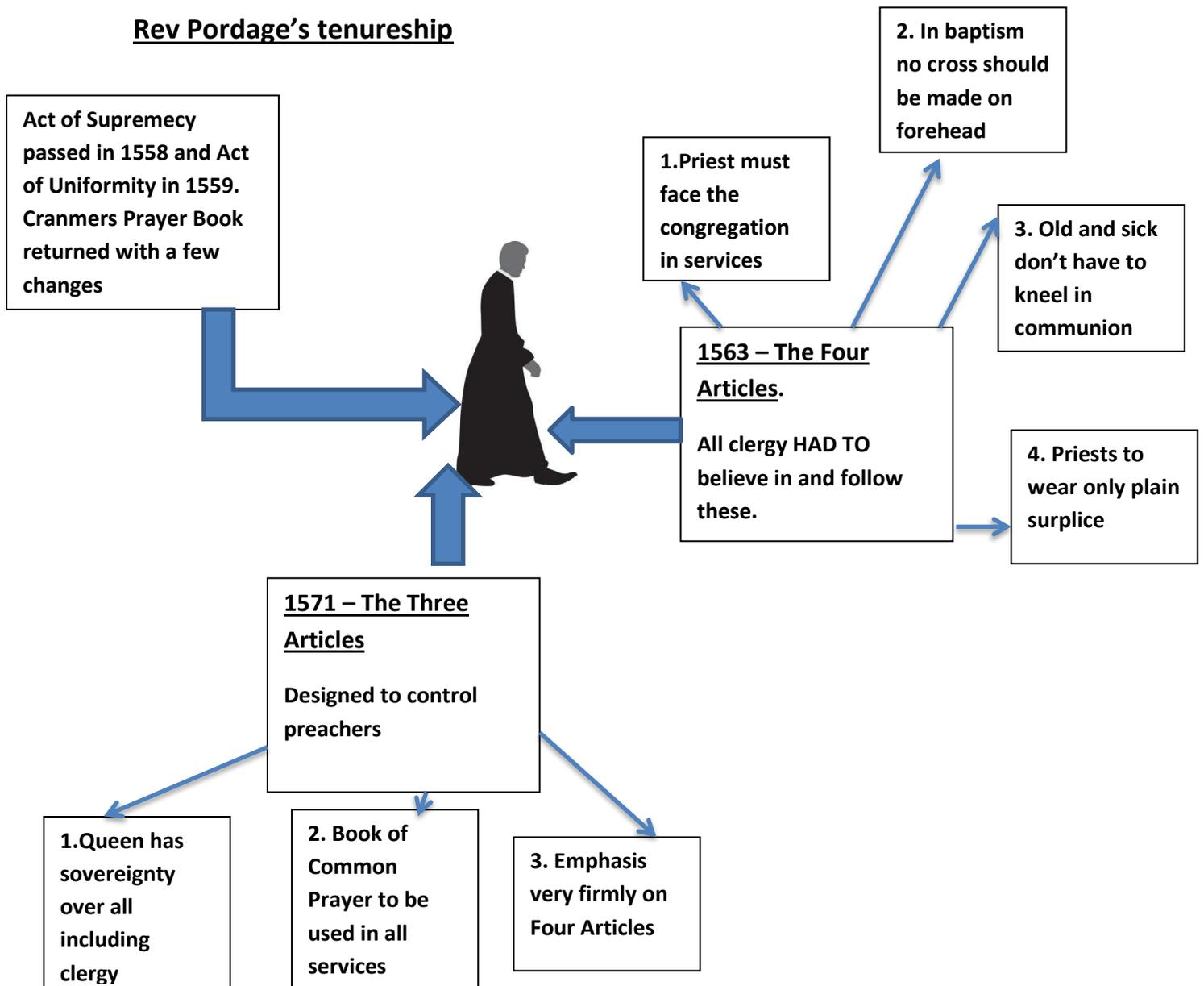
Rev William Pordage (Porridge) - died 1585

Rector of Grimston 1560 – 1585

Rev Pordage is another rector about who little is known, the only information about him is from the church of England Clergy database. Pordage is a name originating in Kent but it is possible that Rev William had links to our locality as Norwich holds some deeds relating to tenements in Pott Row which a John Pordage sold in 1599. This property had previously been owned the West Acre Priory which was by then defunct.

What is known is that like his predecessor Rev Rochester Rev Pordage had to guide his flock through difficult years. When he arrived at St Botolph's the new queen, Elizabeth I, was only two years into her reign but having taken over from her Catholic half-sister and having witnessed the religious turmoil of the previous twenty years, she was determined to try and unite the nation under a new Church of England. In order to do this there had to be even more changes.

Rev Pordage's tenureship

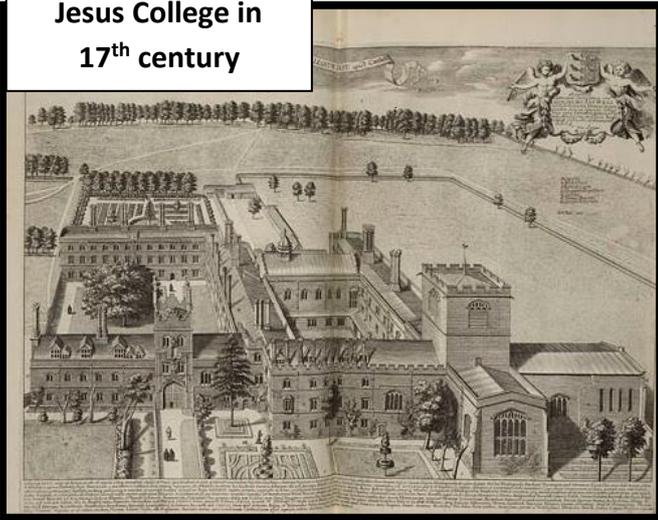


Reverend William Thorowgood 1544 – 1625

Rector of Grimston 1585 – 1625

It is likely that William Thorowgood (sometimes spelt Thorogood) was born in Essex in the 1540s. He went to Cambridge, entered Jesus College in 1571 and was ordained deacon in 1577. He was appointed as a Commissary to the Bishop of Norwich who was then Edmund Freke. A commissary was one who exercised episcopal power on behalf of the bishop when the bishop was geographically distant; it is likely that in the far east and west of the diocese the Bishop of Norwich was very often absent. Queen Elizabeth had restored the Protestant faith; she very much wanted to establish religious calm after the turmoil of the

Jesus College in
17th century



previous fifty years. There was an English Prayer Book (1552) designed to appeal to the majority and elements of Catholicism such as vestments and church decoration were permitted. The bishop, Edmund Freke, was rumoured to be quite a hard line Protestant and he apparently tried hard to impose uniformity across the diocese. In 1579 he had a Norfolk ploughman, Matthew Hamont, burned for heresy and there was another burning of John Lewes, in 1583. As William Thorowgood was himself of the Puritan persuasion he would have found it quite easy

to work as an agent of the bishop and most probably supported these executions.

In 1585 William became rector at Grimston. He was fortunate that in those turbulent times Freke's successors - Bishops Scamble, Redman and Jegon - were sympathetic towards the Puritan wing of Anglicanism so life in the rural parish was probably calm. Towards the end of Williams' tenure, with King Charles on the throne, the prevailing religious stance at court moving toward high church, and with a new bishop there were Puritan prosecutions in Yarmouth. It was during the time of Bishop Scamble that Grimston was host to Father John Gerrard, this surprising episode is described separately.

In 1619 the tomb of Sir Benedict de Breccles was destroyed. The act was that of private individuals, and was doubtless due to anti-popish zeal. The tomb was not just a memorial to Sir Benedict, it is most likely that it would have also been the Easter Sepulchre and thus a symbol of Catholic ritual. Rev Goodall says that on the 5th of October 1619, the Rector, 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'. We do not know if the vandal(s) were ever found.

William was father to a large and successful family. Queens College records state that William had three wives (possibly Anne Edwards, Alice Holbeck and another Unknown). William had many children – possibly ten. It is known that Queens admitted two of his

children – Morduant in 1617 and Thomas in 1611. Thomas succeeded him as Rector. Another son, Edward, became Rector of Little Massingham and a third, Robert, was Mayor of Lynn in 1656. Yet another son, Adam, emigrated to America and is still remembered and celebrated in Virginia with a museum named after him.

In 1625 William died and the care of Grimston passed to his son Thomas. William had prospered in Grimston and died a wealthy man. Adrian Brockett has transcribed an extensive inventory of William's goods which includes furniture, linen, kitchen utensils, livestock and a host of other items the total value of which is £2747.3s.4d (approximately £350,000 today). It is not known whether the Thorowgoods were a wealthy family and this was inherited wealth, whether William inherited money from his late wives or whether the glebe farm/land in Grimston was extremely profitable.

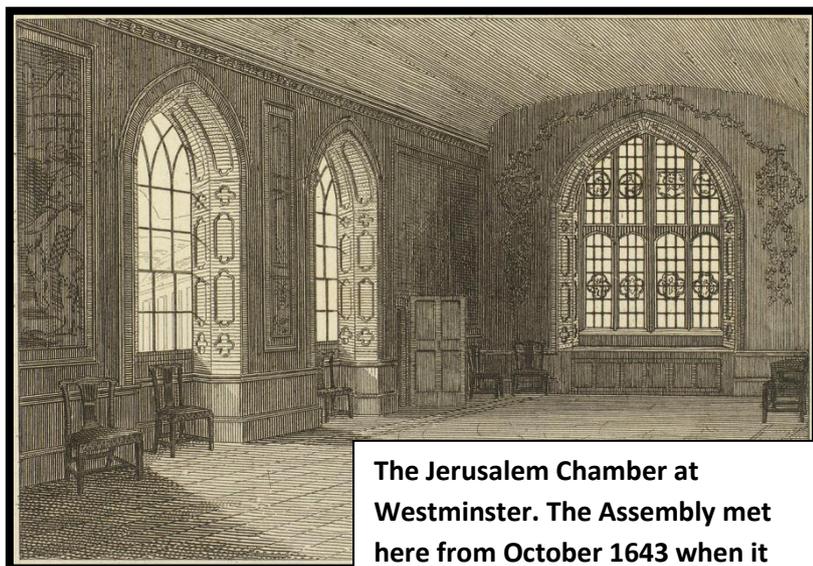
Reverend Thomas Thorowgood 1588 -1669

Rector of Grimston 1625 - 1646

Thomas Thorowgood was born in Grimston into a large family. He went to university in Cambridge but didn't follow his father into Jesus College, he and his brother Morduant both went into Queen's. Thomas was ordained in 1618 and in 1621 he became rector of Massingham. In 1623 Thomas married Anne Wyndham of Pentney who also came from a large family. The Wyndhams (sometimes spelt Windham) were a family who, whilst not exactly aristocratic, were certainly of the gentry; this was a good marriage for Rev Thomas. Anne bore Thomas seven children (that we know of) in as many years. In 1629 two neonatal deaths are recorded, these may have been twins or two pregnancies very close together. There are no more births recorded and as was the case with many women at the time, constant child bearing took a toll on Anne and she died in 1640 at the age of just thirty-eight.

Meanwhile, Thomas had taken over from his father at Grimston. It is certain that the villagers would have known of Thomas Thorowgood as son of the rector even if he had not mixed widely in the village. Rev Goodall tells us that Thomas was a "strong Puritan" and "a man of considerable learning"¹. The Bishop of Norwich in 1629 was Bishop Francis White who was of a high Anglican persuasion and in 1635 he was replaced by Bishop Matthew Wren (Christopher's uncle) high Anglican, anti-Puritan and a staunch Royalist; he was also a great admirer of the new archbishop, William Laud. Laud's changes to the church – supported by the new bishop – were probably an anathema to Thomas. As a man with Puritan leanings he would have found the reintroduction of incense and stained glass a move toward popery although his congregation probably welcomed fewer sermons and a new "Book of Sunday Sports". However, we do not know to what extent rectors in isolated rural parishes like Grimston actually imposed these measures.

The bishops who followed Wren – Richard Montagu and Joseph Hall – were more tolerant men, indeed the established church considered Joseph Hall too lenient with the Puritan faction and he was imprisoned in the Tower of London for six months. Thomas Thorowgood must have been a much respected cleric and theologian as in 1643 he 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'. It is unclear how Thomas came to be a part of this. Each county sent two delegates. Thomas, obviously, was a Norfolk delegate the



The Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster. The Assembly met here from October 1643 when it became too cold in the Henry VII Chapel

¹ "History of Grimston Church" p.10 Rev A Goodall 1923

other being John Arrowsmith of King's Lynn. Arrowsmith was a well-known preacher in the town who was elected Master of St John's College in 1644 and had an illustrious academic career. Perhaps John knew Thomas from Cambridge; perhaps Thomas was an impressive preacher who had attracted attention. It is surprising that Lynn sent two delegates and Norwich, the county town, none.

