

WELFORD-ON-AVON · THE PARISH IN THE DIOCESAN RECORDS,
1185 TO 1792

The Hockadays of Welford

There was never a Hockaday family in the village. There was a Gloucestershire antiquary who copied out its church records, and a small band of Welford people who drove to Gloucester in the 1970s to copy him.

Drawn from the Welford and Weston Local History Society archive (folder references in grey). A companion to the essays on St Peter's, Boat Cottage and religion in Welford. No document in the archive mentions anyone called Hockaday living in Welford or Weston; every reference is to the Hockaday Abstracts. The abstracts survive in the archive only as typed and handwritten copies, so the pictures here are the Society's drawings, photographs and maps of the places the abstracts describe.

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FIG. 2.

St Peter's, Welford, about 1850. Drawing by J. M. Woodward, reproduced as Fig. 2 in H. M. Woodward's 1907 paper on the church. Nearly every entry in the Welford abstracts is about who was entitled to this building and its income. 26/10

A name, not a family

Search the Society's archive for "Hockaday" and you find about thirty mentions in a dozen files. None of them is a person who lived in Welford. There is no Hockaday in the censuses, the directories, the parish council minutes or the house histories. What there is, again and again, is a set of typed sheets headed *HOCKADAY ABSTRACTS*. (*Gloucester Public Library*), each stamped "The Property of the Welford and Weston Local History Society". 03/27, 03/28

The Society's own minutes explain the name only briefly. When Miss D. Ray gave a talk on the material in November 1976, the secretary wrote that the documents "were abstracts made from documents, many of which had never previously been used, by a member of the Gloucester Society named Hockaday." The secretary's annual report put it a little differently: "abstracts drawn from copies made by one Hockaday, a member of the Gloucester Society, who realized the potential of these collections of unpublished old documents." 37/01-04 Some of the longhand sheets the Society photocopied carry the initials "F.S.H.", and the

1713 rectory papers have an "F. S. H." stamp on every sheet. 19/31, 03/38

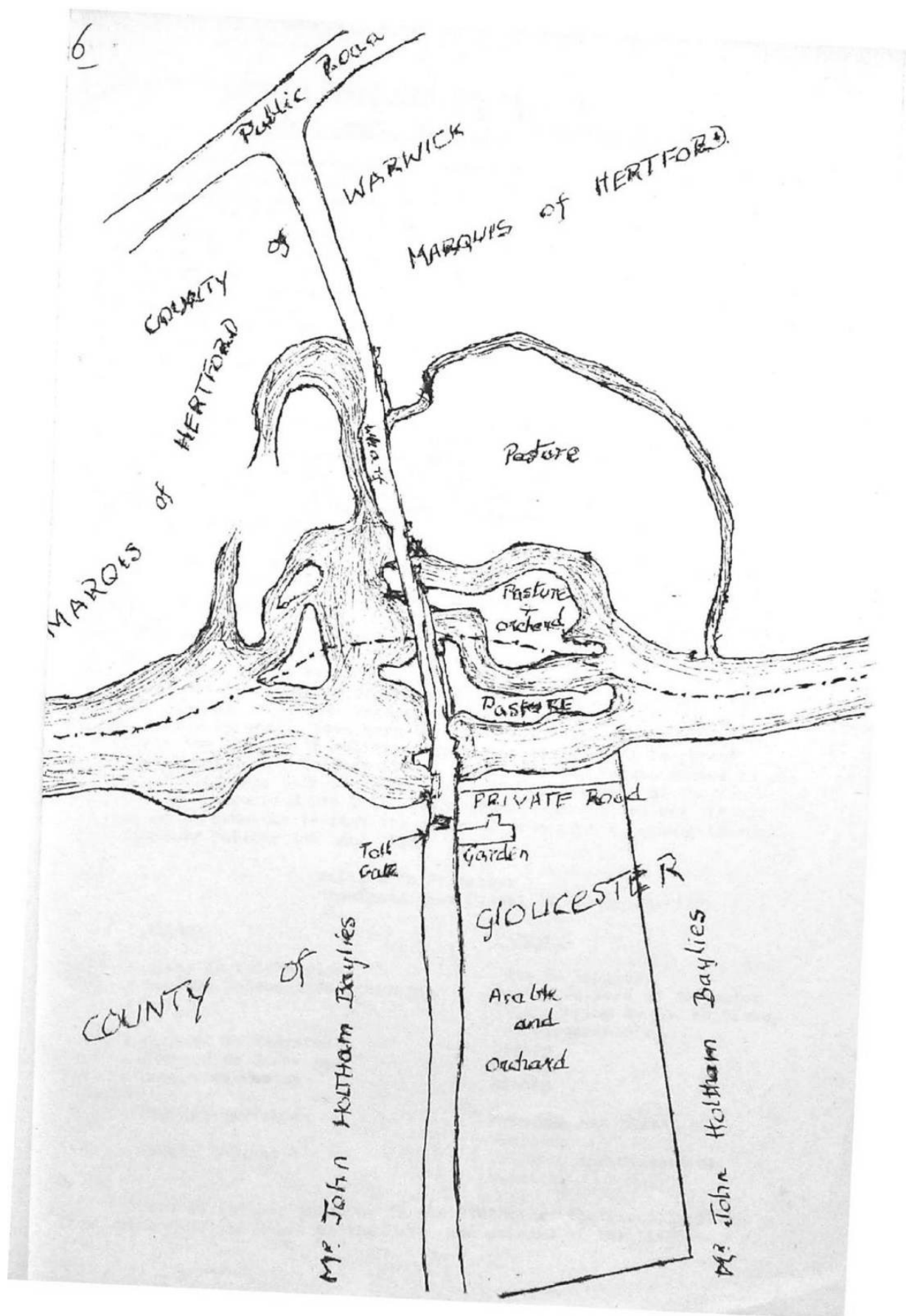
From outside the archive: the compiler was F. S. Hockaday, a Gloucestershire antiquary of the early twentieth century, who worked through the bishops' registers, consistory court books, wills and other diocesan records of Gloucester and arranged what he found parish by parish. The archive itself never gives his full name or dates, and nothing in it says he had any personal link with Welford. His interest was the whole diocese. Welford was one small drawer in a very large cabinet.

