ASHGATE

The Guild and Guild Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford

Society, Religion, School and Stage

Edited by

J. R. Mulryne

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List of Abbreviations

FAS/ *FAS Heritage*: Field Archaeology Specialists, York

MA: *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, 6 volumes, 1921–2011

ODNB: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (in print and eBook formats)

PRO: The Public Record Office

REED: *Records of Early English Drama*

SCLA: Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon

TNA: The National Archives, London

VCH: Victoria County History

WRO: Worcestershire County Record Office

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This book has its origins in the common interest of all its contributors in the local history of Stratford-upon-Avon, and specifically in the remarkable survival of a group of medieval buildings near the centre of the market town. The Guild buildings represent a rare instance of a largely unchanged set of buildings which in their physical existence draw together the threads of the town's civic life.

Taken as a group, the Guild Chapel, the Guildhall, the Pedagogue's House and the Almshouses summarise the town's corporate existence, with footholds in religion, education, law, governance, entertainment and social service. The book presented here focuses on the sixteenth century, with an emphasis on the Reformation period and the lifetime of William Shakespeare. It also looks before and after, into the long history of the Guild of the Holy Cross and onward towards the more recent past.

To the town's great good fortune the Guild buildings continue to serve its needs, in education especially, in the town's spiritual life and in assisting it to meet an aspect of its charitable responsibilities. If civic government has moved to the Town Hall since the nineteenth century, and more recently also to the District Council's Elizabeth House, and if professional theatre has become the province of the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Guild buildings remain nevertheless a central feature of Stratford's built environment as well as its day-to-day life.

Research for this book has thrown into relief the advantages of colleagues working across disciplines with a common purpose. Contributors come from widely differing disciplinary backgrounds, from expertise in architecture and archaeology, by way of archival skills, legal knowledge, local history and history of religion, through knowledge of humanist education and on to practical and analytical expertise in Renaissance theatre. Yet within such diverse specialist interests each contributor has learned much from the others. The great pleasure of serving as editor of this book has been to take part in an enterprise that has entailed so much sharing of knowledge and historical judgement. Contributors have been giving and generous in reading each other's work, in drawing attention to new facts and perspectives, and in being

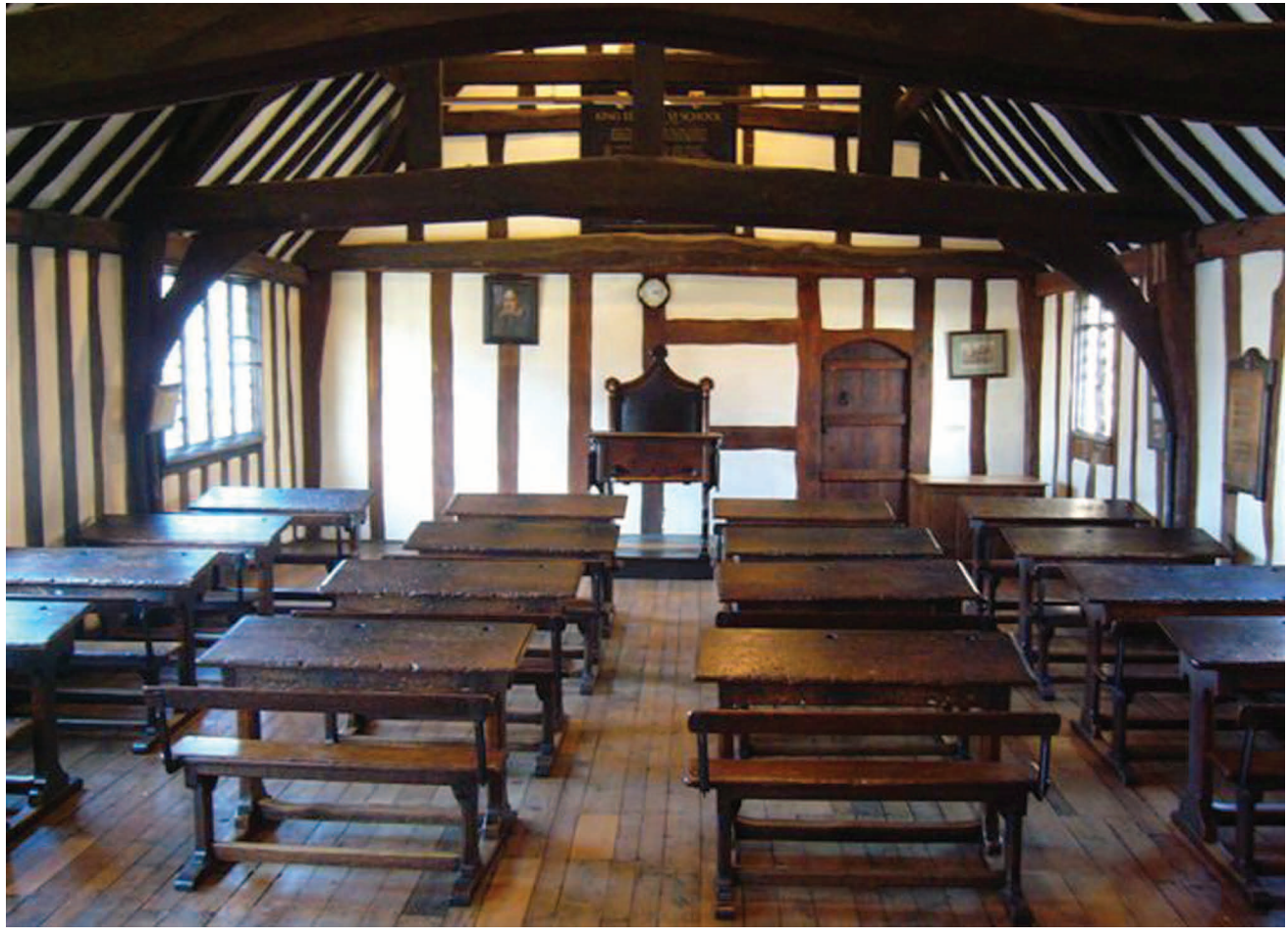
ready to cede personal credit in favour of the improvement of a colleague's contribution. I should like to thank each of them. Disagreements remain over matters of detail, as the Introduction to the book points out, but the overall sense of shared purpose remains strong.

There are numerous debts to acknowledge. The previous and current Headmasters, Governors and Trustees of King Edward VI School have been generous in permitting us to meet and to work in and on the Guildhall. The Stratford Town Council and Town Trust have kindly allowed colleagues to photograph and interpret the Guild Chapel. The Stratford-upon-Avon Municipal Charities have made partial dendrochronological investigation of the Almshouses possible. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has put its Library and Archive at our disposal, has given us permission to publish material in the Trust's care, and its staff under their current Director, Dr Diana Owen, have given generously of their time and knowledge. We are indebted to Sarah Stanton and Cambridge University Press for permission to draw heavily on an article and illustrations previously published in *Shakespeare Survey*. Sally-Beth MacLean has once again helped to promote scholarship by sharing her unrivalled knowledge of travelling players, and *REED* (*Records of Early English Drama*) has made that aspect of our work so much more fruitful through its continued and remarkable series of publications.

Most of all, we are indebted to the support of Ashgate Publishing Limited. It has been a joy to work with Rachel Lynch, Ashgate's Managing Director, on what is now a considerable run of publications. Her advice and guidance have been unfailing. Nikki Selmes and Pam Bertram of Ashgate have acted as press editors for this volume, and our thanks are due to them and to freelance editor Jan Doorly for their care and unflagging support and interest. Margaret Shewring has been indispensable in drawing contributors together socially as well as promoting shared scholarship and enquiry. To my assistant editor, James Morris, I say thank you for meticulous attention to the detail of several chapters, and I offer thanks also to William Mulryne who has taken a number of photographs especially for this book. As always, my wife Eithne has accepted with good grace the many inevitable demands on my time that contributing to and editing a volume of this nature entails.

Ronnie Mulryne

1 The Guild Buildings photographed from the King Edward VI School playground. The Pedagogue's House stands in the centre foreground, with the white-gabled Old Vicarage (1703) behind. The Guildhall and its southern wing are seen to the left. The tower of the Guild Chapel rises in the centre rear. © William Mulryne



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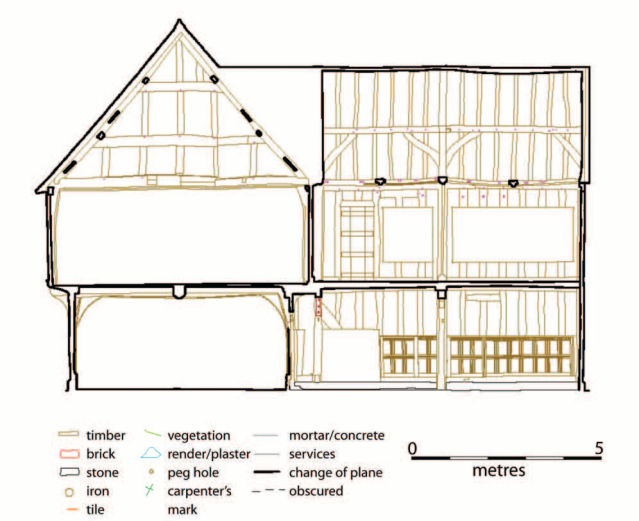
3 The Almshouses, Guildhall and Guild Chapel, photographed from Church Street. © William Mulryne

4 Plan of the ground floor of the Guildhall, showing the location of carpenter's marks. © FAS Heritage

5 The painted scheme at the south end of the ‘lower hall’. © William Mulryne

6 Plan of the first floor of the Guildhall, showing the location of carpenter's marks.



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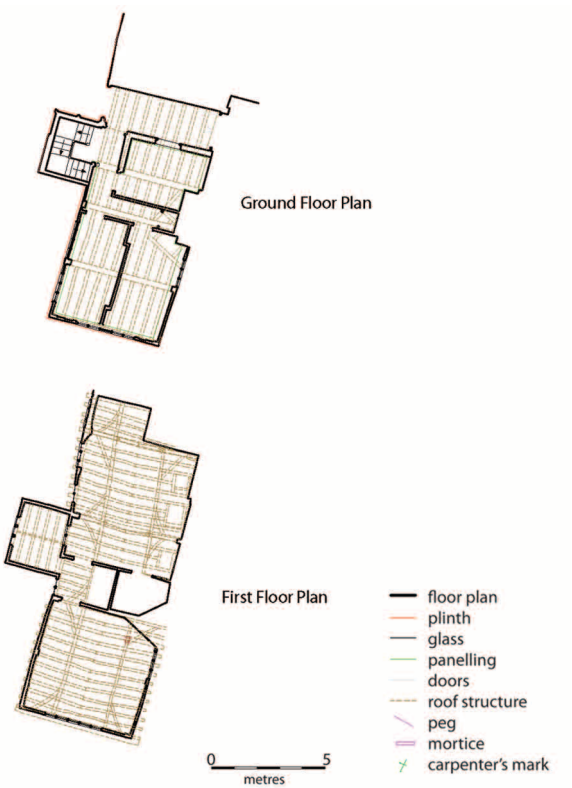

8 Plan of the ground and first floor of the 'Pedagogue's House'. © FAS Heritage

9 The interior of the Holy Cross guild chapel. © FAS Heritage

Introduction

J. R. Mulryne

'A memory room of our culture': the words of author and broadcaster Michael Wood refer to the classroom in the fifteenth-century Guildhall at King Edward VI School in Stratford-upon-Avon in which beyond serious doubt William Shakespeare was educated. But the phrase could apply equally well to the Guildhall as a whole, and beyond that to the entire complex of Guild buildings which today provide a rich focus for architectural and heritage study, and which continue to serve as a site of charitable care and educational and religious life close to the centre of the market town.

The civic history of Stratford is incorporated in its Guild buildings. Over the centuries the buildings have housed the town's institutions, including the Guild of the Holy Cross, the Borough Council and, most probably, the Manorial Court and Court of Record. They also provide a location for the Guild Chapel, the Almshouses and part of the Grammar School, each of which continues today to make its contribution to the town's life. It is rare that an integrated group of late-medieval buildings sharing social, commercial and legal functions should have been preserved largely intact, and rarer still that several of them can boast an unbroken history extending from the early fifteenth century to the present day. This book explores aspects of the archaeology of the Guild Buildings, with their social, legal, entertainment and governance history, by way of a principal (though not exclusive) emphasis on the immediate pre- and post-Reformation period, a span of years that on any estimate constitutes a critical turning-point in many areas of the town's life.

From its construction in the early years of the fifteenth century until the Tudor Reformation and the dissolution of the Guilds in the 1540s, a period of well over a century, the Stratford Guildhall served as the headquarters, meeting place and feast hall of the Guild of the Holy Cross. It later functioned as the headquarters of the Borough Council, from the granting of the town's charter under Edward VI in 1553 until the late 1860s. It received visits by professional players from London and across the country, a series of occasions

which may have prompted William Shakespeare's acting and playwriting career. Its upper floor provided space for the education of secondary-level boys, a role which it has continued to fulfil for a period of more than 450 years to the present day. Each of these aspects of the town's life is given attention in this book, in a series of chapters that draws on the expertise of archaeologists and architectural historians, historians of politics and governance, and scholars with expert knowledge of education, law, theatre history and theatre in performance.

The Guild

Mairi Macdonald's opening chapter sets the Guild Buildings in the long perspective of the Guild of the Holy Cross, exploring a history that reaches back to the thirteenth century and the town's earliest years. The Guild emerges as a religious foundation that, while conscientiously discharging its spiritual and pastoral duties, proved alert, almost from the beginning, to the commercial opportunities open to an organisation of its type. Local and national government during much of the period recognised few obligations towards a diverse local community, including the poor in need of charitable support. The Guild, in line with its founding principles, concerned itself with the community's practical as well as its spiritual needs, caring for its members by social, business and educational activities hosted in the Guildhall, by direct charitable provision centred on the Almshouses, and after a member's death by prayers for his or her soul. Furthermore, it established itself as a hub of commercial links and a property owner of some consequence in the town.

Macdonald charts in detail the fluctuating fortunes of the Guild until its dissolution, noting how prosperity followed from shrewd investment, from carefully adjusted entry 'fines', from strong leadership, and from the recruitment of new members and the nurturing of business contacts. Perhaps her most surprising finding is the attachment to the Guild of members from as far away as Bristol in one direction and London in another, even if in many of these cases the distant recruit became little more than a well-disposed absentee, drawn to membership by business opportunities and connections, as well as by concern for his soul's well-being.

The golden age of the Guild's fortunes, Macdonald shows, ran from the early to the mid-fifteenth century, followed by a steady decline until the 1520s. From today's perspective, commentators too often see the Guild as a remote curiosity. By contrast, Macdonald's account recreates it as a living and developing organism composed of individual townspeople, responsive to the community they serve, sharing in its achievements and reverses, and profiting from enterprise as well as, from time to time, losing out from ineptitude. When Reformation intervened and the Guild was dissolved in common with religious organisations across the country, the impact on Stratford and its

people was wide-ranging, a topic viewed from the perspectives of religion, society and governance by subsequent chapters in this book.

The Reformation

The great upheaval of the Reformation provides the topic for Sylvia Gill's following chapter. The late 1540s saw the dissolution of both of the town's main religious organisations, the College, based at the parish church, and the Guild, located centrally in the town. Dissolution resulted in a loss of employment and accommodation for priests, and spiritual disorientation for their congregations. Yet, as Gill points out, the impact of Reform on the town's life was less stark than it might have been, with pensions for displaced priests assessed in most cases at a better rate than laid down by regulation, with the grammar school re-founded, and with the schoolmaster and the town's vicar provided with salaries comparable to or more favourable than those obtaining elsewhere.

Across the period there were troublesome adjustments to be made by the townspeople, by their civic leaders and by their religious counsellors, whether employed by the Guild or the College. National developments entailed a local response, in particular a response to the fluctuating religious commitments of successive monarchs and their advisers. Wider religious tendencies were reflected in changing patterns of worship, influenced in the early days by the appointment of bishops with advanced opinions, including the local diocesan, the reforming Hugh Latimer of Worcester. They were reflected too in the convulsions caused by edicts aimed at sweeping away the outward signs and symbols of traditional devotion. This last had direct effects on Stratford, with the whitewashing of paintings in the Guild Chapel, including a magisterial Doom and a Dance of Death, and the downgrading and destruction of the Becket Altar, a long-time focus of worship in the parish church.

As Gill shows, Stratford's people met these developments with resilience, preferring adjustment to resistance, so that while sanctions against recusancy were from time to time applied, individual instances of traditional belief and practice were evidently tolerated, even when the tide began to run strongly in the community and among its leaders in favour of a more 'godly' Protestantism. Gill's examination of the wording of a wide selection of testamentary wills demonstrates that when townspeople confronted death, and were therefore at their most open about their confessional allegiances, they adopted one of a significantly wide range of formulae marking the testator out as traditional in religious outlook, or neutral, or Protestant-conforming.

Flexibility was not confined to religion. Stratford's business and political elite adjusted very readily to the new world emerging around them, finding a workable means for the conduct of civic life that, as Guild gave way to Borough Council, proved remarkably efficient in preserving former authority and former privilege in a changed world. The management of change is a

highly desirable skill. It looks as though Stratford, as Gill amply demonstrates, was able to call on leaders capable of steering its civic and spiritual life with notable confidence through one of the most turbulent episodes of national history.

William Dalam, a Case Study

Gill remarks in her second chapter 'Where one is a scholemaster of grammar' that Roger Dyos, curate and then vicar of Stratford, was deemed suitable, Vicar-of-Bray-like, 'to serve in all three reigns. He was acceptable to Edward's commissioners for re-appointment as curate; traditional enough to gain promotion under Mary; and sufficiently reformed to continue his career under Elizabeth'. Less adroit or less fortunate than Dyos was William Dalam, also a priest in Stratford, and a schoolmaster. Gill's chapter focuses on Dalam's career as broadly representative of the experience of religious of the period, from his first recorded appointment to the position of Guild priest in 1540, on to the better-paid job of schoolmaster in 1543, and eventually being required to cede his attachment to the school when the town's new charter and new religious emphasis came to the fore in 1553. A new schoolmaster, William Smart, was appointed, and in consequence Dalam suffered the second reverse of an otherwise promising career, having already lost out when Studley Abbey, where he was sub-prior, was dissolved in 1536.

Dalam may never have settled easily into his Stratford role: his correspondence with Robert Joseph of Evesham Abbey, explored by Gill, can adopt a lofty tone, as though Dalam saw himself as well-placed to instruct these lesser if, in career terms, more fortunate mortals. There is evidence that after the school's re-foundation Dalam tried to hold on to his connection with a schoolmaster's post, with its salary and accompanying living quarters. Though compensated, Dalam must have felt bitterly disappointed. Gill frames her account of his vicissitudes by briefly summarising the history and endowments of the Stratford school that Dalam served for at least 13 years, and by summarising education in the town at a level below that of grammar school, including the 'song school' at the parish church. It is, however, the personal career of the 'grammar priest', poignant in many ways as it was, that may strike the reader as a particularly telling instance of the interaction of religious and secular history at the critical Reformation moment.

The School

Questions have been raised about employment and learning conditions during the mid-sixteenth century and after in the King's New School – the

name given in 1553 to Stratford's re-founded grammar school – and about the salary, work load and qualifications of the schoolmasters and, when one was in post, their assistant or 'usher'. Enquirers want to know the probable number of pupils and the curriculum they studied, their career prospects, the contribution of grammar schools to the wider needs of society, and the stimulus or otherwise of a grammar school education for the intellectual and imaginative development of a boy such as William Shakespeare. What, moreover, was the standing of Stratford's school within the numerous company of grammar schools countrywide, new, continuing and re-founded?

Ian Green's chapter '"More polite learning": Humanism and the New Grammar School' addresses each of these issues, drawing on a wide-ranging review of developments in schooling at this date. His report on Stratford's re-founded school places it within the lowest of three categories of contemporary grammar schools: not among elite schools such as Eton and Winchester, nor among thriving London schools such as Westminster and St Paul's or even notable provincial schools such as Shrewsbury, but rather among the hundreds of less generously endowed schools across the land. Green uses archival sources to conclude that teachers appointed to the new school in Stratford during the 1560s and 1570s were not only difficult to attract but difficult to retain – within a national shortage of suitably qualified and experienced teachers. It was only with the 1580s and the appointment of Alexander Aspinall (master from 1581/2 to 1624) followed by John Trapp (master 1624–1669) that long-term commitment to the education of Stratford boys became the norm.

Early short-termism is less difficult to explain when one considers that the salary offered to the schoolmaster, while not ungenerous at £20 (comparable to the better end of the national range), was in practice hedged about with restrictions, such as potential responsibility for an usher's wages. The provision of living accommodation also appears to have entailed from time to time unspecified charges, in apparent contradiction of the terms stated in the town charter, and by implication therefore in the master's conditions of employment. Add to this that the estimated total of boys enrolled at any one time could run to 40 and perhaps as many as 60, plus the possibility that one schoolmaster working in a single classroom might be required to teach pupils the whole educational programme from early steps in reading to the higher reaches of humanist literature – Cicero, Terence, Virgil, Horace and Ovid – and the job begins to look distinctly uninviting.

Teaching could perhaps be boring too, given the endless task of persuading predictably reluctant boys to master the rudiments of Latin grammar, and to engage in what must have often seemed pointless rote-learning. There were rewarding moments, no doubt, when a boy's imagination was fired by one aspect or another of classical literature, or his ambition engaged by the usefulness of mastering the art of letter-writing in preparation for well-paid employment. Many boys, one would like to think, took part eagerly in

the performance of plays by Terence or Plautus, if performance was offered as part of the curriculum, and perhaps the current crop of boys caught exciting glimpses of the professional players who visited the town, with, just possibly, the more talented boys being invited to take a walk-on part.

Green is sceptical about the view, widely advanced in recent years, that a strong Catholic element is discernible in the upbringing and schooling of William Shakespeare and boys like him, noting the flimsiness of the evidence and the fact that 'across Elizabethan England secondary education was much less confessional in its orientation' than is sometimes supposed. The Stratford curriculum is likely to have followed the beaten path, with William Lily's official grammar forming the staple of much teaching in the early forms, and with set pieces from Aesop, Cato and others being committed to memory both early and late. It may nevertheless be reassuring to know that, in Green's words, 'English students were probably exposed to more poetry and plays and less prose than their counterparts abroad'.

Governance

A period of acute adjustment in the unfolding history of governance in Stratford, as throughout the country, came in the years that immediately preceded and followed the Reformation. Adjustment had consequences, as noted above, not only for religion but also for town politics, two spheres of corporate life that were everywhere comprehensively interlaced. The uncertainties that greeted and followed the Reformation settlements, and the response these elicited from townsmen already holding influential office under the Guild, are traced in detail in a chapter by Robert Bearman. Bearman documents how initiatives that included petitioning for, and acquiring, a royal charter, and skilled management of that less-than-comprehensive document led, as time went on – in particular as regards legal responsibilities – to increasing authority and independence for the town, though also to problems and disagreements.

Stratford's opinion formers, it emerges from Bearman's discussion, knew just how to trim their sails so as to ride out the squalls that accompanied not only the turbulent religious and political lurches from Edward VI to Mary to Elizabeth, but also how to weather unsettling local disruptions in, for example, the lordship of the manor. One manorial lord, John Dudley, Earl of Warwick and later Duke of Northumberland, was executed for treason, yet his son was re-instituted after a period of years during which the lordship was escheated to the Crown. The bishopric of Worcester, the town's diocesan authority, also went through a period of turbulence, with consequences for the conduct of worship in the town and to some extent for its legal structures. The adjustments in civic governance entailed by national events also had to accommodate the wide local disorientation

caused, as Gill noted in a previous chapter, by the disappearance of the town's wealthiest organisation, the College, and the simultaneous dissolution of the Guild, the town's most stable and influential source of authority during the preceding centuries. Stratford managed, as Bearman demonstrates, to make the required changes with little apparent loss to its economy, even if evident alterations to worship necessarily took place in the parish church and, even more, the Guild Chapel. These were dramatic times, but the structures of civic governance that were laid down during meetings in the Guildhall of the newly formed Borough Council served with some degree of success as the foundation on which civic government in the town was subsequently based.

The Courts

Bearman's chapter includes a brief outline of the proceedings of the town's manorial court, a significant institution only arguably and by sleight-of-hand the responsibility of the town authorities. A companion chapter, by Margaret Webster, gives a more detailed account of the day-by-day or fortnight-by-fortnight operation of the town's Court of Record, held, it seems almost certain, in the lower Guildhall. By way of a detailed account of court proceedings, we are able to see at close quarters something of the commercial and on-the-streets life of the town from the 1550s to the 1580s and 1590s, as townspeople sued each other over topics as diverse as fights and accidents, the not-always-endearing exploits of confidence tricksters, and errant pigs unlawfully on the loose.

Perhaps the most illuminating evidence the court proceedings throw up is the geographical area over which the town's trading activities were conducted, from points as distant as North Wales in one direction and London and the South East in the other. Luxury goods passed through and were dispatched from the town. The sometimes unruly traffic of livestock following drovers' routes from rearing place to market also found Stratford a convenient pathway, to the town's commercial advantage. This was, in summary, a court that dealt principally with the interests and activities of the trading class, including litigation over everything from the weight of loaves to neighbourly relationships. It thus played its part in facilitating the conduct of business and in smoothing out wrinkles in the town's social life.

Webster's close reading of court documents reveals that actions were most often initiated and pursued by networks of allies based largely on religious affiliation. Certain other characteristics of local justice come into view. Long delays from initiating an action to its settlement are an unsurprising feature. Evasion of the rules seems, again unsurprisingly, to have been widespread. Local felons, it emerges, could avoid punishment by a timely move outside the borough boundaries, a tactic permitted by the regulations as currently drafted, or by concealing disputed property within their houses, another strictly legal

device. Webster's tirelessly persevering enquiry into documents that are frequently ill-written, bordering on indecipherable, together with her extensive knowledge of legal jargon and the mystifying argot of medieval court Latin and Norman French, throw light on previously unexamined documents which bring us closer to life as it was lived while Stratford reinvented itself in the later years of the sixteenth century.

Architecture and Archaeology

A main impetus towards writing this book has been the archaeological and documentary research carried out by Kate Giles of the Department of Archaeology at the University of York and Jonathan Clark of FAS Heritage, York. One phase of their work, funded by King Edward VI School and the Heritage Lottery Fund's Project Planning scheme, culminated in a three-volume report, issued as a Conservation Management Plan in 2006 and 2007. The report, incorporating contributions by experts in associated disciplines including the environment, painting conservation, and public access and safety, forms the basis of the Guildhall aspect of the Giles and Clark chapter in this book.

Giles and Clark re-interpret some of the evidence incorporated in their earlier study by discussing new dendrochronological investigations, and by drawing on further work on documentary sources, most of them held in the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive. They also offer interpretation of the medieval wall paintings at the southern end of the lower Guildhall, showing that these incorporate a version of the Guild's seal, and finding evidence for the early existence there of a small chapel, with the extant paintings featuring as a 'reredos' positioned behind an altar.

Investigation of the Guild buildings is further extended in Giles and Clark's chapter by a discussion of the Guild Chapel adjacent to the Guildhall – outside the remit of the Management Plan – and by offering new perspectives on the Chapel's interpretation, bringing to the reader's notice the meticulous pioneering research carried out, on the Chapel itself and the Guild buildings more generally, by a former art master at King Edward VI School, Wilfrid Puddephat. Giles and Clark develop their investigations into the post-Reformation period by tracing the Guildhall's sixteenth-century history while it served as the location for business meetings of the newly formed Borough Council. They also offer tentative proposals as to a possible location for the school before it transferred into the Guildhall. An especially notable suggestion, following discussions with Robert Bearman and Mairi Macdonald, is that the 'Scolehowus' mentioned in documents as dating from 1427 may in fact refer to the almshouse immediately adjacent to the Guildhall, usually known as the 'infill' house. On this interpretation, the 'infill' house may have served as a schoolroom at ground-floor level with a master's chamber above, well before the school moved into the Guildhall in the 1560s.

Giles and Clark's new reading of the evidence has implications for interpreting the so-called Pedagogue's House, situated close to the Guildhall as part of the complex of Guild buildings. Previously identified with the 1427 schoolhouse, this has now been shown by dendrochronological investigation as dating from the first years of the sixteenth century; the tree felling for the building's structure can be confidently dated to 1502. A tentative possibility is that in its first years the Pedagogue's House may have served as the hall and parlour of the almshouses, although this possibility will require further investigation. In all, Giles and Clark's expert research both grounds existing understanding of the Guild buildings and opens up new perspectives on their early use and significance.

Playing the Guildhall

Theatre under Elizabeth, especially theatre of the last years of the queen's reign, is widely recognised as one of the glories of English dramatic literature. Less well recognised has been the practice of professional theatre companies touring the country, following a network of routes that flourished alongside London's theatre scene, both before and after the establishment of the first permanent theatres in the capital in the 1560s and 1570s. Almost all the London professional companies toured as an integral, and financially advantageous, part of their commercial lives. Professional companies with their roots in the provinces also toured, in many cases restricting their circuits, as scholarship increasingly shows, to areas where their noble patrons owned significant property, or sought to acquire or maintain political influence.

My own chapter in this volume shows that Stratford and its Guildhall took full advantage of touring professional theatre during the later years of the sixteenth century, to a degree that is perhaps surprising given the town's small population and lack of obvious political profile. Well situated in relation to a dense nexus of touring routes, and benefiting from proximity to the seats of some of the country's leading nobles, not least the Earls of Leicester and Warwick, the town attracted more than 30 visits by professional companies, including the most celebrated, in the years between the late 1560s and the end of the century, with visits tailing off, for reasons the chapter explores, as the century ended – reasons inevitably connected with the town's growing Puritan outlook and practices.

The Guildhall building played its part in this comparatively frequent, if unevenly distributed, activity. Visiting companies were required by legislation to present their current play(s) before the town's governors, in Stratford's case the serving bailiff and aldermen. The natural place for this performance-licensing show was the town's Guildhall, with surviving documents implying that this was indeed the case. Where precisely in the building performances were staged, how the performers related to their audiences, whether performances sometimes took place in the adjacent courtyard, and whether

the touring company went on to perform elsewhere in the town are questions the chapter addresses. It also sketches in some of the local events and drifts of opinion that may have influenced the reception of theatre in Stratford and its Guildhall, especially towards the end of the period.

A Contemporary Play Staged

An issue my chapter raises is the interaction between touring visits and the micro-politics and everyday history of Stratford in the relevant years. The town's drift in the post-Reformation period towards a more pronounced Protestant alignment is well known, and the chapter considers how this and the local events of the period are reflected in the pattern of theatre visits, and in particular their virtual disappearance at century's end, so far as the documentary evidence informs us. A closer focus on one play, its structure and possible staging, together with its relation to the large political and social preoccupations of the period, are the concerns of the chapter contributed by Oliver Jones. The Queen's Men's play *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* may well, Jones suggests, have been performed in the Guildhall during one or other of the three or as now seems to be the case *four* visits by the Queen's company in the years following the company's formation in 1583.

If the play was indeed presented in Stratford, the Bailiff and his colleagues may well have been startled by the edginess of its treatment of topics very much in the mind of the Queen's subjects, particularly in the 1580s and after: religious and monarchical authority, foreign invasion, royal succession, paternity and legitimacy. John, the titular hero, is by no means (in Jones's words) 'full of Protestant morality and decisive royal authority' but is, rather, an 'ambiguous and complex', vacillating, figure who is 'both tyrant and victim'. Accepting the hypothesis that this play was performed in Stratford, and in the light of the play's content and bias, the simple view that touring plays were intended to shore up established authority and disseminate authoritarian propaganda must surely be questioned – even if ultimately *The Troublesome Reign* offers its audience a moderately, though far from entirely, reassuring conclusion.

Jones takes advantage of the survival of the Guildhall building to show how the play's repeated use of tableaux to express political instability could have been managed in the upper Guildhall, and to speculate on how the space may have been used for specific scenes. In a linked staging by actors from the University of York, it became evident to actors and audience alike that performance in the Guildhall would have been entirely feasible, with the intimacy and immediacy of the space providing a tense and satisfying dramatic environment. In performance, it immediately seemed convincing to have the play address itself to the presiding bailiff, an authority figure seated by Jones's choice in the Master's chair at the northern end of the upper Guildhall. The bailiff's authority – representing, ultimately, the monarch –

became a focus for challenge (within carefully observed limits) through being exposed to the script's overt questioning of religious and political orthodoxy, a tactic that introduced directly into the play's staging a satisfying extra-textual dynamic.

The Repertoire

Perhaps the most difficult question to address in relation to touring professional players is 'which plays did they perform on tour?' This is the question Margaret Shewring's chapter considers, drawing on evidence from the companies' known repertoires, with these reconstructed to a large extent from documented performances at court. Shewring draws on such further repertoire information, scant though this is, as survives in local records of towns other than Stratford, and identifies groups of plays likely to have been played by leading companies in the years during which they are known to have visited Stratford itself, from romances to comedies to histories. She speculates, further, that those in the London repertoire at dates close to the Stratford visits may well have been brought to the Guildhall by leading companies for assessment and local licensing by the bailiff and his colleagues.

Shewring's quest for plays in Stratford performance has to meet a range of frustrations, not least the fact that many plays of the period, candidates for playing in the town, are not merely anonymous but lost. Inferences about their content and nature have to be drawn from surviving titles that offer clues but rarely certainty. Nonetheless, she is able to identify a broad development among visiting plays from moral interludes and plays with classical themes to plays with a greater historical-political pertinence and perhaps bite. Yet Shewring cautions against too simple and schematic a supposed development. Repertoire is likely to have responded to audience taste and company circumstances, as well as to external events.

Shewring's chapter very valuably reminds us that a concentration on professional men's companies may prove too limiting if we wish to get a sense of the Stratford theatre scene in the relevant years. Increasing scholarship in regard especially to the Queen's Men and Leicester's Men throws valuable light on touring theatre, and Shewring draws fully on this scholarship. But she also broadens out the discussion in intriguing ways by drawing attention to amateur performances and civic and religious events, and more particularly by asking whether boys' companies, in particular the Earl of Oxford's Boys, may have played a part in entertaining Stratford audiences. If so, could the boys of Shakespeare's school, as hinted in other chapters, have had theatrical role models of their own age to look up to? The possibilities raised in this chapter undoubtedly expand our sense of the role of the Guildhall in the entertainment culture of Stratford in the later years of the sixteenth century.

In Summary

We have attempted in this book to give as comprehensive an account of the religious, educational, legal, social and theatrical history of Stratford, chiefly during the sixteenth century, as remaining documentary and archaeological evidence permits, and so far as this history is centred on the town's complex of Guild buildings. Much of the research has been based on a reading of the buildings from an archaeologist's perspective, buttressed by study of the rich documentary resources that remain in Stratford in collections owned and maintained by the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive. This research has been set in the context of expert knowledge of events taking place and conditions obtaining elsewhere in England – sectarian, educational, social, political – during the momentous years that preceded and followed the Henrician and Edwardian reformations, with Stratford's experience of these years interpreted in relation to the influence and authority exercised in previous centuries by the town's Guild of the Holy Cross.

Much in this book is, of necessity, hypothesis. Even with the town's documentary resources, combined with the published and unpublished work of local historians, a great deal remains that invites inference and speculation. Archaeology too requires interpretation and often suggests the need for further study, even if the development of scientific techniques has reduced the areas of uncertainty. Contributors to this book have tried to make clear when they are basing their conclusions on fact, and where there are reasons for doubt. Even such apparently significant matters as the precise location and extent of the Guildhall's early classroom and the location of the performance area for the players – upstairs or downstairs – remain strictly unproven, as the relevant chapters indicate. Opinion among the team of contributors divides on these matters with documentary evidence of a seemingly irrefutable nature being produced by both sides – a salutary reminder of the tentative and inconclusive nature of our investigations. We hope readers will receive them in this spirit.