Around the same time as the Assembly King's Lynn surrendered to the Parliamentary Army. This was probably a relief to Puritans like Thomas as although the town had long had a Puritan core the surrounding area was mostly dominated by Royalist families, the Le Stranges being one of the best known of these families. It is said that 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. Although Sir Roger remained in prison he was not executed so perhaps Thomas' words and influence had some effect. It is possible that the new governor of Lynn, Valentine Walton, rented a house in Grimston and also possible that Cromwell (the governor's brother-in-law) came to stay in the village although this is not verified.

Like many Puritans of the time Thomas Thorowgood had some (to us) strange ideas. Thomas had a brother, Adam, who had emigrated to America at a young age and it was through him that Thomas was in touch with the Puritan Colonies. In accordance with the Puritan goal of converting the American Indians to the Christian faith, one of the strategies devised was to view the Indians as being descended from the ancient Israelites through the Christian messianic/millenarian myth of the Lost Ten Tribes. In 1650 Thomas Thorowgood published a thesis to this effect. This was immediately refuted as nonsense by Sir Hamon Le Strange (who lived nearby) but the idea apparently lingered in the eighteenth century in some quarters.

In 1646 Thomas resigned the living of Grimston in favour of his son-in-law. His successor was Rev John Brockett who had married Thomas' daughter Ann. Thomas moved to become rector of Great Cressingham where he died in 1669 aged eighty-one.

Rev John Brockett 1613-1664

Rector of Grimston 1646-1664

John Brockett was probably born at Brockett Hall in Hertfordshire in 1613. His father, John was head of a branch of the family which was rather in decline. Throughout his life John Snr's fortunes continued to decline and the family moved from the fine manor house called Mackery End to a much smaller farm, Brockett Snr commenting that he struggled to keep even that.



Mackery End where John lived until his teens. In 1628 it was passed to his aunt's husband.

John's father married three times and John was one of four children. He attended Christ's College Cambridge and was ordained in 1634. Very shortly after this, on 16th August 1635, he married Mary Blackwell at St Michael's church in St Alban's. It's not certain where John took up a first post but it may have been in Graveley, Hertfordshire. John and Mary do not seem to have any children and sometime during the next ten years Mary died.

In 1646 John left Sion College (an establishment for the education of Anglican priests) to take up the living of Grimston. In the same year, on 24th May at the church of St Mary Aldermary in London, he married Anne Thorowgood the daughter of Thomas Thorowgood the outgoing rector of Grimston. Ann was only twenty years old, John was thirteen years older but this was his second marriage and Thomas Thorowgood probably regarded a priest from a good family as an appropriate husband for his eldest daughter. It is almost certain that Thomas and John, who may have met in London or at Cambridge, shared theological opinions; like Thomas John was a committed Puritan.

More than half of John's time in Grimston was through the Interregnum and he would have felt content with the nature of the church at that time. Between 1647 and 1655 he and Anne had three sons - Thomas, John and Briant. We know that Thomas married a local lady called Barbara and lived in Swaffham and that John married Margaret Carter from Congham. But following his father's death and the Restoration Briant emigrated to Maryland. Anne had a brother, Adam, who was a well-known community leader in Chesapeake Bay so Briant would have had family to welcome and settle him in the New

World. Many Puritans decided to emigrate after the Restoration but John remained in Grimston to lead the congregation through yet more changes. He was fortunate in that the newly appointed bishop was Edward Reynolds. Bishop Reynolds had been a member of the Assembly of the Divines (with John's late father-in-law) and was a moderate and a mediator.

John died in 1664 leaving a will that has survived. He made this will in 1646 when he had just married Anne and she is his sole beneficiary; he did not change it to include his children perhaps he thought that as sons they would make their own way in the world. John's will shows him to be a comfortably off country priest and also farmer - there was at this time a substantial Tithe Farm and John owned two bulls and a herd of cows and eight horses plus two foals (one colt and one filly.) The rectory farm had its own dairy and brewed its own beer; it must also have made honey as they were twenty-nine skips of bees. The rectory had at this time nine bedrooms and several living rooms. Although not as well off as his late father-in-law John's estate was valued at £683.17s which can be calculated as approximately £120,000 today.

Reverend Thomas Cremer 1635 - 1694

Rector of Grimston 1664 – 1691

The Cremers were an established family in West Norfolk with estates around Heacham and Snettisham.

Thomas' father was Robert Cremer of Heacham and his mother was Temperance Howell, this gave a hint of the Godly nature of the Howell Family. Thomas, born at Little Massingham in 1635, was the fifth child of this marriage. There would eventually be thirteen children born within fifteen years (not all of them survived) between 1630 and 1645. It is unsurprising that Temperance died just five years later.



Thomas was sent to Westminster School. Although the school had originally been part of the Benedictine Monastery Henry VIII ensured its survival at the Reformation and when Thomas attended the headmaster was Dr Richard Busby. Dr Busby was an outspoken royalist who nevertheless survived the commonwealth. He was also known as an extremely strict man whose discipline was very harsh; it is likely that Thomas was birched more than once during his school career. From Westminster Thomas went to Trinity College Cambridge. He was admitted as a pensioner, these were students whose families were paying their way through university. These young men did not have to take University examinations and for some Cambridge was closer to a finishing school than a university. Thomas however was more serious and one year after arriving in Cambridge he became a scholar; almost all scholars obtained a degree and were ordained, often becoming a fellow which Thomas did in 1659.



In 1660 Thomas became vicar of Barrington in Cambridgeshire and three years later he secured the living at Grimston. In the same year he married his first wife Elizabeth with whom he had two sons and three daughters.

We don't know the theological stance of either of the Cremers. Even if the Cremers did not know the family of their predecessor Thomas Thorowgood it is very likely that they knew of him by reputation as a renown Puritan preacher and member of the Assembly of the Divines. Thomas Thorowgood and, if he was the Puritan portrayed in his portrait, Thomas Cremer, were fortunate in that when the bishops were brought back in 1660 the man

appointed to Norwich was Edward Reynolds. He had been a member of Assembly of the Divines but had been a mediator for Presbyterian ministers and had campaigned for a moderate episcopacy (government by bishops). He was therefore tolerant of a range of beliefs within the church and when the Great Ejection occurred in 1662, the process by which the restored church purged itself of dissenting clergy, Thomas Thorowgood and his successors were safe.

Elizabeth Cremer died in 1673 having given birth to her third daughter. In November of the same year Thomas married his second wife, Sarah Lowry at South Wootton. Their first child, called Thomas after his father, was born the following year and over the next six years Sarah gave birth to four sons and one daughter. In 1680, in what might have appeared to contemporaries as a stroke of bad luck, the second Mistress Cremer also died in or just following childbirth and in 1681 Thomas married his third wife, Mary Boynton, at Grimston. By now Thomas Cremer had nine children (we don't know if all were still living) ranging in age from John aged seventeen to Martin, a baby. There are no children recorded for Thomas and Mary. Whether she was of a similar age to Thomas (in her forties) and past childbearing or whether he had simply had enough of having babies and losing wives we don't know.

Thomas' years at Grimston encompassed the Glorious Revolution in 1688 and the Act of Toleration in 1691. In that year Thomas decided it was time to hand over to a younger man. He handed the living at Grimston over to his son John and he became a preacher in the parish, a job with less stress.

Thomas died in 1694. He is buried in the chancel along with his son John.



Reverend John Cremer 1663 - 1743

Rector of Grimston 1691 - 1743

John Cremer was the eldest of Thomas Cremer's nine children; his mother was Thomas's first wife Elizabeth. John was ten when his mother died; his father remarried very rapidly which was common at the time.

When he was fifteen John was admitted to Peterhouse College, Cambridge as a sizar; his father, Thomas had attended Trinity as a scholar. Unlike scholars sizars were poor students. Each Fellow was allowed to have one such student living in College, doing personal chores for him such as lighting the fire in his room, serving at table, and running errands. This gave the young man the chance to study for a degree, something which he could not otherwise have afforded to do. Many sizars such as John eventually became scholars, obtained a degree and were ordained. However, the fact that John was admitted as a sizar indicates that the Cremers were not as wealthy as they had been thirty years earlier.

In 1687 John began his ecclesiastical career as a preacher in a village called Ravenstone which is in Leicestershire. He remained there until he took over from his father Thomas as rector of Grimston in 1691. In the same year he married Elizabeth Alcock, the living being sufficient to provide for a wife and family. They were married for over forty years which was quite exceptional for the time. After two years of marriage John and Elizabeth welcomed a son also called John, sadly the baby died in infancy. The Cremers had another two sons – John and Gilbert – and a daughter called Elizabeth. Their daughter predeceased both her parents (died 1727). Elizabeth Cremer died in 1737, John lived for another six years; he had devoted over fifty years to the parish of St Botolph's.

John took over in Grimston in a year which nine bishops, including the bishop of Norwich, were removed because two years earlier they had refused to swear an oath of allegiance to William III and Mary II. Over three hundred Anglican priests had also refused (2% of the clergy) but it did not mean they lost their positions. Following this, John served with eight bishops at least two of whom were in office less than three years. The fact that these men ranged in views from High to Low Church shows a new tolerance in the church. John was perhaps the first rector of Grimston to see the beginning of the Church of England as a "broad" church.

Rev Morley Unwin 1704-1767

Rector of Grimston 1743-1767

Morley Unwin was born in London his, parents were Thomas and Martha, Thomas worked as a goldsmith in the city and Morley, his eldest child, was baptised at St Peter, Cornhill on 31st July 1704. St Peter was a new church designed by Christopher Wren to replace a medieval one which had burned in the Great Fire; it was in the very heart of the square mile. Morley grew up in the bustling city. He attended Charterhouse School which was



Charterhouse
School

then based in Smithfield so was probably close to the Unwin household.

From Charterhouse Morley went to Queen's College, Cambridge. He entered the college in 1722 as a pensioner. Generally these were from wealthy families who paid for their keep and tuition and few of them sought a career in the church or as teachers, so few became scholars or

obtained a degree. Morley however obtained his BA in 1725 and his MA in 1728 and in 1729 he became a master at Huntingdon School. This was the school now called Hitchingbrooke. Morley remained teaching for several years. He was then appointed rector of Wistow (a tiny village near Huntingdon) and vicar of Oakington (a village near Cambridge) in 1737 and it appears that he held these clerical jobs alongside his teaching commitment. In 1742 Morley Unwin was the first Rector to be presented to Grimston by Queens' College, Cambridge. Morley Unwin is one of the few rector's whose theological stance was recorded. He was of the of the evangelical wing meaning that he emphasized the significance of the Protestant aspects of the Church of England's identity and stressed the importance of the authority of Scripture and of preaching.

A biographer of the poet William Cowper says that Morley Unwin married in anticipation of getting the living at Grimston. It is not clear whether this means the future Mrs Unwin was a much desired and beloved fiancée or a necessity in a large rural rectory. Whichever they were married in the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral on 17th March 1744 the glorious venue based upon the fact the bride, Mary Cawthorne, was resident in that city where her father was a draper. The newly-weds moved to Grimston. Mary was only twenty years old, exactly twenty years younger than her new husband, she was an intelligent and sociable young woman and it was very soon obvious that the isolated rural setting of her new home would not be to her liking. The couple's first child, William Cawthorne Unwin, was born exactly one year after their marriage and was baptised at St Botolph's on 15th March 1745. He would be the only Unwin child to be born in Grimston because by the following year Mary had persuaded Morley to leave, return to Huntingdon and leave the duties at St Botolph's to a curate. The people of Grimston had hardly had time to get to know the new rector who never returned; although rector in name in reality Rev Unwin

was at Grimston for only two years. The Unwin's daughter Susanna was born and baptised in Huntingdon.

In 1751 Morley took on a chaplaincy in the Royal Navy alongside his chaplaincy to the Earl of Sandwich; there is no evidence that his navy role ever necessitated going to sea. At home in Huntingdon he prepared, or tutored, students for the university entrance which brought in funds and he was of course still paid for Grimston although he had to pay the curate a stipend from this.



In September 1765 the poet, William Cowper, first met the Unwin family. He had made their acquaintance through their son William who, having followed his father through Charterhouse, was at Christ's College, Cambridge where he won many accolades. Cowper described him as is "a most amiable young man." The poet became very close to the family and in particular to Mary and as early as November 1765 made plans to move into their home. The poet had already had a bout of severe mental illness necessitating a stay in the asylum at St Albans and Mary Unwin would be an important support to him for the rest of her life.