So the "Hockadays" of Welford are a body of paper, not a family. That paper, though, is the nearest thing the village has to a medieval and early modern chronicle. Through it you can follow who presented Welford's rectors for five centuries, how the manor was surveyed and sold when the monasteries fell, what Tudor husbandmen left to their children, how Parliament fought over the parish tithes in 1647, and how one rector's debts left the rectory in ruins. The rest of this essay follows the abstracts through those stories, and then follows the people who copied them.

Why Gloucester?

A reader who knows Welford as a Warwickshire village, a few miles from Stratford, might wonder why its records sit in Gloucester. The answer is that for most of its history Welford was not in Warwickshire. The parish lay in Gloucestershire, and in church matters it belonged first to the diocese of Worcester and, after 1541, to the new diocese of Gloucester. The abstracts follow that change exactly: the thirteenth-century entries quote the registers of Bishop Giffard of Worcester, and from the 1540s onward the references are to "Glouc. dioc." and "G.D.R.", the Gloucester Diocesan Records. 03/28, 20/02

The river was the county line. Mary Deverson's paper on Binton Bridges, written for the Society in the late 1970s, includes a hand-drawn map with "County of Warwick" on the north bank of the Avon and "County of Gloucester" on the south, with the toll gate on the Gloucestershire side. 13/32 Welford did not move into Warwickshire until the twentieth century; the archive gives the transfer as 1931 in some places and about 1933 in others. Anyone looking for Welford's church history before then had to go to Gloucester, and that is where the Society went.



Where Gloucestershire began. Mary Deverson's sketch map of Binton Bridges marks the Avon as the boundary between the counties of Warwick and Gloucester, with Welford on the

Gloucestershire side. It is the reason Welford's church records went to Gloucester. 13/32, Paper I

The copyists of Green Hedges

The Welford and Weston Local History Society was a small, mostly elderly group, and in the mid-1970s its research was done by what the minutes call Miss Ray's study group. In June 1976 the committee discussed "her work on the Hockaday Abstracts by Miss Ray". In September it decided that members ought to hear about the research being done by small groups, and planned a November talk on "the Hockaday Abstracts & the work done on them." By the next meeting the title had become "Old Welford from Historical Records", and on 12 November 1976 Miss Ray gave it. 37/01-04

The secretary's minute of that evening is worth quoting, because it is the only description of the work as it was being done:

The earliest reference of interest locally occurs in 1249. Miss Ray had painstakingly followed through from this date information relating to Welford & Weston until more recent times. The application required to decipher, even, the writing of some of these copies is considerable & we are grateful to Miss Ray for the time she must have taken in preparing her talk.

General Meeting, 12 November 1976 · 37/01-04

At the annual general meeting on 18 March 1977 Miss Ray reported that the group's work "on the Warwick Sessions & on Hockaday ... is now completed. Cataloguing of matter is being undertaken." A Society catalogue of about 1979 lists the result: Envelope 3, "'Hockaday Abstracts' from Diocesan Records (Weston envelope inside Welford envelope)", and in a separate box, section H, "Hockaday transcripts with talk notes." 37/01-04, 19/21

We know how the copying was done from a letter Miss Ray wrote from her house, Green Hedges, to Gilda Gray on 1 October 1986. By then she felt she was doing little research. Parking in Stratford had become too difficult for long sessions at the Shakespeare Record Library, and "there's no one left, alas! to drive together to Gloucester to work there as Mr Holman & Mr Kirk & I, and even Alec in the earlier days, used to do." Her own share, she wrote, underlining the words, had been "to copy out all *the* Hockaday Abstracts, which *I* finally finished in several journeys to G. on my own!" 34/50

The picture is a modest one: three or four retired villagers sharing a car down the Vale of Evesham to Gloucester library, reading a dead antiquary's handwriting and copying it out by hand, then typing it up at home. The typed sheets show it. The Welford set carries a typist's note admitting that a phrase was "missed out when typing", and the abstracts are full of question marks where a word could not be read: "collator?", "Stan (way?) Pott (?)", "hanaper (?)". 03/27, 03/28 Mr Holman died in January 1979, and by 1986 Miss Ray thought the material had never been properly written up. One later member, filling a notebook with the abstracts and the churchwardens' accounts in the 1980s, added red-ink questions in the margins: "How? and WHY?" 20/02