The Guild of the Holy Cross and its Buildings

Mairi Macdonald

At the corner of Church Street and Chapel Lane in Stratford-upon-Avon stands a complex of buildings dating from the late middle ages, which for centuries formed the administrative, educational and religious focus of the borough. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that civic government finally moved elsewhere, education continues on site, the Almshouses have a history of continuous occupation for over 500 years, and the Chapel is still in use as a place of worship.

The Guild of the Holy Cross, first referred to in the middle of the thirteenth century, was licensed in 1269 to establish a hospital for the maintenance of poor priests of the diocese of Worcester. Within a hundred years it had become the dominant social force in Stratford-upon-Avon, its history inextricably linked with that of the town.

Throughout the middle ages Stratford was subject to three varying influences or jurisdictions. The borough itself was subject to the day-to-day governance of the manor court of the Bishop of Worcester, the lord of the manor. The bishop was, in addition, the superior landlord of those holding burgages within the borough subject to 12*d*. chief rent, or fractions thereof, payable to his steward. From the late thirteenth century, when the character of the original Guild shifted from a purely religious to a largely secular membership, and burgage holders granted their property to the organisation, many inhabitants found themselves with a more immediate landlord in the shape of the Guild. Added to these was the influence of a College of priests established at the parish church in 1331 by John de Stratford, later Archbishop of Canterbury. The College was yet another body playing a major role in the town's religious and secular life, receiving the tithes and appointing the parish priest. Like the Guild, it acquired property in mortmain, both outside the borough and within, and it too played an additional role as landlord. At varying times all three bodies came into conflict as their religious and secular interests clashed, in some instances vigorously, particularly in the 1420s when the Guild was undertaking its prestigious building programme, and acquired the right to celebrate services in its chapel.

Beginnings

In 1196 a market charter was obtained from Richard I by John de Coutances, Bishop of Worcester, referring to a new town he had laid out on the banks of the Avon. John subsequently granted burghal rights there to his tenants. The town prospered and within 50 years could support at least one lay religious organisation, recognised in 1269 when Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, issued a charter, reportedly at the request of Robert de Stratford and the brethren and sisters of the fraternity of the Holy Cross, granting them permission to build a hospital, together with a chapel, in the town of Stratford. The site chosen or granted for this hospital and chapel was located at the edge of the built-up area of the settlement, on the corner of what are now Church Street and Chapel Lane. Divine service was to be said there for the souls of members' ancestors and all faithful departed, while the hospital was to be for the maintenance of those serving the chapel, needy brothers and sisters of the Guild, and needy priests within the diocese. Permission was given for the acquisition of land and premises, together with percentages from brewing and baking.[1] Although detailed provisions were made for the ordering of the hospital, following the Augustinian rule, it is clear that the activities of the lay fraternity quickly came to overshadow it. Almost immediately the Guild was appointing officers to manage the hospital's affairs, an alderman and steward being mentioned in 1272.[2] In a grant to the Guild of 4*d*. annual rent by Richard de Stratford of Leicester, confirmed by Edward III in 1331, he and his wife Matilda were promised in return that they would be exempt for their lives from the yearly fines for light and drinking. The former refers to the cost of candles to burn before the altar of the Guild in Holy Trinity Church, and the latter presumably to social gatherings, although the frequency is not stated.[3]

Initially the hospital buildings would have been for the domestic and religious use of the inmates and their own priest. The laity would make their devotion to the Holy Cross at the dedicated altar in the parish church, although they met for social and business affairs in the Rood Hall in Church Street. The first mention of a dedicated social/administrative space is in 1292 when leased to tenants, Geoffrey and Margery de Bagindon. In 1296 they granted to the members of the Guild free ingress and egress to the Rood Hall as often as they wished during the year, to hold their *mornspeche*,[4] and once a year, for a week, for drinking – presumably the time required to set up and dismantle the wherewithal for an annual gathering. The deed of grant is endorsed in a later hand *de Aula Sancte Crucis*, referring either to a structure

1 Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive (SCLA), BRT 1/3/155. By 1446 the Guild had built up a property portfolio comprising 41 tenements, eight cottages, five shops, two burgages, seven barns, two crofts, two gardens and two 'lands' in the fields of Shottery, bringing in an income of £27 8*s*. 10*d*. By the time of its suppression in 1548, the income stood at £43 per annum.

2 SCLA BRT 1/2/5.

3 SCLA BRT 1/3/200 (8).

4 Assembly on the morning or morrow after the Guild's festival day.

that stood on the site of the present Guildhall, built in or before the 1420s,[5] or to a building which was later replaced by the nave of the Guild Chapel.

By the early fourteenth century a Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with its own officials, seems to have centred its devotion on the Lady Chapel in Holy Trinity Church. In 1324 John Begelyn granted an annual rent of 2*s.* 4*d.* to the brethren of the Guild of St John the Baptist, implying yet a third organisation, but the following year 16*d.* rent was granted to the fraternity of the Guild of St Mary and St John.[6] It is likely, therefore, that there was simply a single guild with a combined dedication, with differing terminology sometimes used depending on the particular devotion of the grantor.

If there were separate guilds, the membership must have overlapped, for in 1353 John le Wytesmyth attended a meeting of the Guild of the Holy Cross but in 1361 was a proctor of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary.[7]

In 1389 there was concern in the government of Richard II at the growing influence of guilds in local affairs. A national survey was ordered whereby it was hoped that, by establishing that many were not properly instituted, they could be suppressed. This scheme was abandoned, but not before returns were submitted, providing valuable information as to the origins and functions of these guilds. The accuracy of the information is another question.

The Stratford return, for the Guild of the Holy Cross only, using formulaic legal language, stated that its origins were 'from time whereunto the memory of man reacheth not'.[8] No mention is made of a master but the return, submitted by two wardens, stresses their role as financial administrators, and that they were elected by the brothers and sisters whose observance of the ordinances they were bound to ensure. The return also stated that the Guild had 'many houses and rents' belonging to it of right, as specified in a charter of confirmation from Edward III, a copy of which is said to be stitched to the return.[9] The ordinances of the Guild were also submitted. These largely dealt with quarterly payments, burial of members and behaviour at the annual feast, but also included provision for the welfare

5 SCLA BRT 1/2/60; BRT 1/2/2. Recent dendrochronology has given a date range of 1412–1428 for this range of buildings, with a mean of 1417/18. Jonathan Clark and Kate Giles, *Conservation Management Plan. The Guildhall and Pedagogue's House, King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire*, 3 volumes (2006), unpublished report, vol. 2, pp. 9–10. I am grateful to the Governors of King Edward VI School and Dr Jonathan Clark of FAS Heritage for permission to use this report.

6 SCLA BRT 1/2/153; BRT 1/2/152.

7 SCLA BRT 1/2/239.

8 The extent of legal memory was in fact 1189, the accession of Richard I. This would pre-date the foundation of the borough, but the phrase is used commonly where documentation does not survive, but other evidence was available.

9 The writ and return are transcribed and translated in L. Toulmin Smith, *English Gilds: The Original Ordinances of more than One Hundred Early English Gilds …* (London: Early English Text Society, 1870), pp. 212–19. The original return survives, with a contemporary copy of Edward III's letters patent, dated 12 November 1331. This latter – The National Archives (TNA), C 47/46/440 – details existing grants to the Guild and names grantors, totalling 25*s.* 4*d.* annual rent, together with six tenements, 1½ burgages, one shop and one piece of ground. The fact that only one return survives for Stratford would suggest that the Guilds of St John and the Virgin, if they ever had independent status, had already been absorbed by the more successful Guild of the Holy Cross.

of those members who had fallen into poverty or been robbed: they were to be taken care of by the membership so long as they 'bear themselves rightly towards the bretheren and sisteren'. Interestingly no mention is made of sickness or education, both of which are known to have been aspects of Guild activity by this date, the first reference to a schoolmaster occurring in 1295.[10] Whether it is safe to deduce that some property had by this time been allocated for use by the aged and indigent is a matter for conjecture as there are no references to an almshouse in the records before 1406–07 when payments were made for the almshouses, including 12*s*. paid for stone for the hall and almshouses.[11]

As far as organisation and administration were concerned, the return states that the affairs of the Guild were to be managed, with the consent of the common council (presumably all the membership), by two aldermen and six other brethren. However, within 15 years the Guild had been refounded along lines which survived until its dissolution. A charter of Henry IV, dated 8 June 1403,[12] confirmed to the Guild of the Holy Cross lands and premises which had been granted to them, and confirmed also the charter of Edward III of 1331. Stating that the said Guild had been begun anciently and that it had continued until Henry's reign without royal licence, the king gave it permission to continue or, if it wished, to found a new fraternity in honour of the Holy Cross and St John the Baptist. This organisation was to be governed by eight aldermen, chosen annually by the brothers and sisters, who were then to elect from among themselves (or other brothers, though not sisters) a master and two proctors to administer its estates. The income from these estates, and from charitable donations, was to be used in providing two or more priests to say divine service for the souls of the king, his progenitors, the officers, brothers and sisters of the Guild, and all the faithful departed. The charter also states that the Guild was enfeoffed of 20 messuages, three shops, 4*s*. 4*d*. in rent, half a yardland[13] and the moiety of two burgages in Stratford, Bridgetown and Rhine Clifford. Reference was made to other charitable works undertaken by the Guild (*alia opera caritativa*) and that they were not to be hindered by the king, his successors, or justices, escheators, sheriffs or other bailiffs or ministers. It was presumably in response to this charter, confirmed by Henry VI in 1429, that a new Guild dedicated to the Holy Cross, the Blessed Virgin Mary and St John was established, and a decision made to keep formal records of the admission of members.

10 The register of Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, records among the names of those ordained deacon in June 1295 that of Richard, 'rector scolarum' of Stratford, but there is nothing to indicate whether he was connected to the Guild or Holy Trinity: J. Willis Bund, ed., *Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard September 23rd, 1268 to August 15th, 1301* (Worcester: Worcestershire Historical Society, 1902), p. 458.

11 SCLA BRT 1/3/12, 20.

12 This, together with a reference to Edward III's 1331 grant, was recited in an *inspeximus* issued by Henry VI on 15 June 1429, TNA C 66/369 m.13; C 66/424 m.5.

13 A yardland was a unit of land measurement ranging in size, according to area, between 20 and 40 acres. In Warwickshire it seems to have been taken as 30 acres and this is borne out by the fact that Shakespeare's purchase of three and a half yardlands in 1602 is also described as 107 acres.

Growth

The fifteenth century witnessed the Guild's increase in size and status with the acquisition of more property and the addition of new members from a much wider catchment area than hitherto. Contacts were established with local gentry, merchants with whom the town traded regularly, and skilled craftsmen whose talents could be employed by the organisation. However, many of those living at a distance from Stratford can rarely have participated in Guild activities, if indeed they ever visited the town, but their 'brotherhood' was perceived by the Guild as a source of goodwill to be drawn on at need. For these distant recruits, it was the spiritual benefits which served as the obvious attraction. Few members outside Warwickshire ever left bequests of any size to the Guild unless they had family links to the town. Instead, their pursuit of multiple Guild memberships was guided by a desire to accumulate benefits for the safety of their souls. The income from these members, however, enabled the Guild to embark upon an ambitious building programme, the heart of which was a complex of official and religious buildings on the site of the original hospital, chapel and Rood Hall.

The Guild's growing influence in the town, especially in spiritual matters, made a formal agreement with the Stratford College[14] necessary, achieved in 1432 after a long and sometimes spirited dispute. Ecclesiastically at least, the Guild was to be subordinate to the collegiate church and its warden: Guild priests were not to begin mass in the chapel on Sundays, great feasts or other special occasions before the gospel had been read at High Mass in the parish church; they were not to hear confession without the warden's permission, nor administer sacraments to his detriment; offerings made in the chapel were to be handed to the warden; once a year all Guild priests were to cease office in the chapel and attend the collegiate church, and they were also required to obey the warden, acknowledge themselves to be his parishioners, to pay tithes to him and not to stir up strife.[15] Thereafter the various wardens, sub-wardens and priests of the College became members of the Guild. Thomas Balsale, warden of the College from 1466, whose tomb survives in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church and who was admitted to the Guild in 1455 while sub-warden of the College of St Martin, Oxford, was surely a close relation, if not the son, of the Thomas Balsale who served as master of the Guild in 1454–56

14 The College of Priests connected with Holy Trinity Church founded in the 1330s by John and Robert de Stratford.

15 J.H. Bloom, *Medieval Stratford, a Topographical Essay* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1915), pp. 21–2; SCLA ER 2/4. There are numerous references in the accounts at this time to riding to Alvechurch to see the bishop and his officers, entertaining them and Richard Praty, the warden of the College: BRT 1/3/39, 40. The accounts in 1424–25, 1427–28 and 1431–32 contain payments for journeys to Rome, the last to Master Thomas Hanwell 'when he went to Rome for our bull'. In 1427 Pope Martin V granted to the Guild the right to have mass and other divine service celebrated in the chapel by their own and other fit priests, 'saving the right of the parish church'. In 1432 Eugenius IV confirmed the arbitration of the Bishop of Worcester: J.A. Twemlow (ed.), *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers (Regesta Romanorum Pontificum) Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 7 (London, 1893), p. 524; vol. 8 (London, 1906), p. 439; SCLA BRT 1/3/35, 39, 42, 350.

and 1462–63. In 1482, when a detailed agreement was drawn up between the Guild and its new schoolmaster, a period of six months' notice on either side was provided for, subject to the oversight and advice of the bishop and warden.[16]

Decline

After a golden age of admissions in the 1470s and 1480s, membership of the Guild declined, the majority of new members coming from the town or its immediate neighbourhood and increasingly, from 1515, being souls of the deceased rather than living members.[17] The early sixteenth century was a time of religious uncertainty and for those of a conservative view, guilds were bastions of tradition. Belief in the prospect of a swifter passage through purgatory as the result of prayers on behalf of the deceased certainly influenced those who paid for their dead relations to join. Clearly, however, there was a dwindling perception that membership of the Guild was an immediate benefit for the living. Recruits who could play no active part in the affairs of the organisation and whose entry fines were modest were no longer regarded as assets, and as a hub of social activity the Guild's influence began to wane.

Stratford was not alone in this. For 50 years before suppression, economic and religious change worked generally against the influence of guilds, and this was coupled with a campaign on the part of central government, as in 1389 under Richard II, to restrict their activities. Nevertheless, it was still the case that those who were active in Guild affairs could remain very influential, if they so chose. Even after a gap of six years, between the suppression of the Guild in Stratford and the granting of the town's charter of incorporation in 1553, it was predominantly those who had served as Guild officers who were nominated as the first aldermen.[18]

Membership: Benefits and Obligations

Membership of a guild was an arrangement of mutual benefit: the guild acquired prestige, income and networking connections, while the brothers

16 SCLA BRT 1/2/420. The accounts for 1427–28 show expenses involving an arbitration between the Guild and Richard Praty, warden of the College, in which the bishop's steward played a role: SCLA BRT1/3/39.

17 There is no irrefutable or conclusive evidence to support the suggestion that the increase in the number of souls admitted may represent outbreaks of plague, although this may hold true for a few of the years with high admissions. The 50 souls admitted in 1529 possibly reflect a national epidemic of 1527-30, but there is no recorded outbreak to account for the 56 souls in 1515, nor the 37 in 1519. There is also an absence of any admissions in the years 1499–1500, (followed by 19 souls in 1501) and 1510, both of which saw national epidemics. See J.F.D. Shrewsbury, *A History of Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 160; http://urbanrim.org.uk/plague.

18 Of the 14 aldermen named in the charter, nine had served as proctor, alderman or master, two others being sons or grandsons of aldermen or masters.

and sisters could look for both religious and social benefits. In Stratford, the rights and responsibilities of membership were clearly laid down in the Guild ordinances of 1389; but equally clearly, for those who lived any great distance from the town, they must have been more honoured in the breach than the observance. This seems to have been recognised in new ordinances of 1443 when the duties of members were far more generally expressed.

The first part of the 1443 ordinances, as copied into the beginning of the surviving membership register,[19] concerns the duties of the Guild priests: the taking of services, prayers for members, rules for communal living and attendance at the burials of members. These are followed by the duties of the officers who are to meet, with the aldermen and other substantial brothers, four times a year to transact business. The obligations of ordinary brothers and sisters are confined to the specific payment of an entry fee or 'fine' and 'light silver'[20] and the more general, but perhaps more important, obligation of working to the profit of the Guild: they are to be 'good & trewe to this place'. Disputes between members are to be dealt with by arbitration of the master and aldermen, with no suing of other members in any court without the permission of the officers. Attendance at the feast was not mandatory but nor could it be guaranteed. The proctors were responsible for warning brothers and sisters to accompany the master to the parish church for high mass on feast days, and those who were absent without permission could not expect to have 'service of mete'. While there are payments in the accounts, however, for the sending of messages to such places as Bromsgrove and Droitwich to attend the feast, there can have been no expectation that those further afield would come. Indeed, the Guildhall would have been stretched to its capacity had more than 100 attended.[21]

The Buildings

The Guild's headquarters in Stratford-upon-Avon are represented today by a complex on the corner of Chapel Lane and Church Street, comprising some of the finest medieval buildings in the town – the Guild Chapel, the Guildhall and the Almshouses. These represent the Guild's expanding wealth and influence throughout the fifteenth century, as manifested in its administrative and social activities. That there was a previous common hall of some kind is evidenced by the grant of 1292, and from the early fifteenth century there are references to the repair of the hall and the construction of rooms within and around

19 Mairi Macdonald, ed., *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society, 42 (2007), pp. 34–5. These ordinances, which differ quite markedly from those of 1389, may reflect an Act of 1437 (15 Henry VI, cap. 6) requiring guilds to have their letters patent and charters registered before their local JPs. See I.S. Leadam, *Select Cases before the King's Council in the Star Chamber*, Selden Society vol. 12 (1898) pp. cli–cliii.

20 'Light silver' was an annual sum of money paid towards the purchase of wax or candles to burn before the various altars maintained by the Guild.

21 SCLA BRT 1/3/103–105.

it, including by 1406 a presumably detached kitchen.[22] With the upsurge in the fortunes of the Guild, a new hall was needed to accommodate those members who attended the annual feast, and for the fitting entertainment of distinguished guests, and the accounts for 1422–26 reflect this.[23] It is probable that the upper storey of the range now known as the Guildhall was used for business and domestic purposes, such as offices for the proctors and chambers for the priests. The accounts make it clear that throughout the century the Hall was being extended and upgraded.[24]

The Almshouses

The Almshouses are referred to from 1406 when work was done 'at the almshouses', implying that they were already in existence. The fact that stone was bought for the Hall and the Almshouses suggests but is not conclusive evidence that they stood in the area of the Hall. Between 1411 and 1417 three almshouses were built, although there is a hint that they may have been to replace two burnt by fire. As late as 1501 they were thatched.[25] They seem to have been divided into two distinct areas, the lower rooms being granted to needy brothers or sisters of the Guild, and the upper being let out.[26] Tradition asserted that the half-timbered building in the courtyard of King Edward VI School known as the Pedagogue's House was the chamber and teaching

22 SCLA BRT 1/3/20.

23 In 1422–23 there was a payment of 3*s*. '*pro Aula Gild*' and in 1424–25, the expenses claimed by the proctors include a reference to '*Aula dicte Gild de novo aedificata*', SCLA BRT 1/3/34, 35.

24 The master's accounts for 1427–28 include payments for building chimneys in 'le Cowntynghows' in the Guildhall and the chamber above where Master John Harrys lies. The same accounts also refer to a new parlour in the Guildhall for the chaplains. In 1450–52 the accounts show that there was a substantial rebuilding of the chancel of the Guild Chapel, necessitating a re-consecration: SCLA BRT 1/3/38, 56, 58, 59.

25 SCLA BRT 1/3/12, 20.26. The accounts, tentatively dated 1413–14 record the receipt of money for burnt timber of two almshouses after the fire: SCLA BRT 1/3/118. Thatching is referred to throughout the century, the last occasion being in 1500–01 when 4*s*. 3*d*. was paid for 'thacheyng': SCLA BRT 1/3/109.

26 References to the poor and the inhabitants of the Almshouses occur regularly throughout the accounts. It is not entirely clear how many occupiers of the Almshouses there were at any one time and (as mentioned above) some of the upper rooms were let out, but dwellers in the Almshouses were provided regularly with bread and ale, and varying sums of between 22*d*. and 3*s*. 4*d*. were distributed among them, probably as a weekly salary. Certainly this is what happened in the sixteenth century. It is also clear from the accounts that the Guild paid for all or part of their funeral expenses when they died. The year 1427/28 seems to have been busy in terms of burials – the Guild paid a total of 3*s*. 10½*d*. in caring for Thomas Gylker in his sickness, buying a winding sheet, buying wax for candles to burn round his body, paying men to watch the body and providing beer for them, ringing the bell for his soul and digging his grave. Similar sums were spent on the funeral of Alice Berford, but John Russell, 'a poor man in the almshouses', had only a winding sheet bought for him. That same year the proctors spent 7*s*. 4*d*. bringing Matilda Stratton, a poor sister of the Guild, from Walsall to Stratford, caring for her in the Almshouses, and her burial. She and her husband had been admitted as members in 1406. It would seem likely therefore that the Almshouses were occupied both by the worthy poor of the town and those members who had fallen on hard times and could expect the Guild to look after them. In 1440/41 the Guild paid the funeral expenses of Jane, wife of Robert Fryke of the Almshouses, but the same accounts record a legacy from her to the Guild of four pieces of pewter, a basin, a gallon container and a half-gallon container. She was clearly not a complete pauper. SCLA BRT 1/3 *passim*.

space of the succession of schoolmasters appointed from the 1380s, but more recent research has dated this building to around 1503.[27] The early sixteenth century marked a period of decline in the fortunes of the Guild as religious conservatism found itself on the defensive against pressure for reform. In this context, the programme of building at this time, which has been identified by recent research, is a remarkable example of what the gifts of two wealthy men can achieve.[28]

The Documents

In 1553, on its establishment under the charter of Edward VI, the new Stratford Corporation acquired the real property formerly belonging to the Guild, and with it the Guild's records, now part of the borough archives. They comprise, in addition to a register of admissions, 645 deeds, 123 accounts, 36 rentals, two inventories and 65 miscellaneous items, ranging in date from Bishop Giffard's indulgence in 1270 to a contemporary extract from Thomas Cromwell's survey of ecclesiastical assets, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1548.[29] The accounts, which cover the period 1354–1504 (although few in number before the 1390s), fall into two distinct sequences – the masters' and the proctors', the former mainly containing details of entry fines received. The proctors' accounts are more concerned with the day-to-day running of the Guild's affairs, such as building and the receipt of rents and payment of stipends. The accounts further record the increased building activity of the Guild during the first half of the fifteenth century and then the decay in rents later in the century, accompanied by a tendency for the payment of entry fines by instalment as membership became less fashionable and the economic climate unfavourable.[30] Other entries record payments of expenses on membership drives, for gifts of hoods to useful contacts, riding to funerals of members outside the town, and the entertaining of local gentry at Guild expense.

27 Before the 1420s the schoolmaster was granted St Mary's House, beside Holy Trinity Church, to live and teach in. The accounts for 1427/8 include details of the costs of the 'Scolehowus', assumed until 2006 to be the building known as the 'Pedagogue's House': SCLA BRT 1/3/27. Dendrochronology, however, has dated this building to 1503, a year for which no accounts survive (Clark and Giles, *Guildhall and Pedagogue's House*, vol. 2, p. 16). An agreement made in 1482 with William Smyth states that he is to teach grammar freely to all scholars who shall come to the school, taking nothing from them for his teaching. If unable to teach himself, he is to employ a substitute, paying him 100*s*., a half of his own stipend: SCLA BRT 1/2/420.

28 Below Giles and Clark pp. 153–4.

29 The deeds are catalogued at SCLA BRT 1/2, and the accounts, rentals, inventories and miscellanea at SCLA BRT 1/3. A typescript calendar of the deeds, rentals and miscellanea was made by F.C. Wellstood. The accounts were calendared, incompletely, by W.J .Hardy and printed weekly in the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald.* They were subsequently published in book form as W.J. Hardy, ed., *Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation Records: The Guild Accounts* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1886). These calendars are available on-line at www.shakespeare.org.uk.

30 This pattern of decay in rents arising from economic decline can be seen also in the affairs of Coventry during the fifteenth century. See H. Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); R. Goddard, *Commercial Contraction and Urban Decline in Fifteenth-century Coventry*, Dugdale Society Occasional Paper 46 (2006).

A study of the membership using the surviving register, which begins in 1406, together with lists of entry fines recorded in the accounts, reveals certain patterns. In the first 20 years of the re-founded Guild, the average number of admissions, given some wildly fluctuating figures, is about 25. Between 1425 and 1450, however, annual entrants rarely fall below 50 and reach a peak of 128 in 1444. This period of rapid growth represents a time when four men dominated the Guild as masters: Hugh Salford, who was master continuously from 1424 to 1430, John Webbe, who served six times between 1435 and 1447, Thomas Leeke, with a similar record between 1439 and 1454,[31] and, most notably of all, John Hannys, who in the course of his career was elected master no fewer than 13 times. This followed a period of substantial building works carried out by the Guild: the Guildhall and chambers above, the Schoolhouse and Almshouses as well as tenements new-built or improved about the town. The increase in new members at this time may therefore reflect both a growing awareness of the status of the Guild in the area and a concerted effort on the part of the Guild officers to bring in the income needed to carry out or pay the arrears from their ambitious plans. Annual numbers rise sharply again in the late 1460s and early 1470s before declining steadily until the 1520s when, as noted above, a high percentage of admissions were of souls.[32]

Entry fines can also be used to consider the standing of the Guild at particular times. In the early years of the fifteenth century, they were substantial sums of money, the average being 20*s.* per person and 10*d.* light money towards the purchase of wax candles. Where several members of a family joined together, a group discount seems to have occasionally applied: Thomas Torpeley, his son Richard and daughter-in-law Joan paid 53*s.* 4*d.*, whilst Juliana Huggys, her son John and his wife were charged the full 60*s.* Payment by instalments, usually two or three, was frequently allowed. Wives, admitted alone after marriage, often paid only 13*s.* 4*d.* and it is clear that, as with all systems of charging, exceptions were made in particular cases. Membership numbers were not high during the first quarter of the fifteenth century, probably owing to these substantial entry fines, but in 1424 these were halved, couples paying between 20*s.* and 26*s.* 8*d.* on admission. Numbers rose dramatically thereafter and the Guild probably realised that more members paying less was healthier for the life of the Guild, both financially and socially. A diversity of fines continued to be charged, presumably based on a perceived ability to pay, until the 1430s when a norm of 6*s.* 8*d.* per person and 3*s.* 4*d.* for souls seems to have been established. This was largely maintained for the remainder of the century, but what does not appear in the register (although it is clear from the accounts) is that, from the 1480s onwards, payment was often by small instalments, a sure indication that it was becoming harder to attract new members and that

31 John Leeke had served as master between 1411 and 1417, presenting only one account for this period, suggesting that his re-election was a formality. The expenses refer to three days in settling the accounts: SCLA BRT 1/3/26.

32 1424–31, 488 admissions; 1439–46, 477 admissions; 1468–73, 498 admissions; 1507, 185 admissions, possibly a conflation of several years.

means had to be introduced to maintain levels of recruitment. As levels of recruitment among the living declined, largely owing to a perception that guilds were bastions of conservatism with little to offer socially or politically, there was a pressing need to maintain income. This probably accounts for the fact that from 1502 the entry fine for souls was reduced dramatically from 3*s.* 4*d.* to 20*d.*, remaining at this level until the suppression.

In a small number of cases, when a new member had something to offer the Guild, either in goods or services, the money fine was reduced or waived. In 1408 Simon Grove, carpenter, paid not only 53*s.* 4*d.* but also undertook the repair of the chambers in the Hall and the porch of the same. The fines of John Kyrton of Winchcombe, mason, and his wife Joan were excused in 1415 in reward for his work on the Lady Chapel in the parish church. John Campyon agreed to act as the Guild's legal adviser in return for membership in 1424. These payments in kind die out as the century progresses, but there are regular gifts in lieu, of wine, barley and sheep as well as objects to adorn the Chapel.[33]

The Members

Laity

Within the town of Stratford itself, the lay membership shows evidence of an economy focused on the food, clothing and building trades: bakers, butchers, millers, weavers, tailors, walkers (fullers of cloth), shoemakers, drapers, hosiers, glovers, carpenters, smiths and slaters, are all represented as are many others, too numerous to detail. By this time, occupational surnames usually reflect no more than an ancestor's calling, but it is relevant to consider aliases, which throw up further possible occupational names such as brazier, tiler, chandler, mason, thatcher, saddler, glazier and cook. Stratford's position as a market town is also indicated by the presence of barkers and chapmen among the inhabitants admitted to membership.

Until the early sixteenth century the majority of members admitted into the Guild had a designated origin outside the borough of Stratford and it is clear that the organisation was never considered as a purely local affair. The accounts show that in certain years, particularly in the mid-fifteenth century, specific areas were identified for recruitment. In 1442/43 towns and villages northwards into the Forest of Arden were targeted.[34] In 1446 the emphasis was

33 In 1421 William Botulfe gave a vestment on admission and undertook to provide another, together with an altar frontal. A total of five pairs of vestments, together with a pall and two banners, were given to the Chapel between this date and 1441. Also common were gifts of brass bowls, chalices, cups and silver spoons. The last fine 'in kind' was a 12*d.* rent charge from a tenement in Bridge Street, given by John Burges in 1509: SCLA BRT1/1 fols 3r., 6r., 9v., 10r., 17r., 21r., 149r.

34 The master's accounts record expenses of 19*s.* 4*d.* at Evesham, Campden, Coventry, Alcester, Inkberrow, Salford, Kings Norton, Shipston, Birmingham and Idlicote at the reception of brothers and sisters for the profit of the Guild on several occasions: SCLA BRT 1/3/50.

on the route west towards Evesham, and in 1449 and again in 1467, attention turned to the south and west through the Cotswolds. There must also have been recruitment of visitors and traders passing through the town, thereby accounting for Walter Bryd of Kidderminster, admitted in 1425. The most obvious recruitment of visiting traders is the group of 24 members admitted between 1479 and 1518 from Kirby Kendal (modern Kirby, in Cumbria). Of these half were named as wives or souls, so were presumably admitted *in absentia*, the husbands being engaged in the profitable Kendal cloth trading, which took them south, through the Midlands, to the coastal ports. It would be useful for anyone engaged in such peripatetic trade to have a sense of belonging to a particular place *en route.* Social and trading contacts could be reinforced, and every soul would benefit from more priests to pray for them.

Members from country areas came mainly from the natural hinterland of the town or belonged to groups specifically targeted in membership drives, and it seems clear, from gifts of hoods recorded in the accounts, that parish clergy played an active part in this. Most were admitted as members and not uncommonly head a substantial list of their parishioners.[35] Although the number of members from the Arden area to the north of the town may represent a recruitment effort on the part of the Guild, much of the timber for the building works undertaken in Stratford would have been supplied from this area and it would therefore have been natural, despite the presence of the flourishing Guild of Knowle in the Arden area, for timber suppliers to have been invited or encouraged to join. Indeed, there was something of a 'two-way trade' in membership with Stratfordians regularly featuring in the register of the Guild of Knowle. Some of these were also members of the Stratford Guild, but some, in fact, never seem to have joined their home organisation.[36] Warwick, the residence of 75 members admitted between 1414 and 1524, also had its own flourishing guilds but in this case, in the absence of any surviving membership records, it is not possible to establish the extent of any cross-membership.[37]

Of the larger places from which members came, three stand out: Coventry, Bristol and London. Coventry is not surprising, only 18 miles from Stratford but, given that during the fifteenth century it was one of the major cities in the country and had flourishing guilds of its own, why should Coventrians consider it worthwhile joining Stratford's organisation? Few are recorded before the middle of the century, but in the 1450s there were five men who, with their wives and the souls of parents, made up a 13-member contingent. Of these five, all bar one were connected with the building trade and the majority were

35 In 1425–26 Thomas Simon, vicar of Pillerton, was granted a hood 'for labour in inciting divers brothers of his parish into the guild': SCLA BRT 1/3/35. John Iremonger, vicar of Pebworth, heads a list of 14 parishioners from Pebworth and Broad Marston admitted in 1470: SCLA BRT 1/1 fol. 96r.

36 112 members are described as 'of Stratford'. Of these, 32 do not occur in the Holy Cross register: W.B. Bickley, ed., *The Register of the Guild of Knowle in the county of Warwick, 1451–1535* (Walsall: W.H. Robinson, 1894).

37 12 of the Warwick members were clergy connected with either the guilds or St Mary's College. They include Thomas Clerke, master of the Hospital of St Michael, and Doctor Katemer, prior of Warwick, who does not appear in any lists of officeholders. A further seven are described as servants, of varying status, to the Beauchamp and Neville earls of Warwick.

glaziers or, in one case, a painter and glazier. During this time the Guild was engaged in rebuilding the chancel of the chapel, and the expertise of glaziers would have been required. Indeed these are the only glaziers so described in the register. Two of them, Nicholas Aubrey and John Goode, admitted with their wives in 1451, had their entry fines pardoned, while the accounts for that year further show a payment of £4 for 'glasynge' the chancel window.

The first major influx of London members took place in 1469. Eight had been admitted between 1434 and 1468, but in 1469 and 1470 no fewer than 24 Londoners joined. This can almost certainly be attributed to the entry at this time of Hugh Clopton, described as 'of London, merchant'. Younger son of the lord of the manor of Clopton, just outside Stratford, member of a family which had been associated with the Guild since 1413, Hugh Clopton was apprenticed as a mercer in 1444, rising through the ranks of the Mercers' Company in his later career, and serving as Lord Mayor of London in 1492. In 1469 he was still making his way and those joining with him that year and in the year following included Thomas Fabyan, apprenticed to the same master, John Baker, who had taken over Clopton's indentures on the death of his first master, John Roo, and also the widow of that same John Roo, together with the souls of her late husband and children. The master of the Guild in 1469 and 1470 was Roger Paget, himself a mercer, admitted to the Guild in 1453. He was bequeathed £10 in Clopton's will, and one of the tenements listed in the latter's Inquisition *post mortem*, known to posterity as New Place, and later the home of Shakespeare, was then described as in the occupation of Paget. Clearly trading and family interests had led Clopton to join the Guild in his home town and to encourage those with whom he worked and traded in London to do likewise. While there is evidence of Clopton himself returning regularly to Stratford, there is very little in the records to indicate that the other London members ever visited the town.

One other London admission merits further consideration, namely that of Thomas Hannys, also a mercer, who joined the Guild in 1480. He too had strong local links, being a son of John Hannys, who, as noted, had served as master 13 times between 1443 and 1468. Thomas was apprenticed to Hugh Clopton, of whose will he was named an executor in 1496. John Hannys, who had made his will in 1473 in Bristol, although described as of Stratford, left 200 marks and the bulk of his Stratford property to his elder son Thomas. The Hannys (or Handys) family had originated in Hidcote, in Gloucestershire, where John was born, but he had moved to Stratford by 1437 when he and his wife Alice were admitted to the Guild. No occupation is given for him but clearly his trade must later have taken him to Bristol. Although a regular trading route along the rivers Avon and Severn already connected Bristol and Stratford, the Hannys family's links with both may account for the 51 Bristol members admitted between 1444 and 1506. By his will, John left £30 to Holy Trinity Church, £10 to the Guild and £3 6*s.* 8*d.* towards the fabric of the church of his native village, Hidcote. The provisions in the will of his son Thomas, as implemented, were radically to alter the Guild buildings. Hugh Clopton

had already made prior arrangements for the rebuilding of the nave, tower and porch of the Guild Chapel, confirmed by his will in 1496. Hannys, in his subsequent will, proved in 1503, looked instead to the enlargement of the Guild almshouses. He left £200 to his executors

> … for the new bielding and settyng up of the Almeshouses nowe beyng within the towne of Stratford … adioynyng next unto the Scolehowse and hit to be doon before and above any and all other and all other [sic] workes to be disposed for my soule.