In 1767 tragedy struck the Unwin family. On the morning of Sunday 27th June, Morley Unwin was going to his church when he was flung from his horse. He was taken to safety at a local cottage but he had apparently received a fracture on the back part of his skull. Although trepanation, drilling a hole into the skull using a sharp instrument, was popular in the eighteenth century, there is no evidence that doctors attempted to do this to help Morley. At sixty-three he was perhaps considered an elderly man for whom it may be unsuitable. It was reported that he languished, too ill to be taken home, until Thursday evening, when he died. He was buried in the churchyard of St Mary's, Huntingdon.

In his will Morley left legacies to all of his siblings and his children. He stated, however, that Susanna should not receive money should she marry someone of whom her mother and brother disapproved. Many friends were also remembered in his will (including Dr Everard of Lynn) and his wife received the remainder of his estate. Ten weeks after Morley's death Mary, Susanna and Cowper moved to Olney to be close to an old friend Rev John Newton (a captain of slave ship who had found God and become a priest) who would offer them comfort in their grief.

Mary Unwin and Cowper remained together for the rest of her life, she was his constant support and they became engaged but were never married, probably due to Cowper's

unstable mental health. Mary died on 17th December 1796 in East Dereham whilst she and Cowper were visiting Norfolk. She was buried in St Edmund's Chapel in Dereham Church where Cowper was later buried with her.



The poet William Cowper, Mary Unwin's fiancé.

*"God moves in mysterious ways
His wonders to performs"*

Rev Robert Cooper 1717 - 1777

Rector of Grimston 1767 – 1777

Robert Cooper was baptised in Hilborough, near Swaffham on 20th October 1717. His parents were John and Mary about whom we know nothing except for the fact that John does not appear on either the Church of England Clergy database or the Cambridge alumni lists so Robert did not come from a line of clergymen.

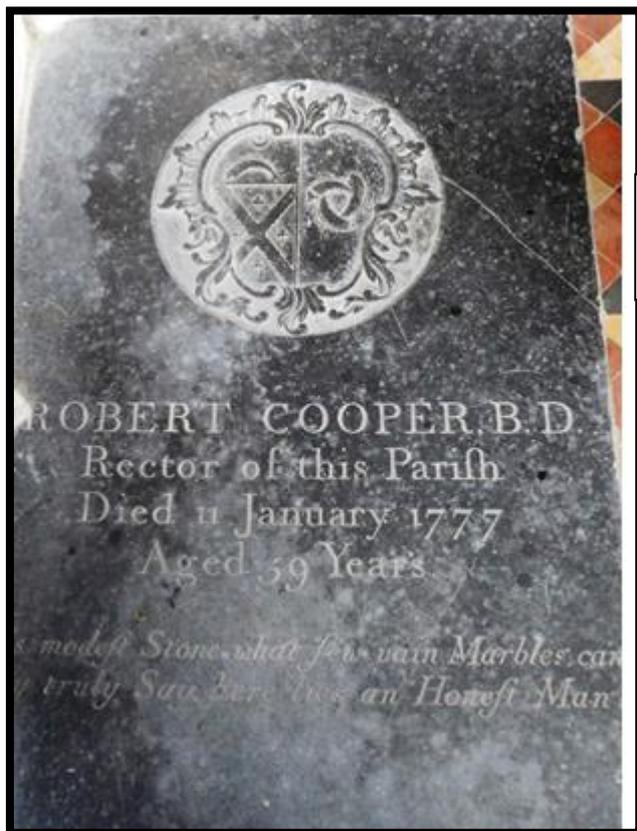
Like several other of our rectors Robert entered Cambridge as a sizar; he started at Queen's College on 3 March 1735. Sizarers were poorer students. Each Fellow was allowed to have one such student (the Master could have two) living in College, doing personal chores for him such as lighting the fire in his room, serving at table, and running errands. This gave the young man the chance to study for a degree, something which he could not otherwise have afforded to do. Being given this chance these students worked very hard to gain their degree and make a career in teaching or the church. Robert was awarded his BA in 1739 and his MA in 1742; he was ordained at Norwich in 1744.

Robert Cooper began his clerical career as a curate at West Leake, a small village in Nottinghamshire. It was an agricultural community with a thriving cottage industry of basket making. From here he moved to Basford where he became vicar in 1748. Basford was then a community outside Nottingham, it is now a suburb of the city. Robert's church here was called St Leoedgar, one of only four churches named for this relatively unknown French saint. On 15th October 1749 Robert married Mary Watson, a Norfolk lady, at his home church of Hilborough. Robert was still vicar of Basford so Mary would have had to relocate to Nottinghamshire which must have seemed a very big move.

From 1759 to 1767 there is a gap in Robert Cooper's CV. The Church of England data base states that he left Basford in 1759 and was appointed rector in Grimston in 1767; there is no further information on the Cambridge Alumni data base which usually lists teaching appointments as well as clerical. A teaching post would seem the most likely but his life during those years remains unknown. In 1767 he took up the post at Grimston. He and Mary were probably pleased to be back in Norfolk, the county of their birth. In addition, Robert, who does not appear to have come from a particularly wealthy family, would have been pleased to have secured (from Queens College) a good living when , the church had become to some extent the preserve of the younger sons of members of the gentry.

Robert and Mary were at Grimston together for ten years. It seems that they were childless but Robert had several brothers and sisters and was very fond of his nieces and nephews. He died in 1777 at the relatively young age of fifty-nine. He was buried in St Botolph's and his stone describes him as "truly honest man". He left a very long will in which everything was left to Mary "his beloved wife" and after her death his estate was to be distributed between his various siblings and their children. He ensured that his unmarried sister would be provided for with an annual allowance.

When Mary died she was buried next to Robert. However, in the intervening years, in 1789, one of Robert's nephews Levi was also buried in the church, the reason for this is unknown.

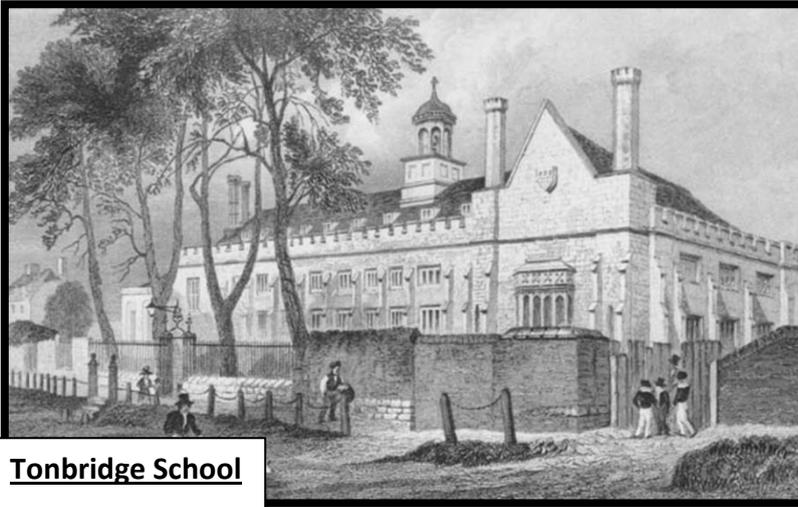


Robert Cooper's memorial
in St Botolph's

John Brett 1743-1816

Grimston Rector 1777-1816

John Brett was born in Reigate, Surrey and was baptised on 26th June 1743 at St Mary's Church. John's father was also called John and he was also a clergyman so, the register



Tonbridge School

notes, was able to baptise his own child. John attended school at Tonbridge. It was not far from Reigate but in the pre-railway days he would have boarded. At that time it was a small school with under one hundred boys. The headmaster in John's time was Rev James Cawthorne; being interested in literature and seeing himself as a poet in the style

of Pope, Rev Cawthorne persuaded the governors to build a large new library which was opened whilst John was at the school and which remains in use today.

In 1762 John entered Queen's College Cambridge and was ordained in 1765. He was appointed curate at Hougham with Mareston, a village in Lincolnshire. Two years later he became the rector there. John stayed at Mareston for nine years and then moved to become vicar at Oakington. John Brett is not the only one of our rectors to serve time at Oakington because, like Grimston, it was a living in the gift of Queen's College. If John was awaiting a more profitable parish with a rectory rather than a vicarage, it was fortunate that the Rev Cooper of Grimston died and in 1777 John Brett became rector of Grimston.

The same year John married Louisa Wright in Hackney, London. The couple had at least three children – those there are records for are Louisa (born 1779) John (born 1780) and Elizabeth (born 1785). In 1795, still rector of Grimston, John also became rector of Congham and he held that job until 1811. As the son of a rector coming from a well-off family John probably had social links which allowed him to hold more than one living. Meanwhile John and Louisa's son John followed his father to Queen's and into the church. He was ordained deacon in 1805 but not ordained as priest until some twenty years later, after his father's death. John Jnr held a succession of jobs as a curate around his home area. In 1805 he was curate at Congham, in 1814 he became a curate covering both Grimston and Ingoldsthorpe (the home village of his wife Marianne Davy) and in 1817 he moved to Dersingham and Wolferton. Whether he had hoped to take on the role of rector at Grimston after his father's death we don't know but in fact he did not become a rector until 1831 when he became rector of Dersingham and Wolferton.

Rev John Brett died on 23rd June 1816 at East Grinstead in Sussex. He was aged seventy-three. As it is not very far from the area of his birth it is possible he had gone to visit

family or was taking a break. He was buried in St Swithuns Churchyard. On 14th December Rev George Barnes was presented by the President of Queen's College as the new rector at Grimston.



**St Swithun's
Church, East
Grinstead.
The resting place of
Rev John Brett**

Rev George Barnes 1769 – 1846

Rector of Grimston 1816 – 1846

George Barnes was born on 23rd November 1769. Although his death records state that he was born “around 1771” he was baptised at St Marylebone on Christmas Day 1769 and the records state that he was born a month earlier on 23rd November; George’s parents were named as Thomas and Catherine. The church in which George was baptised became well known because of its association with the Wesley brothers. Charles had a house nearby from 1770 and from 1779 he and his brother gave concerts in their house for the well to do people of the parish - we don’t know if that included George’s family. The church, which had apparently been finished in 1740 and replaced a medieval one, would soon prove to be inadequate for the burgeoning population and was replaced with the neo-classical building of 1817.

George was admitted to Cambridge University on January 13th 1792, university records record him as coming from Hull. He was admitted to St John’s as a “sizar” which means that the college paid his fees but in return he was expected to take on some kind of work within the college which would imply that George’s family were not well-off. Sizar were known to do better at their studies than gentlemen and George received his BA in 1796 finishing as “3rd Wrangler” which means that out of the year’s cohort, he was placed third in the mathematics exam. He was awarded an MA in 1799 and in the same year became a Fellow at Queens College.

George was ordained as a deacon on 23rd September 1798 at Ely Cathedral and a priest on 20th December 1801. However, he continued in the university and in 1805 he took on the role of Proctor, the proctor(s) being those who, amongst other duties, maintain good order at the university and preserve the right to free speech. They also oversaw (and still do) examinations and ensure there is no cheating. As well as holding this important office George was clearly a force within the college as in 1808 the BD, Bachelor of Divinity, was conferred upon him. At the time this was the highest ranking bachelor's degree, and as senior as the PhD. It required a significant contribution to knowledge in the area

of theology and also publication of work – we do not know what George published.

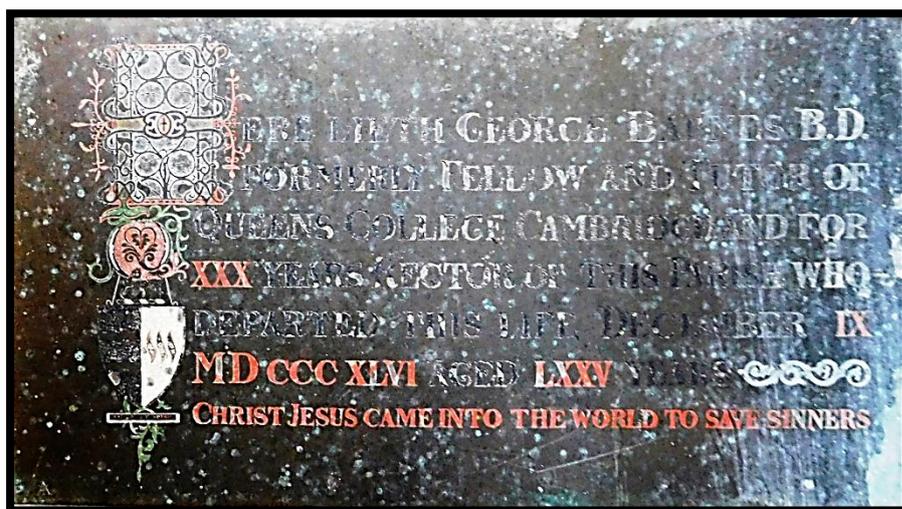


Frontage of Queen’s drawn in 1824. This is how George Barnes would have known it

Approaching forty – middle-age in the eighteenth century – George had done amazingly well for a young man who started as a sizar. However, sometime between 1808 and 1816

he was involved in a controversy at the college. The time came to elect a new president and George was one of the candidates for the role. He was not elected and some kind of protest ensued which was serious enough for the issue to come up before the Lord Chancellor who decided that another man, Henry Godfrey, would take on the role despite the fact that it seems many thought him poorly qualified. This may have been a factor in George moving on – in 1816 he took the job of rector at Grimston a parish which was in the gift of the President of Queens. It may have been a consolation prize for George, probably not a particularly welcome one.