A church that belonged to Paris

The abstracts open with a surprise. Welford's parish church did not belong to a local lord or to an English abbey. It belonged to the priory of Deerhurst, near Tewkesbury, and Deerhurst was a cell of the abbey of St Denis outside Paris. The Society's notebook copies the extract from Edward the Confessor's will declaring that if the minster at Deerhurst "shall ever be alienated from the abbey of St. Denis near Paris to which he has granted it, it shall be the property of Westminster Abbey". A margin note warns that grants of Deerhurst to Westminster do not include the priory's lands, "e.g. Welford". 20/02

The earliest entry naming a Welford man comes from the Gloucestershire Pipe Rolls of 1185: Robert of Welford paid two marks to have his suit against the Prior of Deerhurst heard in the county court. From the 1270s the bishops' registers take over. In 1279 the Bishop of Worcester admitted Philip of Staunton to "the church of Welneford" on the presentation of the Prior of Deerhurst. 20/02

Even the earlier entry of 1273 shows a parson who did as he pleased. A letter from Bishop Giffard to the Dean of Pershore says that William Rufus, rector of Welford, had been given a prebend attached to the church of Inkberrow and had entered that church "without being presented or instituted". The bishop's answer was not to throw him out but to tell the dean to induct him into its custody. 03/28

Ten years later the queen intervened. In 1283 the bishop wrote to the Prior of Deerhurst asking him to present Nicholas of Cleve, "clerk to the Queen", to Welford, even though the prior had already

presented a clerk of his own. The bishop had received letters from "Lady Alianora the Queen" (Eleanor of Castile) and from the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and was, the abstract says, "desirous not to incur indignation of the King." A commission of canons of Wells was sent to install Nicholas if they found the church vacant. 20/02

The French connection mattered most in wartime. When England was at war with France, the Crown took the lands of foreign religious houses into its own hands, and the right to choose Welford's rector went with them. The abstracts record royal presentations in 1321, when two different men, William the Lou[?] and Master John of Gloucester, were presented "by reason of the late voidance of the Priory of Deerhurst"; in 1359, when William of Scaunceby was presented "on account of war with France"; and in 1364. 20/02, 03/28

The year 1364 shows how tangled this could get. When William of Scaunceby died, the prior's proctor presented Robert Jones of Bokeford, who was admitted on 21 June. On 23 September the King presented John Power to the same church, because the temporalities "of the Abbey of St. Dennis in France, now void," were in his hand. The abstracts do not say which man actually served. They show two masters, an English king and a French abbey, each claiming the right to put a priest into a small Gloucestershire parish within three months of each other.



FIG. 4.— NORTH DOOR : NOW WALLED UP.

The Norman north door of St Peter's, "now walled up". Fig. 4 in Woodward's 1907 paper. The doorway was already old when the bishops of Worcester were sorting out Welford's rectors in the 1270s. 26/10

Tewkesbury, Westbury and the King

By the fifteenth century the abstracts show the patronage in English hands. The record for 1467 simply says "Manor of Welneford, see Deerhurst", and by the time of the Dissolution the patronage lay with Tewkesbury Abbey. A later grant explains that Tewkesbury, "the true and undoubted (so long as the said Monastery was in existence) Patrons of the parish church of Welford", had made an "ancient convention or composition" to share the right with the college of Westbury-on-Trym, near Bristol. 03/28, 20/02

When Tewkesbury was dissolved, the college moved fast. On 12 November 1541 its dean, John Barlow, granted the right to name Welford's next rector to three men: George Owen, a doctor of medicine; William Pownsett (typed "Townsett" in one copy), gentleman; and Robert Johnson, notary. The grant had a proviso: if a named clerk, Richard Ewer or Owen, died before the next vacancy, the nomination made to him was void. Patronage had become a piece of property, sold on before the incumbent was even dead. 03/28, 20/02

The college itself did not last long. In January 1547 Sir Ralph Sadler, Henry VIII's agent in the dissolutions, put in a request to buy the rectory of Welford, then valued at £29 15s 10d a year. Two years later the Crown sold a half-acre of meadow in Town Meadow, in the tenure of Thomas Bromley, which had been given to keep a lamp burning in the church. Its rent was 20d, and at 23 years' purchase it fetched 38s 4d. 20/02

The manor followed. In the sixth year of Edward VI (1552) the Crown's surveyors listed every tenant of the lands "lately pertaining to the Monastery of Tewkesbury", and in 1553 the King sold the whole manor of Welford to William Willington of Barcheston, in Warwickshire. The particulars for the sale survive in the abstracts in more detail than any other document. The rents of the customary tenants came to £17 5s 2½d a year. The site of the manor house, with a close of an acre and 72 strips of arable in Salbroke field, was leased out. The woods, the surveyors reported, were only enough to repair the houses and keep up the hedges, so they were "not here valued". 20/02

The mills were valued. The manor had "two water mills there & houses of same mills for the Miller's house ... with several fishings in the water of the Avon", let in 1539 to John Greenhill, his wife

Eleanor and their son Abraham for 81 years. They paid £4 6s 8d for the mills, 13s 4d for the fishing and 7s 6d for the land. 20/02