The scheme was ambitious:

> … a place quadrant beyng in length every wey lxxv foote or theruppon, where as the olde almeshouse now be And to be made with an hall a Parlour, buttrey, kechen and a littell oratory for a chapell havyng other chambres both byneth and above for lodgynd the seid poore people convenyently and made to there ease with chymneys and draughtes thereto necessaries moche after the patron and forme of a platt therefore drawen by me and hereunto annexed.

The will survives only in registered form and the plan is therefore lost. One condition Hannys imposed on this work was that the master and aldermen of the Guild should agree in future to remit the 6*s.* 8*d.* fine for those entering the Almshouses. Despite these clear intentions, Hannys seems to have felt that there might be obstacles to their implementation, and much of the remainder of the will is taken up with legacies to be paid out if the £200 was not expended on building. Among these contingent bequests was £10 to the Guild, £5 of which was to be spent on a silver gilt pyx, weighing 20 ounces, to be kept on the high altar of the chapel. The other £5 was to commission a gilded tabernacle, like that in St Margaret Lothbury, the Mercers' church in London, to cover the sacrament in the chapel. It has hitherto been assumed that Hannys's provisions for the rebuilding of the almshouses were never carried out, but the dendrochronological dating of the Pedagogue's House to 1503 and recent further dating of the current Almshouses seem to prove conclusively that part, at least, of Hannys's scheme was implemented, or perhaps an adaptation. Indeed the current street frontage of the almshouses is nearly twice that specified in the will. Like his fellow successful London émigré, Hannys's legacy to the Guild radically altered the street scene we see today.[38]

Clergy

There is no doubt that clergy were a strong influence in the life of the Guild. Nearly all parish clergy within a 15-mile radius of the town became members, but by far the largest number of religious admitted into membership were the

38 Will, dated 7 August 1502 and proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 23 October 1503 by George Bradbury, one of the executors: TNA, PROB 11/13. Bradbury, also a mercer of London, was Hannys's brother-in-law. The other executor named was Alexander Motton, a priest 'in Stratford', while the overseer was Thomas Bradbury, mercer.

108 chaplains, including not only those appointed to serve in the Guild Chapel but others who officiated in churches and chantries throughout Warwickshire. Appointment to a Guild chaplaincy was clearly regarded as a most desirable position, as most of those so joining paid substantial sums of money for the privilege. Amounts paid range from 13*s.* 4*d.* to 20*s.* for the promise of a vacancy, and from £6 13*s.* 4*d.* to £10 for a definite appointment. Nicholas Leeke paid £14 in 1427 for himself, the souls of his ancestors and his appointment as chaplain. In 1433 the same man, or possibly a namesake, gave seven marks, a silver cup worth £3 and the reversion of a house in Stratford on his admission as chaplain for life. The accounts indicate that the annual stipend of Guild chaplains – there were usually four at any one time – averaged about £4 during the fifteenth century. Occasionally entry fines were granted to named chaplains, but whether to supplement, or as part payment of, their stipends is not clear. Formal grants of chaplaincies made during the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries show that, in addition to a salary, chaplains had their own chamber, cloth for livery and a share of the garden and produce of the Guild.[39] Throughout the century payments occur for repair work in the chambers of the chaplains, or rooms to increase the domestic amenities, which included a new parlour and chimneys in 1427–28.[40] The duties, as outlined in one grant of a chaplaincy, were to celebrate within the chapel of the Guild on behalf of the brethren and sisters of the Guild, living and deceased. The ordinances also specified attendance at the funerals of deceased members, confirmed by expenses recorded in the accounts for the provision of mounts for chaplains, as well as officers, to attend the funerals of distant members. When William Smyth was appointed schoolmaster in 1482, with the promise of the next chaplaincy, his future duties were more fully detailed:

> that, when so disposed, he shall celebrate mass in the chapel of the Gild and on festivals in the parish church of Stratford at the altar of St. John the Baptist for the good estate of the Bishop of Worcester and for the souls of master Thomas Jolyffe and his parents John and Joan and of all the benefactors of the said Gild and of all faithful deceased, saying at each mass for the living *Deus qui caritatis* and for the dead *Inclina domine* and saying 'Ye shall praye specially for the sowles of maister Thomas Jolyffe, Johne and Johanne his ffadur and modur and ye sowles of all Brethers and Susters of the seid Gilde and all Cristen sowles sayinge of your charyte a Pater noster and a Aue'.[41]

Guild Officers

A total of 56 men were elected to serve as Master between 1405 and 1535, the period covered by the register. The majority served for one or two years, but a few, particularly in the period 1430 to 1470, dominated the Guild's activities.

39 SCLA BRT 1/2/536, 539, 552, 561, 605; BRT 1/3 *passim*.
40 SCLA BRT 1/3/38.
41 SCLA BRT 1/2/420.

John Hannys and Roger Paget in particular, who served respectively 13 and 11 times as Master, must have had great influence and it is worth noting that both probably had connections with the cloth trade. Paget, as noted above, was a mercer as was Hannys's son, Thomas, and Hannys himself had trading links with Bristol. His last year of office was followed immediately by Paget's first and the period of their tenures was characterised by a change in the status of many new members, particularly from a distance, including important merchants and traders.[42]

The proctors' duties were clearly described in the 1443 ordinances at the beginning of the register: they were to take receipt of light-silver payments, collect rents due from Guild property and pay the chaplains' salaries, be responsible for all repairs to property, organise and pay for the annual feast, and issue due warning to all brothers and sisters to attend church with the Master before the feast. In addition they were in charge of an inventory of the Guild goods, to be checked annually.[43] This was clearly regarded as a position of some responsibility even if, as is clear from the accounts, the proctors were assisted by a clerk or one of the chaplains to make up the account rolls.[44] The accounts were presented annually and their auditing was an occasion of importance, regular payments being made for food and drink to mark the event. The creation of a 'Cowntynghows' in 1427–28 presumably represents the recognition of a need for a dedicated space for the keeping of dockets, receipt of rents and drawing up of the accounts. The ordinances are quite clear that no-one could become an alderman without first serving as proctor but, as a study of the careers of the Masters shows, this was not strictly followed: no fewer than 27 men, including John Hannys, became aldermen without having first served as proctor. Normally, however, service as proctor, often within a year or two of admission, led to election as alderman, and then as Master. Nevertheless, particularly during the reigns of the longer-serving Masters, some never achieved the final office. Thomas Clopton, elected Master for 1482/83, had hitherto never served in any capacity. His father John had died in office the previous year, and Thomas's election was undoubtedly in response to this. A comparison with surviving Guild deeds reveals that many of the Guild officers also served, often contemporaneously, in manorial roles, being there described, for example, as capital bailiff, constable and steward when they witnessed deeds.[45]

42 A memorandum at the foot of Paget's accounts as master for 1488/9 records that during the 11 years in which he had served as master, he had procured for the Guild sums totalling £343 11*s.* 9*d.*, and had spent £210 18*s.* 9*d.* on repairs and new buildings on Guild lands: SCLA BRT 1/3/99.

43 If there were not enough to cover all the expenses of the feast, the Master was to deliver to them 'the perquysytis of the place': SCLA BRT 1/1 fol.1a v.–2a r.

44 Robert Thorn was paid 3*s.* 6*d.* in 1410–11 for making a book of accounts and other Guild matters. Later in the century, Roger Palmer was paid 3*s.* 4*d.* annually as clerk of the Guild, and may be the writer or scribe of the register. Admitted in 1463 as son of Robert and Joan, his wife Joan was admitted in 1464. He was clearly a layman.

45 SCLA BRT 1/2 *passim*.

Conclusion

The membership register, and more especially the surviving accounts, show that during the fifteenth century, the Guild of the Holy Cross was engaged in ambitious building, rebuilding and restoration projects, not only of its 'let estate' in the town but, more importantly, of its religious, administrative and social heart. The Guildhall and rebuilt Chapel chancel survive from the first half of the century, but it is perhaps ironic that major elements of the complex, the Chapel nave and Almshouses, have now been shown to date from a period of decline in the fortunes of the organisation, and to be almost entirely the result of the benefactions of two men.

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Reformation: Priests and People

Sylvia Gill

Dissolution

On 14 February 1548, commissions were raised to appoint the men whose responsibility it would be to survey, by county, 'what colleges, chantries etc. have come to the King by the Act made in Parliament'. The Act, which on 24 December 1547 had received the royal assent of Edward VI (the King now hailed as the new Josiah bringing in true religion), was for the compulsory dissolution of these 'colleges, chantries etc.'[1] By the terms of the Act, the commissioners were to obtain by survey full details of the memorial foundations active in towns and parishes. They were to report their findings to the Court of Augmentations by 31 May 1548, but all the property of the dissolved institutions formally belonged to the King from Easter Sunday, 1 April. Henry VIII had had his own Chantries Act, granted by Parliament in 1545, which also involved Augmentations and survey reporting, but wholesale dissolution was not the Crown's declared intention at that date.[2]

The second survey, with its greater purpose and closer focus, demanded more detail from local managers, in particular the wardens of town, parish and guild responsible for overseeing foundations and funds. Whether large or small, from colleges and chantries to altar lights and lamps, all memorials had to be declared. Thus, at some point in the spring of 1548, Stratford's representatives would have been obliged to appear before the commission for the second time in as many years to report on the town's major religious institutions – the College of Holy Trinity and the Guild of the Holy Cross,

1 An Act whereby 'certaine Chauntries, Colleges Free chapels and the Possessions of the same be given to the King's Maj[esty]', 1 Edward VI, cap. 14, Statutes of the Realm, pp. 24–33; H. Gee and W.J. Hardy (eds), *Documents Illustrative of the History of the English Church* (London: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 328–57.

2 The Court of the Augmentations and Revenues of the King's Crown, to give its full title, had been created by Thomas Cromwell in 1535 to manage the monastic dissolutions. It was responsible for overseeing the Chantry Surveys for Henry VIII and Edward VI, managing the sales of property acquired by the dissolution process and paying clerical pensions.

and all that belonged to them. In addition to the names of founders, the foundation's purpose, its financial sources and current value, the personal details of serving priests and personnel, their names, ages, stipends and duties were also required.

At the date of the survey both College and Guild had their full complement of clerical staff. Between them they provided Stratford with the services of 13 priests, four choirboys,[3] one 'grammar priest' and one clock custodian. Who were these men? What was their relationship with the townspeople? What of the personal consequences of dissolution, considering that it meant not only loss of income but the loss of home as well?

The Clerical Community

Of the town's two College and Guild institutions, our focus – the Guild of the Holy Cross – was the smaller, and appears the more democratic in the employment of its priests. There was a hierarchy of titles and stipends in the College, whereas the four Guild priests, Roger Egynton, Thomas Hakins, Thomas Moris and John Payn, were all paid the same sum of £5 6*s*. 8*d*. per annum. Only William Dalam, the Guild's schoolmaster, received more, earning £10. 0*s*. 0*d*. Oliver Baker, who looked after the clock, had 13*s*. 4*d*. a year for his services. The priests of the Guild also had their accommodation provided; the letters of appointment for Egynton, Hakins and Moris confirm that in addition to their stipends, each would have a chamber and 'a share of the garden and the fruit thereof'.[4]

Despite being one of the survey's criteria, the ages of the priests are not given (except that of the priest-schoolmaster Dalam, who was aged 60), but Roger Egynton must have been the senior among them. Described with the title 'Sir' and a location of Stratford-upon-Avon, Egynton appears in the register of the Guild in 1505–06 when he paid his fee of 6*s*. 8*d*.; the appellation 'Sir' suggests that at that date he was already fully ordained as priest and, therefore, above the canonically required age of 24. Formally appointed to his Guild post on 24 March 1512, Egynton's name and signature subsequently appear on business documents of the Guild as he also acted as its notary. His relationship with the Guild, as member and priest, was of over 40 years standing by the time of its dissolution. In comparison with Egynton's record his colleagues, Moris and Hakins, appear very junior indeed with appointments in 1543 and 1546 respectively. John Payn's length of service is rather more problematic in that he was already a curate of the Guild in the 1530s, but appears not to have been issued with formal letters of appointment until 1540.[5]

3 For details of the choirboys and their place in the life of the College see the following chapter.

4 SCLA BRT 1/2/536, 24 March 1512 (Egynton), BRT 1/2/605, 22 June 1543, (Hakyns) and BRT 1/2/609, 4 March 1545/6 (Morres).

5 Marginalia in the first pension roll following the dissolution notes the dates of appointment for a number of priests of the Guild (see footnote 4 above) and the College; Payn's is shown as 6 October

These men's livelihoods were lost when the Crown dissolved their institution – though they were eligible for pensions. Unlike the monastic suppressions of the previous decade, when pensions were a negotiating tool and not given to all, this time there was a scale of awards.[6] Though in most cases this scale was firmly applied there were anomalies, and the Guild priests of Stratford appear to have fared better than others: their pensions matched their stipends rather than incurring the scale reduction to £5 per annum. One important aspect of the 1548 Act was the Crown's stated intention to continue the maintenance of schools if deemed appropriate. This was the case in Stratford, which was able to keep its school and see its schoolmaster Dalam reappointed on his old terms.[7]

As with the Guild so with the College: it was also dissolved and all but two of its priests were pensioned. The two exceptions were Roger Dyos, already curate of Stratford and reappointed to the same role, and Robert Smart, curate of Luddington, who also kept his post.[8] As ex-religious, Thomas Clerke of the College and the Guild's grammar priest, William Dalam, had both been through the process previously and once again witnessed the breaking up of the communities of which they were a part.[9] Dalam was fortunate to continue as the schoolmaster but Clerke, most of his fellows in the College and their colleagues in the Guild, though still ordained priests, were now without the status of a formal post or a congregation to serve. Furthermore, for the town, where there had been two places of worship and 13 priests, now there was just the parish church and one curate. The sense of loss and the corresponding re-adjustments would have been experienced on many levels, and might perhaps only be properly understood if we stop to examine the relationship of town, College and Guild through the years of Reformation that preceded the watershed year of 1548.

Priests and People

By 1530, the Guild of the Holy Cross had become a foundation that could provide practical support for local people at nearly all stages of their lives. It owned housing and commercial property for rental, provided a

32 Henry VIII, that is 1540. While this could be an error by a scribe, the entries for Moris and Hakins agree with the letters in the Stratford archives, but there is other evidence of Stratford appointments being taken up in advance of the issue of formal letters (see Ian Green's chapter in this book 'More Polite Learning', pp. 74–6), TNA SC6/EDWVI/714 H/S/Wa/Wo-1547–8.

6 R.H. Brodie (ed.), *CPR 2EdwardVI* Part 4–20.6.1548 pp. 417–18.

7 TNA E319/15/6 20.7.1548: warrant confirming the appointment of Dyos as curate of Stratford, Smart as curate of Luddington, and the continuation of the grammar school with Dalam as schoolmaster.

8 TNA E319/15/6: Commissioners' Warrants (to Continue) Warwickshire and Coventry – 20 July 1548.

9 Dalam had been sub-prior of Studley Priory, a house of Augustinian Canons. See TNA E25/107 and Dom Hugh Aveling and W.A. Pantin (eds), *The Letter Book Of Robert Joseph, Monk–Scholar Of Evesham And Gloucester College, Oxford, 1530–3*, Oxford Historical Society, New series 19 (1967). Evidence from the pension records shows that the College priest Thomas Clerke was an ex-religious from Combe Abbey near Coventry; see TNA SC6/EDWVI/718 H/S/Wa/Wo-1551–52 and E135/9/17, List of pensioners in various counties – Elizabeth (undated but circa 1561).

grammar education for those able to engage in schooling, and supported some of Stratford's poor and elderly in its almshouses. The enabler for these practical provisions was the spiritual support provided by the Guild's priests to a congregation made up of the living and the dead. The priests visited Guild members at times of sickness and on their deathbeds, helped with their wills, attended their funerals and said mass in the Guild Chapel for the souls of those departed. Prevailing theology placed value on the prayers of the priests, and this underpinned gifts and bequests of property and funds to the Guild, in turn providing stipends for the priests, the rental portfolio, school and almshouses. The doctrine of purgatory emphasised the utility of memorial masses for the release of souls from its throes, and encouraged the part that good works could play in assisting souls to heaven. This promoted the participation of individuals in the life of the Guild by becoming enrolled as members, by attending its feasts and by the giving of gifts, combining religious and social investment for the good of their souls and their community.

The same theology was responsible for the development of the role of the chantry priest, endowed to remember a founder or founders and pray for all Christian souls. Such was the spiritual basis for the Guild's rival institution in the town, the College of the Holy Trinity. Here, a chantry chapter of five priests belonging to the parish church became a college proper following the provision of a residence next to the church, where the priests lived in common.[10] From its creation in 1331, the College gathered influence, status and endowments, which in Stratford included combining the role of parish rector with that of warden of the College, an appointment under the eye of the Bishop of Worcester.[11] The College's influence on the town was also enhanced by its status as a local Peculiar (a status which removed it from the full oversight of diocesan authority), one consequence of which was the right, in two years out of three, to sit in judgement on local court cases that would normally have been the prerogative of the bishop. Thus, prior to the development of the Guild of the Holy Cross into an organisation of both religious and secular influence, it was the College that was the local institution that mattered. With the parish church at its heart, associated with the bishop but with judicial rights of its own, it is not surprising that it felt itself senior to the Guild, and there was more than a little grit in their relationship.[12]

10 The college house was begun in 1353 and was built by the Bishop of London, Robert Stratford, a relative of the original founder: William Page (ed.), 'The College of Stratford-on-Avon', *Victoria County History, A History of the County of Warwick, vol. 2* (1908), p. 123.

11 Page, 'College', pp. 123–4.

12 In 1430 it fell to the Bishop of Worcester to settle disagreements between the two bodies regarding the Guild's reluctance to pay tithes from its property to the College. The Bishop's decision enforced the status of the latter, requiring the Guild to pay both tithes and oblations together with a further annual charge of 4*s*. and a direction that the master and officers of the Guild, its priests and members, were all to attend the parish church on the four major feast days: Page, 'College', pp. 113–15; Robert Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530–1580', *Midland History* 32 (2007), pp. 71–2.

Despite disagreements, in the early decades of the sixteenth century the everyday religious and administrative life of Stratford was firmly centred on its two major foundations of Guild and College. Though never immune from outside influence (Worcester's series of absentee bishops made it vulnerable to the oversight of royal officials), after 1530 the Guild–College nexus suffered from the unsettling influence of Henry VIII and his Reformation, which began increasingly to impinge on the lives of these institutions and the townspeople. Ken Farnhill, in his study of guilds and communities in East Anglia, refers to the early years of the Henrician Reformation as consisting of 'measures designed to frighten the English clergy', but inevitably the ripples went wider than the clergy.[13] Given the proximity of Church and people one could not frighten the clergy without disturbing the laity, a state of affairs which came to a peak in 1534 with the Act of Supremacy, confirming the absolute separation of England from the Roman Church and requiring all men over the age of 14 to swear an oath of acceptance.

Meeting Reform

The Act of Supremacy was unlikely to have been Stratford's first acquaintance with radical ideas or the prospect of reform, but it was probably the first time that the provisions of the Reformation were actually visited on the town.[14] The priests of the College signed their acceptance on 19 August 1534 and it seems likely that others of the town would have done so too.[15]

From 1534 onwards the realities of the Crown's religious reforms came ever closer and we can begin to consider the consequences for the people and buildings at the heart of our study. Of the buildings, the Guildhall unquestionably formed the civic heart of the town, but it was in the Guild Chapel (and the parish church) where the Reformation was felt most keenly. The exchange of pope for king, the liturgical changes, the formal

13 Ken Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community in Late Medieval East Anglia* (York: York Medieval Press and Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001) p. 155.

14 Dangerous ideas were not unknown in Warwickshire: Coventry, 18 miles away, had been the centre for a series of Lollard trials and a martyrdom. Bishop Blyth of Coventry and Lichfield held a major heresy investigation of Lollards in Coventry in 1511 to 1513 and the activities of one of the accused, Alice Rowley, brought this doctrine as close to Stratford as Beaudesert, eight miles away. Another of those accused in this trial, Robert Silkesby, was executed in Coventry in 1521 'for holding an opinion that Christ's body was not in the sacrament' and found a place in John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. See Shannon McSheffrey and Norman Tanner, 'Prosecution of the Coventry Lollards in the Ecclesiastical Records, 1486–1522', Camden Society Publications, *Fifth Series*, 23 (2003), pp. 61–318. The city of Worcester had already been the site of reforming activity as its chronicle contains an entry by Bailiffs Walter Stone and John Fathers for 1529 stating that in this year '[the] cross before ye old hallden (Guildhall) called the high cross and many other crosses defaced', Worcester Record Office, WRO 009 1/BA 2636 Miscellaneous Documents relating to the estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, parcel 11, ff. 155–9; see also Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'Worcester: A Cathedral City in the Reformation' in Patrick Collinson and John Craig (eds), *The Reformation in English Towns* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 94–112.

15 The signatories were John Bell, described as warden, William Crace, sub-warden, Robert Middleton, precentor, Humphrey Sadler, curate, Richard Borrow and Thomas Reddell, vicars. Page, 'College', p. 123.

authorisation and introduction of the English Bible, the prohibition of saints and images – during the 1530s these were national decisions that demanded local responses. And, from the middle of the decade, Stratford had a bishop ready to take them forward.

Hugh Latimer was appointed Bishop of Worcester in 1535 and no doubt his proximity to the King and Thomas Cromwell, and his reputation as a keen evangelical and fiery preacher, would have gone before him.[16] In 1537, Latimer took up his residency and proceeded to a visitation of his diocese. The injunctions for this demonstrated his spiritual priorities and represented a further threat to the supporting precepts of Guild and College. In confession and the making of wills, priests were instructed to 'excite' (encourage) testators away from 'will-works' (bequests for the good of souls) towards 'works of mercy and charity' that were the 'necessary works of God'. Furthermore, trentals – the provision of 30 masses for the dead – were disallowed and preaching was to take precedence over ceremony and bead prayers. New prayers for the bidding of the beads[17] had been issued in 1535 and 1536, displacing the old formulas. The language of the proclamation that enforced the changes was designed for drama and emphasis. It declared that all references to the pope, 'his presumptuous and proud pomp and authority preferred, [were now] utterly to be abolished, eradicated and erased out', thus confirming Henry's position as 'immediately next unto God of this Catholic Church of England'. The prayers to be substituted for those of the previous liturgy were those royally and episcopally authorised and Latimer was clear that no other form of prayer should be used.[18] Furthermore, he intervened directly in Stratford in October 1537 when he finalised the removal of the conservative John Bell from his post as Dean of the College. Bell was replaced by Anthony

16 In 1532, Latimer had been directed by Convocation not to preach against purgatory, images and pilgrimages. Despite this, he was invited to preach in Bristol in 1533 where an initially favourable reaction was followed by considerable division among the laity, the civic authorities and local clergy. This dispute ultimately involved the intervention of Archbishop Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, and news of such events must have travelled up the Avon. His later sermons to Convocation in 1536 continued to stress the ills caused by the doctrine of purgatory. For Bristol, see Martha Skeeters, *Community and Clergy: Bristol and the Reformation c. 1530–1579* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 38–46 and note 26, p. 223; for his sermons to Convocation, see *The sermon that the reuerende father in Christ, Hugh Latimer, Byshop of Worcester, made to the clergie, in the co [n] uocatio [n]* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1537), pp. 2–29. STC (2nd ed.) 15286.

17 'Bidding of the beads' was the term used to describe the priest's exhortation before Sunday mass, calling (*bidding)* the congregation to prayer (Old English *bede*), specifically praying for named individuals or groups. The formal call began with the pope and the clergy, the king and those in authority, and any of concern to the local parish, before turning attention to prayer for the dead. In addition to prayers for all Christian souls, the names of those newly deceased would be included together with those who had left sums of money to the parish as general benefactors or for particular inclusion in the bederoll – important to those seeking relief for their souls in purgatory. Evangelical thinking anathematised purgatory and this, together with the displacement of the pope, demanded changes to the format of the bidding prayers.

18 Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (eds), *Tudor Royal Proclamations, vol. 1: The Early Tudors, 1485–1553* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 231; Latimer's Injunctions for Worcester Diocese 1537, in W.H. Frere and W.M. Kennedy (eds), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation,* vol. 2, 1536–58 (London: Longmans Green & Co, 1910), pp. 15–18.

Barker, evangelical and politically acceptable, a career cleric in possession of a number of benefices who is unlikely to have resided in the town.[19]

Parallel to these events were the continuing reforms effected by the Crown. In 1536, the dissolution of the smaller monasteries included the houses of Augustinian canons in Studley and Warwick, the priory of St Anne in Alcester, the priory of Pinley and a house of Benedictine nuns in Wroxall, none of which was more than 12 miles from Stratford.[20] The surviving chronicle of events in Worcester records: 'the monks, friars, canons were put down, and all the jewels of the said houses …were taken away. And the body of Christ (the sacrament) was taken out of the Church'.[21] In Worcester things moved fast under Latimer: it is possible that the city's cathedral and other churches lost their crucifixes and rood lofts in 1537–8. Furthermore, during the same period, the customary robes dressing the image of Our Lady were removed and the shrines of St Oswald and St Wulstan were taken down and the saints' bones reburied near the high altar.[22] Of significance for Stratford, given the existence in the parish church of a chantry chapel dedicated to the saint, was the ruling that the feast day and prayers commemorating Thomas Becket were to be 'clean omitted' from the liturgy. A proclamation declared 'the said Thomas Becket shall not be esteemed, named, reputed, nor called a saint … his images and pictures through the whole realm shall be put down and avoided out of all churches, chapels and other places'.[23] These proclamations were the means by which royal commands were disseminated and were to be read out in towns and parish churches. What would the priests and people of Stratford have felt while they listened to this? Did they glance surreptitiously at the College's chapel of the now demoted saint, or at his figure in the Guild Chapel paintings? Perhaps they shared the Worcester chronicler's sentiments: 'and at that time God sent such lightning and thunder that all thereabouts thought the church would fall on them'.[24] There is certainly evidence locally of the unrest that new ideas and new rulings could encourage.

In 1537 there was heated controversy concerning the radical preaching of a minister, Edward Large of Hampton Lucy, which highlighted differences in religious inclination, though these were also invested with the complications of personal allegiance to local gentry. Traditionalists lined up behind William Clopton – an alderman of the Guild and a major property owner both in and

19 In May 1537, Barker received dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Faculty Office that enabled him to hold any number of benefices with cure of souls up to a total yearly value of £300 and with non-residence, a dispensation that he readily availed himself of, holding livings variously in Wiltshire, Essex and Oxfordshire. Latimer eventually realised Barker was not his ideal type of clerical reformer, telling Cromwell in 1539, '(he) had never had the wardenship of Stratford at my hand, saving at contemplation of your lordship's letter'. D.S. Chambers (ed.), *Faculty Office Registers, 1534–1549: A calendar of the first two registers of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Faculty Office* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966); Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 72.

20 As will be discussed in the following chapter, the sub-prior of Studley, William Dalam, had a connection with Stratford and the Guild of the Holy Cross and became its grammar priest in 1543.

21 WRO 0009:1/BA 2636 Miscellaneous Documents; MacCulloch, 'Worcester', p. 98.

22 WRO 0009:1/BA 2636 Miscellaneous Documents; MacCulloch, 'Worcester', p. 100.

23 Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations vol. 1*, p. 276.

24 MacCulloch, 'Worcester', p. 100.

around Stratford – in a legal action against Large.[25] Opposing Clopton was Sir William Lucy of Charlecote. Of titled status, a significant landowner, Justice of the Peace and local leader, Lucy, who was inclined to reformist thinking and had good political connections, organised the response to Clopton's challenge, and eventually brought in both Latimer and Thomas Cromwell to resolve the issue.[26] A few years later, coinciding with King Henry's return to a more conservative religious stance, action was begun for sexual misconduct against James Barker, then sub-dean of the College (and possibly related to his superior, the evangelical Anthony Barker), a case that came to naught but which reflected the recent changes in the religious atmosphere at Court and in the diocese.[27] Latimer resigned his bishopric in 1539 because of the declining emphasis on reform nationally, and was replaced almost immediately by the College's former Dean, John Bell. This exchange of bishop, the disgrace and death of Cromwell, and a cooling towards the new learning, may have encouraged Stratford authority figures to see the action against James Barker as an opportunity to re-affirm the traditional religious complexion of the town.[28] The evidence of tension in and around Stratford is apparent in these public disagreements. To the cases of Edward Large and James Barker, and the reactions in Worcester, can also be added the more personal testamentary evidence of wills. These documents offer further indications of unease that continued for years to come within the network of relationships affected by religious change, including those between the priests of the town.

'For the Wealth of My Soul'

Sir Thomas Lucy, father of the Sir William whose evangelical sympathies were mentioned above, made his will in 1525. This is a document devoted to instructions 'for the wealth of my soul': for trentals to be sung by the Grey and White Friars immediately after his death, candles to be kept burning during mass for one year, for a memorial *dirige* and *requiem*, and for alms to the poor.[29] It is a will firmly traditional and untroubled by any suggestion of religious

25 William Clopton was a descendant of Hugh Clopton, who was responsible for the building of Stratford's stone river bridge and for the rebuilding of the Guild Chapel in the last years of the fifteenth century. L.F. Salzman and Philip Styles (eds), *Victoria History of the Counties of England: Warwick,* Vol. 3 (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), pp. 221–34.

26 For a full account of this case see G.R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The enforcement of the Reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 375–80. See also Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', pp. 75–6.

27 WRO 802/2764 c. 1520–c. 1541 Visitation Act book of Bishop John Bell, ff. 111–13.

28 John Bell, once he was in place in Worcester, had removed John Combe, Latimer's servant and one of Clopton's opponents, from his post. Furthermore, Bell had a history of anti-heresy activity dating back 20 years or more and in the previous year, 1540, he and his Chancellor, Thomas Bagarde, had pursued incidents of heresy in Gloucestershire – which must have confirmed to his diocese, including his manor of Stratford, that the wind direction had changed. WRO 802/2764 c. 1520–c. 1541, Visitation Act book of John Bell, Bishop of Worcester ff. 137–9; for a full account of the heresy accusations, see Alec Ryrie, 'England's Last Medieval Heresy Hunt: Gloucestershire 1540', *Medieval History* 30 (2005), 37–52.

29 TNA PROB 11-23-379-293 Register: Jankyn, Will of Sir Thomas Lucy, knight, 31.7.1525.

change: Sir Thomas would have found it disturbing that some 10 years later such a testament would have met with disapproval from his son. Sir William's own will, written in June 1551, is strictly a business document. Lacking even the customary opening of 'In the name of God, amen', it is without any reference to his soul, his burial, any memorial or alms giving.[30] These two documents are 'before and after' reflections of the Reformation experience and the confessional divide which became a feature of the rest of the century. During the 1530s, particularly during Latimer's term as bishop, Stratford wills sounded a cautious note. The preambles are brief: of nine wills written in 1537 and 1538, seven state simply 'I bequeath my soul to God Almighty and my body to be buried within the churchyard of Stratford upon Avon'.[31] The two remaining stand out because they both make reference to Christ's shedding of his 'precious blood'. The scribe for these is likely to have been Sir John Payn, curate and priest of the Guild, who appears in the witness list for both. This choice of words may indicate a particular sensibility on the part of the testators (one of whom was a priest of the College) selecting a particular preamble option offered by Payn, who was obviously a scribe of choice for Stratford people.[32] Payn appears in the witness list for five of the other seven wills and as overseer for another (where the witness list is missing). A second scribe at this date was Sir Humphrey Sadler, a priest and curate of the College, who shared with Payn the simpler form of soul bequest.

The role of scribes in the drafting of wills has been a point of interest and contention among historians. Will preambles themselves are controversial as evidence (or not) for the true reflection of individual faith.[33] It is a common practice when considering preambles to categorise them as 'traditional', 'evangelical' 'protestant' or simply 'ambiguous' (see the works cited in footnotes 32 and 33). Those drafted by Payn and Sadler would certainly come into the last category – a choice we might consider sensible given the tenor of the times. Following the preambles came the bequests and here, in the pattern of bequests and recipients, we might hope to find indicators of faith or response to religious change. However, eight of the wills of 1537 and

30 TNA PROB 11-34-325-250 Register: Bucke, 1551 Will of Sir William Lucy, armiger, 23.6.1551.

31 WRO 008.07 1538/247, Richard Harris, 13.4.1537; WRO 008.07 1538/245, John Matthew, 1.10.1537; WRO 008.07 1538/246, George Smyth, 30.11.1537; WRO 008.07 1538/249, William Facey, 28.3.1538; WRO 00817.252/1538 John a Charley, 4.4.1538; WRO 008.7 1538/55, John Attwood, 30.3.1538; WRO 008.7 248/1538, Robert Middleton, 7.4.1538; WRO 008.07 1538/250, William Hands, 30.9.1538; WRO 008.07 1538/253, Richard Burman, 1538.

32 In a study which focuses its attention on the laity of Gloucestershire during the Reformation period, Caroline Litzenberger identified the work of one particular lay scribe in Cirencester, Thomas Farrington, who was involved with more than 20 wills between 1557 and 1578 and appears to have offered his clients a choice of preambles. Caroline Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity – Gloucestershire, 1540–1580* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 175.

33 See among others Margaret Spufford, 'The Scribes of Villagers' Wills in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and their Influence', *Local Population Studies* 7 (1971) 28–43; J.D. Alsop, 'Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 40, No. 1, (January, 1989) 19–27; Claire Cross, 'Wills as Evidence of Popular Piety in the Reformation Period: Leeds and Hull', in D.M. Loades (ed.), *The End of Strife* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), pp. 44–51; Christopher Marsh, 'In the Name of God' in G.H. Martin and Peter Spufford (eds), *The Records of the Nation: The Public Record Office, 1838–1988* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1990), pp. 215–49.

1538 are notable for their simplicity, being those of married men making their wives both executor and chief beneficiary with no reference to bequests to the Church or the poor.

The one more elaborate will is that of Robert Middleton, a priest and chanter of the College. Middleton made his will on 7 April 1538 and declared 'I bequeath my soul to my saviour Jesus Christ who hath bought it dearly with his precious blood and my body to be buried at the discretion of my executors'. This opening statement, though more expressive, was still neutral enough to avoid controversy, a stance supported by his bequests. There were gifts to close colleagues: five shillings to Master Gilbert Burne, sub-warden of the College; to fellow priest Richard Bedyll his best bow and arrows; and 'Sir Burry' (probably College priest, Richard Burrowes) was left a short gown. Middleton also had a friend among the Guild priests; Sir John Payn was to have his best surplice. Nor were the poor forgotten: Middleton left eight shillings for the 'almsfolk in the Guild of Stratford' before turning his attention to another category of separate bequests to his fellow clerics. Nowhere does Middleton request prayers for his soul, but the pattern of his final gifts is suggestive. The monies he left – 12*d*. each to the priests of the College, 8*d*. to the clerks, 4*d*. to the choristers and finally 8*d*. 'to all my brethren of the Chapel' (the Guild priests) – mirrors the way in which attendance at funerals and month's and year's minds (the obituary masses held to remember and pray for the soul of the deceased) were traditionally recompensed. Those Middleton remembered in this way no doubt knew what was required of them and they would have named him accordingly in their prayers at mass.