On 3rd November 1817 George got married in Cambridge. His new wife was Eliza Tucker Atkinson. Eliza was born in Dorset as was her mother Betty. Her father Joseph was born in Lincolnshire and was, like George, a Cambridge man having studied at Magdalene before moving to Peterhouse. It is likely that George and Joseph were academic colleagues and maybe even friends. Although at twenty-eight Eliza was twenty years younger than her new husband, she was some years past the average age of a bride at the time which was twenty-three. It would be nice to think that Eliza had fallen in love with the older, wiser and hopefully kind George but it is more likely that this was a “suitable” marriage which offered the prospect of an escape from spinsterhood and a household of her own whilst George gained a young and hardworking rector’s wife. On the first census of 1841 George and Eliza were living at the rectory with three servants, Eliza was already middle-aged whilst George was seventy. Sadly I have not been able to find any evidence of children. In George Barnes’ time the church, which like many Anglican churches, had been sliding into decline, was re-roofed and the old pews were replaced with Victorian seats.



George died in 1846 and was buried under the altar at St Botolph’s. Eliza was now a widow. Victorian widows were in a precarious position as they were usually dependent upon the benevolence of family. In Eliza’s case this was her brother William. William had lived at Thetford for several years but then moved to be vicar of Rugeley in Staffordshire. In 1851 Eliza was residing with him, his wife, three of his sons and a visitor from Ireland. William also had five “pupils” living with although the address doesn’t appear to be a school as such.

Reverend William Atkinson died in 1865. Although he did leave some funds it is possible that his widow, who would have had to leave the rectory, did not have space or money to keep Eliza with her. Perhaps Eliza returned to live or lodge in Grimston, we know she had retained affection for the village because she set up a charity called the “Eliza Tucker Barnes Charity” which distributed money to twelve poor widows and twelve of the

parish's poorest men on 9th December every year. This charity was closed only in 2017. Eliza died in November 1866, just a year after her brother. She is buried in the chancel at St Botolph's.



Rev William Dixon Rangleley 1800 - 1853

Rector of Grimston 1846 – 1853

William Dixson Rangeley was born in Leeds, Yorkshire. His mother was Sarah Dixson, born in Stone, Staffordshire and his father, John Rangeley was a Yorkshire man. The couple met through Sarah's brother William. William and John Rangeley shared an interest in iron founding and as this was the start of the industrial revolution they looked set to make a fortune. William was one of eight children born to John and Sarah; he had two brothers and five sisters all born in Yorkshire before the family moved to Stone in Staffordshire. It seems that John Rangleley was an inventor; unfortunately his inventions were not always successful and by the time the family moved to Staffordshire John had already been declared bankrupt twice, this despite his having invented and patented a new kind of water pump. Throughout William's young adulthood his father continued as a rather unsuccessful business man. He was bankrupt again on more than one occasion, with more than one business partner and in 1826, the year that William entered Cambridge, his parents moved to Belgium probably to escape debtor's prison. We have no way of knowing what William, a clergyman in training, thought of his father's constant financial problems, but bankruptcy was viewed by most Victorians as a disgrace so possibly



One of the courts at Queens' as William would have known it.

William kept quiet about his father's industrial ventures.

William was a successful university man. He graduated as 5th Wrangler which means that out of the year's cohort, he was placed fifth in the mathematics exam, he was awarded an MA in 1833 and became a

Fellow in the same year. He held several posts in the college. He was Dean (responsible for the chapel) and Praelector (responsible for presenting students for graduation) as well as being a tutor. However, the 1830s were a sad time for William with regard to his family as his sister Sarah died in 1830 and his older brother John died in 1833.

The following decade, in 1842, William's father died. Having been declared an insolvent debtor in Camberwell the year before, he journeyed to Rome with details of his latest invention, a train which had rails rather than wheels. He took details to show the Pope and whilst it seems somewhat unlikely, the press at the time reported that His Holiness was wildly enthusiastic about this and was intending to build a prototype appointing John

as supervising engineer. Unfortunately this proved too much for John who was “seized by an apoplexy” (possibly a stroke) and died soon afterwards. John did not leave any money so his death left his widow dependent upon her family. When William became rector at Grimston in 1846 and therefore had the space to accommodate them, Mrs Rangeley and William’s sister Harriet, moved into the rectory.

In 1850 William was involved in a court case concerning some land which, at that time the church owned in the parish. A case concerning this land was heard at the assizes and was reported in the Norfolk Chronicle 3rd August 1850. It involved a supposed legal agreement concerning tenancy which, after consultation with his colleague Mr Justice Patteson, the judge – Mr Baron Alderson - decided was invalid. William lost the case and the plaintiffs, Richard and William Palmer, were awarded £213.11.6 in damages.

William’s mother and sister were in residence for the 1851 census but Harriet married that same year. Aged forty-four, she was married (by William) to Robert Gilbert who was only twenty-one. It is difficult to ascertain the reasons behind this marriage. Harriet was not wealthy and she was almost certainly not the “glamorous older woman” of modern myth. At the time of the marriage Robert was already the owner of Ashby Hall (in the east of the county) which whilst not grand, was substantial. William and his mother were probably pleased to see Harriet wed to anyone respectable.

William died in June 1853. He died in west London but was brought back to Norfolk and is buried in the churchyard at St Botolph’s. William was a far better financial manager than his father; he left an estate of £7256 18s 4d. Which might be valued as high as £600,000 today.² It is therefore not surprising that there followed disputes and controversy.

William left his entire estate to his sister Harriet Gilbert. This was granted by the Prerogative court of Canterbury in July 1853. As this was before the Married Women’s Property Act any property women took into a marriage, or acquired subsequently, was legally absorbed by their husbands. Harriet died in 1855 and thus her inheritance both legally and morally was Robert’s. Robert soon married a young wife and they had a child. When Robert died in 1874 his will was said to have a codicil



which probably related to the money left by William as it was only in 1892 that the courts finally granted that money to Robert Gilbert’s widow Elizabeth Husband Gilbert

² Measuring Worth.com

Upon William's death his mother went to live with her daughter Eliza who lived in Brighton. She died there in 1860 having outlived all but two of her eight children.

Rev John Rowlands³ 1810 - 1888

Rector of Grimston 1853 – 1883

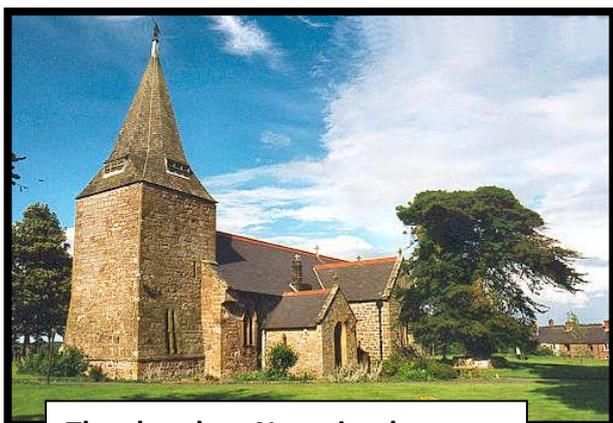
John Rowlands was born in 1811 in a Cardiganshire, Wales. His family were farmers but they must have been of a “better sort” as John was able to attend school at Repton (Derbyshire). John must have been bi-lingual (Welsh and English) he would have needed to speak Welsh in his home community but would of course, have been required to speak English at school.

John arrived in Cambridge in 1828. Like George Barnes, he was admitted as a sizar meaning that he was to some extent subsidised but would have had to take on jobs around the college as repayment. He graduated in 1832 as 10th wrangler (tenth in the mathematics exam). Having taken on various roles in the college John was appointed as curate first at Haslingfield (Cambridge) and then at Great St Mary’s in the



city of Cambridge.

In his thirties, he returned to Wales where he became a curate in Nerquis, Flintshire. Until 1844 St Mary’s Nerquis had been a chapelry of Mold; John arrived as it became a separate parish, a village growing in size as coal and lead mines opened alongside the main industry of agriculture. It is likely that John conducted most services in Welsh as English services were not common here until the 1870s.



The church at Nerquis where John was curate for several years.

On 24th August 1853 John married Georgiana Jackson in Westminster. He was in his forties and she was thirty-five - rather an elderly bride at a time when the average age of marriage for women was around twenty-four – and the newly-weds moved to Grimston. This was probably a little better than Nerquis for Georgiana as she was a woman born and raised in London.

Once installed at Grimston John set about some building work in the church. In 1856 the vestry was rebuilt. Its predecessor was ‘an old unsightly red-brick cottage, with a red-brick chimney, pantile roof, and a horridly 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

³ Photo Ref Mr A Cross 2021

present structure. In 1870 the chancel was partially restored and the present tiles laid down.⁴

According to the Rev Oswell's history John Rowlands should be most remembered as the builder of the "new" (what we call the old) rectory and the laying out of the grounds. Rev Oswell gives a considerable amount of detail about this work. The first part was carried out in the 1850s during which time John lived there with his wife Georgiana and their three children – Elizabeth, George Daniel and Mary. In 1864 Georgiana died aged 47. As she left John with three very young children it is perhaps not surprising that three years later, on 20th June 1867, he married Elizabeth Emma Hodgson in Bristol. As well as the children Georgiana also left a substantial sum of money.

In the 1860s there was more work on the new rectory, a new wing was added. By 1871 with George Daniel away at Repton School, John and Elizabeth were living with the two girls and employed two servants and a governess. John and Elizabeth were not blessed with children of their own and in 1874 Mary Paulina died aged only fourteen and on her headstone is carved the hymn "Safe in the arms of Jesus". Although child death was quite common in Victorian families it was nevertheless a terrible tragedy for John and the two Elizabeths. Interestingly there is a will registered in Mary Paulina's name granting £3058



Matching tombs at Grimston for Georgiana and her daughter Mary Paulina

to her father John. This may have been money left by her mother or by another relation.

By 1881 John had passed seventy. George Daniel was a student at Queen's College Cambridge following in his father's footsteps. John made the decision to move and in 1883 he relocated to Newton Toney in Wiltshire.

In April 1888 John's daughter Elizabeth died aged twenty-nine (like her sister she left about £4000). John was approaching eighty and this must have been a devastating blow; he died the following year leaving £18,000. He was buried in Newton Tony, the rector of Gayton travelled to attend the burial.

Elizabeth retired to Eastbourne where she died on 26th May 1893. Sadly John's only remaining child, George Daniel, who had married and become a priest in Staffordshire, died just six years after his step-mother at the comparatively young age of forty.

⁴ History of St Botolph's Church, Rev A Goodall 1923.

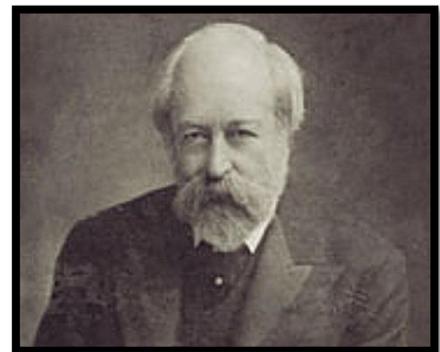
Rev John Fowler 1826 - 1902
Rector of Grimston 1883 – 1902

The villagers of Victorian Grimston must have wondered if they were ever going to get a local, or even English, rector when John Fowler, a Scot, followed John Rowlands a Welshman. John Fowler was born in Edinburgh on 2nd June 1826. His father George was a builder; the 1841 census showed that he and his wife Margaret had five children of whom John was the second eldest. John was educated at Edinburgh Academy where a new school building opened in 1824. He went on to university in the city which was already known as a centre of culture and learning – the “Athens of the North”. John entered Queens in 1845 and from 1849 to 1857 was Assistant Master at Marlborough College.

In 1858 he married Martha Bodley in Gloucester. The Bodleys were an interesting family. Martha was the daughter of Dr William Hulme Bodley whose roots were in Edinburgh. Despite being a medical man Dr Bodley also had an interest in things ecclesiastical and wrote a biography of a Catholic preacher (Richard Sibthorpe) as well as “Prayers for Public Schools”. The two eldest boys Thomas and William both went to Queen’s College Cambridge in the 1840s; it is certain they knew John Fowler as all were interested in Tractarianism. In 1851 William was received into the Roman Catholic Church and became a priest living at Oxburgh for most of his life. Thomas went into teaching for a while but appears to have been a man without a particular direction in life. He frequently appears on the census living with mother or sisters and having no listed occupation. Martha’s sister Georgiana married Samuel Scott a brother of the Gothic architect Gilbert Scott and it was to him that Martha’s brother George Frederick was apprenticed. George Bodley partnered another pupil of George Gilbert Scott, Thomas Garner. Either alone or in partnership with Garner he designed fifty-eight new cathedrals, churches, chapels and items such as the reredos in Kings Lynn Minster.

