The Lay Rectors of Ruislip

by Eileen M. Bowlt

The Domesday Book 1086 mentions 17 priests in the county of Middlesex, and it is generally assumed that each priest represents a church. Ruislip had a priest. We do not know who founded the church or how long before 1086, but since the Domesday survey shows that Wlward Wit, a thane of King Edward owned Ruislip immediately prior to the Conquest, it could have been him. The present building mainly dates from the 13th century with 15th century chancel and aisles. Some chevron marked stones in the north wall survive from an earlier building, and suggest that Wlward's Norman successor, Ernulf de Hesdin, either altered a Saxon church or provided a new one. St Martin was a popular saint in France. The first reference to the dedication of Ruislip's church is in an Abbey of Bec's Customali c.1245.

Patrons

Whoever provided the church would almost certainly have chosen a priest to care for the spiritual needs of the inhabitants. By the 12th century, it was usual for the local bishop to check a candidate's learning, virtue and age, (at least 25 years) and induct him into the Spiritualities (pastoral rights over his flock) and Temporalities (civil law rights over the material possessions of the benefice). The priest was allocated a portion of the village arable to farm. It was known as glebe, a word derived from the Latin, globus, meaning a clod of earth. Parishioners made offerings at mass, and some voluntarily paid him tithes (tenths) of their produce, but until tithes were imposed universally by the 3rd Lateran Council in 1179 the priest remained to some extent economically dependent upon his patron, the person who had chosen him.

Rectors and Vicars

Rector is a Latin word meaning ruler. The rector of a parish was responsible for the cure of souls and for the upkeep of the chancel, the part of the church where the sanctuary and high altar were situated. The rector had the right to farm the glebe and collect the tithes, which were paid in

kind (hence tithe barns for their storage) until they began to be commuted to money payments in the 16th century – a gradual process. When a rector was not a priest, but an institution, or a clergyman unable to perform his parish duties for some other reason, having another parish elsewhere for example, a deputy was appointed known as a vicar. The tithes were split into Great tithes of corn, hay and possibly wood that went to the rector and Little tithes of lambs, milk, eggs and lesser produce for the vicar, who also took over the glebe land.

When Ernulf de Hesdin gave the manor of Ruislip to the Abbey of Bec *c*.1087, the church was almost certainly included in the gift and successive Abbots of Bec-Hellouin (as it was officially known, having being founded by Herlwyn) became the rectors of Ruislip and they or their proxy presented suitable candidates to serve as vicars. Bishops of London showed their authority by confirming the Abbot's rights from time to time. For example, Richard (de Ely), Bishop of London, granted the church of Russelep to the monks of Bec during the reign of Richard Iii. Later Bishops of London gave similar certificates, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Winchelsey, in 1303 stated the right of the Abbot of Bec-Herlewin in the diocese of Rouen, as to the receipt of an annual pension of 4 marks (a mark equalled 13s 4d) from the church of Dunton Waylett in Essex, and to the retention of the Church of Russelepiii.

The Abbot grouped 24 of Bec's English manors into the bailiwick of Ogbourne in the 13th century. It was administered by the prior of Ruislip and the proctor of Ogbourne who acting on behalf of the Abbot had the presentation of all the churches in the bailiwickiv. The Prior and his companion monk at the priory within the motte-bailey site at Manor Farm had their own chapel there and probably had no connection with the running of St Martin's, other than the prior's involvement with the presentation of the vicar when need arose.

The recorded list^v of Ruislip vicars does not begin until 1327 when William de Berminton resigned and John Lekford took over.

St George's, Windsor

The English lands of the Abbey of Bec suffered during the long years of intermittent warfare with France in the late 13th and 14th century. Ruislip was taken into the king's hands on at least three occasions and the Abbot of Bec's grip on the English priories weakened. In 1404, the extensive property of the bailiwick of Ogbourne was granted to the last prior, William de St Vaast (who died soon afterwards) and to John of Lancaster, who became Duke of Bedford in 1414vi. The Duke of Bedford was a younger son of Henry IV and younger brother of Henry V. He became a Knight of the Garter in 1414 and he gave the Spiritualities of the churches within the bailiwick to the Warden and Canons of St George's, on 3 December 1421.