In 1543, Thomas Atwode alias Tailor left a fully traditional will that reflects, as much as the Barker incident, the temporary reining in of reform.[34] It is open and elaborate in its detailed instructions for the obsequies at his death and in the planning for the future relief of his soul. There were to be monthly and annual services involving the parish church, the Guild Chapel and all their personnel, and a priest appointed to sing mass for one year. Atwode, who provided for eight years of services for his soul, was also aware of his earthly duties to the poor,[35] to the upkeep of parish highways and bridges,[36] and to the support of a relative, Humphrey Tailer (whether son, nephew or cousin, we are not told), who was an Oxford scholar preparing to take orders.[37] His

34 TNA PROB 11-30 101-72 Reg: Pynning Will of Thomas Atwode 21.10.1543.

35 In addition to money to be distributed to the poor on the day of his funeral (£5) at his first month's mind (20*s*.) and on Good Friday (20*s*.), Atwode also has other welfare considerations in mind. Five poor men are to receive cloth to make them a gown and a shawl each at 12*d*. a shawl, while five poor women are to have a spinning wheel each and five other poor women a 'woollen card' each.

36 20*s*. was left for the upkeep of Stratford Bridge and 40*s*. for the highways of Rowsley Bridge and 'Coldycot' Lane.

37 Money and goods were left to Humphrey including 'my best silver cup' to be given to him when he led his first mass. This bequest has the proviso that if Humphrey decided not to be ordained, this was to be sold and the proceeds given to the poor. However, Humphrey Atwod alias Tayler was ordained in the following year – as deacon and priest in September and December 1544 with his fellowship of All Souls, Oxford, providing the title to support his ordination. Also see Humphrey Atwod alias Tayler, CCEd Record ID: 65656 as Deacon on 20.9.1544 and CCEd Record ID: 65673 as Priest on 20.12.1544.

group of witnesses also drew on the priests of the town, one from the College and two from the Guild. It was a confident will, without any signs of doubt either in his religion or in the expectation that his requests would be carried out.[38] This might have been personal defiance on Atwode's part, an outward determination that for him at least there was no 'Reformation', and it certainly disregarded the recent experience of fluctuating attitudes in the town and country at large.

The common thread throughout the Stratford wills is the involvement of the priests for spiritual support and as scribes, witnesses, overseers and friends. And yet, as elsewhere, they were apparently removed with barely a ripple. Though the institutional suppressions did not come unannounced, their imposition was dramatic. Each foundation and its priests had acquired a status associated with the nature of their organisation – the College with its mix of parish church and Peculiar jurisdiction, the Guild combining its religious base with its dominance of the secular administration of the town. Intertwined were the personal lives of the priests and their relationships with the townspeople – which we have seen from the surviving wills. The removal of these institutions and their clerics left a vacuum that the able men who had been – and wished to be again – the civic elite of the town now had to address. Perhaps inevitably it was the loss of property, the damage to the administration of the town, the management of the almshouses and school, and their part in all this that took precedence over religious divisions. But religious divisions there were, and continued to be, even if they did not break out into open confrontation until much later, principally in the next century.[39]

Reframing the World

All through this period the state reformation and counter-reformation of religion, with its inherent threat for believers of all stripes, added the complexities of religious doubt and spiritual danger to the accustomed set of loyalties and boundaries which individuals had to negotiate. Previously in Stratford, the boundaries had been those created by the competing authorities of manor, parish and town as represented by the bishop (as lord of the manor), the College and the Guild. During the period after the 1548 dissolution, the manorial lordship passed into the secular hands of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (later Duke of Northumberland) and then into

38 The clerical witnesses were Roger Egynton (sometimes Egerton) and Thomas Hakins (sometimes Hawkyns) of the Guild and John Bartlett of the College. The other witnesses were Richard Patchett, Hugh Reynolds, William Smythe, and Oliver Fraunces; Atwode's executors were Robert Taylor and Thomas Badger and his supervisors, Thomas Whateley and Richard Quiney. Will of Thomas Atwode alias Tailer.

39 See Ann Hughes, 'Religious and Cultural Divisions, 1560–1640' in Robert Bearman (ed.), *The History of an English Borough: Stratford-upon-Avon 1196–1996* (Stroud and Stratford-upon-Avon: Sutton, 1997), pp. 97–109.

those of the Queen, following Northumberland's attainder and execution. Between these two, on the cusp of the reigns of Edward and Mary, from the remnants of the religious Guild came the wholly secular Corporation, designed to retrieve local control and what it could of the property lost to the Crown at the dissolution: what could not be retrieved, however, was the spiritual scaffolding of the town's former administration. Modern work on responses to cultural change strongly suggests that the psychological consequences of these years of religious volatility and shifting certainties should not be disregarded. We should take note of 'why' and 'how' societies and individuals use elements of the 'known' past to overcome the trauma of disruption and create a new frame of reference enabling them to live and work in a different future, which is 'unknown'.[40] With the physical dangers that surrounded confessional affiliation at this date, such re-framing had critical resonance; this had been true under Henry and would be again under his daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. As Queen, Mary executed two former Bishops of Worcester (Latimer and Hooper) and as Lord of the Manor she gave some of her Stratford lands to the re-founding of a dissolved hospital.[41] These actions were consistent with Mary's beliefs and agenda, but can only have aggravated the anxieties of her Stratford subjects where, as the Corporation was becoming established after 1553, religious concerns were mixed with those of another potential loss of property and status. The accession of Elizabeth returned Protestant religion to the fore, and 1559 saw Edwin Sandys, a former Marian exile, appointed as Bishop to Worcester. Three years later, in 1562, Stratford passed from the hands of the Queen back into the control of the Dudley family through Elizabeth's gift of the manor to Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, an active supporter of the new faith. For the people of Stratford, as elsewhere, there was constant readjustment encompassing the spiritual and the everyday, in their own daily lives and their participation in that of the Church and town. This was particularly true for the town's former priests.

Pensions and Employment

Though records of their pension payments survive, evidence for post-dissolution employment for only three of the nine former College priests has come to light: Robert Smart, Roger Dyos and the sub-dean Edward Alcock. Smart was re-appointed as curate of Luddington and appears to have remained in that capacity; similarly Dyos was warranted by the commission to continue in his role as curate of Stratford. Alcock was Dyos's superior

40 This is a subject discussed in full in my thesis, drawing on a number of studies including for example Peter Marris, *Loss and Change* (New York: Pantheon, 1974); see Sylvia Gill, 'Managing Change in the English Reformation: The 1548 Dissolution of the Chantries and Clergy of the Midland County Surveys' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010).

41 *CPR Philip & Mary, vol. 3, 1555–1557*, pp. 544–6; Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 91.

in the College hierarchy and might perhaps have been thought a likelier candidate, but he was the newcomer of the two. Dyos had been a member of the College for longer, though precisely how much longer is not known. He and Burrowes were two of three sureties for Giles Coventry on his appointment as sub-dean, after James Barker, in June 1544.[42] Coventry did not hold this place long, as Alcock himself was appointed in December 1545.[43] Elsewhere it has been suggested that Dyos might have been more traditional in his religion than Alcock and that this encouraged his confirmation as curate.[44] An alternative view might be that Dyos was likely to have been the less traditional of the two (it might only be a matter of degree) and therefore more acceptable to the commissioners.[45] We know that Alcock continued to live in Stratford, renting a house from the evangelically inclined Robert Perrot, but his next appointment, as vicar of Wootton Wawen, was taken up in February 1557 when his patron was Richard Wilkinson, the traditional and counter-reforming Provost of King's College, Cambridge.[46] Alcock only fully enjoyed his vicarage for a few months and made his will in August 1557, a neutral testament that would have been equally uncontroversial in the earlier reign.[47] However, despite the will's lack of spiritual directions, listed among the debts and payments added by Alcock's executors at the end of the document we find the sum of two shillings paid for his month's mind and year's mind, memorials suggesting the persistence of an older sympathy.[48]

For all his continued employment in the town, Dyos's relationship with Stratford was less than tranquil. He gained promotion to vicar in November 1553, a position he kept until he moved to Wiltshire to take up the post of vicar of Little Bedwyn in 1562. However, well before this date there was some discord between Dyos and the new Corporation, which now had responsibility for paying his salary. It has been suggested that this was because in its early days the Corporation wanted Alcock instead.[49] If correct, this might provide a hint of religious preference playing its part in the appointment, but equally could

42 WRO b 716.093-BA.2648/9b(iv) (Episcopal Register); WRO 795.02/2905 Bonds, penances, excommunications, petitions, citations, articles and other papers relating to causes heard in the consistory court; WRO 778.7324/2442, numbers 45, 46, 47.

43 WRO b 716.093-BA.2648/9b(iv); WRO 778.7324/2442, numbers 100, 101.

44 Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 83.

45 The commissioners were directed under the Act of Dissolution to re-appoint priests and schoolmasters where it was thought necessary. They were to 'make ordinances and rules concerning the service, use and demeanour of every such priest': Gee and Hardy (eds), *Documents Illustrative of the History of the English Church,* 'Act Dissolving the Chantries', p. 329.

46 In 1550, Alcock leased a house in Church Street from Perrot for a term of 31 years, a lease that was later acquired by the Corporation when it became the vicarage for the town. E.I. Fripp, *Shakespeare's Stratford* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 51; Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 83. WRO b 716.093-BA.2648/9b(iv) Episcopal Register, Alcock to Wootton Wawen 17.2.1557.

47 WRO 008.7BA3950 parcel 2 f. 157, Will of Edward Alcock.

48 Alcock left substantial bequests to Elizabeth and Thomas Mountford; this is a family name that occurs repeatedly in the recusant lists of 1592. He also owed debts to Stratford people, 11*s*. to Mother Jane, 'dwelling in the almshouse in Stratford which he did owe her' and to Robert Perrot, 6*s*. 8*d*. Also listed among the debts was the sum of 19*s*. paid to Alcock's successor as vicar, Ralph Olton, who was also a King's College appointment instituted in March 1558.

49 Fripp, *MA,* vol. 1, p. xxxix.

be a case of opportunism on the Corporation's part – using the traditional Alcock to try to remove a minister it now disapproved of and also to test what it could and could not do. The Corporation did not prevail, however, though the terms of Dyos's appointment were not drawn up until 1555, and in 1559 local gentry intervened on his behalf because his stipend was being withheld. The issues surrounding Dyos and the Corporation were not resolved until well after he moved to Little Bedwyn and he did not finally obtain payment until 1576.[50]

While the facts surrounding the dispute are not known, a fall from grace might lie at its heart.[51] One of the signatories on the 1576 document that finalised the payment owed by the Corporation to its former vicar was Morrys Dyos. Roger Dyos's will of 1582 confirms Morrys to be 'my base begotten son' to whom he left farm stock and household stuffs. Nothing is known of the liaison that produced Morrys, but it is not unlikely that this and his birth occurred during the Stratford years, particularly given that he must have been of age to witness the debt release in 1576.[52] Despite the quarrel with the Corporation, Roger Dyos must have had a fondness for Stratford even at the end of his life, bequeathing four shillings to be distributed to 24 poor people in the almshouses there and 'to him that ringeth the great bell, 6*d*'.

Did the priests of the Guild fare any differently from Dyos and Alcock? The commission warranted the continuation of the grammar school and its schoolmaster, but the priests were pensioned. Thomas Moris may have found other employment; a priest of the same name and spelling is recorded as curate of Aschurch, Gloucestershire in 1550.[53] Certainly, Stratford's Moris collected his pension from 1548 until 1554–56, but does not appear in the list drawn up for Cardinal Pole in 1556, nor in a later Elizabethan enquiry, so may have died before this date. Thomas Hakins, however, does seem to have found a later post. It appears that he, like Alcock, remained in and around Stratford until June 1554 (during Mary's reign) when, following the deprivation of the previous incumbent, he found a new living – namely the vicarage of Wasperton, about seven miles from the town. Hakins pledged his own bond for his First Fruits (a payment, equal to one year's stipend, which was due to the Crown on appointment) describing himself as 'of Bishopton' – very close to Stratford – and was instituted to his Wasperton

50 The gentry acting on Dyos's behalf in 1559 were Sir Robert Throckmorton and Edward Greville. Dyos received a payment of £11 in 1576 after threatening legal action. E.I. Fripp, *Shakespeare's Haunts near Stratford* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 101–2; Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', pp. 93–4.

51 I am grateful to Robert Bearman for this suggestion as to the cause of the Corporation's displeasure.

52 Fripp, *MA,* vol. 2, pp. 115 and 118; the release document for Dyos is dated 13.11.1576, and the accounting of town's costs for the suit 23.1.1577; for Dyos's will see W&SRO P5/4REG/52, Will of Roger Dyos, 1.9.1582 and P5/1582/20, Inventory of Roger Dyos.

53 Thomas Moris, curate of Aschurch, knew his Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and where to find the Ten Commandments in the Bible but could not repeat them. See J. Gairdner, 'Bishop Hooper's Visitation of Gloucester', *EHR* 19 (1904), 106.

vicarage in September 1554, remaining there until his death in 1581.[54] As for their colleague Roger Egynton, he was at least 68 at the time of the survey, very probably older, and though he collected his pension until 1554–56 and is noted in Pole's list, there is no evidence for other employment nor does his name appear as a signatory on documents. He was the Guild's notary and with its demise went this distinction.

Though there is no specific evidence for the location of a number of the College and Guild priests, there is suggestive evidence for their continued presence in the town or nearby. In 1556, in a will acknowledging her 'ghostly father', Roger Dyos, Emma Lord requested mass and *dirige* at her funeral and at her month's mind. Since this will was drawn up in Mary's reign this traditional request was not controversial, but Emma's words, desiring 'all the priests and clerks being singing men in Stratford', suggest confidence that there were enough clergy in the town to fulfil her wishes.[55] Though not restored to their old status, priests remained to be called on: neither they, nor traditional belief, vanished at dissolution nor did they disappear with the death of Mary and Elizabeth's accession in November 1558.[56]

This persistence of the old faith, however, should not obscure the beliefs of those who were sympathetic to evangelical ideas. Thomas Robins of neighbouring Snitterfield was obviously attracted, and the lengthy preamble to his 1559 will suggests a personal and considered expression of changing belief. Emphasising the Trinity, and leaving his soul to Jesus Christ 'by whom I trust unfainedly (sic) to have remission of sins and to see his face eternally in heaven by the merits of his death and passion', Robins also desired that his funeral 'be done without pomp but £4 to be dealt in the parish to householders at 2d per person'.[57] Stratford wills of later years lack such expressive reformist ideas, principally turning back to the simple and safe formula of the 1530s, but with gradually increasing references to 'the merits of Christ's passion' in the 1570s and 1580s. Superficially, this later progression would chime with the perception of a general consensus between people and Corporation about religious belief, a consensus that was moving the town towards a stronger 'godly' Protestantism. However, beneath this, the divisions created by the split between the old and new forms of confession continued, and an affirmation of Christ's passion in a will preamble might still be ambiguous and sometimes misleading.[58]

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54 For Hakins's presentation and bond for Wasperton, see WRO 778.7324/2442 numbers 249, 250. Hakins also appeared in person before the Elizabethan enquiry c. 1561 to confirm his continued eligibility for his Guild pension, TNA E135/9/17 'A List of Pensioners in Various Counties'.

55 WRO 008.7 3/1556, SCLA PR391/3 Will of Emmot (Emma) Lord 1556 (will damaged).

56 A fragment of an inventory of College property, made as a result of the Duke of Northumberland's attainder, notes items left in 'fr borows chambyr', which must refer to Sir Richard Burrowes. Though there are apparently two later dates on the document – 1578 and 1613 – it could have been drawn up any time after 1553. It implies that Burrowes is likely to have stayed on, and this room was known to have been his. J. Harvey Bloom, *Shakespeare's Church : Otherwise the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity of Stratford-upon-Avon : an architectural and ecclesiastical history of the fabric and its ornaments* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1902), pp. 136–7.

57 TNA PROB 11-32-21-21 Register: Mellershe Will of Thomas Robins 7.12.1559, probate 23.12.1559.

58 Eamon Duffy has particularly emphasised this in his discussion of post-Reformation will preambles. See Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* pp. 502–23.

Keeping the Faith

In 1571, Thomas Badger made his will leaving his soul to Jesus Christ 'trusting to be saved through the merits of his holy passion' and requesting burial in Bidford church under 'my [memorial] stone'.[59] This was an uncontroversial opening in words and tone for that date, but despite this and his ownership of the former monastic property Bidford Grange, where he made his will, there is much evidence that Badger's spiritual heart did not lie with the Church of Elizabeth.[60] Badger had been one of William Clopton's supporters in the Edward Large affair of the mid-1530s and an executor for Thomas Atwode alias Tailor, whose traditional will was noted above. A number of Badger's friends, witnesses at his own will-making, had strong links to the traditional Church, including Robert Whateley, of the large and prominent Stratford and Henley family.[61] Whateley is likely to be the priest described in the 1592 recusancy lists as 'an old massing priest'. A fellow witness was John Wise, perhaps the man of the same name of Coleshill and Warwick who was also reported at the same date (1592) as a persistent recusant. The most senior of Badger's four supervisors was 'my special good [friend]' Master Thomas Throckmorton, a member of the prominent Catholic family of Coughton, to whom Badger left two angels 'for his pains taking'.[62] There were also bequests to the poor, one of which might be taken as a 'virtual' year's mind, since it was to be distributed to mark the anniversary of his death. Moreover there is eye-catching evidence from elsewhere to suggest Bidford Grange was a safe house for those of the old faith. In 1566, Badger and his son William witnessed the very traditional will of Henry Saunders, Master of Arts, once chantry priest and schoolmaster of King's Norton, Worcestershire, and now the deprived rector of Oldberrow, a parish 11 miles from Bidford and nine from Stratford.[63] From the inventory list made at Saunders's death in 1570 we learn that he

59 TNA PROB 11-54 194-141 Register: Daper Will of Thomas Badger 13.10.1571, probate 7.5.1572.

60 SCLA DR 18/2/1 and DR 18/2/2 Copy of the Letters Patent (21.6.37HenryVIII) granting to Thomas Fowler of Stretton upon Fosse co. Warwick, Thomas Badger of Bidford, and Robert Dyson of Inkberrow various ex-monastic properties including the manor of Bidford with Bidford Grange 'late parcel of the dissolved monastery of Bordesley'; a later deed of partition places this in the name of Thomas Badger, (24.10. 37HenryVIII).

61 Robert Whateley was brother to another priest, John Whateley, and also to George Whateley, alderman and bailiff of Stratford – see below p. 48.

62 Supervisors or overseers (both terms were common) were appointed to provide guidance to executors and see that the testator's requirements were carried out. Their obligation could extend to the taking of negligent executors to court to see the latter's duties enforced. Sometimes, but not always, their names occur at the head of inventories as 'appraisers', that is the men who listed and valued the deceased's moveable property immediately after death.

63 Saunders had been appointed to continue as schoolmaster in the dissolutions of 1548, but had become rector of Oldberrow in 1553; he was deprived probably as early as 1561 but certainly by 1565. Oldberrow rectory is recorded as vacant in November 1561 and September 1563, but with no reason given. In August 1565 Geoffrey Heath was inducted into the rectory following the deprivation of Saunders. For Saunders's appointment see WRO 732.4/2337/4 1553–54 and Davenport 214 for Saunders's move to Ullebeogh (Oldberrow) 13.6.1554 and his own bond as Harry Saunders of King's Norton; for Oldberrow vacancies see CCEd Record ID: 148493 CCC, MS 97 (Clerical Survey) November 1561, CCEd Record ID: 199326 20.9.1563; for Saunders's deprivation and Heath's institution see CCEd Record ID: 132972 and WRO 732.6-BA.2511.

had possessions in two locations, Oldberrow and Bidford Grange. Those at the Grange consisted only of personal items of clothing and the money in his purse, surely an indication that this was where he died: a harbour for a deprived priest with a strong adherence to the old ways who may well have been continuing his ministry among friends.

Ralph Cawdrey's will of 1588 is another which adopted an unexceptional preamble of adequately reformist tone, wherein Cawdrey trusts to be saved by the merits of Christ's passion and requests burial in the churchyard of Stratford.[64] As with earlier wills, the influence of a clerical scribe might be discerned here. The name William Gilbard (alias Higgs), once the usher of the school and now the town's curate, occurs in the witness list, as it does in two later wills (1591 and 1593) which both adopt the same opening words.[65] Also occurring in Cawdrey's witness list, and as one of the will's supervisors, is Thomas Barber, a long-serving member of the Corporation, whose later service was troubled by the persistent naming of his wife as a recusant.[66]

It is, however, in the subsequent history of Cawdrey's own family that we find the evidence for a continuing adherence to the traditional faith. The recusancy list drawn up in the spring of 1592 cited his widow, Joan, and their daughter, Alice, as persistently failing to come to church with the added suspicion that they were harbouring seminary priests, one of whom was said to be Joan's son, George.[67] In a second list, dated September of the same year, Joan and Alice were now said to be conforming, but George was missing, whereabouts unknown. Furthermore, Joan and Ralph also had a daughter, Anne, who married into the Appletree family, members of which also appear in the lists in Warwickshire locations.[68] Associated with the Cawdrey women in the first list, as both recusant and a harbourer of priests, was Frances Jeffreys, with whom one of the Cawdrey daughters (possibly Alice) was said to be staying. Frances was now widowed but her late husband was the son of John Jeffreys, one of those who had supported William Clopton against Edward Large in 1537.

These are the network connections and friendships that supported those with like minds, but what of those minds into which religious change introduced differences of affiliation? The family of Robert Whateley, the 'old massing priest' already mentioned, was heavily involved in the

64 TNA PROB 11-73-68-59 Register: Aleyn, Will of Ralph Cawdrey 2.6.1588.

65 WRO 008.789/1591 Will of Thomas Wotton 2.12.1591; WRO 008.789/1593 Will of William Smart 22.3.1593.

66 SCLA BRU 2/2, p. 209; Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 97.

67 Fripp states that Ralph and Joan Cawdrey had two sons named George and this is the elder of the two baptised on 6.12.1565. Fripp, *MA*, vol. 3, p. 10; Michael Hodgetts, 'A Certificate of Warwickshire Recusants', *Worcester Recusant* 5 (May 1965) 20–23 (part 1), (December, 1965), 7–20 (part 2); John Tobias, 'New Light on Recusancy in Warwickshire, 1592', *Worcester Recusant* 36 (December 1980), 8–27.

68 Anne's husband James Appletree was witness and supervisor of Ralph's will. Members of the wider Appletree family are listed as recusants in Preston Bagot and Berkswell, near Coventry. Another, John Appletree of Rowington, was suspected of being a seminary priest, Will of Ralph Cawdrey; Hodgetts, 'A Certificate', 21; Tobias, 'New Light', 19.

religious and secular institutions of the area throughout this period. In 1554 Robert's brother George was an alderman of Stratford and in the same year acquired from John Combe the advowson of Crowle vicarage, to which he presented another clerical brother, John. This John Whateley, born in about 1506, had been a Guild priest in Henley-in-Arden and was warranted to continue there as curate after the 1548 dissolution; appointed to Crowle vicarage in 1554, he served there until his death in 1565.[69] Whateley's lengthy will includes bequests to Thomas Yelshaw (or Ilshaw) and his son Henry, who may have been, respectively, Whateley's brother-in-law and nephew.[70] When John Whateley senior (father of John, Robert and George) made his will in 1554, he noted his fear that his daughter's husband, Thomas Ilshaw, whom she had married in 1548, might misuse her. It has been suggested that Thomas may have been the priest of that name who served in Henley in 1531, and there was certainly a chantry priest of this name in nearby Tanworth-in-Arden until 1548.[71] Whateley senior's concern might well have been the possibility that Thomas would reject his wife as Mary's accession meant that clerical celibacy was once again enforced. This is suggestive evidence of the strains that could occur in a family living in a confessionally divided world. The will of John Whateley junior neatly highlights these divisions while also showing that family relationships could, and did, still function: he made his still-Catholic brother Robert his executor and his conforming, perhaps even reforming, brother George his overseer.

Reformation and Reconstruction

Norman Jones's study, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation*, considers adaptation as a response to the experience of intermittent and dramatic change through the successive reigns of Henry VIII and his children.[72] Importantly, Jones observes the way in which Tudor

69 WRO 732.4/2337/PA 3 Certificate showing John Combe passing the advowson of Crowle to George Whateley, yeoman, Walter Ffeckynton, gent. and Richard Bedle yeoman, of Stratford, TNA E334/4 f. 135r, John Whateley to Crowle, own bond for First Fruits 29.3.1554.

70 Whateley also left bequests to Worcester Cathedral and to the churches of Crowle and Henley, to the poor of these parishes and substantial gifts to members of the Barnhurst family of Stratford. His inventory included books to the value of 20*s*. There is also a claim in the will that John Combe owed him money, payment of which seems to have been outstanding for some years, but there had been problems before: following his institution, Whateley and Combe had disputed in Chancery over the withholding of tithes and the payment of a pension that Combe said was due to him. TNA C1/1394/31–35 John Whateley Vicar of Crowle v John Combe gentleman; WRO 008.7BA3950 parcel 2 f. 28 p. 197 Will and Inventory of John Whateley 10.4.1565.

71 Eric Chitty suggested the Henley identity in his article on the Whateley family, 'The Whately and Wheatley family of Banbury', *Cake and Cockhorse* 4/3 (1969), 35–40. Thomas Yelshawe (sometimes Ilshaw) served one of two chantries founded by the Mountford family in Tanworth-in-Arden from 1510 until 1548 when he was aged 59; TNA E301/53 and E301/57 Chantry Certificates for Warwickshire.

72 Norman Jones, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

subjects learned religious flexibility, how they learned to live with the diversity of ideas abroad and 'reconstructed their culture'.[73]

For some, such reconstruction did lead to Reformation: a striking example for us here is Stratford's William Smith. Once an active participant in the actions against Large and Barker and a witness to Thomas Atwode's traditional will, Smith married into the family of John Watson – an Oxford scholar who became a bishop under Elizabeth.[74] Perhaps influenced by this relationship, Smith moved in the Protestant direction, his sons found favour with the vicar and preacher John Bretchgirdle, and one became a minister of the Elizabethan Church.[75] For others there was the alternative experience, where Reformation demanded reconstruction. As a priest, and despite his personal misconduct and falling out with the town's governors, Roger Dyos provides an example of the successful reconstruction of a clerical career. Dyos was judged suitable to serve in all three reigns. He was acceptable to Edward's commissioners for re-appointment as curate; traditional enough to gain promotion under Mary; and sufficiently reformed to continue his career under Elizabeth. This flexibility was not possible for all. The priest Henry Saunders, Thomas Badger's friend, had continued as master of King's Norton's grammar school when the town's chantries were dissolved, but ultimately would not (or could not) hide his faith and lost his Marian living in the first years of Elizabeth's reign. His 1566 will, which Badger witnessed, bequeaths 'to Almighty God my maker and redeemer my soul to be appropriate with the blessed virgin St Marye and all the holy company of heaven' and desires a godly priest at his burial 'if he can be found'. We can be sure that here 'godly' meant Catholic in its fullest sense.

In Stratford, the ministers who followed Dyos were reformers of gradually increasing strength. During the term of John Bretchgirdle, Dyos's immediate successor, the Guild Chapel was cleansed of its traditional elements, with the removal of the rood loft and remaining 'images' – whether paintings or statuary. This is associated with William Shakespeare's father, John, as his name appears in the Corporation's records as the paymaster for the work that now finally began to bring the chapel into line with government rulings.[76] In 1564, triggered by Vicar Bretchgirdle's preaching initiative and invitations to external speakers, further work on the chapel brought back into use this substantial and conveniently located building, of much significance to the town but with currently no legitimate purpose. While not a wholesale reconstruction, this adaptation, combining as it did the religious and the pragmatic, nicely mirrored that of the people.

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73 Jones, *Adaptation*, p. 6.

74 Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 89.

75 Ibid., p. 89. Smith's son Richard was rector of two parishes in the Winchester diocese: the rectory of Over Wallop, filling the vacancy created by Bishop Watson's death, and then the rectory of Mottistone, Isle of Wight, on the next day. Smith appears to have held these until his death about 1619–20, at which date new appointments were made to both livings. See CCEd Record ID: 241719 Richard Smith to Over Wallop, 18.11.1595, CCEd Record ID: 241720 Richard Smith to Mottistone, 19.11.1595.

76 *MA* vol. 1, Chamberlains' Accounts, 10.1.1564, for the year 1562–63, p. 128.

Stratford's ministers from this date all appear to have had good Protestant credentials, though William Butcher is problematic, and may not have been the happiest choice. Butcher, appointed in 1567, was a licensed preacher but also a pluralist who lost his Stratford place in 1569 and a Somerset living in 1570, and may have had Catholic sympathies.[77] Following him, however, were men who enjoyed the support of both the Corporation and higher authorities. Henry Heycroft, a licensed preacher, benefited from the patronage of the Earl of Warwick,[78] while Richard Burton (sometimes Barton) was described, in a survey made around 1586, as 'learned, zealous and godly … a happy age if our church were fraight with manie such'.[79]

The Badger, Barber, Cawdrey and Whateley families, whatever their confessional lights, did not hide them under convenient or safe bushels; they were active and conspicuous members of their communities. In 1553 at the formation of the Corporation, Ralph Cawdrey was one of those appointed capital burgesses and later served three times as High Bailiff, as did Thomas Barber. There is no suggestion that George Whateley shared his brother Robert's faith, but having this known mass priest in his family did not hinder his career; like Cawdrey and Barber, George was also appointed High Bailiff more than once. Furthermore, in 1586 George endowed a school in Henley-in-Arden, perpetuating the family's ties and service to the place where he and his brothers had been born.[80] At the time when these Catholic families were active, their manorial lord was the Protestant Earl of Warwick. The Corporation in which they were prominent was gradually confirming a Protestant sensibility for the town – overseeing the continuing conversion of the Guild Chapel and the appointment and ministries of the men, noted above, who were to lead Stratford's religious life. The necessity of re-framing life, reconstructing a personal world-view which had to incorporate new civic and religious cultures, does not mean that divisions were smoothed out; it does suggest that successful compartmentalising, the management of public and private behaviours, was a desirable skill, if difficult to achieve.

There *were* conflicts and dichotomies of thought and action. Thomas Badger's traditional faith versus his purchase of monastic property is an obvious example, and he was far from unique. Furthermore, the link of the

77 Butcher followed Bretchgirdle's immediate successor William Smart who, having lost his Cambridge fellowship at Mary's accession, had become Stratford's schoolmaster: this is discussed in the following chapter. Butcher lost his Stratford living in the same year as the Catholic Northern Rebellion. Ann Hughes notes his suspected Catholic affiliation, whereas Bearman, citing Butcher's preaching licence, believes him to have been genuinely Protestant and regards pluralism as the real issue. Hughes, 'Religious and Cultural Divisions', p. 100; Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 99.

78 Heycroft was vicar of Stratford from 1569 and was licensed to preach in 1572. Warwick appointed Heycroft to the vicarage of Rowington, Warwickshire, in 1584. WRO B 716.093-BA.2648/10(i), Henry Heycroft Licence to preach, 8.1.1572 and appointed to Rowington, 23.9.1584.

79 Albert Peel, *The Seconde parte of a register: being a calendar of manuscripts under that title intended for publication by the Puritans about 1593, and now in Dr Williams's library* (London, 1915), p. 166.

80 This might also indicate a desire on George's part to promote Protestant learning as a member of a family in which the reformed faith was becoming stronger. George's great-nephew, William (1583–1639), became the noted Puritan vicar of Banbury, famous for his ministry and preaching there, and known as 'The Roaring Boy'. See Chitty, 'Whately and Wheatley', 36.

Badger family to the Catholic religion did not die with Thomas. His son George continued to hold to it and maybe actively, even dangerously, to promote it.[81] Throughout the period, wills indicate ways in which people approached this publicly: some were careful, some were non-committal and others openly affiliated to one side or the other. Testaments and recusant lists of the 1580s and 1590s are evidence of the consistency with which families remained aligned to the old faith while maintaining a place in the political life of a town whose civic drive was apparently fuelled by an opposing view.

The necessity for flexibility and reconstruction meant different things to different people. Tracing the experience of the priests and people of Stratford-upon-Avon during this period demonstrates this. The College and Guild priests lost their posts and had to adjust to a very different place in society, many of them pensioned and disappearing from view. Once created, the Corporation had to conform and work with the wider authorities to establish itself as an effective administrative body. Within this conformity its leaders, in order to regain something of their former Guild status, had also to find their way and work with each other. Stress and strain showed at times, as evidenced, perhaps, by the poor relationship with Dyos, the action taken against William Butcher in 1569, and later, towards the close of the century, the ejection of alderman and burgess George Badger from the Corporation as a consequence of his adherence to the traditional faith.[82] Overall, however, we should consider the response of Stratford to the Reformation, to its reception of new ideas and its reaction to imposed change, by adopting Jones's verdict on Tudor political culture: 'it was not uprooted or broken. It leaned with the winds until, as they steadied, it developed a permanent, Protestant bent'.[83]

And what of William Shakespeare, the boy whose family had a share in all this? There are many references to the old religious ways in Shakespeare's work – he did not shrink from making them and they did not prevent the plays from being performed. He would have grown up aware of past and present religious and political winds and learned for himself the ways in which his family and neighbours flexed or braced themselves in response. This was, after all, practical religious politics in action. No doubt it taught him much.

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81 In the next reign, there was suggestive evidence linking George Badger to the Gunpowder Plot; Fripp, *Shakespeare's Haunts,* p. 131; Hughes, 'Religious and Cultural Divisions', p. 100.

82 Levi Fox (ed.) *MA* vol. 5, 1593–1598 (Dugdale Society, 1990) pp. 106–7.

83 Jones, *Adaptation,* p. 202.

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'Where one is a scholemaster of grammar': The Guild School and Teaching in Stratford-upon-Avon c. 1420–1558[1]

Sylvia Gill

The documentary sources for school histories in the late medieval and early modern periods are notoriously incomplete. If we are fortunate we find occasional references to the appointment of teachers, the paying of salaries, or the leasing of a property for use as a school, because these were legal matters; but it is rare to find a continuous series of such references. As for the names of the students who attended in a given year, much less information survives except in the case of well-endowed schools such as Winchester and Eton, which kept good records of the pupils – and the fees – they attracted from powerful or well-connected households. Similarly, little survives on the curriculum taught in individual schools, other than the ideal laid down in the statutes supplemented by an occasional publication by a teacher who taught there. Beyond that, we have to rely heavily on a thorough reappraisal of such documentary and physical evidence as survives for a particular school, and use context and comparison to fill out the picture.