After Marlborough John secured a promotion and moved to Lincoln to be headmaster at the Grammar School. On the 1861, 1871 and 1881 census he and Martha were living in the city and sharing their house with lodgers and visitors. They had a son George Herbert who was born in 1861, by 1871 he was already away at school in Wimbledon and in 1881 he was a student at Oxford University.

In 1883, when he was in his mid-fifties, John Fowler took up the living at Grimston. During the years he was rector here John undertook what his successor describes as “his *great work, a work of restoration and enrichment.*”⁵ It was natural that he should turn for guidance to his brother-in-law George Bodley to produce the designs. In

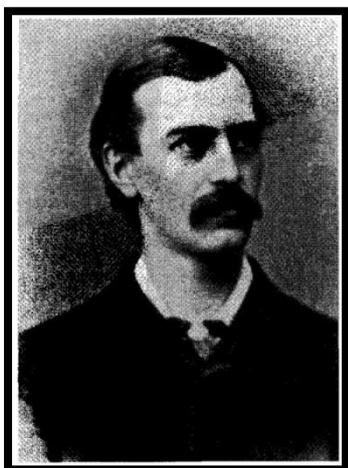


George Bodley

the chancel the roof was raised to its original pitch; the windows, niches, and sedilia were restored and the walls and

⁵ History of St Botolph’s Grimston. Rev A Goodall 1923

ceiling decorated. The nave was re-roofed, and the windows were re-leaded and re-glazed. The church was enriched by the provision of the upper part of the chancel screen and a new font cover. George added a tablet in memory of his brother Thomas who died in 1893 and there is also one to John Fowler. In addition the lectern was donated and carved in John's memory. 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 built. Through the 1890s until 1901 John and Martha continued to live at the rectory, John working hard on the church and facilities for the village. In 1902, in his seventies, John's health began to decline and he resigned on health grounds. He died very soon after and on 11 August 1902 he was buried at Branksome Park in Dorset. Martha died just two years later



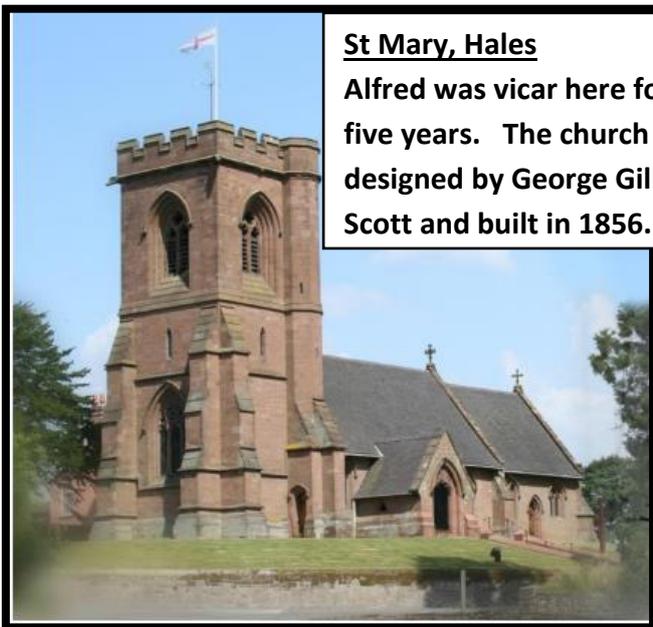
John and Martha's son George Herbert became an expert on marine zoology and oceanography. During WW1 he worked in intelligence planning routes for submarines as his knowledge of the oceans was unsurpassed at the time. He refused a knighthood but accepted a CBE .

Rev Alfred Ellaby 1849 – 1927
Rector of Grimston 1896 – 1918

Alfred Hall Ellaby was born in 1849 to Emma Ellaby (nee Field) and Rev James Watts Ellaby. He was the couple's fourth child- James also had children from previous marriages. The new baby was baptised on 13th January 1849 in Milston the parish where James was a priest. James was an interesting man, in the 1820s and 30s he served as Chaplain to the Russia Company in the arctic port of Archangel where Britain had trading posts. Upon his return he took up a chaplaincy at Milston and he remained a chaplain throughout his ecclesiastical career although there were several years when he was living in an elegant house in Bristol without an obvious occupation. Young Alfred attended Christ's Hospital School which has always been a charitable institution and from there he entered Queen's College, Cambridge. He was ordained in 1872 and went to serve at All Saints, Southampton a church which was destroyed in the Second World War. In 1868 Alfred's brother, George, also a clergyman, took over a house in Southampton called Bannister Court and opened a private school. Sadly George died in 1874 leaving his wife Margaret and three children, Alfred promptly moved to the school to assist his sister-in-law and work as a school master; he stayed for six years.

In 1882 Alfred became curate at St Stephen's, Walcot in Bath. This was quite a new church having been built in the 1840s but not consecrated until 1880. A new chancel was built in 1882 and Alfred may well have been there for its consecration in March 1883. He then secured the post of vicar in Hales, Shropshire. In 1883, with his new role and probably more money, Alfred married Margaret Julia Ward. Margaret came from Southampton; she lived in the parish in which Alfred had originally worked and where her father Thomas was a general practitioner so it's probable that Alfred knew the family from his days in Southampton.

Alfred and Margaret stayed in Hales for five years and four of their six children were born there. Alfred seems to have been an ambitious man, or perhaps with a growing family



St Mary, Hales
Alfred was vicar here for five years. The church was designed by George Gilbert Scott and built in 1856.

there was always a need for a larger income, and in 1888 the family made the long move across the country to Little Eversden in Cambridgeshire, where Alfred was to be rector. The parish was again in the gift of

Queen's and had a value of £224 a year. The Ellabys seemed to have done quite well on this money as on the 1901 census they employed a governess, a cook, a housemaid and a nurserymaid. In Little Eversden Alfred had a very different church to the one in Hales. St Helen's is a mainly fourteenth century church but in the two years Alfred was there a major

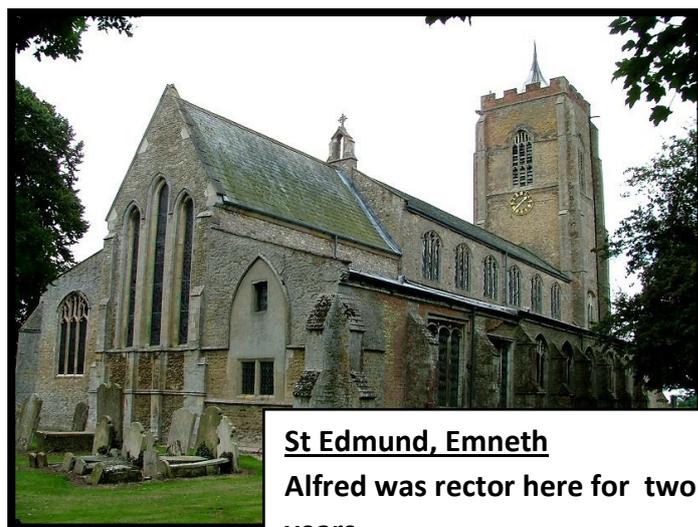
restoration project was started which was not completed until a year or two after he had left moving over the county border to Emneth taking Margaret and the children- including new baby Mildred - with him. This move is rather unexplained. Although the Queen's directory states that Alfred was rector here the Kelly's Directory states that the parish is a vicarage in the gift of the bishop of Ely. In 1911 it was worth £230. There was perhaps another reason for the move – a larger house, somewhere more appealing or perhaps Alfred found the restoration builders in church at Eversden somewhat tiresome.

St Edmund's at Emneth was Alfred's largest church yet. The thirteenth century church had undergone some Victorian

“renovation” just a few years before Alfred's arrival but the church retained a fine rood screen, a fifteenth century font and some impressive tombs. There is also some very impressive Victorian stained glass thanks to the renovation work. Although in an isolated Fenland position, Emneth had a school, post office, a few shops and a busy railway station which served the many fruit growers. However, the Ellaby family did not stay long in Emneth. In 1902 they moved to Grimston which was a rectory in the gift of Queens worth £300. Grimston had a large rectory - the 1911 census listed it with eighteen rooms – which had undergone extensive renovation and rebuilding in the time of Rev Rowlands fifty years earlier.

Alfred was rector in Grimston for sixteen years. A last child, Osmond, was born in the rectory in 1904. During the same time period the eldest son Francis went first to South Africa and then to Canada, George went first to USA and then to America. The Ellaby girls, Dorothy and Mildred, were very much involved with village life both socially and in terms of “good works”. They helped with Sunday Schools, children's outing and parties and even Scouts. Cecil did not initially follow his brothers abroad. In 1911 he was working as a bank clerk in Sheffield but it seems that banking did not work out and as on 25th May 1912 he boarded the ship “Drayton Grange” in Liverpool bound for Auckland New Zealand. Two years later the war broke out.

The family were determined to do their bit. Francis attested in the Canadian Army and in New Zealand Cecil joined the 5th New Zealand Regiment. The girls worked hard on the home front supporting the community wherever they could, Dorothy becoming a cook for the Red Cross. Alfred too seems to have been a good shepherd to his flock. He wrote to the men serving abroad, he held services for them and once the telegrams started coming he tried to comfort the bereaved. Meanwhile Cecil was on his way to Gallipoli and on 8th August 1915, he was killed at Chanuk Bair. His body was never found.



St Edmund, Emneth
Alfred was rector here for two years.



Grimston Rectory in 1910.

It was rebuilt by the Rev Rowland in the 1850s.

The loss of Cecil gave Alfred something in common with the villagers. He, like some of them, had experienced the death of a child without being able to bury or mourn him. He, like some of them, had his son lying unburied in some far off land. He was able to relate to the village losses because he had known so many of the Fallen

personally. He recalled George Mayes who died in 1915 “a quiet and steady lad” and he felt the loss of William Stebbings who was always present singing in the choir. He arranged

services in memory of those who were killed and alongside this the routine of a rector’s life – services, christenings, marriages and burials-continued. There were village events to arrange and attend. No doubt like most of the bereaved, Alfred simply kept going. It was a great shock to everyone when, in October 1917, Rev Ellaby announced, in a letter, that he was leaving the parish the following year. The Lynn News reported:

“At the end of his sermon on Sunday the rector announced that he was resigning the living shortly, the Bishop having offered him, in a very nice letter, another living in the diocese. He said that he thought it would be better for them and for him to resign, though it would be a great wrench for him to do so after so many years among them. The announcement came as a great surprise to the congregation.”

(Lynn News, October 19th 1917).

The living offered was Thornham. It was a very much smaller parish than Grimston, a vicarage and worth £172 a great deal less than Grimston. We can only guess at Alfred’s reasons for moving. The most obvious of course is that he was a man in his late sixties and “winding down” was an attractive option. It is likely that young Osmond was away at school and with only Mildred at home the large rectory must have become a very quiet and empty place. It may also have held memories of Cecil and their loss. Alfred and Margaret moved to Thornham and stayed there for eight years. Alfred did not however forget Grimston and when the War Memorial was unveiled in February 1920, he came from Thornham to do the dedication and to give the sermon. He told the congregation it was a privilege to be there and his words, from one so familiar and respected, must have moved many. He said that most of the men whose names were there inscribed he knew well. Some were valued helpers in the church choir, and many were among those who in pre-war days helped to make up the excellent congregations in the parish church. Of all of them he could say that they were his very good friends. From many of them, he had, during the war received friendly letters in which there was no complaining of the

hardships they were going through. As one who shared in sorrow he offered his true sympathy to all who were thinking of the men who had passed over to the other side but their sure hope was that now the Fallen rested from their toils, enjoyed the blessed reward of those who had “fought the good fight” and had entered into life eternal. Cecil’s name was inscribed on the cross of Portland stone along with thirty-eight other men.

Alfred retired from Thornham in 1926. Just a year later, aged seventy-eight, he died on 11th January 1927 at Linton in Cambridgeshire. Margaret lived until 1942 and died in Huntingdon where she had been living with her retired daughters.

Francis Ellaby, who served with the Canadians in WW1, survived the war and moved to South Africa. He married, had two children and died there in 1952. His brother George, who had also emigrated to Canada, lived out his life there and died in 1972. Alfred and Margaret’s youngest son, Osmond, who was born in Grimston, became a teacher and a special constable and lived in Hastings, Sussex until his death in 1967. The Ellaby girls never married. Dorothy worked all her life in catering and hospitality and spent time in Scotland and in Gloucester before retiring with her sister to St Ives. Mildred qualified as a midwife and spent her entire working life in the East End of London serving the capital’s most deprived communities. She died in 1981 in a care home in Suffolk, her sister died back home in Norfolk in 1968.

