

Sandridge Parish Accounts.

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As a rule there is very little matter of general interest to be gathered from Overseers' and Churchwardens' Accounts in obscure country Parishes. The accounts of the Parish of Sandridge are no exception to this rule.

Such accounts are frequently very much neglected because of their comparatively late date—the latter half of the 17th century and the 18th century are not very attractive periods in Parochial History—mostly drab and dreary. The Account Books themselves very often are in a dilapidated condition; since, when they ceased to be in actual use, they were frequently deposited where dust, damp, and vermin had ready access! In some instances they seem to have been used by children and young persons when making their early efforts in the art of penmanship, for all sorts of odd scrawls are found in unused pages, on fly leaves, and in the margins.

The Sandridge Books which form the subject of these notes cover about a century of Parochial History; namely, the period from 1686 to 1780. When Mr. Page entrusted them to my care they were in a very dilapidated condition, for the most part a collection of loose leaves, which had, from time to time, been

the details of such homely lives cannot of necessity be of very great interest; to one living actually within the bounds of an old parish, and interested in its history, they form a most valuable aid in tracing out the connection of the people and linking them with the places in the parish.

ASSESSMENT LISTS are some indication of the prosperity or otherwise of the Parish. If the calls on the Parish were few, the rates were low.

There are 151 Assessment Lists in all, covering the period of 93 years. The custom of the Parish seems to have been to make two rates in a year, in the spring and in the autumn. Up to the year 1694 no rate exceeded 9d. in the pound. Out of the first 15 rates recorded, eight were at 9d. and six at 6d. In 1694 a shilling rate was reached. A 1s. 3d. rate was made in 1709; but that unit was not again used till 1746, when it became very frequent. In 1758 the rate reached 1s. 6d., while in 1762 and 1763 no fewer than three 2s. rates were levied. Then there succeeds a drop till 1770, when the 2s. rate appears again; and apparently this time it had come to stay, for between 1770 and 1778, out of 17 rates, ten were at 2s., and one as high as 3s., while none fell below 1s. 6d. in the pound.

Nearly all of these rates were "for the Poor," and for "setting the Poor on Work," though special rates were made for the Churchwardens for the four years from 1727 to 1730; for the Constables during the same period; and for the Stonewardens in 1728 only. The custom of the Parish was to pay the Churchwardens' Accounts, the Constables' and the Stonewardens' Accounts out of the Poores' Rate, as occasion arose.

OVERSEERS' ACCOUNTS.—There are 121 sets of these, though all of them are not perfect, owing to missing leaves, and some, of course, are fuller than others in the details which they give. They are quite of the ordinary character. Some of the poor received regularly a fixed amount per month. Rent was paid for some. I am not quite sure whether this can be taken to be house rent paid on behalf of the poor person, or was an amount paid to the householder to whom the poor person was farmed. In the later accounts it is evident that the poor were largely farmed out. Then there were sums given

“in time of need,” sums paid for clothing, for “doctering,” for washing and mending, for putting the parish children out as apprentices, and for charges in connection with death and burial. The phraseology in which some of the entries are made strikes us quaintly and even humourously, but the facts are commonplace enough.

Thus, in 1687, the Overseers paid charges for “ye Widow Lyances boye when he went to the King”—presumably to be touched for the “evil.”

In 1688, 8s. was paid “for a cure for Hines Child.”

In 1692, £1 12s went to “the Boon-setter for Setting the Widow Gray’s Legg and fetching.”

In 1710, Paid “Howard famely at three times being Sick of the Small pox, 14s. 00d.”

For “a Vomit for Mary Turnay,” 1s. 6d. was paid in 1708; while Sarah Nash received 2s. for “cleaning Gladman’s Child,” in 1710, and “Hamerton” cost the Parish 1s. 6d. for Shaving; and “for bleeding and purgeing Sarah Lyame” 2s. 6d. was paid; and shortly after, John Hamerton was “trimed” again, at a cost of 1s. 4d. to the parish.