The Guild's Grammar School

There had been a schoolteacher in Stratford-upon-Avon as early as 1295, a man named Richard who was ordained by the Bishop of Worcester as *rector scholarum*, and who may have been connected to Holy Trinity Church or the Guild. To judge from his licence, he would have taught boys how to read (if their parents could spare the boys' labour from family enterprises) and, if they stayed longer, enough Latin to enable them to help the priest sing the mass. This fits in with the wider pattern from the twelfth to the late fourteenth century of a steady expansion of education in England, both

1 I am particularly grateful to Ian Green for his advice and assistance in preparing this chapter, and to Robert Bearman for various discussions on this and related material.

in the case of endowed schools, which began to appear in churches and hospitals to supplement existing ones in cathedrals and monasteries, and through informal mechanisms. Only the brightest or best-connected youths would have been encouraged to proceed to higher studies that might prepare them for admission to a university. At this date, most teachers probably relied on rote repetition from their own copies of suitable texts, and few had permanent premises in which to teach.[2]

This began to change in the period from the late fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth century, when there was a second wave of expansion, especially of chantry and grammar schools. Some of these schools were sponsored by bishops, such as William Waynflete in Lincolnshire and Oxford, anxious to combat Lollardy. However, financial support now came increasingly from the laity of all ranks, from nobility to humble villagers, but especially from parents of middling status who wanted their sons to take advantage of the growing career opportunities then arising for those with more than just an elementary education. Possible careers included serving as a priest in a chantry chapel or as a domestic chaplain, as a teacher, or in estate management, commerce or government.

It was entirely in keeping with this trend, and perhaps mindful of the existence of comparable schools at nearby Warwick, Banbury and Evesham, that in the early decades of the fifteenth century the members of the Guild of the Holy Cross in Stratford were willing to allow 'John Scholmayster' to rent a 'new chamber in the Hall', and later to subsidise the rent of a house in the Old Town and then a tenement in Church Street for the *magister scholarum* to teach 'children'.[3] However, it was unusual when, in 1427–28, the Guild spent nearly £10 on erecting a purpose-built 'scolehowus' in timber and plaster, with teaching space on the ground floor and a 'chamber' for living space on the upper; for in many towns the space reserved for teaching shifted from one set of temporary quarters to another, or occupied space within the teacher's lodgings.[4] The new building presumably reflected a rising demand for schooling in the town, but even allowing for the fact that stone-built schools cost up to £100, the modest cost of the Stratford schoolhouse suggests that the numbers of students expected was not as great as the 90 or more at leading schools such as Winchester and Eton.[5]

It was also in keeping with growing lay involvement in better educational provision at court and among the landed elite during the 1430s and 1440s

2 A.F. Leach, 'Schools', in William Page (ed.), *A History of Warwickshire,* vol. 2, *Victoria County History* (London, 1908), p. 329; Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools from Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 189–217 and 255–87.

3 Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive (SCLA), BRT 1/3/14, BRT 1/3/16, BRT 1/3/30.

4 SCLA BRT 1/3/38.

5 Orme, *Medieval Schools,* pp. 138, 176–8, 230–31, 218–54, 348, 354, 369; Jo Ann Hoepner Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling 1348–1548* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), *passim*; Leach, 'Schools', pp. 329–31; Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 100; SCLA BRT 1/3/28, 1/3/20, 1/3/28; and see also 1/3/53. For tentative identification of this schoolhouse with the almshouse usually known as the 'infill house', see the chapter by Giles and Clark in this volume, pp. 155–6.

that in 1456 John and Jane Webbe alias Jolyffe began the process of providing the Guild school in Stratford, then taught by their son Thomas, with an independent endowment. The final deed, dated 1482, recorded the giving of lands, the income of which would be used to ensure the teacher was given £10 a year – much the same as that paid at leading schools – and provided with a chamber, in return for which he would 'teach grammar freely to all scholars coming to him to school in Stratford, taking nothing from them for their learning'.[6] Despite lay support of the kind provided by the Guild and the Jolyffes, we should not think in terms of a trend towards the secularisation of education. The teachers in most schools in England at this time were still in holy orders of some kind, and the job description outlined in the Jolyffes' foundation deed required that their 'grammar priest' should be in full priestly orders and perform liturgical duties. He was to say mass for the souls of the family and twice a week, that is on Wednesdays and Fridays, he and his pupils were to attend the Guild Chapel and 'sing the anthem of St Mary and then devoutly say *De profundis* for the souls' of 'Thomas Jollyffe, his parents and all the faithful departed'.[7] The Jollyffe deed thus reflects the pre-Reformation belief that the combination of a charitable act (endowing the school) and having masses said for the souls of the benefactors and all Christian souls would ensure a shorter time in purgatory and take them a little higher up the stairway to heaven.[8]

Compliance with this mix of teaching and spiritual duties is indicated by the references to the schoolmasters of Stratford by the honorary title appropriate to a clergyman of *dominus*, anglicised as 'Sir'. We have 'Sir William Smyth' (the first appointee), 'Sir Henry Barnes' who was 'chaplain of the Guild and schoolmaster' in 1491, 'Sir John Austen', the 'teacher of grammar' in 1500, 'Sir Edmund Darby', 'master and instructor of the scholars' in 1535, and 'Sir William Dalam', 'clerk and school master', who was the last to be appointed under the Jollyffes' rules, in the early 1540s. While the title of 'Sir' confirms that these men were in orders, in some cases it may also refer to possession of a university degree – Sir William Smyth, for example, held a BA.[9] As for the teaching side of their duties, the Jollyffe deed is silent on the nature of the school syllabus; we can probably deduce it was to be based on a familiar structure. Certainly the fact that the schoolmaster is to teach 'grammar' and is referred to as the 'grammar priest' indicates that this school was to provide an education superior to other common sources of schooling, such as elementary and song schools.

6 Orme, *Medieval Schools*, pp. 229–36; Leach, 'Schools', pp. 331–3; BRT 1/2/420.

7 BRT 1/2/420.

8 For comparison, see the chapter 'Reformation: Priests and People' in this volume, and the wills cited, pp. 46–8.

9 Leach, 'Schools', pp. 332–3. To judge from the career details provided by *ODNB* on the Richard Fox and William Smyth who later became bishops, it is unlikely these men taught in Stratford as has been suggested, or if they did they stayed only a very short time.

Learning Opportunities: Elementary, Song and Grammar Schools

In the later middle ages both elementary and song schools were well-established sources of basic learning for boys. Song schools were an early source of general public education, originally based on the teaching of reading and plainsong, which had over time become more narrowly focused on the training and education of choristers,[10] while those wishing to attend grammar school would have had to go through the elementary level first.

An example of the education offered by elementary and grammar schools of the time can be found by reference to another school foundation, of similar date to Stratford, endowed to provide both levels of teaching. Like the Guild school it also had a commemorative function. In 1446 Joan Grendour founded a grammar school in Newland, Gloucestershire, in memory of her late husband Robert, providing the schoolmaster-priest with a house next to the church and £12 per annum from which he was to pay a clerk as teaching assistant. The religious duties of this schoolmaster-chaplain are detailed in full in the foundation document, and appear significantly more onerous than those of his Stratford contemporary. He was to perform mass once a day, and say psalms and prayers with pupils at least twice each day: after lessons had started but before the 9 am breakfast and again at 5 pm before supper. On both occasions master and pupils were to pray explicitly for the souls of those named in the foundation and 'all faithful souls who have departed the light'. Between 1446 and 1465, Joan revised the requirements of her foundation twice, adding new names to the intercessory prayers of remembrance, but the institution of the school remained the same. Unlike Stratford's school, Newland was not free to its pupils: elementary scholars were to pay 4*d*. per quarter to be taught reading, specifically the alphabet, matins and the psalter, while those at the higher level would pay 8*d*. to be taught grammar.[11]

The elements of the education provided at Newland persisted well into the sixteenth century. A later foundation, Childrey School in Berkshire, was established in 1526 to provide both elementary education and grammar teaching but similarly with a strong religious focus. Having mastered the alphabet, Childrey's pupils would learn, probably by rote, the Lord's Prayer, the Angel's Salutation to Mary, the Apostles' Creed and *De profundis* with collects and prayers for the dead – all in Latin; and in English the articles of faith, the Ten Commandments, the seven deadly sins, the seven sacraments, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and the seven works of mercy. The boys

10 Orme, *Medieval Schools*, pp. 63–6, 282–3.

11 Transcriptions of the original foundation and subsequent amendments can be found in *The Register of Thomas Spofford, Bishop of Hereford, 1422–1448* in A.T. Bannister (ed.), *The Registers of the Bishops of Hereford (Lacy, Polton and Spofford) 1417–1448*, Canterbury and York series, vols 22, 23 (1917), pp. 281–8, and in *The Register of John Standbury, Bishop of Hereford, 1453–1474* in A. T. Bannister (ed.), *Registers of the Bishops of Hereford (Beauchamp, Boulers, Standbury and Mylling) 1449–1492*, Canterbury & York series, vols 25, 26 (1919), pp. 21–33 and pp. 105–10. See also Nicholas Orme, *Education in the West of England, 1066–1548: Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1976), pp. 153–65.

were also to be taught good manners and to honour their parents and God.[12] Whereas for some pupils this level of education might be an end in itself, for others, with aptitude and aspiration towards self-improvement, moving on to the complexities and rigours of Latin grammar was essential for the greater enhancement of their career prospects.

Whether Stratford-upon-Avon had a consistent supply of elementary teaching in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries remains unclear, but in the decades before the Reformation it certainly had a song school run by the College of priests which was attached to Holy Trinity Church.

Stratford's Song School

In 1516 Ralph Collingwood, Warden of the College at Stratford and Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, formally endowed a choir of four boys to assist the priests and sing daily in the parish church.[13] This endowment is not dissimilar in its intent to that of the Jollyffes and, like them, Collingwood detailed his requirements. The choirboys were to live a quite cloistered existence (perhaps to steer them towards a clerical life), not going into town, and not drinking beer or fetching it for anyone else. They were to go to bed at 8 pm in the winter and 9 pm in the summer, and share a chamber, sleeping two to a bed. The choirboys' duties indicate the level of education provided. They were to assist in divine service at matins and vespers and, on entering the church, they were to bow to the crucifix and say an *Ave* and a *Paternoster*, after which they were to sit quietly in their stalls. Between services and before bedtime they waited on the College priests at dinner and supper, read the Bible or other religious book, and each evening before bed they were to say *De profundis* and 'God have mercy on the souls of Ralph Collingwood, our founder, and Master Thomas Balshall, a special benefactor'. Balshall, Collingwood's predecessor as Warden of the College, had refurbished Holy Trinity Church in 1492, including building the choir stalls. Thus Collingwood's endowment not only completed the work Balshall had begun, but also ensured daily remembrance of their good deeds, with the choirboys mirroring the prayers of the Guild grammar priest and *his* pupils for the Jollyffes and their son.[14]

12 A.F. Leach, *The Schools of Medieval England* (London: Methuen, 1913), p. 300.

13 Ralph Collingwood MA was Fellow of Michaelhouse, Cambridge, from 1488, prebend of Gates until 1499, prebend of Ferring from 1499 (both Chichester diocese), Warden of Stratford-upon-Avon 1491–1518, Archdeacon of Coventry until 1512, Dean of St Mary's, Warwick 1507–10, and Canon and Dean of Lichfield 1512–21, d. 1521. http://www.quns.cam.ac.uk (Queens' College, Cambridge) last consulted 12.10.2010. Joyce M. Horn (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300–1541*, vol. 7, Chichester diocese (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1964), p. 27; Page, *A History of Warwickshire*, vol. 2, pp. 123–4; Robert Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530–1580', *Midland History* 32 (2007), 73; B. Jones (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300–1541*, vol. 10, Coventry and Lichfield (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1964), p. 7.

14 Balshall also had a link to the Guild and the grammar school since the 1482 deed named him and John Alcocke, then Bishop of Worcester, as overseers of the schoolmaster's appointment should any issues arise on either part and notice of termination be given, BRT 1/2/420 1 July, 1482.

In between all these duties, specifically every day after dinner, the boys were to attend school – not the grammar school in the town but singing school within the College – which was to be taught by one of the College priests, who was not only to act as schoolmaster but also be able to play the organ and ensure the boys could sing in tune with it.[15] The age they entered the song school, and the syllabus they followed beyond the liturgical texts, is not clear – probably much the same as at Newland and Childrey, but it is possible their musical education included singing treble and alto in the polyphonic music then being adopted in cathedrals in the Severn valley.[16] In a College rent roll of c. 1545–46, Richard Sharpe is described as *doctor puerorum* (teacher of boys), and in the first chantry survey of 1546 as *ludimagister* (schoolmaster) and organ player, receiving an annual stipend of £6.[17] Sharpe does not appear in the dissolution survey of 1548, but four choirboys do: William Allen and William Locke, both aged 12, and Thomas Akerley and Thomas Perin, aged 13 and 14 respectively, who in addition to gaining an education had all been paid £1 annually. Indeed, Allen and Perin may both have been tonsured and ready to confirm their intention to become priests, for they were awarded pensions equivalent to their £1 stipend, and these were paid annually between 1549 and 1554, perhaps longer as they also appear in the pensions list prepared for Cardinal Pole between 1554 and 1556.[18] The suppression of all song schools by Edward VI, under the Dissolution Act of December 1547, thus removed what must have been an attractive opportunity for families seeking to educate their boys and perhaps prepare them for a clerical career.[19]

'The last "grammar priest"': William Dalam – a Reformation Case Study

The Guild grammar school founded by the Jollyffes and the College song school founded by Collingwood were probably the two principal sources of education in Stratford before the Reformation, but there was possibly a third – provided by a former member of a religious order. The life and career of Sir William Dalam, the Guild grammar priest from at least 1543 until 1554, encompassed all the changes of the Reformation period. Before becoming the Guild schoolmaster, Dalam was a canon regular of the Augustinian order, Sub-prior of Studley Priory and a schoolmaster. Furthermore, he was also a

15 Sir William Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (2 volumes, Manchester: Manchester University Press, second edition, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 692–3.

16 Orme, *Medieval Schools*, pp. 282–3.

17 SCLA ER1/1/59; The National Archives (TNA), E301/31/c42/p. 22r: Chantry Survey for Leicestershire and Warwickshire, 1546.

18 There is no record of the other choirboys being pensioned: Sylvia Gill, 'Managing Change in the English Reformation: The 1548 Dissolution of the Chantries and the Clergy of the Midland County Surveys' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010), p. 218; TNA E301/53 Chantry Certificates for Warwickshire; E301/57 Chantry Certificates (Pensions) for Warwickshire, certificate 20.

19 This Act also dissolved both the College and the Guild and preceded the chantry surveys of 1548. See 'An Act whereby certaine Chauntries, Colleges, Free chapels and the Possessions of the same be given to the King's Maj[esty]', 1 Edward VI, cap. 14, Statutes of the Realm, pp. 24–33.

friend and correspondent of Edmund Fyld, Evesham Abbey's schoolmaster (and later deputy principal of St Alban's Hall in Oxford) and of Robert Joseph, the humanist scholar and monk of Evesham Abbey whose letter-book survives to record a proportion of their correspondence.[20]

Joseph's letter-book consists wholly of copies of his own writings, meaning we have only half of the story. However, the content of his highly evocative replies to Dalam tells us something of the quality of their friendship, while providing valuable insight both into Dalam's character – as an individual with very particular opinions on the lifestyle, studies and discipline appropriate to a religious order – and his level of education.

All the correspondence between Joseph and his friends was carried on in Latin, and the letter-book contains six letters and one set of verses sent to Dalam, probably in the months of January and February 1532. Dalam had recently enjoyed the hospitality of Joseph and his fellow monks at Evesham, but was now, we infer, taking them to task for ostentation and lavish living while also advising Joseph on the proper approach to study and behaviour. From this it would seem that Dalam had a sense of himself as senior (he was certainly older than Joseph) and as mentor to the younger man.[21] Overhearing this one-sided conversation, we are given the impression that Joseph reciprocates this view or at least knows how to flatter his friend – possibly both. He compliments the 'polish and elegance' of Dalam's Latin and letter-writing skills[22] and, in another letter, respectfully tells him 'I will always remember your advice about my life and studies. If ever you notice any fault in me, I beg you to tell me'.[23]

Of particular interest to us here, however, is Joseph's comment when he forgives Dalam's tardiness in replying to letters. Drawing on his own personal experience of teaching, Joseph reflects sympathetically 'what a heavy burden it is to teach little boys'.[24] This remark tells us that in 1532 Dalam was already teaching 'little boys', maybe providing the elementary skills of reading, alphabet and prayer book noted in the curricula of Newland and Childrey, possibly to young novices but equally perhaps to ordinary boys from the local area. It is not possible to know for sure from how wide an area his pupils were drawn, or exactly where Dalam taught. Religious orders often kept within their houses almonry schools where poor boys were boarded and taught, though at Studley Priory's dissolution in 1536, the officials of the Court of Augmentations (the Crown's agents for all matters connected with

20 Dom Hugh Aveling and W.A. Pantin (eds), *The Letter Book Of Robert Joseph, Monk–Scholar Of Evesham And Gloucester College, Oxford, 1530–3*, Oxford Historical Society, New series 19 (1967).

21 Dalam was born in about 1488, Joseph around 1499–1500 (*Letter Book Of Robert Joseph*, p. xiv). Joseph was born in either Evesham or Alcester, and if Dalam was also locally born may have known Joseph since his boyhood. Edmund Fyld, their mutual friend and fellow schoolmaster, was another local boy, born in Haselor, a little over two miles from Alcester and six miles from Stratford. See Worcester Record Office (WRO) 008.7BA3950 fo.124, Will of Sir Edmund Filde, vicar of St Lawrence, Evesham, 4.9.1545.

22 *Letter Book Of Robert Joseph*, p. 211.

23 Ibid., p. 213.

24 Ibid., p. 221.

dissolution) make no reference to such provision. Alternatively, as Augustinian canons were accustomed to participate in the wider world, Dalam could have taught outside his house while maintaining his residence there: he was listed as Sub-prior at Studley in 1534 when he signed his agreement to the King's supremacy.[25] As Stratford-upon-Avon is less than 12 miles from Studley, it is at least possible that some of Dalam's pupils came from the vicinity of the town, or even that he taught there. There was certainly a prior connection between Dalam and Stratford: the Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross notes the enrolment of 'Sir William Dolaan', Canon Regular of Studley, as a member in 1518–19. Dalam may also have been related to the Munske (or Minsk) family, at least one of whom became a proctor of the Guild and a burgess of the town.[26] Any connections forged through former acquaintances or family might have proved fruitful after the dissolution of the Priory in 1536 when he would have needed both a home and employment.

Dalam's correspondence with Joseph strongly suggests that he had the skills and learning to be able to move up from elementary to grammar teaching. It is not known if he was a university graduate, but he had some knowledge of the new humanist writings and influences which actively interested scholars, such as his friends Joseph (who attended Oxford in the 1520s) and Fyld (who also became an Oxford fellow), even if he was not quite so won over by the new ideas as they were. For example, while apparently not disapproving of Joseph reading the non-Christian authors favoured by humanist scholars, Dalam seems to have expressed some disquiet over how and why these authors were studied. This caused Joseph to respond: 'I will keep to the method you describe in reading poetic fictions; if I find anything that accords with good morals, I try to exhibit it in my life, and things immoral, I abhor'.[27]

Given that he was aged 60 in 1548,[28] Dalam had presumably attended school in the late 1490s and early 1500s. He would have experienced the conventional form of grammar learning of the late middle ages, perhaps initially using the Latin Hymnal (a teaching aid from the thirteenth century which continued in publication until 1530) and the Sequences from the service of the mass. There were also long-serving 'grammars' – textbooks to teach parts of speech and the understanding and composition of Latin texts.[29] Many schoolmasters also used *vulgaria* – short passages of text utilising eye-catching imagery from

25 William Page, 'The Priory of Studley', in Page (ed.), *A History of Warwickshire*, vol. 2, *VCH*, pp. 94–7.

26 Mairi Macdonald (ed.), *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, St Mary and St John the Baptist, Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society, 42 (2007), p. 426. Dalam's signature as a witness to the will of Hugh Reynolds in 1556 (TNA PROB 11/38/188/158 Ketchyn), appears to suggest an alias surname of Minsk, though this is the only suggestion of such a connection. For William Munske as both a proctor of the Guild in 1549–50 and a burgess of the later Corporation, see Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 88.

27 *Letter Book Of Robert Joseph*, p. 213, and pp. xiv–xvi, and p. 275 (Fyld).

28 TNA E301/53 Chantry Certificates for Warwickshire; E301/57 Chantry Certificates (Pensions) for Warwickshire, certificate 20.

29 For a detailed discussion of the development of grammar education and authors throughout the medieval and early Tudor periods, see Orme, *Medieval Schools*, chapters 3, 9 and 10.

religion or everyday life to hold the students' interest and make their point.[30] Humanists increasingly deplored the poor quality of Latin in a number of these texts, but their use in grammar schools persisted well into the sixteenth century. A new 'royal grammar' was issued under Henry VIII in the 1540s, directed to replace the older, suspect material, but it is likely that this was treated to the same fitful adoption as other centrally authorised orders.[31]

Dalam's first recorded appearance as an employee of the Guild occurs in 1540 when he is described as one of its priests in the subsidy lists in Bishop John Bell's Act Book.[32] His formal grant of office as the Guild's schoolmaster was made in November 1543.[33] That Dalam was known in Stratford as *a* schoolmaster (if not *the* grammar schoolmaster) before this November date is shown by a will made in August of the same year (1543) where he appears as schoolmaster in the witness list.[34] Unfortunately, the dearth of accounts for the early sixteenth century makes it particularly hard to trace the names of schoolmasters in the Guild, and it is not certain how long Sir Edmund Darby, Dalam's predecessor, served as 'master and instructor of the scholars' after 1535. Moreover, as we shall see shortly from later evidence, it was not unknown for a teacher to be employed in Stratford before his contract was formalised. Then again, Dalam need not have been teaching grammar between 1536 and 1543: he may have been applying his experience to the provision of elementary-level education to those little boys of the town that a few years later would provide the Guild school with its pupils.

As Sub-prior at Studley, Dalam had enjoyed some status, and his correspondence with Joseph shows us a man accustomed to teach and instruct; he may have found it hard to be merely a Guild priest. If, after his priory's dissolution, Dalam *did* continue his teaching career in Stratford, perhaps at elementary level, combining this with his duties as a Guild priest, he may have encouraged the idea that he was the obvious candidate when the mastership next became vacant. Certainly, once he was in possession of this post, with its higher salary (£10 as against the £5 6*s*. 8*d*. which was the stipend of a Guild priest) and with accommodation for both school and living provided, he was, as we shall see, very reluctant to relinquish it.[35]

In 1544 Dalam was named in a list with fellow clergy, identified collectively as 'now beinge priests of the gyld', when they were party to a lease of property.[36] In the 1545 will of Henry Samuel, Dalam, described as 'clerk

30 Orme, *Medieval Schools*, p. 116, cites a Tudor example by Robert Whittington in which he gives us the best known description of Sir Thomas More: 'And, as time requireth, a man of marvellous mirth and pastimes, and sometimes of sad gravity, as who [i.e. people] say "a man for all seasons"'.

31 Ian Green, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 127–54.

32 Visitation Act book of John Bell, Bishop of Worcester, WRO 802/2764 c. 1520–1541.

33 SCLA ER1/1/28 22 October 2 & 3 Philip & Mary (1555): the grant of a chamber near 'the gild hall' to 'William Dalam, clerk, late grammar master ... having surrendered a grant of the office made to him by the late Guild of Stratford dated 4 November 35 Henry VIII [1543]'.

34 WRO 008.7 1543–44/78, Will of Sir Richard Kyrsten, a priest of the College of Stratford-upon-Avon.

35 See below, pp. 69–70.

36 SCLA BRT 3/195 dated 20th March 35HenVIII (1544).

and scolemayster of Stratford', appears first in the witness list – a position which suggests that he was the writer of the will and therefore inscribing himself in full.[37] Henry VIII's chantry survey of 1546 confirmed the role and clerical status of the schoolmaster within the Guild, recording 'there is now six prysts where one is a scholemaster of grammar'.[38] The 1548 survey of all the endowed foundations then being dissolved provided moreover a formal record of Dalam's age and position. This document reaffirms him as the Guild schoolmaster, 60 years old and in receipt of a stipend of £10 (the same salary as at the post's creation 66 years before).[39]

Having been denied one vocation in 1536, Dalam had the further misfortune of moving to a different post just at the point when the newly influential humanist ideals were downgrading the value of his skills as a schoolmaster, and the more evangelical Reformation under Edward VI cast doubts on the value of his functions as a priest. For a time he survived. Following the survey, the senior officers of the Court of Augmentations authorised Dalam and the school to continue; his stipend was to remain the same, and its payment appears regularly in the Court's records.[40] But the final payment (for half the year only) occurs in a roll dated 1553, coinciding neatly with two major changes at Stratford: the re-founding of the school, and the appointment of a new teacher, William Smart, as the first master under its new charter.[41]

Facing Change: An Old Priest and A New School

The royal charter founding 'the King's new school of Stratford-upon-Avon' in 1553 was probably based on the charter of Warwick School, which had been secured from the young King Edward VI by the Dudley family.[42] Similarly, the Stratford charter was also a means of consolidating the hold of the Dudley brothers (Ambrose, Earl of Warwick and Robert, Earl of Leicester) on the town.[43] Ostensibly, however, its purpose was to ensure that the boys and youth of the town were 'imbued from their cradle with more polite learning than was usual before our time', so that when they grew up the Church in England would be 'adorned and decorated not only by men learned in literature, but

37 TNA PROB 11/31 191/69 Alen – Will of Henry Samuel, probate 29. 3.1545.

38 TNA E301/31 – Chantry Certificates for Leicestershire and Warwickshire, 1546.

39 TNA E301/53 Chantry Certificates for Warwickshire; E301/57 Chantry Certificates (Pensions) for Warwickshire, certificate 20.

40 TNA E319/15/6, 20.7.1548; SC6/EDWVI/714 H/S/Wa/Wo-1547–48; SC6/EDWVI/715 H/S/Wa/Wo-1548–49; SC6/EDWVI/716 H/S/Wa/Wo-1549–50; SC6/EDWVI/717 H/S/Wa/Wo-1550–51; SC6/EDWVI/718 H/S/Wa/Wo-1551–52.

41 TNA LR6/123/1 Office of the Auditors of Land Revenue and predecessors: Receivers' Accounts, Series 1, Her/Shr/Wa/Wo – 1552–3.

42 SCLA BRU 1/2: Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation, charters; E.I. Fripp (ed), *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, Dugdale Society, vol. 1, 1553–1565 (1921).

43 Leach, 'Schools', pp. 304 and 334; see also below, pp. 73–4. See Bearman's discussion in this volume, p. 102, of the Dudleys' possible motivation in securing the charter for Stratford.

by men wise to the advantage of our whole realm'.[44] William Smart, who was to be the enabler of these high ideals in the new school's first years, was the brother of a local yeoman. He may also have been related to one of the College priests recorded in the 1548 survey with whom he shared a surname: Robert Smart, who was a fellow of the College and curate of Luddington, a parish he was authorised to continue serving when the parent foundation was dissolved.[45] As with Dalam at the dissolution of his priory, a long-standing relationship with the town may have made it an obvious haven for William Smart when on Mary's accession in 1553 he lost his fellowship in Christ's College, Cambridge, but it also proved fortunate for the Corporation. Smart, in holy orders, relatively young, highly qualified and inclined towards the newer learning, arrived in the town at the point at which the Corporation was being formally constituted and the school re-founded with new ambitions. Dalam, by contrast, was 65, with a long career firmly rooted in the old world – an ex-religious and, as we have seen, likely to be old-fashioned in his teaching.

Exact details of William Smart's initial appointment are not known but his relationship with Dalam, and its implicit tension in the changing environment of Stratford in the mid-1550s, is evident from three agreements drawn up in 1554 and 1555. The first, dated 20 December 1554, is formal confirmation of a current situation, namely that Smart was already in post – 'now schoolmaster with us in the said burrowe' (sic) – and directed 'dylygently to employ himself, with suche godly wysdom and lernynge as God hathe and shale endue hym with, to lerne and teche in the said gramer scole …' in return for an annual stipend of £20.[46] The second and third documents, however, tell us that Dalam was still in residence and not leaving office willingly. Perhaps the Corporation had exceeded its powers in appointing Smart, and Dalam was offering a legal challenge. In a grant dated 1 January 1555 Smart was indentured to pay Dalam £6.13*s*. 4*d*. per annum for life – a payment which, though mirroring the older tradition of new parochial incumbents paying their predecessors an agreed pension, in this instance covered Dalam's services as an assistant in the school.[47] The final document of the sequence, dated 22 October 1555, suggests that Dalam had shown reluctance to end his involvement with the school and surrender his quarters. The Corporation, supporting its action with reference to his age, provided Dalam with a chamber nearby – '*cameram iuxta domum sive aulam nuper vocatam* "the gild hall in Stratford"' – and an annuity of £8, and it was only at this point that he surrendered the grant of office made to him by the Guild in 1543.[48]

Having belonged to a regular order (the Augustinians) and then taken up employment within a Guild, Dalam experienced dissolution twice. Finding

44 SCLA ER82/6/81, Richard Savage, unpublished translation of the 1553 charter endowing King Edward VI School, para. 59.

45 TNA E319/15/6, 20.7.1548.

46 SCLA ER1/1/26 – 20 December 1554; see also Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', pp. 94–5.

47 Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 95; SCLA BRU 15/12/15, dated 1 January 1555.

48 SCLA ER1/1/28 – dated 22 October 1555. Dalam, the document implies, is aged and infirm, *iam senio afflictus.*

himself replaced after surviving the second round of suppressions must have been a particularly severe blow, especially as the new Corporation featured those who had been his former Guild employers. Perhaps as recognition of his years of service to the town and an acknowledgement that he was still a priest and of some local status, Dalam was allowed to serve at certain times in the Guild chapel, saying mass for the bailiffs and burgesses of the town.[49]

As he was born around 1488, Dalam's life and career bridged the old world and the new. This is reflected in both his experience in education, from his own schooldays to the end of his working life as a schoolmaster, and his service as a priest. It was an experience shared with many others of his upbringing and vocation, and he must have meditated on the changes he had lived through. Given that during Dalam's last years Mary's rule was attempting to reinstate much that had been lost, he may have thought some of that change undone. His death in the summer of 1558, less than three months before that of the Queen,[50] meant that he did not live to see Elizabeth's Settlement and that he died (legally) in the old faith: his burial is recorded in the parish register of Stratford, on 31 August of that year.[51]

Had he been born a few years earlier, Shakespeare would probably have had a very different education at the hands of this last 'grammar priest' of the Guild.

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‘More polite learning’: Humanism and the New Grammar School

Ian Green

The royal charter that founded ‘the King’s new school of Stratford-upon-Avon’ in 1553 envisaged the introduction of a ‘more polite learning than was usual before our times’.[1] This aspiration owed much to the persuasive case for a new humanist curriculum made in the first half of the sixteenth century by renowned visitors to England such as Erasmus and Vives, strongly supported by both Catholic and Protestant academics and courtiers born in England, from Waynflete, Colet and Lily before the Reformation to Elyot, Starkey, Ascham and Cheke during and after it. The idea that an education based firmly on study of the classics would provide the Crown with a pool of educated councillors and officials, and a nation of civilised, obedient subjects, was not one that the precariously placed Tudors and their leading supporters were likely to ignore. These ideas had for some time been leaving a growing mark on the education given in a few elite schools and on the private tuition provided for princes and princesses and nobly born children at the Tudor court. And by the mid-sixteenth century, the new educational agenda was reaching out into the provinces, through the initiatives of noble families such as the Dudleys and the Hastings in the Midlands, and the support shown by many of the landed gentry and urban elites who wanted to ensure that at least one of their sons should have an education that would fit him to move in polite society or enter a profession. A combination of the temporary disruption to established schools caused by the Reformation and the vogue for the new curriculum meant that from the 1530s to the 1560s there was both an opportunity and an impetus for the new humanist ideals and texts to be incorporated, first, into the new statutes or regulations of schools then being re-founded, secondly, into the syllabus of many of the existing grammar schools that had *not* been directly affected by the Reformation, and, thirdly,

1 I am deeply indebted to Robert Bearman for his help in bringing materials for this chapter to my attention, and his many suggestions and insightful comments on different drafts. For the charter, see above, p. 68 and fn. 42.

into the statutes or curriculum of the hundreds of brand new grammar schools, both permanently endowed and temporary, which were set up in England from the 1560s to the 1630s.[2]

Depending on their predisposition and abilities, the new syllabus must have left its mark on the intellectual development of thousands of boys who attended a grammar school in this period – not just a lively, intelligent youth like Shakespeare, or William Smith, the son of a 'mercer' who went on to university and became a teacher in Essex, and probably Richard Field, son of a business associate of John Shakespeare who became a printer in London, but also in different ways the other sons of local dignitaries such as Richard Quiney, Arthur Cawdrey and Richard Tyler, who probably sat alongside them but did not move as far away.[3] It has been calculated that at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the late 1570s, perhaps a quarter of all boys who were aged between 10 and 15 may have attended the new grammar school set up under Henry VIII, which may have had a capacity of about 80 boys. At Stratford, where there is information about those born in the parish, but not about the intended capacity of the school, the equivalent might have been about 40 to 60 boys, drawn mainly from the sons of citizens of some means. This total could well have been supplemented by boys from outside the borough, but on the other hand not all boys who began at a grammar school necessarily lasted the full course of about six years.[4]

Recruiting Teachers for the 'New School' from 1565 to 1624

The ending of the ecclesiastical duties of the old schoolmaster-chaplains at the Guild and the pressure to upgrade the curriculum meant that the type of teacher appointed to schools like Stratford in the second half of the sixteenth century could have been very different from the old. In practice, this turned out to be only partly the case. As before, some teachers were in holy orders, albeit Protestant this time, and some may have attended university for a

2 Ian Green, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 9–10, 15–22, 78–83, 105; Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), pt 1; *ODNB* under Henry Hastings, third earl of Huntingdon; and see above (p. 68) for the Dudleys.

3 E.I. Fripp, *Master Richard Quyny* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), pp. 13, 30–31; E.I. Fripp (vols 1–4), Levi Fox (vol. 5) and Robert Bearman (vol. 6), (eds), *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, Dugdale Society, vols 1, 3, 5, 10, 35, 44 (1921, 1924, 1926, 1929, 1990, 2011), at vol. 3, p. 20 n.1; Levi Fox, *The Early History of King Edward VI School Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society Occasional Papers, 29 (1984), p. 15; Jeanne Jones, *Family Life in Shakespeare's England* (Stroud: Sutton, 1966), pp. 15, 47–8; and the entries for Shakespeare, Smith, Quiney, Cawdrey and Tyler in *MA* vol. 6.