Rev Armitage Goodall 1860 - 1944

Rector of Grimston 1918 – 1930

Armitage Goodall was born in 1860 in Littletown, Yorkshire. The small township, part of Liversedge near Dewsbury, was at the centre of the Yorkshire woollen industry in which Armitage's father Benjamin was employed as a mechanic/turner. At the time of Armitage's birth most children worked in the mill, the Goodalls were an ordinary working-class family and the 1871 census showed that Armitage, aged just eleven, was working as a printer/compositor. He had not followed his father into the mill but had secured employment in what his family may have regarded as a "better" industry, whether he was still receiving any education we do not know.

Armitage must have always been keen to learn and interested in education. By 1881 when he was twenty-one he was working as an assistant schoolmaster. Neither of Armitage's brothers went into the mill – Arthur was working as a clerk and Fred as a printer/compositor perhaps taking Armitage's previous job. Having the boys in "clean and respectable" occupations would have been a source of pleasure and pride to Benjamin and Mary although the girls were weaving in the mill.

In 1883 Armitage married Susan Heatley at Christ Church, Liversedge. Susan was a local



Christ Church, Liversedge. It was opened in 1816

girl; she was born in Liversedge and worked as a weaver in the mill.

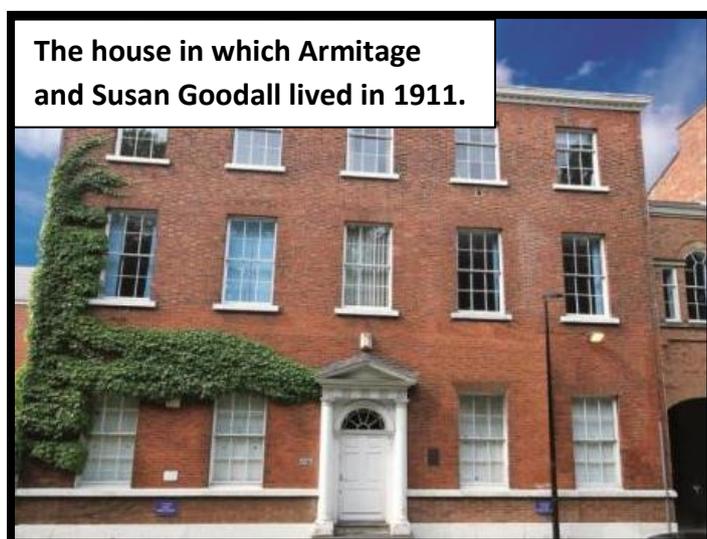
Perhaps she and Armitage were childhood sweethearts or perhaps they met at the church. Susan must have known that Armitage was a man with some ambition and would not be content to stay teaching in Liversedge all his life. It is difficult to trace the Goodalls in the 1880s. The 1891 census showed them in Billericay, Essex where they were sharing a house with Susan's brother and his wife and also a young cousin. Henry was a joiner, Armitage listed his job as

"Visitor of Schools" presumably some kind of school inspector. The road in which they were living, Avenue Road, was a street of Victorian semis, it would have been a definite step up for both young couples.

In 1894, aged thirty-four, Armitage Goodall entered Queen's College, Cambridge. Armitage had worked hard enough to secure funding for higher education he was a pensioner, someone self-funding paying for both tuition and accommodation. He entered a world in which his peers were of a different age and different class, there was a new way of life to experience and as well as his academic studies there were new social idioms and conventions to learn. We do not know what Susan did or where she lived whilst

Armitage was at Cambridge. She must have been a resourceful young woman and it is likely that she had always been aware of, and shared, Armitage's ambitions. In 1898 at least one of these ambitions was fulfilled; Armitage was ordained and in 1899 he returned to the North, to take up the role of curate at West Houghton. West Houghton is not in Yorkshire, it was a pit village over the border in Lancashire, close to Bolton. It must have had a different feel and atmosphere to Liversedge and living and working here (as a Yorkshireman) was a learning experience for Armitage. Just one year later they moved this time to Eccles near Manchester. The mills in Eccles turned out cotton, there were acres of new housing built to house the workers and the manager's. Armitage was curate at St Andrew's Eccles which was built in the 1870s to serve the growing suburb of Monton and there was an Anglican school attached to the church.

Armitage retained an interest in education from his days as a teacher and local inspector and in 1904 he took the post of Diocesan Schools Inspector for the diocese of Wakefield a



post he held for the next fourteen years. The Goodalls were now firmly middle-class. They lived in a large elegant house in a Georgian terrace opposite the park and they had two servants – a cook and a housemaid - to look after them and Susan's elderly mother.

Armitage Goodall had a great deal of experience in education and his years as a curate had probably given him an insight into the squalor and poverty in which many people in the

mill towns lived but still he must have found visiting some schools quite disheartening. The school leaving age had been raised to eleven in 1893 and to twelve in 1902 but many parents did not adhere to this. The "half-time system" by which children worked half the day in school and half in the mill seemed in some places unaffected by these changes and the system actually endured until the end of the Great War. Alongside his school inspections Armitage was writing a book and in 1913 "Place Names of South West Yorkshire" was published. It sold quite well; a revised edition was available in 1914 at a cost of seven shillings and sixpence. ⁶

In 1918 Armitage Goodall became rector of Grimston. At the age of fifty-eight he left Yorkshire and a house in town and travelled, with Susan, across England to take up residence in a rural rectory. His predecessor, Alfred Ellaby, had left the parish quite suddenly the Lynn News reporting that. "The announcement (*of his departure*) came as a great surprise to the congregation."⁷ Alfred Ellaby had been in Grimston for many years. He had been with the villagers through the war and, moreover, had, like some of them, a

⁶ Manchester Courier, September 1914.

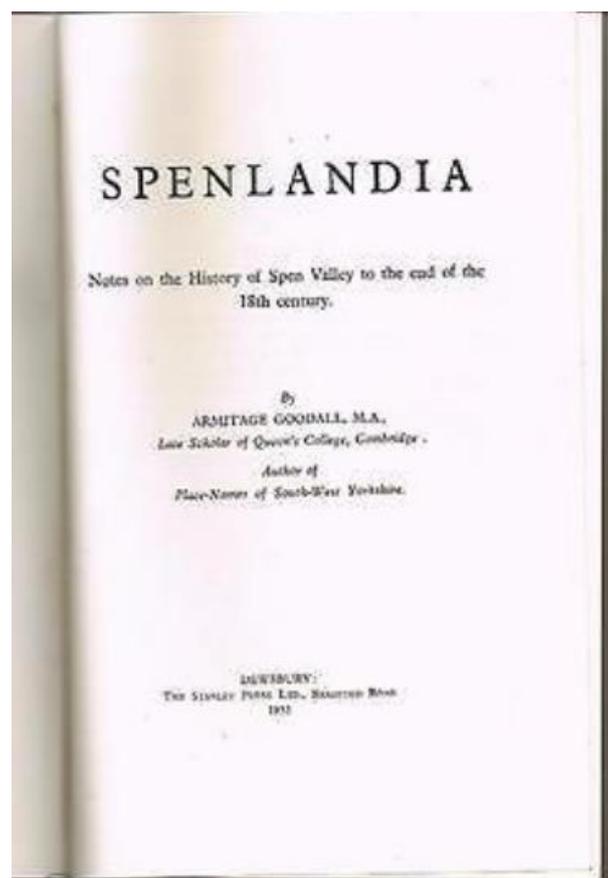
⁷ Lynn News, October 19th 1917

son dead and unburied in a foreign land. This undoubtedly created a kind of bond and probably made him a hard act to follow. A few months after Armitage's arrival, in August 1918, the fifth year of war began. Rev Goodall read out the names of those the village had lost and the subject of the sermon was "Blessings Arising from the War". It is to be hoped that the congregation were able to understand the positive message in this as they were unlikely to know the quote from Shakespeare Henry V "There is some soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distil it out."

Armitage Goodall was a very good organiser and he took the lead in organising the Peace celebrations in 1919, deciding the nature of the War Memorial and arranging its building, setting up and unveiling. Interestingly, when the memorial was unveiled, Alfred Ellaby returned to carry this out and preach the sermon, whether he was invited by Rev Goodall we don't know. Rev Goodall was an industrious and studious man and during his time at Grimston Armitage Goodall wrote an extensive history of the church and the village and also one of Massingham.

Rev Goodall left in 1930. He and Susan returned to Yorkshire to live in Cleakheaton. This was a good place for Armitage as it was the major town in the borough of Spenborough (no longer in existence) Armitage was planning his next book – a history of the Spen Valley. The Goodalls lived in Grange Road, a quiet road opposite woodland with a view over the valley; they were both by then over seventy. Susan died in 1938, Armitage stayed on in Grange Road with a housekeeper and in 1943, just a year before he died, he published "Spenslandia", his history of the Spen Valley to the end of the eighteenth century.

Armitage Goodall died in 1944. He left £2400, about £75,000 today. As he and Susan had never been blessed with children it was left to his two nephews. One was a theatre director; one had followed Armitage into teaching.



Rev Ernest William Selwyn 1889 – 1973

Rector of Grimston 1930 – 1938



Ernest Selwyn was born in Brighton, Sussex. His father William was a clergyman, his mother was Helen Watson. The 1891 census, taken when Ernest was just a year old, showed that little Ernest along with his older brother George were visiting their maternal uncle George Watson in Fakenham whilst their parents, William and Helen, were with Williams' mother in London. Three years later Helen gave birth to a little girl called Constance who was followed in 1896 by another daughter Marjorie. Sadly this last child died in infancy and three years later Ernest's mother died in Erpingham, Norfolk which was possibly her childhood home.

Just one year later, in 1900, William Selwyn remarried. The following year the 1901 census showed that Ernest aged eleven was away at school- St Lawrence's in Ramsgate, Kent. Whilst he was there Ernest learnt rifle shooting and became known as a very good shot. He moved onto Trent College and from there to Queen's College, Cambridge where he represented the college at shooting. He also represented England in rifle and revolver shooting in both 1911 and 1912. The 1911 census showed that Ernest was living with his father and stepmother in Isleworth where his father was vicar.

The following year Ernest was appointed curate at Bermondsey and Rotherhithe in the east end of London. Bermondsey was full of industrial plants, docks and immigrant housing and parts were amongst the worst slums in London. Dickens set the novel "Oliver Twist" in the area in which Ernest's church was built (in 1840). This must have been a shock to Ernest after seaside Brighton and affluent, riverside Isleworth but it was also an opportunity to see the ministry in a different light. During this time Ernest developed an interest in Scouting which was quite new at the time. When the Great War started Ernest offered to serve but so many of the parish staff had left for the war he was needed to "hold the fort" in London.

As the war ended Ernest moved to Rotherhithe to the Queen's College Mission later the Queen's House. According to the college "*The work of the Mission consists in running a Boys' Club, not merely for the sake of providing healthy recreation and amusement, but for furthering their education and developing their religious life. The aim, therefore, is threefold; social, educational, and religious.*"⁸ Here he was instrumental in developing the works of the Scouting Movement; the troop was called the 7th Rotherhithe and Bermondsey. In parallel with this responsibility he was also appointed curate of the local church of Christ Church, Rotherhithe. In fact, he was largely responsible for the whole parish due his vicar's long term illness. This was clearly a huge workload for a young

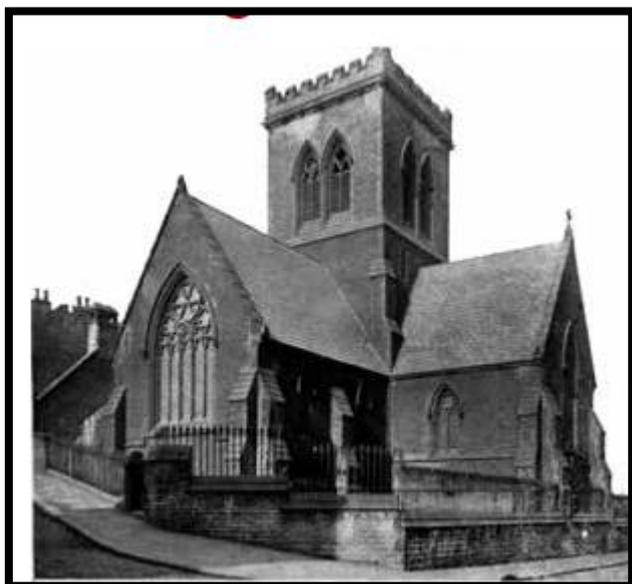
⁸ The Queens' College Mission Rotherhithe, by the Rev. J. Kingdon, 1914, p. 188

clergyman caring working in a demanding environment and not surprisingly his work caused his health to deteriorate and it was decided that he should move.