There was a condition that the Warden and Scholars should pray for him before and after his deathvii. A few days later on the 14 December, the Duke gave power of Attorney to John Greville, Esquire, his receiver general, and others, to deliver seisin (possession) to the Free Chapel of St George, Windsor, in the priory of Okburne with churches etc belonging thereto'viii. It was a goodly haul, comprising the churches of St George and St Andrew at Ogbourne; a Prebend at Sarum which had been endowed with the rectories of Wantage, Hungerford, Shalbourne and Combe in Wiltshire and Berkshire; the rectories of Ruislip in Middlesex and Glynde in Sussex; portions of tithes scattered through 48 different parishes, including Southall which was part of Hayes parishix.



St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle The Dean and Canons have been rectors of Ruislip since 1421.

The easiest way for the Warden or Dean and Canons of St George's to deal with their duties of maintaining the chancels and privilege of collecting the Great tithes within the rectories belonging to them, was to lease them out to wealthy people like merchants and landowners, which is precisely what they did. Leases produced a regular income and relieved them of the maintenance work. In Ruislip, the Dean and Canons retained the Advowson or right of presentation and are still patrons of the living.

St Martin's chancel was rebuilt in the 15th century, most probably after the Dean and Canons took over and possibly at the expense of John Walaxton, the first named lay-rector of Ruislip.

Tithe Barns

Probably one of the barns at the priory had always been designated for the storage of tithes, but around 1300, the Great Barn, one of the glories of Ruislip, was built, perhaps to re-establish the status and standing of the of the monks, which must have been shaken by the first royal confiscation of their property in 1294. We have not so far found the building accounts (if they still exist), but dendrochronogical tests on the main posts show that the timber comes from fast growing oak trees that were felled between 1296 and 1328x. Such timber was used while green before it became too hard to work. The carpentry techniques employed - joints like the traite de *Jupiter* in the purlins, show superior workmanship that must have been executed by carpenters trained to the standard required in royal buildings. The Great Barn is referred to as the 'tithing barn' in Ministers' Accounts 1434-36xi.

Only a church institution or college could have afforded such a superior farm building. Similar barns in the vicinity are later than the Ruislip Great Barn, but also in the care of wealthy institutions. Harmondsworth (1424-27) was built by Winchester College and Headstone Manor, where their Great Barn dates from 1504-06, was in the possession of the Archbishop of Canterbury from the early 14th century.

The Great Barn passed with the manor of Ruislip to other owners and eventually to King's College at Cambridge, so the Dean and Canons of Windsor built or acquired a barn in Bury Street on the north side of the Vicarage on the corner of Ladygate Lane, presumably in the 15th century. It is mentioned as the 'Rectory barn' and its position is given in the 1565 Terrier of Ruislipxii.

Walaxton, Waleston 1476-1532

Who were the Walestons and where did they spring from? They appear in Buckinghamshire records in the mid-15th centuryxiii and the first suggestion that they have a house or land in Ruislip occurs in the earliest surviving lease of the rectory, dated the 1 June 1476xiv. It lets the rectory of Ryslyp in the county of Middlesex, except the presentation and collation (institution of the vicar), to John Walaxton of Rislyp (note two different spellings in the same document) for twenty years at an annual rental of eighteen pounds. There were two more 20 year leases of the rectory, one to John Walaxton esquire in 1497xv and to John Waleston esquire in 1517xvi. There is insufficient information available to positively identify the relationship between these three men, but they could be father, son and grandson.

Perhaps the first John ran into financial difficulties some five years on, or he might have been spending money on rebuilding the chancel, because the Dean and Canons granted the rectory to John Redynge and John Chamber, both husbandmen with Ruislip names, for ten years from 1482, paying £16 for the first two years, the next seven £17 and the last year £18. This lease was superseded in 1487, by another to John Ridyng for ten years at £18 per annum rental, pretty much filling in the period of John Walaxton's original leasexvii.

John Waleston died in 1532. His widow, Agnes, made a willxviii. On the 1 April 1532, in which she refers to 'my parsonage' (i.e. the rectory) wanting her executors to take the profits until the term of years of the lease expired. However, Ralph Hawtrey was granted the rectory for 20 years from 1532, presumably having taken over his father-in-law's leasexix. From 1532 the rectory lease passed from one Hawtrey to another and the Walestons have no direct connection with it.