I do not know at what period the custom of burial in “wooden coffing” became general in this part of the country; but it must have been established here by long custom, since we find that those buried at the cost of the Parish were so interred. In 1691 “a coffing for George Gray” cost 7s., and this was apparently the recognised charge for some years. By 1710 the charge had risen to 8s.

Under dates of 1700 and 1703 respectively occur the following entries:—

Paid for a Shroud for Elizabeth Wish and Coffing and the Kings Duty and the Parson and Clarke 00. 19. 06.

Paid for Coffin and Shroud and Beere and the Queens Duty for Martha Wishes funerall 01. 03. 06.

In connection with the payment of the Constables’ Accounts, the term Headborough is frequently used up to the end of the 17th century. Thus: in 1695,

Pd. ye Constables Accompts with ye Headborough 15*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.*

CHURCHWARDENS’ ACCOUNTS. As a rule, I suppose we expect the Churchwardens’ Accounts to be a trifle more interesting, because from them we gather notices of little alterations made in the Parish Church. Though here at Sandridge the Churchwardens’ Accounts were almost

invariably paid out of the Poores' Rates there are only 20 statements of these accounts set out, and these lie between the years 1720 and 1758. The bulk of the money paid through the Churchwardens seems to have been expended, not on matters connected with the Church and its Fabric, but on hurrying undesirable tramps through the parish for fear they should fall ill, or die within its bounds, and so become chargeable to the rates. Other moneys were spent in payment for killing foxes, pole cats, hedgehogs, and such like. In the first quarter of the 18th century, "Turkey Slaves," or folk who professed to have been such, were so constantly turning up in the Parish, and getting relief from the Churchwardens, that at length the Parish got sick and tired of pole cats and Turkey Slaves, and solemnly abolished the custom of relieving them, on the 14th April, 1732.

"It is resolved and agreed that no Churchwarden or other Parish Officers shall after ye date hereof give or allow to any person or persons whatever, any of ye parish money for any foxes polecats or hedgehogs, or any such like Vermin as hath heretofore been done nor for any persons pretending to be Turkey Slaves or for any wandering persons Claiming relief without due authority and also that no Churchwardens or other parish officers shall claim or demand any extravagant fees or payment for executing any parish Orders Notwithstanding any former Custom to the contrary: and also that there shall be allowed two Shills and Sixpence a piece to each Churchwarden at each Visitation and no more, and ten Shillings a year to the Minister and no more."

The expenses connected with Beating the Bounds of the Parish seem to have been paid out of these accounts. The bounds were beaten in 1720 at a cost of £5 14s. 10d.; in 1727, when "for going the Bounds of the Par-*ish* for Beere att Tomalings and Weathereds" £2 12s. 6d., was paid; and £6 9s. 11d. was the amount of "Chalkley's Bill for Beere for going the Bounds of the Pshe."

The only other reference I have noticed of Beating the Bounds occurs in a note as follows:—

"That the inhabitants of the Parish went the Bounds on ye 21st and 22nd of April, 1778, and that the sum of Six Pounds was allowed by the Rt. Honble. Earl Spencer for Defraying the expenses."

As regards repair of the fabric there is not much to note. Such as the following are pretty frequent:—

"Ralph King for Led and Soder and Glace and Worke, £5 14s. 8d. (in 1720)."

In 1723 there is a charge "for mending the bell clapper" of 1s. 6d.

The sum of 1s. 0d. was paid in 1733 for keeping up the "Barge End of the Church."

A charge for mending the churchyard fence and hedge frequently occurs.

In 1700, according to an entry in an Overseer's Account of that date, £3 1s. 6d. was paid for taking down part of the Church Steple; and in 1706, "a Dyall for the Churchyard" cost 12s.

The Tower of the Church fell, I believe, in 1688, and the taking down of the part of the Steeple may have been a portion of the ruined tower. Salmon, writing in 1728, calls shame upon the Parishioners for having done nothing in the 40 years towards the repair of their Church Tower.