Welf

ord Mill and the weir, early twentieth century. An undated photograph in the Society's river collection. The 1553 sale particulars list "two water mills" with fishings on the Avon, let to the Greenhill family; this is the site's successor. 52/30

Adding everything up, the clerks reached a yearly value of £33 7s 9¼d, which at 25 years' purchase gave a price of £834 14s 3d. One of the auditors added a memorandum that has the flat voice of a man filling in a form for a place he had never seen: "This is an entire manor of it selfe and parcell of none other, and how nere the same doth lye to any of the King's majestie's houses of access, forrests, parkes or chases I know not." 20/02

Fields, strips and best beasts

For a local historian, the most useful part of the 1552 survey is its list of copyholders. Each tenant "claims to hold by copy" of the manor court a house and land, and the survey names the fields where that land lay. Put together, they give a picture of Welford's open fields 250 years before the enclosure award of 1802. 03/28

The arable fields were Middle Barrow, West Field, Sholebreade, Stabroke (also written Stabreade and Slabroke), Down Field and Corne Field. The meadows were West Meadow, Downe Meadow,

Poole Meade and Nether and Over Poole Dole. The 1553 particulars add Bright-hal Barrow, Bidston meadow and six acres across the Avon "called Hilborough otherwise Grafton meadow". 03/28, 20/02

The holdings were small and scattered in the way of every open-field village. George Holt held a messuage and a virgate and a half: seven acres in Middle Barrow, nine in West Field, six in Sholebreade, a quarter-acre close round his house, three acres of meadow, and pasture for eight animals and 45 sheep. He held it for life, paid a fine of 11s 3d to come in and a rent of 16s a year. Walter Smyth had much less: a house, half an acre of meadow and twelve "sillions", or single strips, spread across five fields, with pasture for two cows and seven sheep. 03/28

Every copyhold carried a heriot, the lord's right to the tenant's best animal at his death. John Ward's entry spells it out: he gave 13s 4d as a fine "and 'heriot' (sometimes 'best beast') when it should happen 1 cow." Other holdings had names that outlived their first tenants. Walter Bromley held a virgate "called Cocks", and Thomas Hewes held "Roberts" and "Starks", along with a cottage "late in the tenure of Katherine Samon, Widow." The notebook copy adds the margin notes "Compton House" beside John Welles and "Blackman's House" beside John Cox. Someone in the Society was already trying to match Tudor tenants to houses still standing. 03/28, 20/02

The free tenants paid almost nothing. Stephen Harrison held two and a half virgates "by what service is not known", William Millward one virgate, Richard Cowper three-quarters of an acre for 13½d. The last name is "John Grewell Esq.", who "holds certain lands free" for no rent at all. The Society's note takes him to be John Greville of Milcote, the great landowner of Weston, of whom more below, although Sir John Greville had died in 1546, six years before the survey. 03/28

46/01



CHURCH VIEW AND LYCHGATE COTTAGES
BOAT LANE

Church View and Lychgate Cottages, Boat Lane. A mounted postcard by Sears & Smith from the Society's photograph collection. Timber-framed houses like these were the homes of the copyholders and will-makers in the abstracts. 46/01

"My soule to God"

Hockaday also abstracted wills proved in the Gloucester courts, and four from the 1540s let the people of the 1552 survey speak for themselves. They were all husbandmen, and their bequests were mostly animals and grain.

Hary Roberdes made his will on 10 February 1545. He left 4d to the high altar, a strike of wheat and one of barley to the church, and 8d to the bells. His son Thomas was to have an ox and a young mare, and each of his four daughters "a cow and a heyfer at there marige, also half a quarter of whet". His wife Isbell and son William were to farm together, but "if Isbell my wife do mary then she shall take the thyrd part off my goodes as corn, catell and household stuff." 20/02

Thomas Welles, who made his will on 9 August 1546, split his farm down the middle. His son John was to have two oxen, two cows, four sheep "and half my cart and half my plough", and his widow Elizabeth the other half, on condition that each paid the lord half the rent. His witnesses were "Thomas Myll, John Heynes and John

Holtham husbandmen of Welford", all names from the survey.
20/02

William Robarte, in October 1546, left 12d to "maintain the pave stones" of the church and scattered animals among the village. Esabell Archarde got a load of wheat, a load of barley and his dun mare, and Thomas Henryson his "red browne musseled bullock". Every unmarried godchild was to have a shock of barley. Wyllyam Shakell, a few weeks later, left his cow to Henry Aspell for the "labours & paynes that he hath byn at with me". Beside that name the 1980s commentator wrote: "Remember Aspinall one of earliest Masters of King Edward's School." 20/02

These are still Catholic wills. Roberdes leaves money to the high altar, and Shakell commends his soul "to God and our blessed Lady". Within three years of the last of them the chantry certificate had been made and the lamp land sold. A few lines of copied probate catch the old religious world in its last years in Welford.