The first John Walleston probably rebuilt the chancel and later members of the family took an interest in the furnishings and altars of the church. Agnes Walleston wished to be buried 'nigh unto my late husband' and left money for the costs of her burial and for her 'Month's Mind' (the Catholic custom of celebrating a requiem mass one month after a death). 10 marks apiece were to buy ornaments for the altar of Our Lady and the altar of St Nicholas. This is the first record of such an altar. King's College, Cambridge, is dedicated to

St Mary and St Nicholas and might be the reason for the dedication, but there are four medieval St Nicholas churches in the City of London, so he might have simply been a popular saint. Agnes gave her best cow for the maintenance of Our Lady's light and her second best cow for the Holy Rood light. The rood – a crucifix with Our Lady and St John on either side, would have hung at the junction of the chancel and nave, above the rood screen. The church fabric was not forgotten and £10 was left for 'reparations' and ornaments 'such as shall be thought expedient and needful'. Agnes did not die until 1545.

Images and lights were mainly swept away from churches in the reign of Edward VI (1547-53) and Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, ordered all altars in the London diocese to be removed by Whit week 1550. Ruislip's vicarage was worth only £8 in 1547 and there were said to be no charities, obits or lights in the parishxx. It all sounds a little bleak. Ralph Hawtrey (1494-1574), as lay rector probably supervised these changes. The wall paintings were painted over and apparently forgotten, only being rediscovered in 1851 when workmen accidentally uncovered coloured patches, which were recognised as important by the quick-witted schoolmaster and organist, Mr Phillips, who happened to be present and recommended their preservation.

So far as the tithes were concerned, the Walestons only collected corn and hay and not wood to which they were perhaps entitled, and in compensation the vicar was permitted to take 20 loads of wood each year out of the lord's wood. Why, one wonders, if it was the rector who was not receiving his due and the vicar had never had a right to wood tithes. A dispute arose in 1577xxi, when John Hawtrey, then a fairly new rectory lessee, probably claimed, or attempted to claim the wood tithes. Mr Wold of Weybridge, who had leased the wood and underwood (the hornbeam coppice) in Ruislip Park from King's College, objected and five elderly residents made depositions on his behalf. Thomas Lyon, a carpenter, aged 74, said "for all his time he hath seen the farmer of the parsonage there receive and take tithe corn and hay there and no other tithes and almost 60 years ago he dwelt with one Mr Wallaston, farmer of the same parsonage about 2 years and at that time he saw Mr Wallaston receive the same corn and hay and no other tithes and if any other had been due he thinks he would have had it but all other tithes (except wood) the vicars there have accustomably received the same".

It is not clear what happened but as the question of wood tithes is not mentioned again for more than 200 years, perhaps the vicar got his fuel.

There are no Walleston memorials now visible in St Martin's.

The Hawtreys 1532-1725

The rectory leases passed from Ralph Hawtrey who died in 1574, to his son John who died in 1593. John's nephew, Ralph Hawtrey, succeeded and died in 1638. He was followed by his son John, who died in 1658. The final Hawtrey lay rector was his son Ralph who died in 1725 at the age of 99, having outlived his male descendants. The only hiccup was in 1596, when the lease went to William Gerrarde of Harrow-on-the-Hill, during the lives of Raphe Hawtrey, John Adherne, his brother-in-law and John Carter his nephew^{xxii}.



Ralph Hawtrey 1626-1725 was Lay Rector of Ruislip from 1658 until his death

The Hawtreys paid their rent for the lease half yearly sometimes at Lady Day and Michaelmas (25 March and 29 September) and sometimes on the other Quarter Days, Midsummer and Christmas (24 June and 25 December). The annual rent remained £18 throughout the 16th century, despite that covering a period of inflation. By 1625 it was £20 plus £4 towards the buying of two fat boars for the hospitality of the Dean and Canons at Christmasxxiii. The receipt in November 1633 runs 'Received the day and year above written of Mr Ralph Hawtree [sic] Esq. the sum of ten pounds due to the Dean and Canons of Windsor the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

last past for half years rent of the Rectorie of Rislip in the countie of Middlesex. Received also the four pounds more being then due as aforesaid for two boars and a capon'xxiv. Whenever the lease was renewed, there was a fine (sum of money) to be paid. It was £200 in 1633, to be paid in two instalments.