4 Brian Mains and Anthony Tuck (eds), *Royal Grammar School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: A History of the School in its Community* (Stocksfield: Oriel, 1986), p. 5; E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), Table A.3.1; I am indebted to the analysis of Stratford baptisms and burials prepared by Norma Hampson in conjunction with Corporation minutes and accounts. It has been suggested there were about 40 pupils in the 1570s at Stratford: Richard Pearson, *King Edward VI School Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare's School* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 2008), p. 13.

time. However, in a number of instances the new teachers at Stratford were probably much younger – certainly younger than Dalam when he retired – and probably never intended to stay for long, unless (as was happening elsewhere in England at the time) they could secure another source of income in the area, from a Church living or fees for the tuition of extra scholars. In the case of Stratford we probably also have to distinguish between the teachers appointed during a transitional phase from the 1550s to the 1570s, and the more settled phase that began in the 1580s. Thus William Smart probably turned to schoolteaching only after ejection from his Cambridge fellowship at the start of Mary's reign, and though he conformed to the Marian regime, may have remained sympathetic to Protestantism, for on the death of John Bretchgirdle, vicar of Stratford from 1561 to 1565, he briefly served that living, before moving on to another the following year.[5]

Smart's successor, John Brownsword, had been a pupil of Bretchgirdle in Cheshire in the 1550s when the latter had been perpetual curate and master of the school at Witton, and to judge from the Latin verses in Homeric mode which the young Brownsword had then written in his master's praise, was much influenced by his skill and energy as a teacher. Brownsword may have attended Oxford and Cambridge, though there is no firm record of this, and he may have acted as a tutor in a gentry household in Cheshire. He had certainly gained experience of teaching in new grammar schools at Wilmslow and Macclesfield in the early 1560s, and then briefly at Warwick before moving to Stratford. The fact that the Corporation was prepared to offer him the full £20 a year instead of the £13 6*s*. 8*d*. he had received at his previous schools, and an initial contract of two years rather than just one, suggests that they may have recognised him as a good catch for the new school. But with the premature death of his mentor in 1565, and perhaps for other reasons we will explore shortly, Brownsword did not settle at Stratford, and in 1567 opted to return to Macclesfield, where he may have left a senior pupil in charge. He stayed there until his death in 1589, by which time he was widely recognised for the quality of his teaching as well as his verse.[6]

In the late 1560s and 1570s it proved particularly hard to attract and keep well qualified or experienced teachers. John Acton, who does not seem to have had a degree, stayed only 15 months in 1568–9. Walter Roche had been a fellow at Corpus Christi, Oxford, but was not a career teacher. Having accepted the post of master at Stratford by late 1569, he was then given the royal living of Droitwich, which he held in plurality with the mastership for less than two years before switching to another living and then becoming a lawyer. Simon Hunt had perhaps received a BA at Oxford, but since this

5 See above p. 69; A.F. Leach, 'Schools', in William Page (ed.), *A History of Warwickshire,* vol. 2, *Victoria County History* (London, 1908), pp. 333–4; *MA*, vol. 1, pp. 33–6.

6 E.I. Fripp, *Shakespeare Studies: Biographical and Literary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), pp. 13–16, 36–42; *MA*, vol. 1, pp. lv–lvii, 142–3; *ODNB* under John Brownswerd; Leach, 'Schools', pp. 334–5.

was in 1569, he must have been very young when licensed by the bishop in 1571, and he stayed only until 1574. Thomas Jenkins had an MA and perhaps prior experience of teaching at Warwick before becoming master at Stratford from 1575 to 1579. But John Cottam or Cotton, another Oxford graduate in his thirties, stayed little more than a year, from late 1579 to early 1581.[7] Only with the appointments of Alexander Aspinall and John Trapp do we find graduate teachers being appointed who were prepared to stay for long periods. Aspinall was another Oxford graduate who served as master from his appointment in 1581 or 1582 until his death in 1624, though with the help of assistants from the late 1590s, by which time he had diversified into property management, selling wool and yarn, and brewing. John Trapp was yet another Oxford graduate, who began as Aspinall's usher but was appointed master in 1624 and stayed until his death in 1669, though he too needed the help of assistants and a deputy, partly because the governors widened the catchment area for pupils (for which he was given a salary enhancement of £5 in 1633), and partly because from the late 1630s he held Church livings as well.[8]

Why did it prove so hard to attract and keep good teachers at the start of Elizabeth's reign? First, there was a national shortage of well-qualified candidates. Production of graduates had not yet recovered from the disruptions of schools and universities in the middle decades of the century, and those who did reach university and managed to stay for a few years found there were plenty of opportunities in the Church and professions, many of them potentially more rewarding and better paid than what one graduate would call the 'moiling and drudging life' of a teacher.[9] Secondly, there were at least three types of grammar schools, and Stratford was in the largest and lowest tier. There was a small elite of older schools like Eton and Winchester, well endowed and organised and able to attract the most talented teachers of the age, including some with higher degrees, and to afford an excellent library. Then there were a few dozen new or newly re-founded ones like Westminster, St Paul's and Merchant Taylors' in London, the occasional provincial school like Shrewsbury, and urban schools like Bury St Edmunds, Hull and Newcastle-upon-Tyne which attracted students from some distance away – schools with sufficient funds to hire both a master and an usher, able through networks based on their hinterlands or connections with alumni to compete for the best teachers available, with at least a BA and perhaps an MA, and perhaps some Greek as well as Latin, and even, like Shrewsbury, to acquire sizeable libraries. Finally, there were hundreds of local grammar schools, of which the re-founded school at Stratford-upon-Avon was an example: not only less generously endowed,

7 *MA* vol. 2, pp. xxiii, xxv–vi, xl–xli, 21, 35–6, 46, 48, 57; vol. 3, pp. 13, 33, 38–9, 45, 48, 79, 95, 117; Fox, *Early History*, p. 10; Robert Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530–1580', *Midland History* 32 (2007), 102–5.

8 Ibid., p. 104; Leach, 'Schools', pp. 335–8; Fripp, *Quyny*, pp. 61–2; *MA*, vol. 3, p. 117; Fox, *Early History*, pp. 15–17.

9 David Cressy, 'A Drudgery of Schoolmasters: The Teaching Profession in Elizabethan and Stuart England', in Wilfrid Prest (ed.), *The Professions in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 129.


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but experiencing difficulty in attracting teachers with a degree and experience.[10] The Corporation at Stratford was either unlucky in its choice of candidates or had more urgent priorities than attracting as good a teacher as it could afford.

Salary and Terms and Conditions for the New Teachers

Take the salary and terms and conditions offered at Stratford, for example. Though the wages were twice those paid before the new foundation of 1553, and more than in some other new grammar schools, £20 was only about average for a moderately sized grammar school in provincial England in the mid- to late-sixteenth century, and was subject to certain deductions, as we shall see. A skilled labourer might earn £15 in a good year, and teachers with talent or experience, who could pick and choose their next post, may have deemed £20 inadequate for the work that was demanded and the services offered in return. Moreover, at Stratford the salary was pegged at that level for several decades, but the inflation that dogged England for much of the sixteenth century was beginning to bite hard by the 1560s and 1570s, and the population of England was also rising as fast as the aspirations of many of the landed and urban elites for their children. Many masters were therefore faced by an income dwindling in real terms, and a rising roll of students who, because of raised parental expectations that their children would receive a 'more polite education', were likely to be kept longer in school than before.[11]

Where a grammar school was relatively small, with about 20 or 30 pupils as at Scarborough and Dedham in the late sixteenth century, a single master might be able to cope, provided all the students who entered could already read and write. But in many cases this was a counsel of perfection, and in Stratford there does not appear to have been a regular source of elementary teaching before the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, when John Whyte and then Thomas Parker were licensed as teachers, and were probably supported not by the Corporation but by fees from parents, which must have narrowed their clientele to the children of the moderately affluent. A petition on Parker's behalf in 1604 made it clear that he was teaching 'little children ... the alphabet and reading of English' and that thereby 'the Free School [was] greatly eased of that tedious trouble'.[12] But where the numbers enrolling for free grammar schooling were either high or increasing, and especially if any youngsters arrived unable to read, the situation could soon become intolerable, and in this situation many teachers requested and obtained the help of an assistant known as an 'usher'. His job was to teach any who had not yet

10 Ibid., pp. 129–53; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 57–66.

11 William R. Feyerharm, 'The Status of the Schoolmaster and the Continuity of Education in Elizabethan East Anglia', *History of Education* 5/2 (1976), 109–11; Cressy, 'Teaching Profession', pp. 144–5; Mains and Tuck, *Royal Grammar School*, pp. 7–8.

12 Worcester Record Office (WRO), BA3124/1/3; E.R.C. Brinkworth, *Shakespeare and the Bawdy Court* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1972), pp. 102, 104.

learned how to read English properly – the 'petties', or little ones, aged seven or eight – and to start those in the lower forms of the grammar school proper, aged about nine or ten, on the official Latin 'grammar' and other elementary Latin texts. This left the 'master' free to concentrate on ensuring those in the middle and senior forms studied their Cicero, Terence and Ovid thoroughly, and acquired the arts of composing polished, persuasive letters, essays and speeches. Moreover, in many towns and cities, the authorities picked up the tab for an usher. Coventry Grammar School, endowed in 1573, paid £20 to the master and £10 to a learned usher, and provided both with houses. Norwich Grammar School paid an usher £6 8*s*. 4*d*. in the mid sixteenth century, but by 1586 had raised this to £13 6*s*. 8*d*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1577 had a master and an usher, but by the 1610s had appointed an under-usher or third master, suggesting numbers had since risen. At Wolverhampton by 1609 there was an usher teaching a dozen absolute beginners how to read and 30 slightly older boys some basic Latin, while the master had only 19 pupils in the middle school and nine in the top forms.[13]

However, the situation in Stratford seems to have been that the Corporation stuck to the principle that the charter mentioned only one teacher, and if an assistant was required his wages had to come from the master's salary. The agreement with Smart in 1554 stated that he was to teach 'all such scholars and children as shall fortune to come thither' who were 'ready to enter into the accidence and principles' of Latin grammar, but Smart initially had to pay Dalam a third of his salary to act as his assistant, and after the old priest's death £4 a year was deducted from Smart's salary to pay first William Gilbert alias Higgs, and then in 1564 William Allen 'for teaching the children': was this possibly the choirboy of 1548, William Allen, pensioned off when the song school at Holy Trinity was closed?[14] With a stronger hand to play, Brownsword may have received the full £20, for after 1564 we hear nothing of an usher in the Stratford records for over 30 years. However, it is striking that while Brownsword's agreement with the Corporation in 1565, like Smart's, stated that he had to teach 'all such scholars as shall ... come to the school there', it omitted the clause about their being expected to have attained a minimum standard of literacy before joining the school. Was he expected to manage all-comers by himself?[15] Only in November 1597, after Aspinall had been in post for many years, had diversified into other lines of business, and would shortly become a burgess, do we find an usher appointed, the young Henry Sturley who had been a pupil of Aspinall's but was still at university. In 1603 the chamberlain's account lumped together 'Master Aspinall and Master Sturley' in the payment of £20 for 'their year's wages', though the next year Sturley, like many ushers, moved on (to be master of Chipping Camden

13 Cressy, 'Teaching Profession', pp. 145–7; Mains and Tuck, *Royal Grammar School*, p. 8; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 60–61.

14 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 33–6, 122, 128, 140 n.12; Leach, 'Schools', p. 334; Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', pp. 97, 101; and above, pp. 63–4.

15 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 121 n.9, 122, 142–3.

school, and then a minister). But thereafter there are more regular mentions of an usher, as in 1611 when Aspinall promised the Corporation to 'procure a sufficient scholar from Oxford or some other place'. Richard Williams was usher in 1612, 'Mr Owen' in 1617, George Quiney in 1620, and John Trapp in 1623. But the Corporation not only warned Aspinall that the 'election of an usher [was] out of his own means', but also insisted they could intervene on who was appointed, as happened in the dispute between Quiney and Trapp in 1622. This dispute arose partly because another possible way of supporting an assistant teacher financially – indeed, it was a method strongly encouraged by Canon 78 of 1604 in parishes still without an endowed school – was for the curate of the parish to be employed as a teacher also. This may have happened in the 1560s with William Gilbert, and later with Richard Watts and George Quiney. But the resolution of the dispute of 1622 suggests this doubling up was not without problems: 'also ... it is agreed that at no time hereafter the office of reading minister and usher schoolmaster shall be supplied by one person'.[16]

There were other means by which masters could find a way round the problem of facing too many pupils at too many levels. One was to use a senior pupil to teach the petties. If the pupil was any good, this was a short-term solution, since he would soon be leaving for university or some other career opportunity. However, if he showed promise, it might pave the way for a return within a few years: returning to one's county or town of origin was a common trait for university-educated teachers in this period. Had Henry Sturley, the son of a fellow burgess in Stratford as well as a pupil of Aspinall, perhaps served in this way before heading off to university? It would explain his being recruited before he had finished his studies there. Had George Quiney, another son of a Stratford alderman, perhaps been a 'helper' too? He appears as an usher from 1620, but had graduated from Oxford as recently as May that year. Indeed, if he showed early talent, might William Shakespeare have acted in this capacity in his teens in the late 1570s? If so, this might have been the basis for the later report that he had been a 'teacher in the country' (which for Londoners meant anywhere outside the city walls).[17]

Another means of raising funds for a hard-pressed master was to allow him to charge at least some fees, which he could then use to pay for a full-time usher. There were many schools in which head teachers were allowed by the governors or other ruling body to raise their incomes a little by charging the 'free' students a small entrance fee, and perhaps a penny at Christmas and small charges for candles, heating the schoolroom, or books. Some authorities also allowed the schoolmaster to charge full fees to the parents of any pupils from outside the catchment area, and the cost of accommodation if they boarded with him, though this risked the wrath of parents of town children

16 Leach, 'Schools', pp. 334, 337–8; Gerald Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529–1947* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 370–71; *MA* vol. 1, pp. 121 n. 9, and 140.

17 Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, p. 87; Fripp, *Quyny*, pp. 117, 120–21; Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 104.

if they felt the master was giving fee-payers more attention. But it is not clear whether these fees were permitted in Stratford, and if they were not, and there was no extra funding provided for an usher, then some of those young or inexperienced teachers in the late 1560s and the 1570s may have been left as the sole teacher with perhaps about 40 to 60 pupils of different ages and levels, all expecting to be taught during the same hours and in the same room.[18] That total was quite possibly on the cusp between the number with which a competent teacher could reasonably hope to achieve some progress, at least with brighter students, and a flood which threatened to overwhelm him.

Accommodation

The governors of some schools, as at Coventry and Felsted, made efforts to make life tolerable for teachers in other ways, for example by providing a decent house and keeping it in good repair. At Stratford the Corporation was bound by the charter of 1553 to provide *domum et mansionem convenientem* – 'a convenient house and mansion' – for the teacher (a 'mansion' was a dwelling place or room, as in Tyndale's translation of John 14:2: 'in my Father's house are many mansions'). The charter did not, however, state how commodious this accommodation should be, who was responsible for its maintenance, or whether it came free of charge. It is not clear where Smart was housed in 1554: if Dalam was still in residence in the master's quarters, Smart was perhaps put in temporary accommodation until the old canon could be moved to the 'chamber nearby ... "the gild hall in Stratford"'. As a condition of appointment Smart had also had to accept a further deduction of his pay – £3 6*s*. 8*d*. for two years and £1 13*s*. 4*d*. for a further two years – towards repairs to property in Stratford.[19] When Brownsword arrived from Warwick in 1565, the Corporation promised him a 'dwelling house' and did not specify any deductions, but he *was* asked to acknowledge their 'charges in placing the new master, his wife and goods', and to agree to sacrifice £5 of his wages if he left at the end of his two-year contract (which he did). This house was presumably the schoolhouse built in 1427–8, for within months of Brownsword's departure, the Corporation had agreed to lease to one Robert Hall what was variously referred to as the tenement 'some time employed to a school house' and 'a house in Church Street commonly called the old school with chamber over'.[20] This house would remain in tenants' hands throughout the early modern period, bringing in a steady income of 10*s*. a year, raised to 13*s*. 4*d*. when the first lease was expiring in 1598, and then to 20*s*. in 1617.[21]

18 See footnote 4 above.

19 Cressy, 'Teaching Profession', p. 145; Feyerharm, 'Status of Schoolmaster', p. 110; *MA* vol. 1, pp. xvii, xxx, 35–6, 49.

20 See the chapter by Giles and Clark in this volume, pp. 153–6.

21 *MA*, vol. 1, pp. lvi, 142–3, 150; vol. 2, p. 8 (and BRU 8/5/5); vol. 5, pp. 87, 126 (and Council Book B, p. 344).

The result of the re-arrangements implied in these moves was that both teachers and pupils needed new quarters. As far as accommodation for the teachers from 1567 to 1610 is concerned, there is insufficient evidence for us to be certain. On the one hand, the Corporation may have provided free quarters (as they did for the vicars) though not always in the same place, and charged the masters extra for additional space such as a study. On the other, the Corporation may have regarded itself as bound to provide accommodation but not necessarily free of all charges, and the hard bargains it drove with Smart and Brownsword may have set the tone for the next few years. Acton did not stay long enough for us to be clear as to where he was accommodated; and Roche, soon a pluralist, may have lived in his cure. Those teachers who were appointed in the mid-1570s were apparently offered a 'chamber' for which they paid 10*s*. a year. The accommodation offered Hunt was initially, in 1574, referred to vaguely as 'one chamber' and in 1576 as 'his chamber', but by 1580 and 1583 this had become 'the schoolmaster's chamber'. In 1586 there is a reference to 'Mr Aspinall's chamber which he now dwelleth in', which suggests he was living there rather than just using it during the day, but in 1599 there is mention of 'Mr Aspinall's study' (Aspinall had married in 1594 and perhaps moved to married quarters elsewhere).[22] By the 1580s the schoolmasters may have been able to drive a harder bargain with the Corporation, for each year from 1581 to 1586 the chamberlain was exonerated for *not* receiving 10*s*. for 'the schoolmaster's chamber'.[23]

Whether these references from 1574 to 1599 refer to the same 'chamber' each time is not clear. Nor is the location. Was it the same chamber 'next the gild hall' that Dalam was persuaded to move into in 1555, or in one of the rooms on the east side of the courtyard (including the house later renovated for the schoolmaster in the early 1610s), or in the block to the south? In 1599 the 'chamber' being used as 'Mr Aspinall's study' was evidently located on the first floor of the south range abutting the 'tenement in Church Street', for in that year the incomplete tiling on the old schoolhouse was causing 'hurt' to this chamber. Moreover in 1612 Aspinall's 'chamber' was said to be 'over our Council chamber', which was situated on the ground floor of the southern extension of the Guildhall. About this time, however, there seems to have been a rearrangement of the first-floor rooms over the Council chamber and perhaps at the south end of the upper floor of the Guildhall too, to provide alternative storage space for Corporation property and accommodation and study space for teachers and curates.[24]

In 1611, the 21-year lease which Aspinall had taken out in 1590 of a range of 'tenements and rooms of housing' within the Guild complex, probably on the eastern side, was due to fall in; and in 1610–11 work was begun not only on a new residence for the vicar, but also on 'the house that must be for the

22 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 86, 103, 114; vol. 3, pp. 46, 120; BRU 15/12/54, p. 6; Fripp, *Quyny*, p. 62.

23 *MA* vol. 3, pp. 84, 98, 120, 138, 150, 164; vol. 4, p. 18.

24 BRU 8/5/5; Leach, 'Schools', p. 337. Compare the more detailed discussion in Giles and Clark in this volume, pp. 156–60.

schoolmaster'. To judge from the items and sums then accounted for, this latter 'house' was not a new one, but an existing one which had undergone major renovation – presumably the one built in c. 1502–03 which by the nineteenth century had become known as the 'Pedagogue's House'. Aspinall himself seems to have moved into this house and lived in it for some time, for in 1624 his successor as master, John Trapp, was promised 'the house and garden wherein Mr Aspinall late dwelt, for his habitation' as well as 'his chamber by the school' (presumably as a study for himself) at the slightly lower yearly rent of 6*s*. 8*d*.[25] It had apparently taken the Corporation over 40 years, since 1567, to provide the new *domum et mansionem convenientem*, and even then they did not come completely free.

The Schoolroom

This still leaves the question of where the teaching took place and under what sort of conditions. In practice, few teachers in late Tudor England can have had high expectations. In the increasingly crowded towns of that period, space was at a premium, and many of both the old and the new endowed grammar schools either lacked a permanent teaching area – moving from one set of temporary premises to another, or sharing space with someone else, such as the incumbent in the parish church – or were bursting at the seams of the small premises inherited from times when fewer students had attended school. Even the rooms purpose-built in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries for a lucky minority of schools were by modern standards not large, as in the small to middling grammar schools at Thame, Enfield and Ashbourne, where the schoolroom was perhaps 15 metres by 8 metres, or at Hawkshead, perhaps 11 by 7 metres. But the ideal which we find stated as late as 1660 in texts such as Charles Hoole's *A new discovery of the old art of teaching school*, for example – a partition between different classes, and desks on which students could write or in which they could perhaps keep their books – probably remained just that. The reality, as indicated in woodcuts and on seals of the period, was probably a single room into which all age levels were crammed, with the master in a chair, sometimes on a dais so he could survey the whole room, and the pupils ranged on benches or 'forms', with their books on their knees, as in the woodcut on the title-page of Nowell's *Catechimsus parvus* published in 1573 and reproduced in this volume (Fig. 4.1, p. 77).[26]

In the absence of firm evidence to the contrary, we must assume that this was initially the case in 'the King's new school' at Stratford too. The accounts

25 *MA*, vol. 4, pp. 116, 125; B.R.U. 4/1/211; Leach, 'Schools', pp. 334–8; J. Clark, K. Giles et al., *Conservation Management Plan. The Guildhall and Pedagogue's House, King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire*, 3 volumes (2006), unpublished report, vol. 2, pp. 26–8.

26 Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 60–66; Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 100; visit by IG to Hawkshead School.

make it clear that the Corporation recognised a duty to keep the 'school' or 'schoolhouse' in reasonable repair, but provide only tantalising clues as to what the schoolroom contained, or even where it was after Brownsword left and the 'old school' was leased to Robert Hall in 1568.[27] Alternative premises were perhaps already under consideration by 1567, for Brownsword donated '12*d*. toward the making of the school'; and while at least one of the payments for alterations and repairs in 1567–8 refers specifically to work on the 'old school' (2*s*. for groundselling – making a clay floor), others may refer to alterations needed to prepare a replacement teaching area: the 'repairing of the school', 'dressing and sweeping the school house', 'a plank for the school', and 'taking down the sollar over the school'.[28] From the recurrent payments to locksmiths for new keys or mending the lock of the 'school house door', on at least four occasions between 1569 and 1645, we may surmise that there was sufficient of value in the 'school house' to require a secure door – perhaps the large dictionary given by Bretchgirdle in 1565 (unless that was kept in the master's 'chamber' overnight), or the books given in 1625 which led to the making of some shelving in 1630.[29] However, the first we hear of desks, as opposed to benches, is a payment for repair to one in 1692–3. On the other hand, the payment of 1*s*. 4*d*. in 1587 for 60 bricks 'for the making of the hearth in the school house' suggests there was at least a source of heat in the winter months. In addition there were payments for planks and nails for repairing the school floor in 1573–4, and for repairing school windows at least four times between 1573–4 and 1632 (on one occasion the master paid 7*s*. 6*d*. towards the cost – had there been a 'barring out'?). The studding of the walls was repaired in 1608, and the walls were replastered and lime-washed in 1632.[30]

The location of the schoolroom was almost certainly on the first floor of today's Guildhall. The reference to the removal of the 'sollar' over the schoolhouse in 1567–8, the payments in 1581 and 1615 to carpenters and tilers for work 'over the stairs of the school', and the extensive work on the 'upper school stairs' in 1623 strongly suggest that the teaching took place on the first floor, as do references to work on the roof on three occasions between 1604 and 1623. The most likely location for the teaching area, then, was the upper hall of the Guildhall, though just how much of that area was occupied, and what the layout was of master's chair and boys' benches within that space still remains unclear. In the 1490s there had been a buttery and perhaps a pantry or other service room at the south end of the first floor, and the early eighteenth-century headmaster Joseph Greene referred to two chambers in

27 In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the term 'school-house' was used to refer to the place where teaching took place, and by extension to the teaching given there; it did not necessarily imply a separate building. See the chapter by Bearman, p. 111 for 1627 survey references to the schoolhouse as well as the schoolmaster's house and chamber and the Guildhall, BRT 2/1 p. 118.

28 *MA* vol. 1, pp. lvi, 115; vol. 2, pp. 8, 10. The term 'sollar' was used (in the sixteenth century) to refer to a loft, attic or garret, and in the 1920s Fripp thought there were still traces in the 'overhall' of a main beam having been cut to facilitate a narrow stair up to such a room (ibid., vol. 1, p. xvii).

29 *MA* vol. 2, p. 22; vol. 3, pp. 49, 118; and *Conservation Management Plan*, vol. 2, p. 29; and footnote 44 below.

30 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 75, 77; vol. 4, p. 17; *Conservation Management Plan*, vol. 2, pp. 29, 35.

the same location. If these rooms had a continuous existence in between (and the references to a chamber 'next the school' being occupied by ushers in the early seventeenth century may fit in with this), then the teaching area would have been at the north end of the first floor.[31]

Wherever the teaching took place, it was unlikely to have been a quiet haven. After the incorporation of 1553, the old Guildhall complex soon became the busy hub of the whole town's communal life. In the different buildings round the courtyard, there were regular meetings of law courts and councillors, and sermons by visiting preachers; there were business dealings and charitable activities; weapons were stored in an armoury and Corporation funds in a 'chest' in a couple of rooms close to or adjoining the master's chamber; and feasts were held occasionally. From the early 1560s to the 1630s, Corporation records also show a steady stream of workmen carrying out repairs to the roofs, windows, walls and floors of the other rooms and buildings in the complex, as well as upgrading the heating inside and relaying the slabs outside them. The spaces earmarked for teaching or studying might also have been frequently disrupted, or perhaps even commandeered, during at least 30 visits of professional players to Stratford-upon-Avon of which there is a record between the late 1560s and the 1620s. These players may well have performed in the area otherwise occupied by the schoolroom, and burgesses and aldermen seeking to impress their guests at these performances, and actors needing changing rooms, would probably have given the interests of teachers and scholars low priority.[32] The visiting troupes also acquired a reputation for rowdiness, and caused damage too. The council accounts for 1587 list 1*s*. 4*d*. 'for mending of a form that was broken by the Queen's players': was this one of the school benches? Pupils may have loved these visits, but teachers may not, especially if any of them thought professional play-acting was immoral (as some 'godly' teachers did), or resented their lessons and their quarters being invaded by noisy thespians.[33]

In short, there were various reasons why men like Smart and Brownsword and some of the young or inexperienced teachers who followed them might have been disinclined to make a career of teaching at the new school in Stratford. Expectations were probably high, but the conditions of service were not particularly generous, and the teaching space may have been, even by contemporary standards, noisy and liable to disruption. The frequency with which Shakespeare later described schoolmasters as dry pedants, and implied that most pupils crept 'like snail / Unwillingly to school' (*As You Like*

31 Ibid., pp. 28–9; *MA* vol. 3, p. 81. The order in 1595 'that there shall be no school kept in the chapel from this time following' (ibid., vol. 5, p. 25) may indicate that there had been some teaching there, perhaps of an overflow from the grammar school, or perhaps a petty school.

32 BRU 3/2. For further discussion of the visits and the location of the playing area or areas see the chapter by Mulryne in this volume, pp. 171–206.

33 Leach, 'Schools', p. 335; *Conservation Management Plan*, vol. 2, pp. 21–26, 27–9; J.R. Mulryne, 'Professional Players in the Guild Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1568–1597', *Shakespeare Survey* 60 (2007), 1–22; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 207, 213.

It, 2.7.146–7), may have been designed to feed the prejudices of his audiences at the turn of the century, for across the whole of England grammar school teaching soon acquired a reputation for being boring and repetitive, and grammar school teachers for being tyrannical and humourless. But there was another side to this picture. Even committed, talented teachers probably found that keeping classes of mixed age and ability hard at work in a cramped, noisy classroom probably left few opportunities to instil much pleasure as well as profit into classroom exercises. And the rote repetition and the memorising of rules which became staples of grammar school education were effective, even if they sometimes bored a lively young mind like Shakespeare's.

Nor should it be thought that the standards of teaching at Stratford were not at least average. Abraham Sturley in a letter to Richard Quiney senior cited Erasmus's *Adagia* – a classic schoolbook of the period; Sturley's son, Henry, a pupil of Aspinall's, wrote Latin fluently before becoming first an usher and teacher and then a minister; and in 1598 Richard Quiney junior, also taught by Aspinall and perhaps Sturley as usher, was able, aged 11, to pen a Latin letter to his father in London asking him to buy two copy-books, one for himself and one for his brother Thomas (who later married Judith Shakespeare).[34] As far as Shakespeare is concerned, if he began as a petty at the age of seven or eight and entered the grammar school proper a couple of years later, his teachers were probably drawn from transient ones like Hunt and Jenkins. But an inexperienced teacher does not necessarily make for bad teaching, and to judge from his subsequent skill in exploiting the tricks of the classical trade, what Shakespeare did absorb as a schoolboy, either studying in class or perhaps reading by himself at home, almost certainly helped to mould his idiosyncratic intellectual and artistic development.[35]

Religious Education in 'The King's New School'

There have been suggestions that three of the teachers at Stratford during Shakespeare's childhood and adolescence leant strongly towards Catholicism: Simon Hunt (1571–74), Thomas Jenkins (1575–79), and John Cottam (1579–1581). Combined with the fact that John Shakespeare had stopped attending church for a number of years, and that one of William's possible contemporaries at school, Richard Dibdale, had an elder brother trained as a priest at Douai and himself as an adult became an 'obstinate' recusant, we

34 Fripp, *Quyny*, pp. 13, 30–31, 117, 120, 123, 127, 133, and see 160.

35 Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 93–101; Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the Age: The Life, Mind and World of William Shakespeare* (London: Viking, 2008), pt 2; see also T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's 'Small Latine and Lesse Greeke'* (2 vols, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944); Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books* (London: Continuum, 2004); Leonard Barkan, 'What did Shakespeare read?', in Margareta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Park Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 43–59.

have the potential for a strong Catholic element in Shakespeare's upbringing. However, the evidence for this is far from conclusive.

John Shakespeare was recorded as not attending church for fear of being arrested for debt rather than religious scruple. In the case of Hunt there is no material evidence, only coincidence of timing, to connect the Simon Hunt at Stratford with the one who enrolled at the Catholic College at Douai in 1575. Similarly, to proceed from the fact that Thomas Jenkins had attended St John's College, Oxford in the mid 1560s, when a minority of its fellows were in trouble for their Catholic beliefs, to the assertion that Jenkins was a Catholic sympathiser is to offer guilt by association rather than specific proof. The fact that Jenkins was a son of one of the servants of the founder of St John's College, Oxford, probably accounts for his choice of college. And although John Cottam or Cotton *might* have been the brother of the Thomas Cottam who was arrested as a Catholic priest in 1580, and *might* have resigned in 1581 over Thomas's arrest, persistent efforts to establish that John himself was a recusant have failed to substantiate that case too.[36]

It also seems unlikely that closet Catholics would have been appointed by the strongly Protestant Ambrose Dudley, in whose hands the appointment of teachers technically lay, or survived long in a very public post such as schoolteacher. The ecclesiastical authorities in London and in the dioceses (including Worcester) had initiated licensing procedures to prevent Catholics taking school-teaching posts, and tried to keep an eye on them subsequently through regular visitations of the parishes. Moreover, in Stratford itself Henry Heycroft, the vicar from 1569 to 1584, was a Cambridge graduate, an active Protestant reformer and preacher, and backed by Ambrose Dudley; and the curate from 1570 was William Gilbert, a former usher at the school who perhaps shared Heycroft's views. Any of these men would almost certainly have complained loudly if they had suspected schoolmasters of doing anything to favour the old religion, for example by neglecting to catechise their students or failing to ensure they attended church regularly.[37]

That having been said, there is no reason to regard the teaching in Stratford in the Elizabethan period as having a pronounced Protestant hue. This was due not to local factors, but to the fact that across Elizabethan England secondary education was much less confessional in its orientation than it might have been had the Crown, bishops, clergy or parents insisted on it; and it was also arguably much less confessional than in most Protestant or Catholic schools abroad or in Scotland. English grammar schoolboys devoted much less time to attending church for worship than did their Catholic predecessors in England and their Catholic contemporaries abroad, and they heard fewer sermons

36 Robert Bearman, 'John Shakespeare: A Papist or Just Penniless?', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56/4 (2005), 411–33; and Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', pp. 99–105. The *ODNB* article on Thomas Cottam does not mention a brother; Jones, *Family Life*, p. 112, and Jeanne Jones (ed.), *Stratford-upon-Avon Inventories 1538–1699*, Dugdale Society, vols 39, 40 (2002, 2003), vol. 1, pp. 104–6.

37 Bray, *Anglican Canons*, pp. 200–201, 370–73; W.M. Kennedy, *Elizabethan Episcopal Administration*, Alcuin Club Collections, vols 26–27 (London, 1924), *passim*; Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', pp. 99–100; Brinkworth, *Shakespeare and the Bawdy Court*, p. 59.

than students in Geneva. True, there were sessions of communal prayer and worship at the start and end of each school day, but these were often formulaic, and in some cases even included prayers and psalms specified by school founders before the Reformation, and often in Latin, the use of which was prohibited in parish churches. Catechising did take place in many schools on Saturdays, but only for an hour or two; and there is little evidence that sermon repetition was taken seriously. To the disquiet of the 'godly', reading the Bible was not a regular part of the syllabus, and as for mastering the biblical languages, the study of Greek was slow to spread outside the leading schools of the South East, and Hebrew was found only where a teacher had the skill and the inclination to teach it. Although many teachers were in holy orders, they provided a moderately Protestant rather than a strongly confessional education or one designed to prepare candidates for the ministry; and no-one seems to have been prepared to do much about this situation.[38]

Shakespeare's supremely retentive memory does seem to have absorbed phrases from the official Protestant elementary catechism of the day, the Prayer Book catechism of 1549, and to have known the prayers in the official *Primer and catechisme* targeted at the young. When Hamlet protests to Rosencrantz that he still loves him, he holds out his hands and swears by 'these pickers and stealers' (3.2.323) – an odd phrase until one realises that in the 1549 catechism the child is taught that the eighth Commandment means he must 'keep his hands from picking and stealing'. Moreover, either as an adolescent attending church regularly or a young married man attending rites of passage such as weddings, baptisms and funerals, he soaked up phrases from the more frequently used services in the Book of Common Prayer and the two official Books of Homilies. By the time he started writing he was familiar with different translations of the Bible, though in the case of the Psalms, which he cited more than any other book, it was nearly always the Great Bible version of the psalter used in church rather than the Genevan.[39] But like many other educated men of the day, he had become familiar not just with the ancient classics in the original or translation, but also with the texts of Chaucer and Langland and more recent Renaissance texts in translation. And his personal preference was not for those texts saturated in Christian teaching on the virtues of being humble and meek, or embodying the Protestant insistence that, without divine grace, fallen man was incapable of meritorious actions, but those which lauded the ancient and medieval concepts of courage, honour, and duty, or articulated the concept of earthly rather than sacred love. Poets and playwrights in London were not alone in

38 Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 88–92, 267–306.

39 Ian Green, *'"The Christian's ABC": Catechisms and Catechizing in England c. 1530–1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 170; Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 33, 77, 210, 245n, 402; Richmond Noble, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1935); Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), pp. 20–25, 242–3; and John W. Velz, 'Shakespeare and the Geneva Bible' in Takashi Kozuka and J.R. Mulryne (eds), *Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson: New Directions in Biography* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 113–18.

doing this. Members of the universities wrote encomia in which the virtues and patriotism of monarchs like Elizabeth and James I were compared very favourably with those of ancient gods and emperors, as well as Old Testament heroines and heroes. And in the provinces the educated elite wrote epitaphs praising the virtues and sense of duty of their departed relations, implying that their charitable deeds and regular church attendance made them worthy of salvation. In short, among the adult laity of late Elizabethan England there was a growing tendency for the moral teaching of the ancients to be treated not as a useful supplement to the Church's teaching on Christian conduct, as the humanists had imagined it would be, but as synonymous with it.[40] Shakespeare's education had not steered him towards Catholicism, but it had probably not made him a particularly well informed or strongly committed Protestant either.