Three bell ropes were purchased in 1723, and again in 1729.

The only references to public events in these accounts are half a crown paid to Robert Nickols "for Droming Proclaiming y^e King" (George II.), and "for Ringing the King's Crownation Day," 3s. was paid; and for "the new Prayers" at the same period, 1s. was paid. In 1733, Jordain was paid 1s. 2d. for "Ringing for y^e Prince of Oringe Marriadge."

For "Mending Seats in the Church, and Nails for the New Ledges for the Church-Warden's Seat," 14s. 4d. was paid in 1729.

In 1727, £11 12s. 11d. was expended upon the making of hangings and a cushion for the pulpit of Scarlet Cloth. The details and price are all set out.* The cushion was

*They are as follows—

| | <i>li.</i> | <i>s.</i> | <i>d.</i> |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 4 yards $\frac{1}{2}$ of fine Scar. Clo. att 26s. | 05 | 17 | 00 |
| 5 yards of Scar ^t . Sup ^e . f. Rattinall 4s. | 01 | 00 | 00 |
| 15 yards Nat. Scarlett Orriss att 15d. | 00 | 18 | 09 |
| and for 6 yards Bro. Do. at 2s. 2d. | 00 | 13 | 00 |
| and for 4 Scarlett Tassells at 4s. 6d. | 00 | 18 | 00 |
| Nine pound of fine Down feathers for the Cushone at 18d. per pound | 00 | 13 | 06 |
| for two yards of ticking for the Cusheon | 00 | 05 | 00 |
| for Rings | 00 | 00 | 10 |
| for Silk Thread and Tape | 00 | 01 | 06 |
| for Tenber Hookes | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| for Making the Pulpit Cloth and Cusheon | 01 | 05 | 00 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 11 | 12 | 11 |

stuffed with 9lbs. of "fine Down feathers," at 1s. 6d. a lb.

There are the usual charges for "Bread and Wine for the Sacrament" two or three times in the year. In 1731, the Churchwarden had paid 4s. 1d; and he notes "when I came to pay the had brok one bottle a going."

The Surplice was washed about twice a year.

The usual charge was 5s., but in 1744 they got it done for 1s. 6d.

In 1733 Six Basses cost 4s. 2d., and in the following year 12 cushions for the Communion Table cost £6 12s. 0d.

A "book of holinleys" costing £1 0s. 6d. was bought in 1723, and its binding in 1758 cost 6s. 0d.

Six Common Prayer Books, and carriage cost £2 6s. 8d. in 1729; and in 1731, £5 14s. 0d. was paid "for a Bible and Common prair book."

In 1758, 1s. 8d. was paid "for a Cord to let Corps in Ground," and for a "Heirse cloth and Hood for a master of arts," £3 17s. 0d. was paid.

This last entry is quite out of the common.

References are frequently made to sums received for, or rather paid out, on account of Briefs, and there is a list of Briefs kept for a short period, namely, for the years 1731, 1732, and 1733. Of the most noteworthy places helped by Sandridge in this way may be mentioned:—St. Michael's, Southampton; Kidderminster; Evesham, and Ealing Churches; no sum exceeded 5s., and the last only received 2s.

I may point out that the lists of Briefs collected in various parishes of the country do not differ very much. The fullest I have met with is at Weston in county York. A comparison of several various Brief lists reveals here and there little points of interest, but since I began comparing several lists, from as widely separated parishes as Westow and Bp. Hatfield; All Saints', Hertford, and St. Lawrence, Reading, I believe the whole subject has been taken in hand, and a full list completed of the Briefs issued by Authority. There are 28 only given by name here in the Sandridge list.

There are only 29 Vestry Orders, ranging from 1722-3 to 1778. For the most part, they refer to apprenticing lads chargeable to the parish, farming out the aged and

infirm, and such-like. There are no very interesting points to note.

The meeting place of the Vestry in 1725 was "the Bell."