Puritans, Parliament and Tithes

The early 17th century saw a steep rise in the number of Puritans in the House of Commons and in the church. They looked for preaching from ministers, more lay involvement in the running of the church and the abolition of Church Courts which dealt with such things as offences against morality and non-payment of tithes. Parliament wanted to control both Church and State and thought that these matters should come before the Common Law Courts. Parliament would also have liked to abolish tithes and have the clergy maintained by voluntary contributions from their flocks. However, Parliament contained too many landowners who owned tithes for this idea to be popular and it was realised that insufficient maintenance would be provided on a voluntary basis to support a learned clergy. 'The minister might go barefoot and his family a-begging for what the common people would contribute to his subsistence'. (Blyth 1652)

Another problem was that many tithes had been commuted to money payments, and had been devalued because of inflation. Commutation had probably happened in Ruislip because in 1639 John Hawtrey, then lay-rector, obtained a licence from the Dean and Canons, to pull down the Rectory Barn on the corner of Ladygate Lane on condition that the close of land on which it stood (about one acre) should be added to the vicarage^{xxy}. The site remained the vicarage field until houses were built there in the late 20th century.

There was a quick turnover of vicars here in the 1640s, when the official list (from Hennessey's Novum Repertorium 1898) names four men, but fails to give exact dates of their incumbencies. In June 1646 John Hawtrey received an order 'that there bee added to the vicarage of Ruislippe in this countie supplied by Nathaniell Gyles Minister there the sume of four and twenty Pounds per annum out of the impropriate Rectorie of Ruislipp aforesaid and the tythes and profits, now in lease to John Hawtrey Esq and sequestered as belonging to the Dean and Canons of Windsor....' xxvi.

Mr Gyles seems to have been put into the living by Parliament. Walker's 'Sufferings of the Clergy' says that Mr Gyles was a byword for litigiousness and that 'he used to preach, it is said, with a pistol about him, which most commonly hung at his neck'. In 1650 his successor, Robert Cresswell, gave a receipt for the rent of the rectory 'now in the hands of the state and for the use of the state'xxvii. After the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, sequestered property was returned to Windsor. Ralph Hawtrey was lay-rector and renewals and payment of the fine came roughly every four years.

The value of the rectory is only mentioned occasionally and was said to be worth £18 in 1547, which meant very little profit. However, it had risen to £300 in 1650. A valuation of Ralph Hawtrey's estate dated the 20 October 1718, shows that he paid £25 per annum for the lease and a fine of £130 every four years. The tithes brought in £250 a year, giving him a yearly profit of £192 $10s^{xxviii}$. The last lease signed by Ralph Hawtrey was dated November 1724, when he was said to be sick.

His estate descended to his granddaughter, Jane and her husband, James Rogers.

The Rogers

James Rogers renewed the lease as executor of Ralph Hawtrey in 1724 and in 1736, some months after the death of his wife, Jane. He himself died in July 1738 and the Eastcote estate including the manor and rectory leases were left to his 16-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, who never married and lived until 1803. The Dean and Canons of Windsor seem to have had no qualms about leaving the lease in her hands, although there could be no official renewal in her name until she came of age in 1744.

Elizabeth Rogers paid £60 a year rent and a substantial fine on renewal every seven years. There was a little trouble over vicarial tithes in the later 18th century. Weldon Champneys, vicar 1778-94, refused to accept money payments, presumably because the sums were very small and demanded tithes in kind. James Ewer, who owned and lived in Mill House in Bury Street noted in his diary 'Whereas a despute has arisen betwene the Present Minister and the Parish concerning prive tithes and so he wold take in kind I having but one cow mesuard the firs pil and there was nine pints. Joseph Vincon witness'xxix. Did he deliver a small amount of milk to the vicar daily and one wonders how