A Humanist Education

This brings us back to what was taught in the 'King's new school'. Today the idea of focusing a Christian education on the study of pagan texts may seem odd, and some of the 'godly' would soon be expressing concern at the imbalance between pagan and Christian materials used, and at the prospect of 'filthy' passages in authors such as Terence, Ovid and Horace being studied by schoolboys. But Christian humanists like the Catholic Erasmus and the Lutheran Melanchthon regarded the mastering of the intricacies of Latin grammar and rhetoric as the best possible mental training for the young, and viewed authors like Cicero, Virgil and later Seneca as proto-Christians. Humanists admired the Stoic moralising of the ancients, and their belief that pursuing moral ideals such as duty, honour, courage and moderation could secure a happy life on earth and immortal life thereafter. Humanists argued that the classics provided not only lessons in good manners for the young, but also reservoirs of moral teaching which could legitimately be used to supplement that found in the Bible and Patristic writings. Moreover, many of the early leaders of the Reformation in England, including bishops like Parker and Grindal at Canterbury, Sandys at York, and Cooper at Lincoln, were themselves the product of a humanist education in good learning and good manners, and were aware that the humanists' concern with mental training and linguistic analysis had produced a series of eminent biblical scholars, theologians and preachers. The result was that for more than 200 years after the Reformation, successive generations of English schoolboys were fed a diet which consisted above all of Latin texts; and the production of these soon became the monopoly of a privileged inner core of 'stationers' who churned out tens of thousands of copies of those texts every year.[41]

40 Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 232–3, 264–5, and Chapter 6; and on epitaphs, Ian Green, *Word, Image and Ritual in Early Modern English Protestantism* (forthcoming).

41 See references in fn. 2 above, and Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. x–xi, 33–52, 79–80, 83–6.

4.2 Schoolboys of King Edward VI School attend a lesson in 'Big school' on the upper floor of the ancient Guildhall. Photograph taken 29 November 2006. © Ronnie Mulryne

The first stage of a grammar schoolboy's education was a thorough grounding in the rules of Latin grammar as laid down by the humanists, and there is an early indication of this in Stratford in the agreement made with the first new teacher appointed under the new charter in 1554. This agreement specified that one of Smart's main priorities was to teach 'the accidence and principles of grammar'. This refers to parts one and two of the official Latin grammar, assembled by William Lily and authorised by Henry VIII: the short introduction known as 'the accidence', and the longer part two, the *Brevissima institutio* or 'grammar' proper. Revised in the early 1540s, these two parts were soon being printed in thousands of copies each year for grammar schoolboys across the country, and such was the common ground shared by those boys who had attended the lower forms of a grammar school that when Shakespeare parodied some of the grammatical rules laid out in 'Lily's Grammar', he could be moderately confident that many of both the citizens of London and the courtiers and gentry who heard it would recognise what he was up to, and perhaps give a rueful smile.[42] Examples include the impromptu class given by Hugh Evans in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (4.1.16–79), and the citing of Latin tags or one-liners from Lily, as in *Titus Andronicus* when Demetrius quotes a couplet in Latin, and Chiron replies 'O, 'tis a verse in Horace, I know it well / I read it in the grammar long ago' (4.2.22–3).

42 *MA* vol. 1, p. 34; Bray, *Anglican Canons*, pp. 200–201; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 127–54; Barkan, 'What did Shakespeare read?', pp. 37–9; Bate, *Soul of the Age*, pp. 79–90.

At the same time as tackling 'Lily', students in the first two or three years at the grammar school proper were introduced to works like Aesop's *Fables*, Cato's *Disticha*, and Culmann's *Sententiae pueriles*, which were designed to promote fluent reading and comprehension of Latin, and lingered in the mind of Shakespeare long after he had left school. Often these preliminary works were studied in editions which had been prepared by humanist teachers in Catholic schools abroad, and even those prepared by Protestants stressed moral issues – how to be a good son and student, what sins a schoolboy should avoid – rather than confront confessional matters.[43] Next, in the middling and upper forms of the typical grammar school, students were introduced to the letters and essays of Cicero, which were regarded as a perfect model of style and cradle of virtue, and to the different types of poetry by Terence, Ovid, Virgil, and Horace. That copies of these works, in school editions with marginal notes, were in circulation in Stratford can be seen from the copies which John Bretchgirdle, a former teacher, gave away to young relations and godchildren in his will in 1565. These Latin letters, essays and poems were painstakingly taken to pieces, syllable by syllable, to see what devices their authors had used to create the particular dramatic or emotional effects for which they were famous. The object was to train the young in the arts of writing polished and moving letters, dashing off 'themes' or essays which could sway the reader one way or another on a point under debate, composing Latin verses in different metres and for all types of occasions, and writing and delivering orations clearly and persuasively. To do so, they might well need a short dictionary such as Withals' or the much larger dictionary produced by Thomas Cooper from an earlier work by Eliot. John Bretchgirdle left a copy of the former to a friend's son, and his copy of the latter 'for the common use of the scholars of the Free School of Stratford-upon-Avon'; and some scholars have suggested Shakespeare may well have used it in his treatment of passages from Virgil.[44]

There are good reasons for thinking that students in less prestigious grammar schools did not necessarily study the full range of these works, or find the time to read them from start to finish. Shakespeare, for example, was more familiar with the opening books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* than the closing ones. Such students – and their teachers – probably also had fewer reservations about using English translations where they were available, than did their counterparts in the top tier of grammar schools. Shakespeare probably used Grimaldi's popular bilingual version of Cicero's *Offices*. However, if we compare the teaching in the upper forms of English grammar schools as a whole with that in similar schools abroad, we find that the texts used in England seem to have suffered much less from bowdlerising of the naughty bits, and also that English students were probably exposed to more poetry and plays and less prose than their counterparts abroad.[45]

43 Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 160, 163, 172, and 156–90 *passim*.

44 Ibid., p. 2 and Chapter 4; Fripp, *Shakespeare Studies*, pp. 25–7.

45 Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 204, 225, and 191–265 *passim*; the copy of Cicero bequeathed by Bretchgirdle may have been Grimaldi's edition. See Fripp, *Shakespeare Studies*, pp. 26–7.

Drama in the Classroom

Shakespeare's love of the stage probably owed much to three intersecting developments. The first was the increased prominence given to secular drama and poetry in many grammar schools, including some acting out of authors like Terence and sometimes Plautus too. Terence was widely admired for holding up 'a looking glass for directing life' (in Melanchthon's words), and his plays were studied in most English grammar schools. When the boy in the induction to Ben Jonson's *The Magnetic Lady* says 'I learned Terence i'the third form at Westminster', he probably reflected Jonson's own experience and that of many in the audience.[46] We also know that Terence was not just studied but performed at Westminster School as early as the 1540s; and by the 1560s the normally supportive Ascham was actually complaining about too 'many bold bawdy *Phormios*' being performed in grammar schools. Other schools, like Winchester and Eton, had a long tradition of putting on plays: at Winchester they even set up a stage, bought extra candles, and carried a portable organ from the chapel to the hall and back. But newer schools like Merchant Taylors', Shrewsbury and Sandwich were also soon encouraging play-acting by pupils. Thus the first headmaster at Shrewsbury, Thomas Ashton, imported the dramatic tradition from the Cambridge college where he had been a fellow (St John's), and by the late 1560s sixth-formers were performing one act of a play every Thursday in school and staging a public performance every Whitsuntide. Given the numbers of teachers at other schools who had also spent some time at university, it is worth reminding ourselves that the century 1540–1640 represented a golden age of university Latin drama, with performances of both ancient and new plays by undergraduates and graduates.[47]

The second development was the visits of companies of professional players who, as we have seen, came to Stratford many times in the 1570s and 1580s (incidentally Shrewsbury and Sandwich as well as Winchester and Windsor were also on the routes travelled by players in the Elizabethan period). It is possible that the young Shakespeare may have seen performances by some of the leading actors and companies of the day, such as James Burbage of the Earl of Leicester's company in the 1570s, and perhaps Edward Alleyn of the Earl of Worcester's players and Richard Tarlton of the Queen's Men in the early 1580s. Since his father was Bailiff in 1568–69 (a post that included vetting the plays of visiting companies) and remained a senior figure in the town at least until the mid-1570s, it is quite possible the young William may have seen more than one performance in

46 John R. Schneider, *Philip Melanchthon's Rhetorical Construal of Biblical Authority* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990), pp. 36–8; Ben Jonson, *The Magnetic Lady*, The Revels Plays, ed. Peter Happé (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), Introduction, lines 41–2.

47 Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 206–09, 214–16; U. Potter, 'Performing Arts in the Tudor Classroom', in L.E. Kermode, J. Scott Warren and M. van Elk (eds), *Tudor Drama before Shakespeare* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 143–66.

Stratford, in either the Guildhall or perhaps a local inn too. Did he even have the chance of a walk-on part in a child's role?[48]

The third trend was the rapidly developing interest among the educated elite in London and at court in the secular poetry and drama not just of the classical era but of the late medieval period and early Renaissance too, copies of which were becoming increasingly available in translation. Shakespeare's mature writing reflects his passion for both the classical authors he had studied at school and those English and Continental texts which he perhaps first encountered in London, in the original or if more convenient in translation. Moreover, he could be moderately sure that many in his audience would share his enthusiasm for these works, and even be able to recognise at least some of his clever borrowings and frequent allusions to the works of an author like Ovid. And even those in the audience with little or no classical education might welcome the story-telling, the spectacle and the mellifluous verse which he had derived from his love of that author. 'Elizabethan theatrical Ovidianism', suggests Jonathan Bate, represented 'an exceptionally fruitful embrace between "high" and "low" culture'.[49]

By the 1570s or 1580s the masters and the teaching at 'The King's new school of Stratford-upon-Avon' may not have been as distinguished as at those attended by other authors of the day, such as King's Canterbury (Christopher Marlowe), Merchant Taylors' (Thomas Kyd), and Westminster under William Camden (Ben Jonson). Nor was Shakespeare able to attend university, as poets and playwrights like Thomas Nashe and John Fletcher did.[50] But his schooling had probably done enough to give him a solid grounding in rhetoric and the classics, and this enabled him to collaborate and compete with those writers who may have acquired more Latin and a lot more Greek, but proved to have been blessed with less natural talent than he was.

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49 Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 10–13 and *passim*; Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 22–4, and for the later period, pp. 310–30.

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The Guildhall, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Focus of Civic Governance in the Sixteenth Century

Robert Bearman

The complex of buildings in Stratford associated with the Guild of the Holy Cross – its chapel and Guildhall, and the almshouses and the school it once maintained – has for centuries occupied a place in public perception quite unrelated to its architectural qualities, important though these are. For these buildings are not only symbolic of the power and influence of the leading townsmen of the late medieval period, they are also a visual representation of the ideal of independent governance of a market town. In the sixteenth century these characteristics are at their most meaningful, as the town moved from one deeply influenced by the activities of the medieval Guild of the Holy Cross to one largely governed by a newly appointed corporation, both of which bodies, however, operated from the same headquarters.[1]

From the eighth until the early sixteenth century, the lordship of the manor of Stratford had been vested in the bishops of Worcester. But around 1200, John de Coutances, the bishop of the day, had laid out a new town within his manor, granting to the burgesses who came to settle there certain privileges which marked them out from those – the great majority – who lived and worked on the land. Though obliged to pay a chief rent to the lord of the manor for the tenure of their burgages, and to attend his manorial court, these burgesses were deemed to hold their land freely – that is, they could sell, divide or bequeath it – without undue influence. The granting of such rights, intended to foster urban entrepreneurship, was as much to do with lordly ambitions as it was with creating an independent urban elite: a concentration of tenants within a small area who, as a result of their trading enterprise, generated additional income for the lord. This was in the form of market tolls, a policy favoured by many late twelfth-century landholders struggling to cope with the effects of inflation. But in the longer term, these

1 This issue is more fully discussed in Robert Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530–1580', *Midland History* 32 (2007), 68–109.

burgesses, in Stratford as elsewhere, achieved a considerable measure of independence, and by the early sixteenth century the business of Stratford's manorial court was clearly being conducted as much in their interests as it was in the bishop's, made easier by the fact that since 1498 three successive Worcester primates had been absentee Italians. Moreover, although the manorial court might have represented the legitimate and traditional method of governance, it was not all-powerful. Within the town were two wealthy and powerful organisations, whose influence on town affairs could not be ignored. The first was the Stratford College, a body of priests presided over by a dean, which had evolved out of a chantry established in the parish church in the 1330s. They occupied an imposing building opposite the church, and enjoyed a very substantial income, not only from the parish tithes but from numerous freehold properties within the town granted to the foundation by early benefactors, yielding an income, it was said at the Dissolution, of around £120. The College also enjoyed what was known as a Peculiar jurisdiction whereby, for two years out of three, the dean sat in judgement in cases which would normally have been referred to the bishop's court.

But the College was not the only religious organisation within the town of sufficient wealth and influence to undermine the lord of the manor's authority. The Guild of the Holy Cross, of thirteenth-century origin but re-established in 1403 by amalgamation with two other foundations, was charged with the maintenance of a body of priests to pray for the souls of its departed members.[2] Like the College, it had been generously endowed, and by the early fifteenth century the income from its property portfolio was sufficient to fund the improvement and extension of its corporate buildings – not only its Chapel, where the priests provided for the spiritual needs of Guild members, but also a Guildhall in which to gather on both formal and informal occasions and a schoolhouse and almshouses to meet secular needs. The elaborate annual feast for its members provided a strong measure of social cohesion, and this and other communal activities also served to promote favourable political and economic alliances beyond the town. Furthermore it is clear that by the early sixteenth century the chief officers of the Guild also dominated the proceedings of the manorial court – or, if they were thwarted in doing so, as in 1504, were prepared to take direct action.[3]

It is against this background that we must assess to what extent, by the early sixteenth century, the Guild buildings were functioning as the focal point of civic life. In purely spiritual terms, the Guild was clearly a source

2 For the latest analysis of the Guild's importance, see the introduction to Mairi Macdonald (ed.), *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society, 42 (2007), pp. 1–32. See also Christine Carpenter, 'Town and "Country": The Stratford Guild and political networks of fifteenth-century Warwickshire' in Robert Bearman (ed.), *The History of an English Borough: Stratford-upon-Avon 1196–1996* (Stroud and Stratford-upon-Avon: Sutton, 1997), pp. 62–79.

3 I.S. Leadam (ed.), *Select Cases Before the King's Council in the Star Chamber*, Selden Society, 15 (1902), pp. 230–34. The case arose out of riotous disturbances when the bishop's deputy steward swore a jury of the 'most senglest & simplest persones' instead of 'substantial men of honest conversacion'.

of comfort for those seeking a safe passage through purgatory; but, just as important, it provided practical educational services and social care through its school and almshouses, and conviviality through its annual feast. Such was the purely secular influence it could bring to bear, both as a leading property holder in the town, and through its dominance of the manorial court, that its activities became inextricably linked to wider issues affecting the town's commercial resilience. The Guild buildings, housing the facilities to meet these spiritual, social and economic needs and aspirations of the local community, were thus of central importance. Moreover, it is more than likely that the Guildhall also provided a meeting place for the lord's manorial court, the only building within the town with the capacity to accommodate, in some dignity, not only the steward, court officials and a jury of at least 12 men, but also those burgesses who owed suit of court (though many appear to have risked a fine for non-attendance).[4] On the face of it, it might seem unlikely that the lord of the manor would have wished his court to have been held on Guild premises. However, following the establishment of the Corporation (discussed below), it is clear that, at least by the late 1550s, the manorial court leet was indeed held in the Guildhall; and, given that in the early sixteenth century members of the Guild had dominated the proceedings of the manorial court, it is very probable that this was merely a continuation of existing practice. By way of contrast, the College enjoyed a detached and independent existence, operating from a base outside the borough boundary and with an assured income unrelated to any wishes or requirements of the local community. On the contrary, its income was distributed amongst the College priests, over half of it (nearly £70) to the dean alone. The role and responsibilities of the Guild of the Holy Cross were very different. Though not as wealthy as the College, with which it had an uneasy relationship due to the former's assertion of spiritual superiority within the parish, its leading lights were also Stratford's principal residents, who over time had fashioned it into an institution on which it was believed the town had come to depend for its good governance.[5]

Such fluid and imprecise arrangements were common to many sixteenth-century market towns and worked tolerably well. However, they were inevitably disrupted by the mid-century suppression of religious institutions and the consequent confiscation of Church property. From the government's point of view, this may initially have had as much to do with getting its hands on the Church's wealth as it was with religious reform. But its effect was just as profound, if not more so, on the issue of local governance. In Stratford's case, one consequence was the complete removal from the scene of the College. This had a dramatic effect on the manner in which services were conducted at the parish church but only a limited impact in wider social and

4 In fact, the jury of 12, and sometimes more, was customarily sworn from as many as 24 summoned: E.I. Fripp et al. (eds), *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, 6 vols., Dugdale Society, 1, 3, 5, 10, 35, 44 (1921, 1924, 1926, 1929, 1990, 2011), vol. 1, pp. 23, 27, 41.

5 See particularly Macdonald, *Register*, pp. 7–8.

economic terms. Far more significant in this respect was the suppression of the Guild. In origin a religious organisation, it thus suffered the same fate as the College, with all its property confiscated and its activities suspended. However, whereas the College priests had simply been pensioned off, with the option of seeking preferment elsewhere, those leading burgesses who had dominated Guild affairs – and who had enjoyed the influence in the town which its property portfolio had conferred on them – simply lost that status with nothing offered in return. No doubt there was genuine concern among some Guild members that they would no longer be buried with all the traditional Catholic ceremonies and safeguards; but the loss of prestige and a fear that the town's fortunes would go into decline without the social cohesion which the Guild had provided was an equal cause of concern and resentment.

There was a way open to resolve such situations. This was for the leading burgesses to petition the government for a charter of incorporation under which the confiscated property of religious institutions previously operating within their communities could be restored to newly founded corporations, in return for performance of services which those religious institutions had earlier provided. This was a course of action on which Stratford's leading burgesses had decided by February 1553, and their wishes were fulfilled the following June when a charter of incorporation in their favour was duly signed and sealed. The main provision was to return to the petitioners, formed into a legal corporation, all the confiscated property of the former Guild, and a portion of the tithes formerly belonging to the College, in return for paying the salaries of the schoolmaster, and the vicar and his assistant, and for maintaining 24 people in the almshouses. In other words, this new body, legally constituted, was taking over responsibility for funding those public services formerly provided unofficially through the Guild, and for meeting those of the town's spiritual needs hitherto provided by the College.

Such an arrangement was not a charitable act on behalf of the government. To secure such a deal the petitioners would have needed to raise a substantial sum of money. In Stratford's case we do not know the precise sum but, from the evidence of the arrangements made in many other comparable cases, there is no doubt that it was required.[6] In return, the principal townsmen, as members of the Corporation, were able to resume the role they had played as leading members of the Guild, charged with the same secular responsibilities (to which had been added the requirement to pay the vicar) as they had shouldered before and on whom the economic fortunes of the town were believed to rest.

It was at the Guildhall, where the Guild's officers had formerly met, that the newly formed Corporation now gathered to preside over the town affairs delegated to it. If its importance as the Guild's headquarters had

6 Robert Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns of England: Politics and Political Culture, c. 1540–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 350. Richard Harrington is also known to have lent 40 shillings 'vnto the purchesynge of the corperacyion' (Fripp et al., *MA* vol. 1, p. 87).

not already conferred upon it the status of the town's quasi-town hall, then this new arrangement certainly did. The Corporation clearly met there and also kept its papers, civic paraphernalia and other valuables on the site. In the first book of orders of 1557, for instance, we read that the annual election of the bailiff and chief alderman should take place at 'a Hall to be kept in the Councell Chamber ... & every thaldermen and Capytall burgessez shall be there present, euery of them in hys goune'; and furthermore that similar halls be held in the same council chamber at least monthly 'to commen & consoult to gether of thynges nessesary & to redress thos thynges that shall forten to be enormyd [i.e. abnormal] and out of ordor'.[7] Given, as described elsewhere, that the rooms on the upper floor of the old Guildhall became, from around 1568, the schoolroom and living accommodation for the schoolteachers and curates, these rooms associated with the meetings of the Corporation are most likely to have been on the ground floor, though it is also clear that some of the upper chambers were used to store Corporation effects.[8]

The old Guild complex was also the focal point of other activities. An important provision of the charter of incorporation was to grant the bailiff and chief alderman the right to preside over a court of record with jurisdiction in civil claims up to the value of £30. Such a court, intended to provide a speedier method of resolving small debts than that available in the higher courts, and thus of considerable benefit to the town's trading community, would require space for the presiding magistrates, the court officers, a jury of at least 12, the plaintiff and defendant with their counsel, and the general public; and also, perhaps, a room off the main hall for the jury to deliberate. Records of this court survive more or less from the date of the charter and, although it is never clearly stated, it must surely be the case that the ground floor of the Guildhall was the venue for its sessions – repairs to the court house, for instance, are mentioned specifically in the chamberlains' accounts submitted in January 1571.[9] Furthermore, a natural corollary of the pre-Reformation use of the Guildhall for feasting would have been its adoption later in the century as a place of entertainment by travelling players and other itinerant performers. Also within the complex were the almshouses and the school, relocated, around 1568, from 'the old schoolhouse' to the upper floors of the Guildhall, both facilities now functioning under the auspices of the Corporation. The fate of the former Guild Chapel seems for a while to have hung in the balance. Though it enjoyed a temporary reprieve as a place of worship during Mary's reign, it subsequently appears to have fallen into disuse before being restored as a venue for visiting preachers in the mid 1560s.[10]

7 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 63–4.

8 A chamber housing the borough harness or armour, for instance, is documented from 1580/81 (*MA* vol. 3, p. 98), and a chamber with a chest (maybe containing the borough muniments) from 1584/85 (*MA* vol. 3, p. 164); but both doubled up as accommodation spaces.

9 *MA* vol. 2, p. 48. On 1 October 1604 there was also expenditure on the 'counsell house & court house window': *MA* vol. 6, p. 325.

10 Bearman, 'Early Reformation Experience', p. 97.

It was not the case, however, that all civic power had been transferred to the new Corporation. The 1553 charter may have created a legal body to which property could be transferred, albeit in trust to perform certain duties, and have granted to it certain other minor powers, including the right to hold a court of record to promote the town's economic well-being. But the old manorial system of government was left intact. The lord of the manor was no longer the Bishop of Worcester. By a series of complex deals the lordship had passed in 1549 to John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, then, early in 1550, to the Crown, and finally, in May 1553, back to Dudley, now Duke of Northumberland; and it was he, acting on behalf of the young Edward VI, who had negotiated the terms of Stratford's charter. And these terms clearly reflected Dudley's wish to retain some control over the newly formed Corporation. His consent, for instance, was required for the appointment of each new bailiff and of both the schoolmaster and the vicar. Also, unlike the experience in other nearby towns, no arrangement was made for control of the manorial court leet to pass to the Corporation. This court had traditionally dealt with minor breaches of the peace, the observance of orders concerning waste disposal, restrictions on the movement of livestock and dogs, and the making and selling of bread and ale. The issue of entitlement to the revenue from the market tolls was also left in the air, a major cause of friction which came to a head at the turn of the century. The fact that such matters remained outside the immediate control of the Corporation was to become a clear obstacle to the efficient management of town affairs.

Dudley's plan, however, was thrown into almost immediate confusion on the young king's death a few days after the charter was sealed, followed by Dudley's ill-fated attempt to put his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, on the throne, and his arrest and execution for treason shortly afterwards. His estates, including his lordship of the manor of Stratford, were forfeited to the Crown with the result that Queen Mary and, from 1558, her sister Elizabeth, enjoyed the lordship. Then, in 1562 the Queen re-instated Dudley's son, Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, in his lands and privileges, including the lordship of the borough.

Quite what happened in terms of the governance of the town during this nine-year suspension of the Dudley interest, 1553–1562, is far from clear. Although the first book of orders required the Corporation to meet monthly, no record of such meetings (with the exception of the election of the bailiff in September 1554) survives. By way of contrast the only records we do have are those of the twice-yearly meetings of the manorial court leet. In theory, these should have been held, as they were in pre-Corporation times, in the lord's name, first Mary and then Elizabeth. But of this there is no mention. Instead the name of the court evolved, from the simple 'Curia lete' (court leet) of April 1554, to 'Visus ffranci plegii Cum Curia et Sesione de pace' (view of frankpledge with court and session of the peace) by October 1554, and then to 'Visus franci plegii cum Curia

ballivi, aldermannorum et Burgensium de Stratford' (view of frankpledge with court of the bailiff, aldermen and burgesses of Stratford) in October 1557.[11] The court rolls recording these proceedings remained in the town, to become part of the borough archive, another indication that the Corporation appears to have been treating the leet as its own court. The provision for the holding of these courts – 'the gret letes ther Callyd the law days [to] be ther kept twyez euery yer', to be attended by all freeholders and residents under pain of fine – was even included in the Corporation's book of orders.[12]

The records of the proceedings reveal a mix of traditional court leet business, as outlined above, with various orders concerning the dignity and status of the newly appointed Corporation. In October 1553, for instance, 'all & every the officers & other persones' were required to be 'obeydyent unto the hye beyly in payne of every offender to forfet & losse for every defallt xx s. & that no persone be so hardy to revell or rebell ageynst eny offecers in lyke peyne, & to have iii days & iii nyghts punyshement in the open Stox'.[13] Thomas Powell almost immediately fell foul of this order – 'revelynge as well ageynst m^{r} hye beyly as also agenyst other the quenes magestyez offeceres' – and was fined at the next court.[14] It was also agreed there that for every fine amounting to more than 3*s*. 4*d*., a third should be given to the high bailiff and a third to the Corporation's chamberlains.[15] In October 1555, orders were introduced to penalise anyone refusing civic office, and the court was also used for the appointment of the high bailiff and other officers for the coming year.[16] In September 1557, a revised set of orders defined the circumstances in which aldermen or capital burgesses could be expelled, and sought generally to regulate their behaviour and define their responsibilities. The oath required of aldermen and burgesses also emphasised their duty to 'maynteyne & defende the liberties and Rightes' of the town, and to give their best advice for its benefit and good governance.[17] And for the next six years, the proceedings of this same court leet are all that have survived to indicate how the town was governed.

What would appear to have happened, then, in the confusion following Dudley's arrest and execution, is that the Corporation had assumed, intentionally or otherwise, that the court leet had in fact been granted to it. Although Queen Mary was still, in theory, the town's lord, the courts were not held in her name, nor before her representative, in marked contrast to those dating from before the charter of incorporation, which made

11 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 23, 27, 75.
12 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 63–4. The phrase 'to be kept ther', occurring after other regulations concerning meetings in the council chamber, strongly suggests that the manorial court leet was also to be held in the same room, or rooms.
13 Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive (SCLA), BRU 15/9/4.
14 *MA* vol. 1, p. 24.
15 *MA* vol. 1, p. 25.
16 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 44–5.
17 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 67–9.

respectful note of the current lord. Whether this arose out of a genuine misunderstanding of the terms of the charter, either on the town's part or that of the new royal administration, or both, or whether the Corporation quietly assumed powers in the hope that the queen's advisers would overlook the anomaly, it is difficult to say. What we do know, however, is that, when in 1562 Queen Elizabeth restored the lordship of the manor to Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, he resumed control of the court leet (the records for which are now lost) and that the Corporation began to record its slimmed-down proceedings in a different way.

Regardless of these legal niceties, what is at least clear is that during these nine years the borough's court leet was held in the Guildhall, as its orders indicate. There is also no doubt, on the basis of passing references in subsequent chamberlains' accounts, that the leet continued to be held there after Ambrose Dudley resumed control, even though its records are lost. In 1577, for instance, the chamberlain accounted for the expense of providing candles at the leet, strongly implying not only that it must have been held on Corporation property but in all probability still in the Guildhall.[18] But it was now held not before the town's high bailiff but before the lord's steward, John Hubaud until his death in 1583, and then George Turville and Edward Boughton.[19] There is no evidence that this dual system of civic governance led to serious difficulties: Ambrose Dudley exercised his authority with a light touch, taking little interest in any personal administration of his Midlands estates and rarely visiting them.[20] At the same time his high standing at court, and that of his brother Robert, Earl of Leicester, guaranteed a certain security for the town.

Nevertheless, there were some early indications of an independent spirit. In May 1565, only three years after the lordship had been restored to Dudley, the chief alderman, Lewes ap Williams, and Adrian Quiney were deputed to approach the earl 'for thobteynynge of Suche libertyez as the Said lord of Warr' hath with in the burro of Stratford'.[21] Nothing came of what was clearly an attempt to buy Dudley out and later, in May 1572, Quiney, now bailiff, was authorised to 'deale in all causes now in varience betwene the Ryght Honorable Lord ambrose earle of warwycke and the borowgh of Stratford'.[22] Surviving evidence does not indicate the precise nature of these disagreements and, except for Dudley's confirmation of the election of subsequent bailiffs and the record of regular presentations to him of an ox as a New Year's gift, there is little evidence of his involvement in Stratford affairs. Nevertheless, on his death in 1590 the Corporation set in train moves to secure control of the leet, which, as Dudley had no heirs to succeed him, had escheated to the Crown together with all his

18 *MA* vol. 2, p. 118.
19 E.g., *MA* vol. 3, pp. 137, 148, 163–4; vol. 4, pp. 15, 17, 31.
20 Though he was entertained at Stratford in October 1582 (*MA* vol. 3, pp. 118–19).
21 *MA* vol. 1, p. 145.
22 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 63–4.

real estate. However, negotiations with the government broke down, probably because the asking price was too high, and the lordship was sold instead to Edward Greville of Milcote. But the Corporation did not give up and, after a lively dispute with Greville, succeeded in 1601 in obtaining favourable legal opinion that the bailiff and chief alderman, as justices of the peace, were entitled to hold quarter sessions within the borough.[23] This they accordingly did, from January 1602, taking over much of the business hitherto the responsibility of the court leet – the making of by-laws, the regulation of local trade, the licensing of victuallers, and the punishment of minor breaches of the peace.[24] These sessions, like the court leet (which thereafter appears to have all but ceased functioning[25]) were held, we may be sure, in the Guildhall – on 28 September 1604, for example, there were repairs to the Guildhall 'before the quarter sessions' when candles were also supplied – underlining the building's function as the centre of increasing autonomy in local governance.[26] From September 1604, there is also good evidence for the holding of a formal court of the clerk of the market, presided over by the bailiff, also doubtless held in the Guildhall.[27] This was an office conferred on the bailiff back in 1553 but it was clearly not until 1604, with the court leet in decline, that he had felt in a strong enough position to exercise his authority through the holding of a formal court. It was also at this time that the bailiff is first known to have acted as coroner, most famously after the seizure of goods at Clopton House in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot.[28]

One would also like to think that the Guildhall would have been used for other functions concerning the governance of the market town. Elsewhere in England, not least in nearby Evesham, there are examples of rival authorities in the town occupying their own headquarters as if to emphasise their separateness. On the other hand, the use of its buildings by visiting justices and dignitaries on county or central government business could serve to enhance the impression that the Guildhall or town hall was the centre of local government. For Stratford the evidence is inconclusive as to whether the Guildhall was used for such purposes. The chamberlains' accounts, which survive in a more or less unbroken series from 1563, are peppered with references to payments made to visiting officials who might have used the Guildhall for the transaction of their formal business. In 1576, for instance, the justices 'did sitt for the subsidy', as they did again in 1585, and in 1584

23 *MA* vol. 6, p. 146. The high bailiff and chief alderman had been named as justices of the peace in the 1553 charter but there is no evidence in the early years that they ever held quarter sessions. This probably arose out of the fact that, for the period 1553–1562, the court leet had been held as if in the Corporation's name (see above), thus enabling its officers to exercise jurisdiction over minor breaches of the peace and the infringement of by-laws.

24 For the earliest evidence of the holding of these borough sessions, see *MA* vol. 6, p. 166.

25 After 1591, there are no references to the leet until 1601, when it was apparently held at the Bear, in Bridge Street, before Greville's steward (*MA* vol. 6, p. 182).

26 *MA* vol. 6, p. 325.

27 For evidence of the earliest court, see *MA* vol. 6, p. 302.

28 *MA* vol. 6, pp. 370–4.

Sir Thomas Lucy 'sat w^th the water baylyfes'.[29] In 1605 two surveyors of the king's lands were entertained in Stratford and routine payments were made to entertain visiting justices of the peace throughout the period under review. However, in no case can we be certain that the Guildhall was used for their deliberations: on the contrary, on one occasion, in 1581, we know that it was not, when sack, wine and sugar were dispensed to Thomas Lucy and Fulk Greville 'at theire sittinge at the beare [a large inn at the bottom of Bridge Street] about the subsidye'.[30] The Bear is mentioned on several other occasions as the provider of hospitality – in January 1571, for example, when commissioners were 'at the beare' during a visit to settle a dispute between the Corporation and Robert Perrott, and in 1583 when three justices were entertained there at the Corporation's expense.[31] Later, in 1595 and 1597, the justices were the recipients of Corporation hospitality at the Swan, on the opposite side of the road.[32] While it still might be argued that these justices, though entertained at either the Bear or the Swan, nevertheless might have sat formally in the Guildhall, the lack of any hard evidence that they did, coupled with the statement that on one occasion they met at the Bear, would indicate that this was not their normal practice.

This focus of legal and administrative business on the Guildhall, initially carried out in the names of both the Corporation and the lord of the manor, but eventually in the name of the Corporation only, thus conferred on the building a special status, perpetuating a reputation it had acquired in the pre-Reformation period as the seat of local administration and thus a symbol of the ascendancy of the leading townsmen. By February 1606 there is even reference to it as the town hall as opposed to the Guildhall.[33] If we also accept that, before the dissolution of the Guild, the court leet had been held on its premises, then the 1553 charter had simply transformed the governing elite of the Guild, meeting as a quasi-official ruling body, into a legally constituted bench of Corporation aldermen and capital burgesses doing the same job. What would not seem to be in doubt is that during the turbulent years of the sixteenth century, and for some time after that, the Guildhall and its ancillary buildings symbolised the principle of self-governance within the town, whether they were playing host to Corporation meetings, sessions of various courts – the court leet, the court of record, borough sessions, the clerk of the market's court – or the travelling players, and that the school, chapel and almshouses made other provision vital to the town's welfare. Technically, the legal basis on which the governance of the town rested had changed significantly, but the function of the Guild buildings as the headquarters of the town's pre- and post-Reformation

29 *MA* vol. 2, p. 116; vol. 3, pp. 149, 164.
30 *MA* vol. 3, p. 97.
31 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 40–41, 58; vol. 3, p. 135.
32 *MA* vol. 5, pp. 79, 123. Earlier, in 1577 and 1580, payments were made to the Waterman family, managers of the Swan, not specifically for hospitality but for supplying sack and wine for the justices (*MA* vol. 3, pp. 13, 81).
33 *MA* vol. 6, p. 370.

leading institutions had nevertheless provided an important element of continuity.

This had another important consequence. In Mary's reign, there was talk of restoring confiscated religious property to its former owners. However, this found little favour among those people (whatever their personal religious views) who, like members of the newly formed Stratford Corporation, had dug into their pockets to buy back this property themselves, albeit corporately, in order to maintain their ascendancy within the town. For purely secular reasons, they thus became complicit in the Reformation process, a factor which goes some way to explaining why religious reform was more easily achieved in towns than in their rural hinterlands.