There are the usual solemn resolves of the Vestry to put an end to drinking at the charge of the parish, by parishioners in vestry assembled, and by the labourers on the highways.

The following note concerning the employment of John Wright and John Dudley may be mentioned.

"For thrashing Oats they are to have 1d. a Bushel, for "Pease" and Barley 1½d. a bushel."

The last vestry order, dated May 21st, 1778, notes that William Lawrance and John Lawford agreed to build the new Parish House for £128.

There is one memorandum which deserves notice.

Among the accounts for 1711 the following note occurs:—

"It Has Been Generally Computed that ye Parish of Saundridge In ye County of Hertford produces from The Manor Tythes and Rents of ye Several farmhouses and Lands yearly £2800 Besides the Vicar's Dues and Itt is Computed That They do amount yearly to about £90 a year for wich The Vicar is not charged either to ye Land Tax or Poor's Rates, and It has allways Been Esteemed that ye Dutchess of Marlborough Has Reced as above half ye annual Income of ye Parish.

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--|-----|----|----|
| The Tythes yearly | 350 | 0 | 0 |
| Fines, Herriots and Quit Rent valued at | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 70 Acres of Wood Land at 7s. p Acre | 24 | 10 | 0 |
| Farms Houses and Land Lett Exclusive of Tythes | 975 | 10 | 0 |

£1,450 00 0

The Rents of ye Several other farmes Land and houses in ye Parish have allways Been Esteemed at yearly £1350 00. 0.

Total £2800 00. 0d."

The Vicars of Sandridge during this period were: Edmund Wood to 1714, William Crowley to 1721, Samuel Grice to 1744, William Langford to 1793. These Vicars very rarely sign any of the Parish Accounts, or Vestry Orders, nor do their names appear in any of the Assessment Lists. Some of these Vicars seem to have been non-resident, and I think that Mr. Grice must have been living here, and doing duty in the time of William Crowley for some years before he became Vicar. In 1731 and onwards, in the Churchwardens' Accounts, Madam Grice is frequently mentioned as having been paid various sums for washing and

mending the Surplice, the Communion Cloth, and cleaning the Church Plate. I have not been able to ascertain what light the Church Registers throw upon the point. Mr. Preedy was in charge here in 1751; but I am not sure whether he was Vicar or only curate in charge.

The Place Names in the Parish are worth noting. The early Assessment Lists give the Place Farm, Bridalls, the Street, Robotham's Land, Ward's Land, Wine Mill Close, the Mill, Hamines, Burry, Fairfoulds, Parke Mead, Grunwyns (the name as a surname appears in the early lists up to 1699; after that the land is called by that name), Brick Kilns, Greensis. In the early part of the 18th century the Place Names are dropped out of the lists, but they come in again in 1736, when some new names occur. Wheeler's, Poors land, the Wick, No Man's Land, Porter's Lands, Eaton's Field, Jennins Field, St. Peter's Lands, Chalk Dell Farm, Water End, Hill End, Tower Hill, Halsey's Land, Beech Hide, Cheapside, Cappes, Hookes, Nashes, Woodcock Hill, Evan's, Neal's Land, Marston's Land, Town Farm, Bush Fields, Samwell's, White House Farm, Coleman Green, the Malting. Of Publichouses, the oldest noted is the "Rose in Crown." The "Green Man" Alehouse and the "Queen's Head" Alehouse are mentioned in 1750.

An Edward Smith, of Sandridge, left £2 a year to the Poor of Sandridge, as well as bequests to other places. There are 22 lists of persons receiving this dole between 1687 and 1708. Then, for a long period, no lists are made out. In 1732, a distribution was made of three years' money, and for 1748 and 1749 a list is also given.

I have not ventured to deal with the names of persons which most frequently occur in these lists. The Thrales seem to have taken an active part in the affairs of the Parish all through the period.

As I said at the beginning, there is nothing of general interest in these Accounts; but this Society having been instrumental in preserving them, it seemed desirable to lay before its Members a general statement of what is contained in them.