many cows there were in the parish? When his successor, Mr Gibbons, arrived in 1794, he demanded wood tithes and the Dean and Canons sought legal opinion. The vicar's case was 'that the roads in this parish and neighbourhood were so bad before the turnpike roads were made that the vicar could not afford the expense of hauling his tythe of underwood, when such underwood was cut, but now the roads are so much mended, a considerable payment will arise after payment of the carriage which is his reason for making the claim'. The legal view was that it rested with the vicar to prove his entitlement by endowment or usagexxx. Nonetheless the Dean and Canons were persuaded to grant tithes of the coppice in Park Wood to Mr Gibbons and his successors. Mrs Rogers was so angry that she refused to renew her lease when it fell due in 1798 unless she could be indemnified against the vicar's right. (By then Mr Gibbons had died and been succeeded by Daniel Carter Lewis.) 'I cannot help complaining that the Dean & Canons have used me very unhandsomely by making a deed to deprive me of my property in the tythe of underwood'xxxi. She threatened to bring a suit against them. The lessors pointed out that any wood tithes would belong to the vicar not the rector, but being anxious to renew the lease, they told the new vicar that the 1796 grant had been 'solely to establish the Vicar of Ruislip in the tythe of Coppice Wood if that right could be shown either by endowment or usage and as neither he nor his predecessors had been able to find the endowment nor show by usage his right thereto they were of opinion he ought to surrender the confirmation that they may be enabled to treat with their lessee for a renewal of lease'. There was no renewal and there the matter rested until Elizabeth Rogers's death in 1803.

The Deanes

In her will she left her estate, after the payment of annuities to Philadelphia and Jane Deane, then to Ralph Deane, their nephew as residuary legatee. The women were the grandchildren of two of Elizabeth's aunts (there had been a marriage between cousins), Philadelphia Hawtrey who had married George Blagrave and Elizabeth Hawtrey whose spouse was the Rev John Deane. Philadelphia and Jane had been living at Eastcote House as her companions for several years. They renewed the lease after her death, but were asked to pay an unusually large fine of £4,697 19s 2d because of the lapse of 12 years. They pleaded that Mrs Rogers had been old and infirm 'not fully competent to do business', a statement belied by her

vigorous correspondence in 1797-8. The 'Church bridge' across the Pinn near the vicarage was repaired in 1805 and the renovation of the chancel began in 1807xxxii.

Mrs Rogers had long opposed enclosure of the common fields and waste, and her trustees lost no time in introducing a Bill in 1804. The Enclosure Map showing the redistribution of land was prepared in 1806 and the bill was enacted in 1814. Tithes were extinguished on the new enclosures as both rector and vicar received land in lieu. Tithes ceased on the old enclosures at the same time, but were replaced by a corn rent, reviewed every 21 years and calculated upon the prevailing price of corn in Cambridge Market.

The Deanes had sent their tithe accounts for the years 1803-06 to Windsor. See below.

Table 4. Ruislip Tithes 1803–6				
	1803	1804	1805	1806
	£ : s : d	£:s:d	£ : s : d	£ : s : d
Tithes	368: 4: 4	411:19:761/2	535:12: 21/2	556: 9: 81/2
Deductions				
Poor Rate	38: 6: 5	38: 6: 5	48: 0: 0	48: 0: 0
Rent	58:19:2	60:17:0	60:1:1	57:12:11
Statute Duty	9:15:7	19:15:7	9:15:7	9:15:7
Dinner on Tithe Day	17:5:5	19:6:6	19:10:0	19:17:0
Property Tax	16:0:0	16:0:0	18:0:0	32: 0: 0
Total deductions	142 : 4 : 7	144 : 5 : 6	155: 6: 8	167 : 5 : 6
Proft	225:19:9	267:14:1	380: 5: 61/4	402 : 1 : 01/4

It shows how the rising price of corn as the Napoleonic wars progressed increased the value of the tithes and also that the custom of giving a dinner to the farmers on Tithe Day, mentioned by Parson Woodford of Weston Langville, in his 1776 diary, was kept in Ruislip.

The Dean and Canons of Windsor did very well out of the upheaval, being given 291 acres near the Roxbourne Brook as their rectorial allotment and about 100 acres on Haste Hill in compensation for loss of tithes. The lay rectors, instead of the expenses and difficulties encountered in collecting tithes, could now increase their income by intelligent farming. However, Philadelphia and Jane Deane had already written to Windsor, pointing out that a house, barn and stable would be needed on land allotted to the Rectory.