Rectors in a changing church

The abstracts trace Welford's rectors through every swing of the Reformation, though often in the dry language of bonds and first fruits. In June 1554, under Queen Mary, George Owen used the right he had bought in 1541 and nominated John Williams, LL.B., to Sir Ralph Sadler, now lord of the dissolved college. The church was vacant "by the lawful & canonical deprivation of Richard Quine, married clerk." Married priests were being removed all over England that year, and Welford's rector was one of them. 20/02

Williams died within five years. On 11 November 1559, in the first year of Elizabeth, John Wood was instituted to Welford. The ceremony took place in London, because the sees of both Gloucester and Canterbury were then empty. Wood stayed more than twenty years. In 1563 his churchwardens, John Winter and one Mill, with the parishioners John Weles and Thomas Bromley, reported to the bishop "that all is well". In 1571 Wood signed the Elizabethan articles, and in 1576 he sat the bishop's examination in Latin and Scripture. 20/02

By then the Grevilles of Milcote had the patronage. In 1581 Philip Jones was instituted on the presentation of "Lewis Grevell esq.", and in 1592 Edward Vernon on that of Edward Grevell. Lewis, or Lodowick, Greville appears elsewhere in the abstracts in a less pious light. A copy of a 1564 deed in the State Papers is endorsed

“this is a copy of the false deed which Grivel & Porter caused a suborned persone to acknowledge”. In 1571 there was a Chancery bill against Porter and Grevill for trying to defraud William Clopton of the manor of Aston. And on 18 March 1576 the Privy Council wrote to Sir Thomas Lucy and two others “desiring them to hear complaints of the tenants of Welford against Lodowick Greville.” 20/02 The Society’s paper on Weston church adds the end of the story: Lodowick “was pressed to death in 1589 for murder”, and was remembered in the village as “the Wicked Loddy”, with a “Loddy’s Pool” named after him. 13/32

Ordinary parishioners appear in the abstracts in the same years, mostly in probate. In 1577 Thomas George, yeoman, left his son John “100 marcs due from Mr Lodwick Grevell”, a debt that may not have been easy to collect, and told him to pay the rector, John Woode, £10 a year for pasture. Inventories put a price on lives: Richard Haris left goods worth £34 4s 4d in 1580, and Anthony Fardell £14 in 1645. In 1637 Richard Wakefield, a Welford miller of 24, swore that he intended to marry Elinor Trueman of Stanley Pontlarge, 27, “with consent of their parents”. 20/02

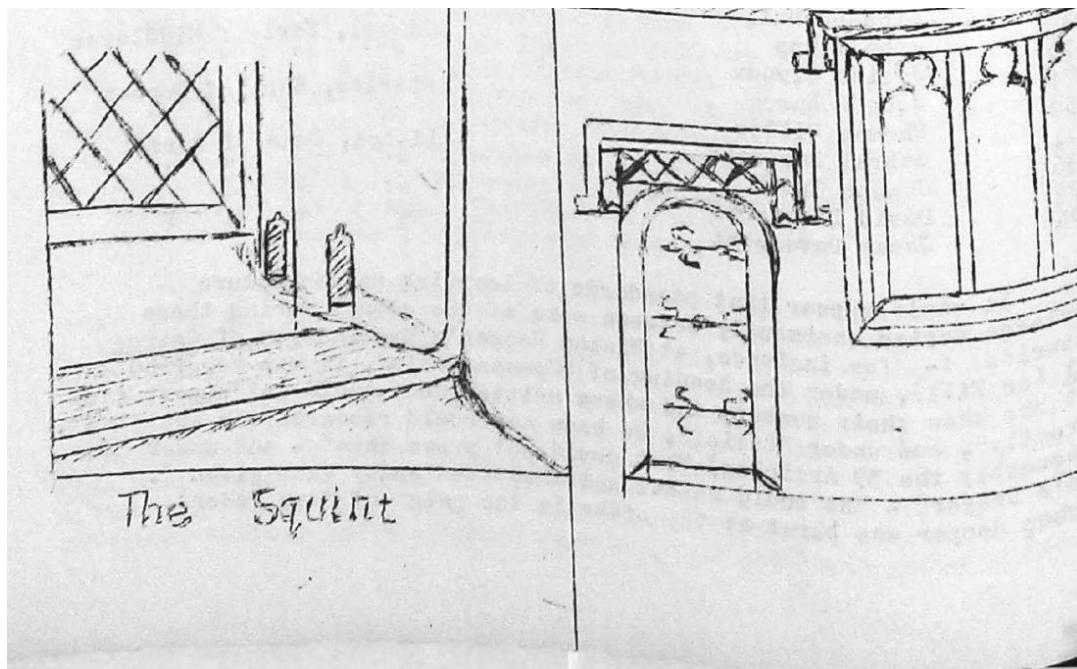
Weston and the Grevilles

The Society copied a separate run of abstracts for Weston-on-Avon, the small neighbouring parish. Weston’s church belonged to Evesham Abbey’s sphere rather than Deerhurst’s, and the entries begin in 1249 with Pope Innocent IV confirming an agreement between the Bishop of Worcester and the Abbot of Evesham over the churches of the Vale. That is the “earliest reference of interest locally” of Miss Ray’s talk. 03/27

Weston’s medieval parsons come through as people who often wanted to be somewhere else. In 1303 Richard of Stanway, rector of “Waston upon Avon”, was licensed to be absent for five years’ study. His successor, Richard of Tadyngton, was summoned in 1304 for arrears of rent, had the fruits of his church sequestered and got them back by swearing he was “harmless touching the writ”. In 1399 the Pope ordered the church given to Richard Godynton, an Augustinian canon of St Frideswide’s in Oxford and a papal chaplain, who exchanged it within a year for a living in Somerset. His successor, Robert Holbroke, complained to the archbishop in 1401 that the Abbot of Alcester had carried off the tithes of hay and sheaves from Milcote. 03/27

