

STOCK REGISTERS 1563 TO 1804

This is an edited version of a paper delivered by the Rev E P Gibson to the Royal Archaeological Institute in 1888 entitled 'Parish Registers of Stock Harvard cum Ramsden Bellhouse and later printed. The registers of Ramsden Bellhouse have been omitted. Charles Phillips Editor

THE PARISH REGISTERS OF STOCK HARVARD

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The old Register Book of Stock embraces a period of 241 years (viz., from 1563 to 1804), and would have lasted up to the present day, had the same style of entries been continued as they were at the beginning, but the later Rectors seemed in a hurry to fill up the old book and start fresh ones for baptisms and burials, as they were compelled to do in the case of marriages.

For the sake of clearness and simplicity, I intend to make my remarks in three distinct divisions—(1) from 1563 to the Great Rebellion; (2) from the Great Rebellion to the Restoration; and (3) from the Restoration to the end of the Book.

The first thing to be noticed is the list of rectors, 12 in number, covering a period of 311 years, and giving an average of about $26\frac{1}{2}$ years to each.

The only ones known to fame are Charles Hood, the famous school-master and grammarian, instituted rector 1660 (Dec. 10) and buried 1666 (March 5)—for whose life see *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, vol. iv.; and William Cawthorne Unwin, the friend of the poet Cowper, who wrote the well-known piece, entitled, "Tithing time at Stock," most probably during one of his visits at Stock Rectory between 1769 and 1786.

Mr. Newton, who is styled "Curate," seems to have had sole charge of the Parish from 1563 to 1622, when he resigned his curacy. The rectors of the parish during that time were Oliver Clayton 1556, Will. Pindar 1580, Will. Symonds 1587, who were probably also rectors of Springfield, as was the case with Dr. Pindar, who was instituted in 1619 (or according to some authorities 1639).

I regret to have to state that the first few pages, containing, doubtless, the title of the book, &c., have been cut out, so that it begins abruptly as follows:—

1563, 5 Eliz.

(1st Entry.) Chrystened Charles Hedgeman, sonne to John Hedgeman, ye xviith of April.

Each right hand page being signed at the bottom, "Pr me Johannem Newton, Curat."

There are 34 entries on this page (from Ap., 1563, to July, 1584) viz., 15 christenings, 6 marriages, and 13 burials. The christenings, marriages, and burials being entered promiscuously till the end of 1580 (p. 10), when they are arranged under their several headings.

There appears to be nothing very striking or remarkable in these

entries till we come to Dr. Pindar's time, when the custom of making notes seems to have come into fashion, but we learn that the number of births, marriages, and deaths is very much the same as at the present day shewing conclusively that the population of the place has been about the same for at least 300 years.

I would here remark that there is no notice whatever of the burial of Mr. Twedye in the Register Book, although there is a brass tablet erected to his memory. This brass consists of the coat of Arms at the top, then a full length effigy, and at the bottom the following inscription :—

The corpse of Richard Twedye Esquire lieth buried here in tombe
Bewrapte in claye and so reserved untill the joyefull dome
Whoe in his lyffe hath servēd well against the Ingleshe foes
In forren lands and eke at home, his countrie well yt knowes
The prince he served in courte full long a pensioner fitt in p̄sonage
In his county, a Justice eke, a man full grave and sage
Foure almshousses here hath he built for four poore knightes to dwell
And endowed with stipends large, enough to kepe them well
In ffiftye eyghte yeares his course he ran and ended ye 28 of Januarye
1574.

In the year 1634 there were 24 entries of baptisms signed per me, Richardum Cole M^r Pindar Rectoris coadjutorem sine curatum, among which occurs the following rather curious one :—

“John ye sonne of John Fisher (as was sayed) & of Margaret a stranger brought to bed at ye Cocke some four days before was baptized ye same time being ye 15th of March pdet: on which day in ye night ye said Margaret as they called her, & her sayed sonne were together with one whom they called her sister secretly conveyed away—ye host & hostesse not knowing hereof—Meretricium certe hoc fuit facinus”—

Also we notice the following, which shows how careful the Clergy were in those days not to trench in any way on the rights or duties of their neighbours :—

“Clemens ye daughter of John Harris of Westhanningfield & of Clemens his wife (uppon expresse leave given by their owne minister or curate in regard of his absence and other occasions) was baptized May y^e 3rd 1635.”

And one which seems to denote great care in noting bastardy cases—

“William ye sonne of Jane Sharp singlewoman and of William Collin singleman (as she confessed and hee likewise) bapt^d May 27.”

On p. 35, A.D. 1641, we notice the use of the expression “Sabaoth day,” *e.g.*

“Thomas the sonne of Richard Witham & Anne his wife was baptized on the Sabaoth day being November 7, 1641.”

This being about the time of the Great Rebellion, I shall now, according to the plan I have laid down, direct attention to the marriages and burials up to the same date.

As I said just now, the baptisms, marriages, and burials were entered together till 1581, when they were placed under their separate headings. On page 43 we have the following entry, which will serve for a sample :—

“Zachary Graunte & Dorothee Dithe was married ye xxiii of October.”