He took up a brief appointment at St. John the Divine, Merton but was soon moved to the curacy of St. George, Sheffield in June of 1923. St George's is one of the very large Victorian churches built in Sheffield; it is now used by the university. Whilst he was at St George's Ernest met Alice Kathleen Adams. Despite the fact that Kathleen was from a long-established Primitive Methodist tradition they were married at St. George's on the 30th June 1926 by the Bishop of Sheffield.

Ernest had continued with Scouting. St George's had an active Scout Troop (101st Sheffield) no doubt Ernest was involved with this but he was also Commissioner of Rover Scouting for Sheffield and it is recorded that, on 2nd December 1926, he gave an address to the BBC (from the Sheffield Relay Station) about the Rover Branch of Scouting.

In June 1926 Ernest was appointed to his first position in charge of a parish - he was made vicar of St. Stephen's in Sheffield. St Stephens is another Victorian church built through



Victorian philanthropy. In Ernest's time it served a large community of back-to back housing.

On 1 June 1927, Kathleen and Ernest had their first child - Robert Jasper. On 25 March 1929 Alice gave birth to twin boys, Thomas and Walter. Sadly Thomas died four days after birth. He was buried at Christchurch Sheffield. The following year the family moved to Grimston a very different kind of parish; the youngest Selwyn, Basil was born here in 1931.

At Grimston Rev Ernest remained involved with scouting. In 1932 he became District Commissioner for King's Lynn Scouts taking over from Lord Fermoy, he was also listed as Scout Master at Grimston at that time. The following year the King's Lynn district underwent some changes and the Grimston Scout Troop, under Rev Selwyn, became the 8th King's Lynn (Grimston) Group a name that continues to the present day. Rev Ernest continued as Scout Master and District Commissioner throughout his time in Norfolk. In 1937 he handed over to Mr C.A. Freestone who had served several years as Assistant District Commissioner and was well-known to him. The Scouts in Grimston thrived under Ernest Selwyn and his involvement was a service to the village beyond his ministry.

In 1935 Ernest experienced a tragedy at St Botolph's when Edward Linford, his gardener, who had been church organist for many years, committed suicide. Edward was a war veteran who suffered with mental health problems and during his stay in a mental hospital the PCC found a replacement organist. They told Edward he could return to the role when it was vacant, they were probably anxious about his health as the doctor had

re-referred him to the psychiatrist. Rev Ernest was also anxious about the way Edward took the news, he spent a long time talking to him and when he apparently went missing drove his car round searching and then called the police. Later Edward Linford's body was found by the train line at Grimston, he had committed suicide. Edward Linford's death caused a schism in the PCC and in the village. He had always been a devout man and was a Sunday School Teacher as well as organist and people felt for him. Rev Ernest expressed "deep sorrow and sympathy" but doubtless it took a while and a lot of work to heal the split in the PCC and congregation.

Rev Ernest Selwyn and his family left Grimston at the end of 1937 to move to Hampshire where he took on two parishes. He remained committed to Scouting, was a District Commissioner in Hampshire and was awarded the Silver Acorn for services to Scouting. Throughout his life he had also maintained his interest in, and skill at, shooting. He competed regularly at the yearly meet at Bisley with some considerable success. He passed this interest and skill onto his son Walter.

Rev Ernest lived out his life in Hampshire with his wife Kathleen and died there in May 1973. They are both buried in the village churchyard at Old Alresford with their eldest son Robert who was killed in an accident aged twenty-two.

Rev Eric C Corke 1897 – 1961
Rector of Grimston 1938 – 1946

Eric Corke was born in Wiltshire. His father Hubert was rector of Bradenstoke where his church was built only in 1866 and was privately funded. The family were living there on the 1901 census but ten years later, on the 1911 census, they had moved to Cheltenham and Hubert was vicar at Holy Apostles another (much larger) Victorian church. Hubert and his wife Louisa had three children; Eric had an older brother called Hubert and an older sister, Dorothy. Hubert was apparently a very academic child. He was educated at Cheltenham Grammar School, 1911 was his last year at school. Eric, for reasons unknown, did not go to the Grammar School but attended Dean Close School a school established twenty years earlier by evangelical churchmen; possibly the founders were known to Hubert.



H.W. Corke –
Eric's brother

In 1912 Eric's brother Hubert left school to attend Faraday House Electrical Engineering College. The course was four years and in the first year his results in examinations were so good he was awarded a special prize. He went into industry to complete his second year and was able to be with the family in Cheltenham. In 1914 when the war broke out Hubert suspended his studies and joined up initially in the Public Schools Battalion. In December 1914 he was given a commission in the Gloucester Regiment and was sent to France in 1915. Eric meanwhile was aged eighteen and not yet old enough to join up but probably longed to follow his brother. On April 19th 1916 Hubert Corke was killed in the trenches just south of Loos. He was hit by a fragment from a shell, one of the thousands of random deaths in WW1. The family were distraught; Hubert was buried in Maroc Cemetery and after the war the original wooden cross marking his grave was sent home to Cheltenham where it remains in the churchyard.

Eric joined up as soon as he was old enough (in 1916) and by 1917 was an officer in the newly formed 16th Battalion of the Cyclists Corps. The primary roles of the cyclists were reconnaissance and communications (message taking). They were armed as infantry and could provide mobile firepower if required and they carried out these roles wherever they were posted. In 1917 Eric and 16th were in Salonika. We do not know how but alongside the normal British medals Eric was awarded a medal from the Serbia government. It is called the "Order of the White Eagle" and a number of British officers were awarded this medal for assisting the Serbian Army.



Order of the White Eagle medal.
One like this was awarded to Eric Corke

After the war Eric went to Queen's College Cambridge and thence to the London College of Divinity. His first parish was St Barnabas, Sheffield where he was appointed curate in 1924, this was followed by a year in Macclesfield, Cheshire. He was then appointed chaplain to the newly opened Goldings Technical School in St Albans. This experience prepared him to be curate at Aberlour and sub warden of the orphanage there. This huge establishment was linked to the Episcopalian Church and although it has since been the subject of controversy, at the time it was considered to provide a good home for children without families. Rev Eric left Aberlour in 1937 following a second serious fire in the course of ten years. He spent 1937-8 at Wombwell in Yorkshire.

When Rev Eric came to Grimston in 1938 he was able to have his sister Dorothy and his mother Louisa to live with him; the three of them are shown living at the rectory on the 1939 survey. Eric and the ladies spent eighteen years at Grimston; It was Eric Corke, who had so many sad memories of the Great War, who had to shepherd the congregation through the long years of WW2. Alongside the worries of the war, Louisa Corke died here in 1944 and having reached the peace Eric and Dorothy moved on in 1946.

Rev Eric Corke died in Reading, Berkshire in 1961 aged sixty-four.

Rev Eric Walton Rogers 1902 – 1985

Rector of Grimston 1946 – 1952

Eric Walton Rogers was born in King's Norton, Worcestershire in 1902. He was not born into an ecclesiastical family – his father Joseph manufactured solder. Eric had just one sister and the 1911 census showed the family living in Mosley a leafy suburb of Birmingham in a large house. Eric was not old enough to fight in the Great War but may have gone to university or college shortly afterwards.

Eric was ordained in 1931 and the first parish we can find him at is St Mary's Rickmansworth where he was curate in the 1930s. In 1938 he married Margaret Miller and when war broke out Eric and Margaret were living at St Raphael's Vicarage, 6 Garden Way, Willesden, St Raphael's being a Mission Chapel for nearby St Mary's. Between the wars Neasden had become an increasingly popular and bustling suburb, it was considered to have an exceptionally vibrant High Street. Nothing remains of Eric's church and vicarage (the church closed in 1972) there is a large estate covering most of that area and Garden Way is a turning off the frantic North Circular Road.

We don't know where Eric served in the war years before arriving at St Botolph's in 1946. Perhaps he came here straight from North London. He stayed here only six years and sadly there is no information either here or in Crockford's about his time here or his later life. We know only that he left Grimston in 1952 and retired from the ministry in 1970.

Eric Walton Rogers died in Cassington, Oxford on 16th March 1985. He died quite a wealthy man leaving around one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. It is possible that his late father, Joseph, the soldering manufacturer had done well for himself.

Rev Thomas Winston Daniel 1903 – 1980

Rector of Grimston 1952 - 1957

Thomas Winston Daniels is a man who has, sadly, eluded enquiry and has disappeared into the mist of the past.

He was born in 1903 but there is no certain record of his birth, nor does anyone with his name appear on the 1911 census; presumably he started life with a name that was different in some way. As he has no entry in Crockfords there is no record of when he was ordained – he was recorded on the 1939 return as living at the Vicarage in Bexley with Rev and Mrs Barrett, presumably he was a curate at Rev Barrett's church which might have been St Mary's or St John's.

Rev Daniel has left no written evidence of his time at Grimston or at Congham where he was rector one year earlier. He left the parish in 1957 when still only middle-aged. At some time, probably in the 1970s, he went to live at the College of St Barnabas in Lingfield, Surrey which is a retirement home for Anglican Clergy. He died there on 6th March 1980 aged seventy-seven.

Rev Eric Leslie Fuller 1894 – 1966

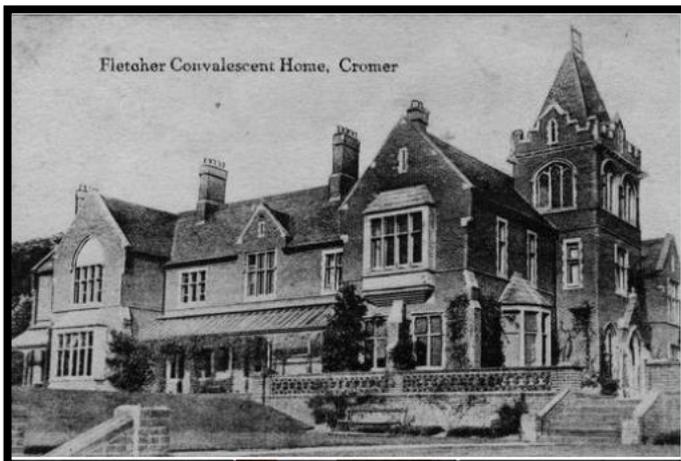
Rector of Grimston 1957 – 1964

Eric Fuller was born in 1894 in Chester. His father James was an ordained clergyman and the 1901 census showed that he was running a school in Chester where Eric and his mother Minnie were also living. Eric was their only child. By 1911 James had taken over a parish, he was rector at Pulford near Wrexham and the family, plus Minnie's mother, lived in the huge rectory at Pulham where there were sixteen rooms. Eric was then aged fifteen and was at school.

When war broke out and conscription came in in 1916 it appears that Eric was not immediately called up. He was a student of theology and clergymen were exempt from service. However, in 1917, on 23rd November, he was called up and assigned to the RGA (Royal Garrison Artillery). We must presume that Eric was initially passed as fit to serve but the following year, in February 1918, he was seen by a Medical Board who noted that he had a "TB gland on the next broken down and suppurating". This condition is called scrofula. The condition would now be treated by antibiotics but in 1918 the best treatment was thought to be removal so on 12th February 1918 Eric had an operation under local anaesthetic to remove the gland. After this another board in March, observing his scar and general health, declared him unfit for service whilst noting that he had been a well-behaved soldier. He was given a Silver Badge, a £10 gratuity and declared twenty per cent disabled.

In 1920 Eric was back living with James and Minnie. It is more than possible that his health was still not good. However, he moved onto his first parish which was in Walton, Liverpool. By 1939 Eric had moved further north and was vicar of St Andrew's Church in Deptford, Sunderland but in 1942 he married Doris Gertrude Jarvis in Hinckley where he was vicar at the Holy Trinity.

Eric served in Leicestershire for several years. From Hinckley he went to Desford and then, in 1954, to Cosby. Eric and Doris arrived in Grimston in 1957. Rev Eric Fuller served our



parish for seven years until 1964. He died just two years later on 9th May 1966, at Fletcher Hospital, Cromer which was then a convalescent/nursing home. It is possible that his health had never been good after his early tuberculosis.

The Fullers were both over forty when they married and had no children so Doris, who inherited a

small amount from her husband, returned to her home county of Leicestershire.

Rev Albert Robinson 1915 – 2007
Rector of Rector of Grimston 1964 – 1973



A very young Albert

Albert Robinson was born in Great Ouseburn, Yorkshire in November 1915 during the Great War. His parents were Albert, a cashier at the time and Elizabeth. Albert Jnr was the youngest child; he had five older sisters so it is likely he was something of a favourite in the household.