Milcote, a manor inside Weston parish, was the seat of the Grevilles, and from 1401 the family dominated both villages. The abstracts give long extracts from their wills. Sir John Grevell, who died in 1480, left £50 “for the building” of Weston church and eight marks to his vicar, Sir Thomas Rutter, “for the tithes I forgot”. Sir Thomas Cokesey in 1498 left Henry VII his best collar, worth £200 and more, so that the King would be “more favourably inclined” to let him endow a perpetual chaplain at Weston. Sir Edward Grevile in 1529 asked to be buried in St Anne’s Chapel in Weston church. 03/27 A separate abstract gives the will of Sir John Grevill of Milcote, dated 7 March 1546/7. He called himself the “very true and just patrone” of Weston church, “purchased of King Henry VIII”, and named as one of his supervisors “Mr. Willington”, probably the William Willington who would buy Welford manor six years later. 03/33

Tom Holman and Miss Ray turned this material into a paper on All Saints, Weston, which lists “The Hockaday Abstracts” among its sources. It shows that the church was built almost entirely around 1480 out of the Greville bequest. The paper describes the Greville brasses of 1546 and 1559 in the chancel, the window of little ships that may refer to Joyce Cokesey, and the squint that once let worshippers in the lost St Anne’s Chapel see the high altar. 13/32



“The Squint”, All Saints, Weston-on-Avon. Drawing from T. Holman and D. Ray’s paper on Weston church, which drew on the Hockaday Abstracts. The openings gave a view of the high altar from St Anne’s Chapel, where Sir Edward Grevile asked to be buried in 1529. 13/32, Paper II

The flood of 1588

One entry in the Society's notebook stands apart from the rest. Under the heading "Welford July 1588 — Spanish Armada. Flood & storm from register covers", someone copied a note written on the covers of the parish register. "Old mother H[?]" and a companion, haymaking in Hillborough meadow, were carried by "a great wave ... on a haycock across Avon" up to the wall of the rectory. Three men on Stratford bridge found they could go neither forward nor back. The water rose a yard an hour from eight until four, "that it came into the parsonage of Welford church and filled the fishpool and took away the sign at the Bear; it carried away Edward Butler's cart ... and it came into the vicarage of Weston and made Adam Sanders thence remove." 20/02

The Bear was the riverside inn later called the Boat, now Boat Cottage. The flood note is not strictly a Hockaday abstract, since it comes from the parish register and not the diocesan records. But it was copied into the same notebook as the abstracts, and the people who did the copying plainly treated it as part of the same quarry.



Boat Cottage, Boat Lane. Fig. 67 of the 1992 Conservation Area Study. As the Bear inn, it lost its sign to the flood of July 1588. 15/08

Dr Bowen and Mr Trapp

In 1631 Jenkin Bowen, M.A., was instituted to Welford on the presentation of Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex. The 1980s notebook-keeper could not resist adding a contemporary's sneer at Cranfield's purchased earldom: "none but a poore spirited nobilitie would have endured his perching on that high tree of honour."

20/02

Bowen was a royalist, and when Parliament won the Civil War it took his living. Among the photocopies the Society brought home are seven pages in Hockaday's own hand, initialled F.S.H., copying the proceedings of Parliament's Committee for Plundered Ministers from manuscripts in the British Museum. They tell the story almost as a drama. 03/38

On 27 June 1646 John Trapp, the Puritan scholar who was already vicar of Weston and master of Stratford grammar school, complained that the rectory of Welford had been "sequestred from Dr Bowen delinquent" and given to him, but that Bowen and "one William Miller & others imployed by the said Dr" were still going round demanding the tithes. The Committee sent a serjeant to fetch Bowen and Miller to London. 03/38

By August 1647 the quarrel had spread into the parish. Six parishioners were holding back their tithes from Trapp: Anne Griffin, widow, Edward Pratt, John Wells, John Alexander, and Robert and Edward Martin. They agreed to pay whatever two local justices, Captain Ailworth and Mr Lee, thought fair, within three weeks, or be brought to London by the Serjeant at Arms of the House of Commons. Bowen, summoned for forbidding the parish to pay, said he had since told them to pay Trapp, and was let off. The Committee ordered the sheriff, the deputy lieutenants and the justices to suppress "all tumults disturbances & oppositions" against Trapp. 03/38

Anne Griffin had the last word. In September she petitioned that she had been forced to pay Trapp his tithes, while Trapp himself refused to pay his share of the parliamentary taxes laid on the hamlet of Bickmarsh. Her case was sent to the Warwickshire committee, and the order to take her into custody was cancelled. 03/38 A year later Trapp was the second signature on the Gloucestershire ministers' declaration in favour of the Solemn League and Covenant. 20/02

The story ends with a reversal. In August 1662, after the Restoration, "Jenkin Bowen, Dr of Divinity & rector of Welford" signed his declaration under the Act of Uniformity, back in the living he had lost. His curate, Richard Jackson, signed the same week. A red note on the modern copy adds "for J. Trapp at Weston". Trapp kept Weston until 1669, and the Society's Weston paper records that he lies beneath its altar. 03/38, 13/32

