



St. Margaret's Church

I P S W I C H

The Commissioners' Return of 1552 on behalf of Edward VI

Although Henry VIII had made himself the head of the Church of England in 1535, services in this church, and across England, remained much as they had been under Catholicism. Henry never permitted the renunciation of Catholic doctrine or ceremony and reasserted this doctrine in The Act of Six Articles of 1539.

Edward, born in 1537, was the only son of Henry VIII. His mother was Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour. His education was provided by tutors who were influenced by the Protestant ideas spreading across from Europe, which, although rejected by Henry, had been warmly embraced by advisers such as Thomas Cromwell who was executed in 1540 during Henry's reign.



In 1543 Henry signed the Treaty of Greenwich bringing peace between England and Scotland through the betrothal of Edward to the seven month-old Mary, Queen of Scots. The Scots later repudiated the treaty and they renewed their alliance with the French, which led to an invasion of Scotland by Henry in 1544. This war was to continue into Edward's reign.

When Henry died in 1547 Edward VI became king at the age of nine and a Regency Council was appointed to exercise power on his behalf. His reign was to last just six years, but it brought about major religious and political change. The years were also marked by economic problems, partly due to the cost of the war with Scotland, and partly due to social unrest.

Edward, influenced by his Lord Protectors, Somerset and Northumberland, was much more radical than his father in his establishment of the Church of England in line with Protestantism. Services were required to be said in English rather than Latin, many of the liturgical furnishings and some items of precious metal were no longer used during the services, and clerics were no longer required to be celibate.

In 1549 the crown appointed Commissioners to demand that incumbents and churchwardens provided inventories of church valuables. Ostensibly this was to ensure that those items no longer in use were not removed from the church without the permission of the congregation, and that any money raised was used for the benefit of the parish. In effect, however, it was to enable the crown to establish the value of the items held by the church so that they could be removed and used to support the exchequer and to pay for the cost of wars.

The following is a transcript of the 1552 return for St Margaret's Church. Where necessary explanatory notes have been included for ease [*thus*], although most words when spoken will sound like their modern equivalent.

24
Saxons
and West Saxons
John Edward e West Saxons
Lanfranc e West Saxons
Domesday book of West Saxons
West Saxons one hundred
the other West Saxons
John one Physician of Exeter
West Saxons Weymouth
John one Prior of Exeter e West Saxons
Weymouth
Edmund e West Saxons
William fitzherbert
Sir me John Holland Sir me matfalo gardener

Saynt Margarette

John Brend and Richard Cattell
churchwardens.

Inn primis [primarily] viij payer [seven pairs] of
challis [chalices] all gylte [gold or gold plate]
wherof one wayeth xix owence [19oz, 540g]....
The others wayeth xvij ownce. [16oz, 450g].
Itm [item] one crysметору [a chrismatory – a
small receptacle containing consecrated oils
used in religious rites] of silver parcel gylte
[silver and gilded on part of the surface]
waying xxij ownce [22oz, 624g].

Item de pediat et
magnetis

Item in hande of Edmund
one stroppe shewyn one
crownge stroppe e in distance
of yarde fayrely

Item one shope of Edward warden
of shreves

Item one shaynes bynch stroppe
for a chaffe stroppe

Item iij^m other stroppe of
playne stroppe

Item iij^m other stroppe of
playne stroppe

Item the vij^m other stroppe of playne

Item the viij^m stroppe

Item one shane stroppe of silke

Item one bens stroppe of black
hemped at a chaffe of latten
stroppe

Item one other bens stroppe of
black henged at a chaffe of
red stroppe

Item one shyppe

Item the viij^m stroppe

Item sette in the shaynes

Item in thande [*the hands*] of Edmunde Wytheponle esqwyer [*More recently known as Withipoll Esquire*] one sepulchre clothe and iij [3]. of redde velvet. [*possibly sold to this person*]

Item one cope [a long cloak worn by a priest] of
whyght satten [white satin] of brydges
[thought to be modern day Bruges]

itm one stayned lynen clothe for a crosse
clothe [a banner attached to a processional
cross]

itm iiiij [4] alter clothes of playne clothe

itm iiij [4] alter clothes of diap [*unknown*].

itm six towelle

itm one playne towel

itm one carre [square, from the French *carré*]
clothe of sylke

Itm one hersse clothe of black worsted wt
[with] a crosse of tawny chamblett [used to
cover a coffin]

Item one other hersse clothe of black worsted
wt a crosse of red chamblett

itm one surplus

itm vj [6] rotchette [*or rochet, a long white vestment*]

Item belles in the stepyll iij [4]

Solde by thomas Whythyng
 Edward Syngar to John Brende
 one helle Leynghm of Robt
 Battell for the sume of
 Item other churchgoodes sold by the
 seyd John Brende & Rycharde
 Battell to Robt Etyngm of
 Yppyswiche for the sume of
 S. m. m. viij. viij. iiiij.
 D. owt at p. in h. d. v. m. n. d.

Solde by Thomas Whythyng and Henr.
 Bryges to John Brende one belle waying cccij
 quarteres xxvj li [pounds] [303 quarters 26
 pounds, or over 75 cwt or about 4,000kg
 which seems impossibly large for the time and
 size of the church] for the some [sum] of
 v^l.vj^s.viii^d. [i.e. £5 6s. 8d., £5.33 or about
 £2,750 in today's money]
 Itm other churchgoodes sold by the seyd
 John Brende and Rycharde Battell to Robt
 etyngm of Yppyswiche [Ipswich] for the
 some of ix^l. viij^d. [i.e. £9 0s. 8d., £9.03 or
 about £5,000 in today's money]
 Total (Smm) xiiij^l.viij^s.iiij^d. [i.e. £14 7s. 4d.,
 £14.37 or about £7,500 in today's money]

H. d. v. m. n. d.
 Leyd owt by the seyd
 churcwardens wt the assent
 of the hole parsh for repacon
 done in the churche in the
 iij^{de}, iiij^{de}, iiiij and v yeere [the 2nd, 3rd, 4th
 and 5th years] of the reygne of [the] seyd
 sovraygne lorde that nowe ys [i.e. Edward VI
 is the present king] that ys to saye in Glasynge
 of the wyndowes of the churche whiche were
 decayed wt (with) the great tempest of hayle,
 paving and ledynge wt other necessary
 repacons [in glazing the windows of the
 church which were decayed with the great
 tempest of hail, paving and leading with other
 necessary repairs].
 And See

Leyd owt [aid out i.e. spent] by the seyd
 churcwardens wt the assent of the hole
 parsh [whole parish] for repacon don in and
 [here as a mediaeval ampersand] upon
 [repairs done in and upon] the seyd churche
 in the iij^{de}, iiij^{de}, iiiij and v yeere [the 2nd, 3rd, 4th
 and 5th years] of the reygne of [the] seyd
 sovraygne lorde that nowe ys [i.e. Edward VI
 is the present king] that ys to saye in Glasynge
 of the wyndowes of the churche whiche were
 decayed wt (with) the great tempest of hayle,
 paving and ledynge wt other necessary
 repacons [in glazing the windows of the
 church which were decayed with the great
 tempest of hail, paving and leading with other
 necessary repairs].

Remaining clear [i.e. once payments have
 been deducted] in the hande of the seyd
 churcwardens iiij^l.viij^s.iiij^d. [i.e. £4 7s. 4d.,
 £4.37, or about £2,250 in today's money]