We don't know what Albert did for a job before the Second World War. In 1937 he married Esther White in Eastbourne, Sussex; the Robinson family had moved there as Albert Snr had a job as a gardener. Esther was living with her in-laws on the 1939 census - Albert Jnr was not there it is possible that he had already joined the forces.

In 1960 Albert went to Rochester Theological College. He was ordained two years later and took up at post at St Peter's Limpsfield (Surrey). In 1964 he came to Grimston as Rector. During Rev Albert's time at Grimston the station, Grimston Road, was closed to freight (1965) having been closed for passenger services since 1959. Rev Albert must also have seen huge changes in the village as many areas of housing – the bungalows along Lynn and Low Road, The Walnuts and housing along Chapel Road in Pott Row – were built during his time. Both the Tumble Down Dick and the New Inn were closed during his tenure.

In 1973 Rev Albert Robinson left Grimston to go to St Mary's at Great Plumstead. He stayed there until he retired in 1981. He and Esther moved to Gloucester where Albert was licenced until 1991 and could perhaps help out when and where needed.

Esther died in Gloucester in 1989; Albert remained there and lived until 2007 when he died aged ninety-two.



Rev Robinson watched George Cross receive an award for forty years as a church warden. It was presented by Albert Blake, Irene Cross received flowers.

Rev Esdaile Lennox Barnes⁹ 1913 – 2000

Rector of Grimston 1974 – 1975

Esdaile Barnes was born in 1913 in Croydon; one of four sons born to Caroline and Alfred Barnes he was baptised at Chiddingfold St Mary on 27th April 1913. Alfred was an architect but it seems that by the 1911 census (before Esdaile was born) he had already partly retired as he described himself as “don’t work” and “partly at home”. However, this must have been a temporary thing because the 1939 register showed him as an architect employed by the Home Office.



In 1939 Esdaile was a student living in Croydon with his mother Caroline and his future wife Audrey Densham (Alfred was living in Aylesbury with a couple called the Stillwells). Audrey Densham was a qualified nurse and she is also listed on the 1939 register for Croydon Nursing Home as, rather less obviously, is Esdaile, especially as that hospital on St James Road was a maternity hospital.

Esdaile and Audrey married in July 1941 the same year that Esdaile was ordained priest having trained at the London College of Divinity which is now closed (in 2019). Esdaile began his ministry in the Diocese of Bath and Wells first as a curate at Street where he was chaplain to the British Legion and then, from 1943 – 1945 as rector at Priston a village very close to Bath. It was there that Audrey and Esdaile’s first daughter was born, she would be followed by two more girls and a son.

From Priston the Barnes family moved to Tulse Hill, they stayed here for seven years. Esdaile’s stay in Tulse Hill was not without small controversies. In September 1950 he publicly complained (in the Norwood News) about parishioners who pestered him for references or to act as witness. The following year he had a run in with the diocesan chancellor over the removal of two commemorative religious pictures in St Matthias. However, despite this it was apparently a total surprise to the parish (as reported in the Norwood News in December 1951) when the vicar announced his departure to go to St Andrew and St Mary at Maidenhead. Having served eight years there, Rev Esdaile and Audrey left for Australia.

The Barnes spent ten years in Australia during which time Esdaile held four posts. Firstly he was vicar in the town of Uralla in New South Wales and after four years there he moved to Moree where he spent the same amount of time. For one year after this he was the city of Tamworth and for one year, from 1970 to 1971 he was curate at St Peter’s Cathedral in the city of Armidale.

⁹ Photo Ref Mr A Cross 2021

Upon returning to England Esdaile was curate at Holy Trinity Folkestone a large and busy Victorian church with a reputation – which it maintains - for outstanding music. After two years there Esdaile was able to secure his own parish and came to Grimston in 1974. Sadly he did not settle here and after just one year he left to return to Australia.

Rev Esdaile Barnes spent the rest of his life in Australia. He was vicar at two parishes and retired in 1983 but remained attached to the Diocese of Sydney. He died in 2000.

Rev Andrew Herbert Redding Thomas 1941 – 2021

Rector of Grimston 1976 – 1983

Andrew Thomas was born on December 16th 1941 in Croydon, Surrey. He was the youngest of three children he had an older brother Graham and an older sister Janet. He attended the Whitgift School in South Croydon and followed his father into banking. Andrew was brought up in an actively Christian family and felt called to go into the Ministry training at the London College of Divinity. His first curacy, in the late 1960s, was in Cromer, Norfolk under the watchful eye of Rev



Derek Osborne. This curacy lasted for three years and during that time he met Gill Skinner who would become his wife. Andrew stayed at Cromer for three years and became Diocesan Holiday Chaplain. He spent many happy hours with families in North Norfolk covering many miles on a scooter before progressing to a VW Camper Van.

In 1976 Andrew and Gill moved into Grimston Rectory with their two small children – Simon aged three and Rebecca aged eighteen months. A second daughter, Hannah, was born in King’s Lynn in 1979. Andrew became rector of the United Benefice of Grimston, Congham and Roydon under the patronage of Queens College, Cambridge. Within a short time of his arrival restoration work began on St Botolph’s Grimston which included the bells being refounded at Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London. In summer 1979 Andrew started the first Holiday Club for young people at Grimston Junior School – over fifty children took part. This continued every summer with numbers increasing each year. Andrew then began a Christian Youth Fellowship Association (CYFA) group for teenagers in the benefice. This group enjoyed weekends away, the summer games of shinty on the beach became legendary. In 1980 Andrew established the Village Link Magazine which was delivery free to every household – this is still going forty years later. Other innovations included the first Christingle Service in 1981 and the first Grimston Fete held in May 1982 at “The Springs” courtesy of Norma and Margy Benson.

Andrew and Gill left Grimston on March 20th 1983 to go to Howell Hill in Cheam where Andrew was chosen to lead the church through a new build to accommodate a growing congregation. He was there for twelve years and then moved to Beccles for seven years.

In 2002 Andrew took early retirement due to health issues. He and Gill moved back to Cromer where latterly his failing health took him to Faldonside Lodge Care Home in Cromer. Andrew died in Norfolk and Norwich Hospital on May 29th 2020 aged eighty.

With thanks to Rosemary Bowers for writing this and sharing memories of Rev Thomas also to Ray Messam for the Photo of Andrew

Rev William Howard 1947- xxxx

Rector of Grimston (Inc Congham & Royfon) 1984-2013

William Howard was born in Cuxton, Kent. One of four sons, he came from a long line of clergymen. His mother Judith (nee Harland) had a paternal grandfather in the church whilst William's father and grandfather both called Alfred and his great-grandfather Thomas had all been rectors. William attended Dean Close School in Cheltenham. A Christian boarding school founded in 1886 in memory of Dean Francis Close, Rector of Cheltenham and educational philanthropist, Dean Close had in the past been a popular choice amongst the clergy and remains so. Following school William entered St.John's College, Durham in 1966 to study Politics, Anthropology, Social Theory and Institutions. His first job was as a computer programmer for Hampshire County Council and after that he worked for the Sudan Council of Churches Commission for Rehabilitation and Relief (Nairobi) whilst waiting to go to Oxford in Autumn 1974. William was a student at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford for three years during which time he married Margaret Dinnick (in 1976) and was ordained in December 1977.

William's first post in the church was as curate at St Peter's Norbiton, Kingston upon Thames where he stayed for three years. In 1980 there was a move to St Catherine's, Mile Cross, Norwich. Mile Cross was the first big council estate in Norwich and was started as



part of the 1902s "Homes for Heroes" scheme. The church was built in 1933 – 5 opposite a library of the same era. Church, library and vicarage are all listed now.

Moving to take over the living of Grimston which by then included Congham and Roydon meant a move to a very different kind of parish (parishes). Two of the three churches – St Andrew Congham and St Botolph Grimston are medieval and therefore expensive to maintain, the congregations were different in make up to those in the city church. The villages then were home to many families – there was a thriving village school opposite the rectory and another in the hamlet of Pott Row. William, Margaret and their three daughters – Sarah, Rebecca and Jenny – were very involved in village life. The girls attended the village schools (and later the local high school) and Margaret was much involved in music in those schools, at church groups and at Christmas services for beavers

and cubs. Apart from his clerical duties William was trustee of the Grimston Fen and Allotment Trust and was involved in Hudson Fen Leisure a group aiming to improve sports and leisure facilities in the villages. Together Margaret and William hosted lunches in the rectory for senior residents and William was for several years responsible for delivering the Cub Scout Christmas Hampers to those most in need.

A Friends of St Botolph Group was established during William's tenure but the event for which William would long be remembered was the Annual Art Festival which was held in St Botolph's each Spring. This was a hugely successful event on many levels; it raised money, it was a social event (as teas and refreshments were served) and it gave local artists the chance to show and sell their work. The event was much missed when William left.

William and Margaret retired to Wellesbourne, Warwick in 2013. William served in the Coventry Diocese and took on the secretary role and then treasurer of the Friends of Coventry Cathedral with whom he had long been involved. The villages which had been under William's care were joined with parishes around Gayton and Massingham to form one large benefice of eleven parishes.

Rev Jane Margaret Holmes 1957-2021¹⁰

Rector of Gayton 2011-2021 & Grimston 2013-2021

Jane grew up on a farm in North Lincolnshire - she was a country girl. Following a personal tragedy in her adult life she turned to God and found him ready and waiting to wrap her in his arms and this is how Jane saw her life develop. She left a career in finance and banking and trained for the ministry.

She was ordained in 2007 and came to Gayton in January 2011. She found the people to be friendly and welcoming, she liked the village and she had a great team to help her in her duties. In 2013 she took over from Rev William Howard at Grimston and, with the help of her team expanded her responsibilities to other churches. She was passionate in teaching and sharing the love of God to all ages and she dedicated her life to the Church and her parishes.



Jane cared not only about committed Anglicans but about people of all faiths and those with no faith. She was interested in all aspects of village life and met many people in her work. She shared people's joy in weddings and baptisms and their sadness in funerals. She was most happy with children and loved Messy Church, singing and dancing and her visits to school.

Jane was ill for the last two and a half years of her life and was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer. Everyone who knew her prayed for a return to good health and then, following her acceptance, a peaceful end. She died on February 8th 2021 aged 63 years, with her brother and sister by her side.

Jane's funeral took place at St Nicholas Church, Gayton on 25th February 2021.

¹⁰ Photo and information from Village Link Magazine August 2021

Rev Judith Pollard 1956-xxxx
Rector of Grimston 2021-2023



Judith Pollard was born Judith Boydon in Nottingham on 5th July 1956; her parents were Muriel and Donald Boydon. Judith left Nottingham to go to college in Manchester to study Theatre intending to work in theatre administration. In 1979 she secured an exciting job at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield where the World Snooker Championships had just started. The following year, 1980, Judith married Mike Pollard in Nottingham and when his job relocated to Peterborough Judith left the Crucible and moved with him.

Judith became a civil servant in the Department of Employment. This was ideal because it meant that when Mike's job moved Judith could also move and keep a job. The Pollards moved to Northallerton where their eldest son Joseph was born. His two younger brothers Luke and Jacob were born in Darlington and Nottingham respectively. It was perhaps good for Judith and Mike to be back in Judith's hometown with a young family to manage. The three boys all have disabilities which had a huge impact on Judith's life and also deepened her understanding of Christian faith and the nature of ministry. In 2009 Judith entered training for the priesthood and Mike gave up his job to be full-time carer for the boys.

Judith trained at Westcott House in Cambridge. Westcott House is a Church of England theological college that has been training people for ministry for over one hundred years. It was initially set up to raise the standard of clergy education and now prepares people for licensed ministries in the Church. This time spent in inspirational training meant that Judith was staying at the college during the week and returning home at weekend.

Judith gained an MA in Pastoral Theology and her time at Westcott gave her a particular interest in revealing the love of Christ in care for others. She is a member of the Society of Catholic Priests and aspires to a more traditional, more sacramental understanding of Church. Judith was ordained in Southwell, Nottinghamshire in 2011 and served her first curacy in the Newark with Coddington Team. She came to Norfolk in 2016 as Team Vicar of Grimston, Gayton and Massingham Benefice working with Rev Jane Holmes.

Unfortunately, Jane's health began to deteriorate and as this was happening Covid hit. Judith found herself spiritually leading a bewildered – and in many cases frightened – community through Covid whilst also coping with the terminal illness of Rev Jane, a dear friend and colleague. When Jane died in February 2021, Judith became Acting Team Rector.

In her years as rector Judith has seen brighter times. The severity of Covid diminished events and services returned to the churches including concerts at St Botolphs and St

Andrews at Congham underwent major refurbishment and repairs which were completed just in time for Judith's retirement on 31st August 2023.

Judith and Mike are planning to move west to be near their sons who now have a permanent home in mid Wales. Judith will continue in the ministry in a new role in a new parish with this verse to guide her:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and be not wise in your own understanding".