Mr Talbot's debts

The longest single story in the Welford abstracts is about money. Robert Talbot, M.A., of Clare College, Cambridge, was instituted in 1692. In the following years the abstracts list a succession of curates licensed "to serve the cure of Welford": John Oldaker in 1699, Thomas Baker in 1703, Thomas Taylor in 1707. That is usually a sign of a rector who did not live in his parish. 20/02

In 1709 the reason came out. A clergyman named Charles Humphreys had won a judgment of £700, plus 50s damages, against Talbot in the King's Bench under William III. Talbot had no goods except his living. So, on 24 June 1709, the first day of Trinity term, the Queen's writ reached the Bishop of Gloucester, Edward Fowler, ordering him to raise the unpaid balance of £419 10s 11d from Talbot's "ecclesiastical goods". The bishop wrote on it that the writ "was brought to me on Friday morning ... and is the first writt of the terme that came to my hands". The notebook-keeper read the bishop as adding, rather plaintively, that it was "the first in this forme I have ever received". 03/30, 20/02

The bishop sequestered the tithes and glebe, first to James Smallpiece of Cheltenham and then to Richard Humphreys of London. They had to pay the curate, the taxes and the repairs first, and only then send the rest to Gloucester towards the debt. A writ came every Trinity term. The balance fell from £419 to £376, then £375, then £296 in June 1712. That December the chancellor of the diocese sequestered the income of Welford, "vacant by the resignation of Robert Talbott", into the hands of the churchwardens. 03/30

The new rector, Edward Astley, from Sutton-under-Brailes, found the place in ruins. A commission of four clergy viewed it in April 1713. The chancel needed only 30s of plastering. But the parsonage house "consisted of fiteene bayes ten whereof are so very ruinous that the same will not admitt of repairing". Of the two barns, the larger was "intirely dilapidated & neither stick or stone standing".

The commissioners thought a full rebuilding would give a house too big "for a living of that value". They advised repairing five bays and the smaller barn and adding three new bays and a new barn of three bays, for £200 and upwards. Two of them added that, "from the best informacion from the Inhabitants of Welford", the damage had happened "during the Incumbency of Mr Talbot". In November 1715 the bishop ordered the scheme carried out, and released Astley from any further claim once it was done. 19/31, 03/31

Not everyone accepted this account. The widow of a twentieth-century rector, writing to the Society, denied that she had ever said Talbot left for money reasons. She preferred a link with the Talbot Earls of Shrewsbury and with Queen Anne's Bounty. The modern note on the sequestration papers is blunt: they "show Talbott's living under sequestration for debt every year from 1709 until he resigned in 1712." 03/39, 03/30



he Old Rectory, Welford, seen through its gateway. A later twentieth-century photograph. The rectory was largely rebuilt by Edward Astley after the 1713 survey found ten of its fifteen bays beyond repair. 46/05

The Georgian rectors

After the Talbot drama the abstracts become thin again. Astley stayed for more than fifty years. On his death in 1765 the living was

sequestered to the curate, J. Martin, and the churchwardens Joseph Hancock and William Bennett. John Thomas, LL.B., followed. In 1771 the Duke of Dorset presented Joseph Greene, already vicar of Weston and master of Stratford grammar school, the man who found and copied Shakespeare's will. Greene also held Miserden, and the copyist noted with two exclamation marks that the two parishes were said to be "not more than 27 miles apart !!", adding their values: Welford £180, Miserden £160. 20/02, 13/32

Greene died in 1790 and Thomas Hunt succeeded him. The last Welford entry is dated 1792: a petition to the bishop "from some of his majesty's protestant dissenting subjects" to licence a room in Welford, with the name Matthew Mills. It is the first sign of the village's Methodist chapel, and a fitting place for a run of Church of England records to stop. 20/02



FIG. 1.

Inside St Peter's about 1850. J. M. Woodward's drawing, Fig. 1 in the 1907 paper, shows the box pews, the lofty pulpit and the painted royal arms. The church still looked much as the Georgian rectors of the abstracts left it. 26/10

What the abstracts became

The Society's copies were used, if not always in the way Miss Ray hoped. They fed the Weston church paper and the vicar lists that recur across the archive. They also run through the notebook whose second half works through the churchwardens' accounts of 1617 onwards, with the Hockaday entries at the front to explain the gaps. 13/32, 07/01–11, 20/02

They also brought enquiries. In February 1982 John C. Holtham of Tredington wrote to the Society's secretary, Mrs Farnell. He had traced Holtoms in Welford before 1550, often linked with a family called Tomes, and had used "the Hocaday [sic] Abstracts at Glous Lib." to do it. The Holtams are everywhere in the abstracts: Richard Holtam leased the manor site in 1539, John Holtham witnessed Thomas Welles's will in 1546, George Holttam's testament was approved in 1559, John Houltam married Rose Davis in 1641, and a John Holtham was churchwarden in 1712. 14/01, 03/28, 20/02 A set of notes on the 1838 tithe apportionment points the other way, telling a reader "For earlier claims to land look up Hockaday 3588 — Gloucester Library." 08/15

The Society never produced a narrative history of medieval Welford. Miss Ray's 1986 letter mentions a member's relative who was interested in the period but "too busy" to write a summary, and notes that Mr Holman had begun one before he died. What survives instead is the raw material: typed abstracts with their misreadings left in, a notebook in three hands and three inks, and photocopies of F. S. Hockaday's own clear handwriting. Read together, they make one of the fullest records the village has.