Ralph Deane, who had come into possession by 1810, when the fine for renewal was £1230, wrote plaintive letters to Windsor where a deaf ear was turned to his pleas that the rectory land was difficult for him to let without buildings. He purchased a small piece of land in West End Road adjoining the rectory land and built a house upon it - shown on the first OS map 1820 as New House (later Bourne Farm) - where he housed a farm bailiff. He also leased the manor from King's College and farmed the Northwood rectory land from a farmhouse, (now converted to greenkeepers cottagers on Northwood Golf Course) which had been built on the manorial allotment in 1827. It is understandable that he should have amalgamated his personal, College

and Rectory land in the cause of efficient farming, but surveyors from Windsor became confused and assessing the land too highly sought to increase his fine, producing a spate of anxious letters between Eastcote and Windsor.

The Vicar received about 120 acres scattered over what is now South Ruislip, in lieu of tithes; 25 acres of Park Wood and 50 acres on Haste Hill to settle the dispute over wood tithes and fuel for his fire; 40 acres in South Ruislip on account of his former glebe land in the open fields.

Francis Henry Deane succeeded his father in 1852 and was the last lay rector. All Windsor's rectorial estates passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1867 and Mr Deane had to deal with them in future. By a deed dated 12 December 1872 the commissioners conveyed the reversion of the whole 338acres 1rood 19perches to the lessee in consideration of his surrender to them of the leasehold interest in the corn rents and the sum of £6,500xxxiii.

Mr Deane built New Farm in Northwood for the farmer of the Northwood land. New Farm and Bourne Farm became part of the Eastcote house Estate and were both sold in 1931.

A major restoration of St Martin's took place in 1870, with George Gilbert Scott in charge. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners and F.H. Deane undertook the expense of restoring the chancel **on condition that the nave should be restored by the parishioners** and others interested in the parish. The appeal sent out in May 1868 shows that he had already promised £126.

When the Rev Christopher Packe died in 1878, Windsor was beset with applications for the living. One was from Francis Deane's brother, the Rev Charles Deane, who wrote 'My family having been lessees of the Rectory for about 400 years...my brother

Francis, apart from other members of the family contributed £300 to the late Church Restoration and all my blood that I have known have been laid in Ruislip churchyard.'

He failed to get the post.

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<sup>1</sup> Morris L.E., 'A Customal of Ruislip', Transactions London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, Vol 19, pt 1
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ii St George's, Windsor xi, G.6

iii Ibid xi.G.51

iv Morgan, Marjorie 'English lands of the Abbey of Bec', OUP 1946, p 23

^v Hennessey, *Novum Repertorium* 1898

vi Morgan, Marjorie 'English Lands of the Abbey of Bec' OUP 1946, p131

vii St George's, Windsor, X41

viii Ibid X43,

ix Morgan, op cit, pp 138 - 150

^x I.Tyers, Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report 82/97

^{xi} TNA S C 6/917/27 Transcript by L.E. Morris in Local History Room at manor Farm House.

xii King's College: RUI/182

xiii Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies D/209/4

xiv St George's, Windsor, xv.31.65

xv Ibid, xv.31.70

xvi St George's, Windsor, xv.31.65; xv.31.70; xv.31.71

xvii St George's, Windsor xv.31 67 - 68

xviii LMA: Acc 0249/0191

xix St George's, Windsor, xv.31.73

xx VCH Middlesex, Vol 4, p 142

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xxii St George's, xvi 1 57

xxiii St George's, xvi 1 60

xxiv LMA: Acc 0249/0551-2

xxv LMA: Acc 0249/0647

xxvi LMA: Acc 0249/0657

xxvii LMA: Acc 0249/0652

xxviii LMA: Acc 0249/2280

xxix Bowlt E.M. 'James Ewer's Diary' RNELHS Journal 1978

xxx LMA: Acc 0249/ 0672

xxxi St George's, Windsor xvii 4 39

xxxii St George's, Windsor xvii 38 8

xxxiii Information from Church Commissioners