DATE	ENTRY IN THE ABSTRACTS	REF.
1554	Richard Quine, “married clerk”, deprived; John Williams instituted	20/02
1576	Privy Council orders a hearing of tenants’ complaints against Lodowick Greville	20/02
1588	Armada-year flood; the Bear loses its sign	20/02
1646–47	Rectory sequestered from Dr Bowen to John Trapp; tithe dispute	03/38
1662	Bowen, restored, signs under the Act of Uniformity	03/38
1709–12	Robert Talbot’s living sequestered for a £700 debt; he resigns	03/30
1713–15	Rectory found ruinous; Astley ordered to rebuild for £200	19/31, 03/31
1771	Joseph Greene presented; also holds Miserden	20/02
1792	Dissenters petition to licence a room in Welford	20/02
1976–77	Miss Ray’s talk on the abstracts; copying completed	37/01–04
1986	Miss Ray’s letter describing the trips to Gloucester	34/50

Gaps and conflicting sources

WHAT THE ARCHIVE DOES NOT HAVE

- There is no evidence of a Hockaday family in Welford or Weston. The only Hockaday in the archive is the compiler of the abstracts.
- The archive holds the abstracts only as the Society’s typed copies, a notebook and photocopies. There are no scans of the Gloucester originals, and Envelope 3 and box section H from the c.1979 catalogue (19/21) are not among the scanned files, so Miss Ray’s talk notes are missing.
- The archive never gives Hockaday’s full name or dates. The identification as F. S. Hockaday rests on the “F.S.H.” initials and stamp (03/38, 19/31); the description of him as an early twentieth-century Gloucestershire antiquary comes from outside the archive.

WHERE THE COPIES DISAGREE

- **Typing slips in 03/28:** the Deerhurst entry dated “1232” must be later, since Bishop Giffard held Worcester from 1268; Walter le Stokes is dated “1303”, before the death of the rector he succeeded in 1304; and the 1539 lease is dated “31 Henry VII” for Henry VIII.
- **Names:** the 1541 grantee is “William Townsett” in 03/28 and “William Pownsett” in 20/02; the clerk in the proviso is “Rich. Owen” in one and “Richard Ewer” in the other; the 1712 churchwarden is “John Stotham [?]” in 03/30 and “John Holtham” in 20/02.
- **Talbot’s debt:** 03/30 gives a 1711 balance of £375 12s 11d with a yield of £78 17s, while 20/02 has a January 1710 writ for £335 13s 11d yielding £38 17s. 20/02 also has a separate May 1709 writ for £40 against “PETER? Talbot” in favour of Edward

Goodall, which 03/30 omits. The sequestration to Smallpiece is dated 31 May 1709, before the 24 June writ it recites.

- **First fruits:** the rectory is assessed at £29 15s 10d in most entries but at £25 19s 10d for John Williams in 1554 and £26 16s 3d for William Izard in 1668.
- **Richard Quine:** Mrs Gray's talk (18/23) has him deprived under Edward VI; the abstract dates the vacancy to Mary's reign in 1554 and gives the reason as his marriage.
- **Royal presentations:** the rector's widow (03/39) says the Crown's last presentation was in 1308, but the abstracts record royal presentations in 1321, 1359 and 1364.
- **John Grevell, 1552:** the survey lists "John Grewell Esq." as a free tenant, but the Weston brass dates Sir John Greville's death to 1546 and his heir was Edward; the entry may be out of date or refer to another John.
- **Talbot's departure:** Mrs Gray (19/45) says Talbot made "considerable alterations" to the rectory with Queen Anne's Bounty; the 1713 commission found it ruinous and blamed his incumbency.
- **The talk date:** the September 1976 minute plans the talk for 19 November; the general meeting minute records it on 12 November.

SOURCES

- 03/27 Hockaday Abstracts, Weston-on-Avon (typed) · 03/28 Hockaday Abstracts, Welford 1273–1552 (typed)
- 20/02 Society notebook: Hockaday Abstracts for Welford to 1792, 1588 flood note, churchwardens' accounts with 1980s commentary
- 03/30 Sequestration of Welford rectory, 1709–12 · 03/31 and 19/31 Rectory dilapidations, 1713–15 (F.S.H. transcript)
- 03/33 Will of Sir John Grevill, 1546/7 · 03/38 Committee for Plundered Ministers, 1646–47, and diocesan notes 1662–79 (F.S.H. transcript)
- 03/39 Letter from a rector's widow on Talbot and the two manors
- 13/32 Society papers: Binton Bridges (M. Deverson); All Saints Church, Weston (T. Holman and D. Ray)
- 14/01 Letter from John C. Holtham, 1982 · 34/50 Letter from Miss Ray to Mrs Gray, 1986
- 19/21 Society catalogue, c.1979 · 37/01–04 Society minute book, 1976–81 · 08/15 Notes on the 1838 tithe apportionment
- Pictures: 26/10 (Woodward, 1907), 46/01 and 46/05 (photographs), 52/30 (mill), 15/08 (1992 Conservation Area Study), 03/26 (1949 map)