We must also consider the general background. The period 1500 to 1640 witnessed the building of nearly 100 new town halls and the conversion of around half as many existing buildings for civic use. Some 50 per cent of this work took place in the years 1540–1590 as many of the newly incorporated towns, of which Stratford was one, sought a headquarters for the business it now had to conduct.[34] Many of these new corporations, Stratford again among them, had come into existence as the result of the suppression of religious, or semi-religious, institutions which, until that point, had played an important part in the social and economic life of the town, its leading townsmen having bought back confiscated property to provide an income for the continuation of such activity. As a matter of course, the administrative headquarters and meeting places of these institutions also came into their hands, providing a convenient focus of civic activities, albeit now secular in nature. This was Stratford's experience, as it was in many other towns, such as Warwick, Leicester, Walsall, Norwich, Lavenham, Peterborough and Chipping Sodbury. Some upgrading of these premises was no doubt thought desirable but not to the same degree as happened, for instance, at Totnes in Devon, or St Albans in Hertfordshire, where the new corporations, having inherited or bought properties hitherto used exclusively for religious purposes, were obliged to undertake extensive work of stripping out and conversion. In some places, such as Cricklade in Wiltshire, and Swaffham in Norfolk, where no such meeting places were inherited, it even proved necessary to build new town halls; but it is also clear that, despite the wish of the authorities to emphasise the dignity of their newly won status, dramatic rebuilding was unlikely to be sanctioned unless there was a genuine shortage of suitable accommodation. This would simply be on the grounds of cost. Many founding members of these new corporations had already contributed to the costs of buying back the property required to provide an income for their respective corporations. Unless this income provided them with a regular surplus, they were therefore unlikely to look with favour on ambitious rebuilding schemes.

34 Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community c. 1500–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 160–68. Stratford-upon-Avon, however, does not feature in his analysis.

Such reluctance was clearly Stratford's experience. The buildings which had functioned perfectly well as the Guild's administrative headquarters and meeting place simply became the Corporation's. Detailed financial accounts do not survive earlier than the accounting year 1561/62, so it is not entirely clear how matters were conducted in the very early years of the Corporation's existence. In 1562/63, however, an income of just over £52, mainly derived from rental income (just over £50), was all that could be set against the inescapable £41 required to pay the salaries of the schoolmaster and his assistant and to fund the allowances made to the almsfolk.[35] This left only £11 or £12 for spending on other projects and it is therefore scarcely surprising that the members of the Corporation, who had already financed the costs of incorporation, adopted a policy of repair and improvement, rather than rebuilding, when the management of their headquarters was under consideration.

Robert Tittler may be right in his assertion that town halls became a powerful symbol of the newly acquired status of many of these recently incorporated sixteenth-century English towns. But there was a limit to the financial sacrifices Corporation members would be prepared to make if plans for over-ambitious building operations were put before them. There may also have been an underlying anxiety, in the wake of the recent political and religious turbulence, that their position was not entirely secure. In Stratford, this was of particular concern, given the survival of the lord of the manor's authority as expressed through the court leet, initially in the hands of the Catholic Queen Mary. The impression in these early years is therefore one of the Corporation feeling its way, almost of making do, until the situation became clearer. But, beginning in the accounting year 1562/1563, we find evidence of what appears to be an overhaul of the Corporation premises. In that year, and the following one, much work focused on bringing the Guild Chapel into use as a venue for visiting preachers.[36] The following year, 1564/65, there were payments for extensive re-tiling work, certainly of the schoolmaster's house, and probably of the schoolhouse as well.[37] The following set of accounts covers two years, 1565/66 and 1566/67, during which time it seems clear, from payments made, that the school was relocated from the premises it had occupied in pre-Reformation days to more suitable accommodation, probably the first-floor rooms of the Guildhall building.[38] In the following year, 1567/68, the Guildhall itself received attention, as it

35 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 120–22. Early totals of the Corporation's income are distorted by the fact that the tithes restored under the charter, valued at £34, in return for paying the vicar's and curate's stipends, had apparently been farmed out to a leading alderman, William Smith, at a nominal sum, who then paid the stipends but retained any surplus. This arrangement may have arisen out of a loan made by Smith to meet part of the costs of incorporation. This remained the situation until 1577.

36 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 127–8, 138–9. It was initially the convention that the accounting year began from the swearing in of the chamberlains in the autumn, even though the accounts were not presented until January. Thus an account rendered in January 1565 could cover expenditure during the period September 1563 to September 1564 (e.g., *MA* vol. 1, p. 137).

37 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 149–50.

38 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 8, 10.

did in 1568/69 accompanied by the very considerable expenditure of £9 on Clopton Bridge.[39] This period of overhaul came to an end in the accounting year 1569/70 with substantial payments recorded for work on the vicarage, the almshouses and what was termed the court house, either the Guildhall itself or, perhaps more likely, the eastern extension to it.[40]

This, then, seems to represent the limit of the Corporation's initial ambitions in respect of its civic headquarters, with its attention now turned towards the flexing of its political muscle. January 1572 brought the first major outlay (£7) on expenses incurred in legal costs as the Corporation struggled to extend its authority within the town.[41] This led eventually, as outlined above, to a showdown with the lord of the manor, at the very beginning of the seventeenth century, whereby his remaining authority, largely as exercised through the court leet, was fatally undermined as the result of the Corporation's successful bid to hold borough sessions within the town. In the final stages of this struggle, members of the Corporation were even prepared to lend over £10 to supplement another £15 from the Corporation coffers to meet the legal costs involved, sums well in excess of those spent on building operations.[42]

Another area of increased expenditure was in gifts to visiting justices, other officials and local dignitaries in an effort to secure favourable consideration of the Corporation's concerns. Substantial payments to companies of travelling players might also be expected to win favour in the eyes of their lordly patrons, especially the exceptional fee of 17*s*. paid to the 'lorde of warwicke players' in 1574/75, acting under the patronage of Stratford's lord of the manor, Ambrose Dudley, who had been reinstated in this role in 1562.[43] No payments to visiting justices and officials are recorded until the accounting year 1566/1567, when an expense of 7*s*. 3*d*. was incurred for supplying a breakfast for an unknown beneficiary.[44] But in the accounting year 1576/77 the Corporation spent more than £3 6*s*. 0*d*., in a combination of payments, for entertaining on separate occasions the visiting justices, the Bishop of Worcester, Lord Chandos and Edward Aglionby (the town's recorder), for sending a New Year's gift to Sir John Hubaud (the Earl of Warwick's steward), and in payment for performances by Lord Leicester's players and those of the Earl of Worcester.[45] In 1581/82, outlay of this sort accounted for over £9, mainly as a result of making a present of an ox to the lord of the manor, and by entertaining him and the town's recorder when they visited the town in

39 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 22, 34–5.
40 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 46–9.
41 *MA* vol. 2, p. 60.
42 *MA* vol. 6, pp. 183–4.
43 *MA* vol. 2, p. 105. Similar deference would have been shown to the company enjoying the patronage of Dudley's brother, the Earl of Leicester, with his base at nearby Kenilworth, which received a generous 15*s*. the following year (*MA* vol. 3, p. 13). For the level of fees paid to visiting companies in the later sixteenth century see the chapter by Mulryne in this volume, pp. 183–5.
44 *MA* vol. 2, p. 9.
45 *MA* vol. 3, pp. 13–15, 17.

October of that year.[46] Such expenditure may have been exceptional but an annual outlay of between £4 and £7 was by no means unusual, particularly at times of crisis in town affairs.

This drive towards greater civic autonomy eventually led, in 1610, to the grant of a second charter.[47] Although in many ways a confirmation of practices already adopted on an ad hoc basis (and already enshrined in a book of orders drawn up in 1603[48]), the Corporation's right to hold quarter sessions was now officially recognised, as was its entitlement to make by-laws, and enforce them by fines and imprisonment. The posts of Recorder, High Steward, Common Clerk and Chamberlain were formally recognised and the court of record was permitted to meet weekly instead of fortnightly. Two years later, a new book of orders was issued which reflected this growing influence on the conduct of town affairs, including formal rules for the licensing of victuallers and the maintenance of the streets.[49]

It seems that only at this point was further thought given to the enhancement of the civic buildings. In one area this might be said to have been forced upon the town authorities. Under the 1553 charter, the Corporation was required to provide a house for the vicar. Since 1550, the vicar of the day had leased a house in Church Street belonging to Robert Perrott and then to his son-in-law Richard Woodward. As part of its obligations under the 1553 charter, the Corporation took over this lease, paying the rent on the vicar's behalf, raised to 40*s*. a year when the lease was renegotiated in 1581.[50] On the expiration of this lease, in 1606, some further provision became necessary. Various ideas came to nothing, including housing the vicar in one of the Corporation's own properties or purchasing a new house,[51] and for a few years the vicar appears to have been lodged in temporary accommodation. However, in 1610 an opportunity of resolving the situation presented itself. Back in 1590, the Corporation had leased to the schoolmaster, Alexander Aspinall, the buildings lying along the east side of the school courtyard.[52] To what purpose these buildings were then put is currently uncertain but when the lease fell in, the Corporation took the property back into its immediate possession and embarked on an ambitious programme of re-configuration to provide a new vicarage alongside an improved residence for the schoolmaster.[53] Cost-cutting was not the real issue behind these changes: the 40*s*. saved on the rent which the Corporation had previously paid out, on the vicar's behalf, for the house

46 *MA* vol. 3, pp. 118–19.
47 SCLA BRU 1/2. For a summary of its contents, see L.F. Salzman and Philip Styles (eds), *Victoria History of the Counties of England: Warwick*, vol. 3, pp. 249–50.
48 *MA* vol. 6, pp. 249–61.
49 SCLA BRU 3/2.
50 *MA* vol. 3, p. 96, fn 5.
51 *MA* vol. 6, pp. 333, 343–4.
52 SCLA BRU 15/3/8.
53 The expenses on the vicarage are clearly set out in the accounts submitted to the Corporation in January 1611 (SCLA BRU 4/1, pp. 210–12). The improvements to the schoolmaster's house and other adjacent buildings are included in the accounts submitted the following year (SCLA BRU 4/1, pp. 222–5).

in Church Street was cancelled out by the loss of the same sum on Aspinall's surrender of his lease of the courtyard buildings. But to have brought the vicar within a complex which served as the focal point for the Corporation's other responsibilities was clearly thought both logical and convenient. In a survey of 1627, the accommodation within this complex was then listed as the vicar's house, the schoolmaster's house, a chamber for the assistant minister, a chamber for the schoolmaster, a chamber for armour, the Guildhall, the school house and the almshouses.[54]

In another sphere, however – the regulation of the town's markets – the Corporation eventually thought it more appropriate to provide a new building elsewhere. Initially, there is some evidence that the Guildhall was intended to double up as a market hall. At the court leet held in April 1559, for instance, it was ordered that tanners coming to Stratford to sell leather should conduct their business in 'no other place but in the gyld hall'.[55] In October 1563, a similar order required them to bring their leather to the 'Courte Hall … ther to be serchyd & Sealled befor yt be put to saell'.[56] For quite how long this rule applied is uncertain, though subsequent books of orders of 1603 and 1612 clearly indicate that this was still a requirement for hides brought into town for sale at the fairs. On market days, however, this checking was now done outside the Gaol House, close by the High Cross at the north end of High Street.[57] The precise date of the Cross in its final form (it was demolished in 1821) is not known but, small as it was, it was clearly thought to be in a more convenient focal point for the conduct of market business than the Guildhall, well away from the town centre. The chamberlains' accounts therefore contain periodic expenses on its maintenance: in 1572, for example, 1577, and, in particular, 1579.[58] However, by the early seventeenth century something grander was clearly envisaged. In 1626 Thomas Walker sold to the Corporation his house on the corner of Chapel Street and Sheep Street to provide a site for the construction of a market house, although it was not until 1634 that construction work began.[59] It also proved to be a contentious issue; the builders, led by John Page of Chipping Campden, were eventually forced to petition for payment in King's Bench.[60] The appearance of this building, an open colonnaded market area on the ground floor, with a room or rooms above, is preserved in an early nineteenth-century drawing from an unknown source.[61] But it was clearly not the Corporation's intention that this building would replace

54 SCLA BRT 2/1, p. 118.
55 *MA* vol. 1, p. 95.
56 *MA* vol. 1, p. 126.
57 *MA* vol. 6, p. 257; SCLA BRU 3/2.
58 *MA* vol. 2, p. 69; vol. 3, pp. 15, 46–7.
59 For this first town hall, and its successor, see Mairi Macdonald, *The Town Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1986).
60 The story is well told by E.A.B. Barnard, 'The Building of the Old Market House at Stratford', *Evesham Journal*, 5 and 12 February 1928, although his concluding paragraph reveals that he thought the dispute related to the building of the Market Cross in High Street.
61 Macdonald, *The Town Hall*, p. 2.

the Corporation's existing headquarters. In fact, the new market hall was damaged during the Civil War and not brought back into use until the mid-1660s. But even then, from that point until its demolition in 1767, the 'large, handsome room extending the whole length of the building' on the first floor was used principally for ceremonial dinners and occasional visits by strolling players, and soon fell into disuse. The original Guild buildings, despite any shortcomings, continued to provide a more convenient base for operations and it was only in 1868 that the decision was made to transfer the Corporation meetings from there to the newly refurbished town hall, which had itself been built in 1767 on the site of the first market hall demolished in that year.

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The Stratford Court of Record 1553–1601

M.A. Webster[1]

Courts of Record existed in some towns such as Shrewsbury during the Middle Ages, but many more came into existence under the Tudors, when charters of incorporation were granted to towns including Stratford, Banbury and Evesham. These borough courts were often preferred to the manorial courts for small debt claims connected with commercial transactions, or for damages, in view of the fact that manorial courts could not issue warrants to bring defendants to court. In addition, the borough courts furnished a quicker, more convenient and less expensive method of proceeding than the manorial courts. Moreover, inflation had reduced the value of the forty-shilling limit which normally applied to manorial courts.[2] Finally, Stratford's manorial Court Leet convened only twice a year, in contrast to the Court of Record's fortnightly meetings.

The Charter

Under the terms of Stratford's charter of 1553, the privilege of holding a Court of Record was granted to the bailiff and burgesses and their successors in perpetuity. The Corporation of 14 aldermen and 14 burgesses was required to appoint a Bailiff and Principal Alderman to act *ex officio* as Justices of the Peace within the borough during their year of office. At least one, usually both, of these men sat on the bench in the Court of Record with 'other burgesses' who, when they are named, can be identified as former bailiffs. Where the Justice was not a lawyer and served only for a year, the advice of other experienced practitioners would have been useful. The Court was to hear all pleas,

1 I am greatly indebted to Dr Robert Bearman and Prof. Alan Dyer for their support and advice.

2 A thirteenth-century document quotes the 40-shilling limit. Inflation is estimated to have been 400 per cent over the sixteenth century. See Nigel Heard, *Edward VI and Mary: A Mid Tudor Crisis?* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990) p. 122; and C.W. Brooks, *Law, Politics and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p. 272.

complaints and private actions for debt, account, trespass, covenant, contract, detinue and contempt occurring within the borough boundaries, to a limit of £30 (and probably for not less than 5*s*.).[3]

This list of actions is fairly standard.[4] The court's principal function, however, was to look into two areas: first, debt (recompense for money borrowed and not returned, or goods delivered and not paid for) and detinue (goods paid for and not delivered); and, second, trespass *vi et armis* (assault and battery or breaking and entering) and trespass 'on the case' (breach of contract).[5]

The court's most awkward limitation was the narrow jurisdiction of the borough boundary, which did not include even Old Town or Bridgetown.[6] Defendants could escape penalties by pleading that the offence took place outside the borough; fugitives could escape arrest if they could not be found within the borough limits. And where the serjeants reported that nothing could be found to distrain (as was the case with John Shakespeare), the defendant would have been obliged only to see that his property was either locked up inside his house or, if too large (as in the case of animals, for example) removed say to Snitterfield or Wilmcote.[7]

The monetary limit of £30 in Stratford is in the higher part of the then current range, since this was normally between £10 and £40.[8] Most cases were for considerably less, and many fall within the forty-shilling limit permitted in the manorial courts. Cases involving more than the limit would be dealt with by higher courts, but since these were staffed by trained legal personnel, they were more expensive to run. The Courts of Record provided a quick and useful local service at a more affordable cost, and were administered by respected citizens, usually with personal knowledge of the people and issues involved. If litigants felt that justice had not been served they could, in cases involving more than £5, appeal to the Court of Chancery. Real and mixed actions – any connected with land tenure – were excluded from the court's remit, though they were included in the case of the parallel courts in Banbury and Evesham. This exclusion from Stratford's charter, and other functions retained by the lord of the manor, the Duke of Northumberland, caused problems for many years to come.

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3 Penny Tucker, 'London's Courts of Law in the Fifteenth Century: The Litigants' Perspective' in Christopher Brooks and Michael Lobban (eds), *Communities and Courts in Britain 1150–1900* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), pp. 25–42, p. 30.

4 Of the nine personal actions of the time, only Replevin ('a legal remedy for a person to recover goods unlawfully withheld from his or her possession') is not sued in Stratford. The goods in dispute are required to be produced in court.

5 S.J. Stoljar, *A History of Contract at Common Law* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1975) pp. 29 foll.; J.H. Baker, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England* vol. 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 819 foll.

6 Old Town is the area around Holy Trinity, the parish church; Bridgetown is the part of Stratford across the river from the main area of the town.

7 Margaret Hastings, *The Court of Common Pleas in Fifteenth Century England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1947), p. 212. The Shakespeares owned land in Wilmcote and Snitterfield, villages a short distance to the north of Stratford.

8 Banbury's limit was only £5; Evesham's was £100.

The Legal Process

From extant documents preserved in the collections of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust it is possible to infer the procedure involved in suing in this court.[9] These documents include declarations, pleas, *replicatio*s (responses to what the opponent has said following a declaration and plea), jury lists, bills of costs, various warrants for arrest (*capia*s), distraint (*distringa*s) and so on, as well as documents connected with appeals to Chancery in London: *certiorari* (requiring details to be sent to Westminster), *procedendo* (referring the complaint back to Stratford), and *de errore* (complaints of mistakes).[10]

The first step was for a complaint to be lodged with the authorities. In London, a large bureaucracy attached to the courts provided a location, if often a very time-consuming one, to which plaintiffs could go.[11] Where plaintiffs resorted to in Stratford can only be surmised. The complaint had somehow to reach the court 'steward'. Possibly there was an office in the Guildhall which might be visited at specified times, such as before or after a court sitting. The complaint may have been noted in a book, now lost, or more probably in loose papers. Some notes of this kind occur at the foot of some of the surviving court documents.

Having made his complaint, the plaintiff submitted a declaration,[12] a detailed account of the matter to be resolved, drawn up according to a precise legal formula. Declarations survive in considerable quantity,[13] written as were almost all the proceedings in abbreviated Latin. In the 1550s most of the farmers and tradesmen in Stratford would probably have had to employ someone to do this on their behalf – someone familiar with the 'mystery' of medieval legal Latin. Before the advent of local lawyers attached to the court, plaintiffs must have turned to anyone they could find locally, such as the Town Clerk, any local barristers or other lawyers, or the schoolmaster.

A declaration was presented before the court at one sitting, and at the next the defendant entered his plea (either that he was guilty or not guilty or a demurrer citing a legal technicality).[14] He could ask for a postponement (notionally an opportunity to discuss the problem). The plaintiff for his part could also ask for the case to be carried over. After the plea had been entered, the plaintiff could respond to it at the next sitting. The defendant could reply at the sitting after that, and so on. Eventually plaintiff and defendant could agree that the matter should be referred 'to the country',

9 Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 184 foll., and J.H. Baker, *The Common Law Tradition: Lawyers, Books and the Law* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000) p. 155 and see footnote 21 below.

10 'Any decision in a court of record ... was subject to review in the king's court by writ of error': Baker, *Common Law*, p. 322.

11 Ibid. p. 45.

12 See ibid. pp. 276–7 on similar procedure at Battle Abbey Court.

13 These are distributed throughout the holdings of the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, SCLA BRU 12 and 15.

14 Demurrers were written in Norman French. In all those extant, John Jeffries writes in reply to William Court Junior. It is therefore not clear whether Stratford's other attorneys would have been fluent in this language, which had traditionally been used by lawyers addressing each other in court.

meaning that a jury trial was requested. If both parties agreed, the serjeants were issued with a *venire facias* (a summons to prospective jurors). At the next sitting a *habeas corpora iuratorum* (a listing of prospective jurors) was drawn up, and at the sitting after that a *distringas iuratores* (a summons to the chosen jurors). Only after each of these precepts had been served did the jury finally appear.[15]

There were two lists of jurymen, selected from the jury list of qualified[16] freeholders. The first, probably issued at the same time as the *habeas corpora iuratorum*,[17] was supposed to include 24 names, but was not always complete. The second, attached to the *distringas iuratores,* was of 12, chosen from among the names on the first list, though if all 12 did not arrive on the day, extras were sometimes co-opted from the bystanders.

The jury heard the case. Witnesses were summoned.[18] The steward read the charge in English, and the jury retired under guard, a function performed in Stratford by the beadle. The jury returned and gave its verdict in English. The charge and the verdict are quoted *verbatim* on numerous extant jury lists. The judgement of the court, based on the verdict, was delivered at the next sitting, and the loser was presented with a bill for expenses and costs, as well as damages if applicable. If he did not pay, he could be arrested through a *capias ad satisfaciendum*. If he still failed to pay, some of his goods and chattels could be confiscated by means of a *fieri facias*. If he absconded, whoever had stood surety for him was required to pay in his stead.

The Court Record

Stratford's extensive documentation from this date,[19] allowing an insight into the business life of the town and demonstrating the court's importance in the lives of the townsfolk, is a rare survival. Entries referring to complaints, to be heard before the High Bailiff Thomas Gilbert and the principal alderman, commence on 29 November 1553, with the Town Clerk Richard Simmons serving as clerk to the court and recording its proceedings. Also present were the two serjeants-at-mace (Richard Sharpe and William Butler), four constables (Francis Harbidge, John Wheeler, William Smith and Lewis ap Williams), two tasters for bread and ale (Richard Hill and William Morris) and the beadle. It is not clear whether the manorial steward was also present, though he signed all the warrants.

15 Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 200.

16 Qualifications for jury service: i) adults, but not dotards; ii) no criminal record; iii) resident within the borough; iv) 40-shilling freeholders. See P.G. Lawson, 'Lawless Juries? The Composition and Behaviour of Hertfordshire Juries, 1573–1624' in J.S. Cockburn and T.A. Green (eds), *Twelve Good Men and True: The Criminal Trial Jury in England, 1200–1800* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988) p. 121.

17 Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 51.

18 One document survives – a rare piece of evidence – containing verbatim testimony from a boy about some misappropriated oxen.

19 See the Bibliography to this chapter, the entries under 'Primary Sources: SCLA'.

At first, other burgesses present were probably aldermen called upon to stand surety for litigants. The serjeants and Simmons, meanwhile, acted as 'attorneys'. Initially, in Queen Mary's reign, attorneys stood in for someone who could not be present in person, but were not necessarily lawyers.[20] Later, during Elizabeth's reign, the serjeants gave way to professional lawyers attached to the court.[21] The serjeants also carried out the court's warrants for arrest, attachment or distraint. They had to be able to read, and to write a 'return' in Latin.[22]

The function of the constables is never made plain, but they were probably on hand to keep order. The tasters of bread and ale presented to the court, probably verbally, any infringements of current regulations. There are no surviving complaints about ale, only about under-weight loaves.[23] The assize of bread was not in fact part of the Court of Record's remit, and the tasters also reported on this matter, more correctly, to the manorial Court Leet. However, it was evidently more effective to deal with such matters in the fortnightly Court of Record than to wait for the twice-yearly Court Leet. The beadle had a duty to keep juries under lock and key while they were deliberating. The only town official never mentioned is the Chamberlain, the town's treasurer. The court was required, it seems, to be financially self-sufficient. Payments listed in the margin of the record and in the bills of costs seem to have been collected by Simmons as Town Clerk and handed out by him to the appropriate recipients, with most going to himself as the leading professional.

The first page of the extant court record is the only one surviving that was drawn up between the end of 1553 and 20 May 1556, though some documents connected to cases which took place between these dates do survive. The scribe writing up the actions in 1556 was Peter Gill,[24] who does not appear elsewhere in Stratford records. He may possibly have been the manor steward, predecessor of Thomas Martin, the man who signed the three earliest surviving warrants. These are inscribed on vellum whereas, in the borough of Stratford, paper is normally used. Martin is succeeded by Roger Edgeworth, who signs as *senescallus* or steward, and who also operates in Warwick and Coventry. Described in Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive manuscript BRU 12/5/13 as one of 'the coroners of the county of Warwickshire', he was therefore an officer of the Crown, and could well have been steward of the manor held by Queen Mary following the attainder of the Dudleys. He signs warrants, written in black letter on vellum, in the style of the courts at Westminster.

20 Even though Edward I had in 1292 'directed his justices to provide for every county a sufficient number of attorneys and apprentices': Sir Frederick Pollock and F.W. Maitland, *The History of English Law*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, second edition, 1923).

21 William Court junior in December 1585 and Thomas Trussell a few months later. This change seems to have taken place nationally at this date: Brooks, *Law, Politics and Society*, p. 257.

22 It is not clear how well qualified they would have been in the provincial courts. See W.R. Prest, *The Rise of the Barristers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 4.

23 And on one occasion candles.

24 That he was possibly a lawyer is suggested by his having written the declaration BRU 12/5/25.

After Mary's death, Edgeworth[25] is replaced by William Court senior. One warrant survives on which the name of Edgeworth has been erased and that of Court substituted. Court previously had acted as a barrister, and Martin, after he ceases to sign the warrants, also appears as a barrister.[26] When Court no longer signs the warrants, Henry Higford takes over until 1569, where a second gap appears in the record, together with a much longer gap in the associated documents.[27] In 1584, when the record resumes, the man signing the warrants is Henry Rogers. Eventually John Jeffries junior,[28] who succeeded Simmons as Town Clerk during the second gap, takes over the warrant-signing as well as the recording. Henry Rogers had been seconded to assist Sir Thomas Lucy's investigations into the conspiracies against Elizabeth.[29]

The court was held with the bailiff presiding, normally on alternate Wednesdays, though not usually during the 12 days of Christmas, or on other holy days. Missed sittings in January and February were probably due to severe weather, and those occurring in late July or August or even early September no doubt resulted from the demands of harvest. Trade was dependent on farming and followed it in a seasonal pattern. The court follows the same pattern with more litigation in the autumn, after the harvest, and less in summer when farming was at its busiest.

The subjects of litigation are many and varied, covering most of daily life at the time. All kinds of building materials are mentioned, and furnishings, household equipment, weapons, food and drink, clothing and jewellery. Many actions concern clothing purchased by townspeople from tailors, and cloth and trimmings purchased by tailors from mercers, haberdashers and associated traders. Tradesmen sue over their stock-in-trade, farmers over crops, animals and farm equipment, and doctors over treatment. There are disputes about documents and failure to perform undertakings, to pay rent or deliver a surety. There are problems over squatters and gambling debts and missing savings. The wealthy, it emerges, buy large amounts of meat. Tailors buy enough material for one outfit at a time. There are fights and accidents, reports of confidence tricksters, pigs loose in gardens and gossipy accusations of theft and other improprieties.

Where the court was held is not recorded. However, the number of buildings of suitable size within the town was limited. If one rejects barns as insufficiently dignified, only three remain: the parish church, the Guild Chapel and the Guildhall.[30] The parish church must be discounted, since it

25 Described by Fripp, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records* (*MA*) vol. 1, p. xxx as a 'Romanist' and at *MA* vol. 3, p. 56 footnote 6 as having to resign his post in Stratford 'because of his Romanist principles'.

26 These men are labelled *Consil. ad barr.*

27 All associated documents are also missing from the beginning of 1588 to the middle of 1593.

28 Earlier he had acted as a lawyer, as he wrote the declaration BRU 12/5/83 (a second copy of which was written by Simmons) and the *replicatio* BRU 12/8/199.

29 Jeffries and Simmons appear from the record to perform one function, and Higford and Rogers another.

30 Inns were also used, however, for manor court proceedings. See Brooks, *Law, Politics and Society*, p. 245.

lay outside the borough boundary. This leaves either the Guild Chapel or the Guildhall. Not far away, at Much Wenlock, a purpose-built courthouse was provided for legal proceedings during the Tudor period, and, if one assesses Stratford's situation bearing this and other factors in mind, it becomes evident that, although churches and chapels were considered suitable,[31] the Guildhall was much more likely to have been used since it offered the required facilities. At Much Wenlock the builders considered that a courthouse needed one large room with open access from the back, and at the other end a smaller room leading off it. On the ground floor of Stratford's Guildhall, as readers of this volume will be aware, is a large hall suitable for the court, with what is commonly known as the 'armoury' to one side of it,[32] where the justices could prepare and to which the jury could retire.

There are no illustrations of the court in session, but it is reasonable to assume that, like other courts of the period, it followed the arrangement at Westminster Hall.[33] At the southern end of the ground floor of Stratford's Guildhall, in front of the wall paintings with the insignia of the Guild, there would probably have been a dais,[34] if the pattern of the Westminster court was followed, on which the bench for the Justices and their 'brethren' would have been placed. In front of this at ground level would have been a large table at which the steward and his assistants, if any, sat. The two serjeants-at-mace and the crier would have stood by the table, and in Stratford the beadle, who may have acted as crier. A bar then separated these officers from the jury benches. The plaintiff and defendant (if present) stood with their attorneys and witnesses behind a second bar which separated them from the jury. Unlike Council meetings, the court was open to all, and the proceedings could be watched from the back of the hall or even through the windows. Clearly the Guildhall was the most suitable place in Stratford to adapt to this use, particularly since the personnel involved were using it for other civic functions.

How far the fittings provided for the Court were fixtures is not known, but they were, we may be sure, heavy and cumbersome. It would be quite easy to use them *in situ* for other courts, if any, held in the hall and not difficult to adapt them for meetings of the Corporation. However, they might become more problematic if plays were to be performed in the same space. Presumably it would have been more convenient to use the end of the hall opposite to the dais and benches, with the players entering and exiting through the doors into the yard and using one of the other buildings – possibly the chapel – to act as a tiring-house. It may well be, however, that plays were performed in the Upper Guildhall, where the same problems would not have arisen.[35]

31 See for example J.S. Cockburn, *A History of the English Assizes 1558–1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 29, or Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 39.

32 More probably a council chamber, if the analogy with Much Wenlock is pursued.

33 Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 28.

34 There is archaeological evidence for a dais; see Giles and Clark in this volume, p. 144.

35 See the chapters in this volume by Macdonald (pp. 19–20) and Mulryne (pp. 193–5) and the Introduction, p. 12.

No book of rules survives for the Stratford Court, but Beesley's *History of Banbury*[36] records one which still survived in that town in the middle of the nineteenth century. Fripp, probably following Beesley, suggests that the court providing the model for both Stratford and Banbury was the Court of Record in Coventry. However, the model for the Stratford court was more likely to have been, as suggested above, one of the courts at Westminster Hall: the Court of Common Pleas, which dealt with debt,[37] or the King's Bench dealing with trespass on the case. The leading men of Stratford had long been familiar with London, as their trading patterns and legal activities demonstrate, so that influence from London is sufficiently probable.

Trade in the Proceedings of the Court of Record

During the Middle Ages the chief commodities exported from Stratford and its environs were malt, cheese and wool.[38] Grains of various kinds,[39] mainly barley, were grown south of the river, but seem from the record to have been traded locally rather than exported.[40] By the second half of the sixteenth century, the demand for woollen cloth from Worcester and Coventry had become erratic and, while Stratford's Bailiff in 1553 is a dyer of woollen cloth and a litigant in an action involving his trade,[41] subsequently there are few mentions of cloth-making in the record.

Stratford was situated in a commercially strategic location, since the routes from the North West to the South East crossed the Avon at the town's Clopton Bridge. One of the regrettable omissions in the record is that the scribe does not give the place of origin of every litigant, as he was supposed to do,[42] but one of those to whom he does refer early on is a man from Leyland in Lancashire. Litigants could come from anywhere and it is clear from their names that a few are even foreigners.[43] To qualify for suing in the court, litigants had only to have completed their business transaction within the borough boundaries,

36 Alfred Beesley, *A History of Banbury* (London: Nicholls & Son, 1841–2), p. 229. George May, in *A Descriptive History of the Town of Evesham* (Evesham: Geo. May, Whittaker & Co. and London: J.B. Nicholls & Son, 1845), pp. 465–6, quotes the charter for Evesham, but not a rule book.

37 Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 16. For Fripp's view of Coventry as the probable model for the Stratford court, see *MA* vol. 1, p. xxxix and footnote 3.

38 Alan Dyer gives a comprehensive account of Stratford's economy, 1540–1640, in 'Crisis and Resolution: Government and Society in Stratford, 1540–1640' in Robert Bearman, ed., *The History of an English Borough: Stratford-upon-Avon 1196–1996* (Stroud and Stratford-upon-Avon: Sutton, 1997), pp. 80–96.

39 Wheat, buckwheat, oats, rye, corn, muncorn (mixed grain), barley, peas, beans and vetches all figure in actions.

40 Dyer, 'Crisis and Resolution', pp. 88–9, and J.M. Martin, 'A Warwickshire Market Town in Adversity: Stratford-upon-Avon in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Midland History* 7 (1982), 37.

41 Declaration BRU 12/5/19 is a suit against him by William Whateley over dyeing 442 yards of woollen broadcloth. Also in Mary's reign, BRU 12/5/20 (ap Williams v. Morris) is over madder and alum and 12/5/36 over fulling lawn. Thomas Degge is also mentioned as a weaver.

42 Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 158.

43 For example, '*Eliozenis ahepea*' BRU 12/1: 23 April 9 Eliz. (1567). The scribe writes what he thinks he hears as the name.

and people appear to have come in from the surrounding area[44] in order to be covered by the Stratford court.[45]

Trade from the North West was mainly from mid- and north Wales. Welsh drovers took their cattle to Stratford and then via Oxford or Banbury to London and the South East. On the journey they sold some of their cattle to the local butchers for fattening, and not all the Welshmen continued on their way beyond Stratford. The record contains, indeed, numerous Welsh names of people living in the town.[46] Lewis ap Williams even became bailiff. When the woollen industry declined, butchery and the associated leather trades evidently increased in importance. Skinners, tanners, curriers, whittawers, glovers, shoemakers and saddlers proliferated in place of clothmakers. Pigs were kept locally, and sheep supplied meat and leather as well as wool.[47] There was a lucrative trade in rabbits.[48] A cart service was provided by carriers, it emerges, to take Stratford products to London.

The Court record shows numerous leather workers in Stratford at the time, supplying about 2,000 local inhabitants and other customers. Gloves were a luxury item and, with one third of Stratford's people estimated to have been living in poverty,[49] it would be surprising if the glovers found a ready market. Even those townspeople above the poverty line would not all purchase luxuries such as gloves and a large proportion of the population would be children. So Stratford seems from the record to have been over-generously supplied with glovers, unless, as is probable, many of the gloves were being traded elsewhere, especially in London as the centre of luxury. Carriers such as Edward Bromley are found taking local produce to the London traders. In 1594, for example, William Coates (a tailor[50]) sold a total of 480 rabbits to Bromley to be paid for 'on Edward's return from London on all his journeys'. Presumably Bromley sold the rabbits in London and was expected to pay Coates out of his profits. Goods carried by horse[51] or horse and cart would need to be small and light in weight. Fowls and rabbits for the poulterers and small leather goods such as gloves and shoes would be ideal. There seems to have grown up, moreover, a veritable Stratford-in-exile in the north of London. It appears from the record that surplus young people were regularly sent to the capital as servants and apprentices, both boys and girls. As an example, we find a defamation case in which one woman accuses another of

44 Alcester is mentioned several times, but in the declarations there are dealings with many towns, such as Shipston, Evesham, Coventry, Birmingham and Shrewsbury, as well as local villages such as Wixford, Armscote, Preston Bagot or further afield Little Stretton in Shropshire. This is an area of research requiring further study.

45 Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 159.

46 Including butchers.

47 Raw wool is still being sold, of course. See, for example, BRU 12/5/78.

48 For both meat and skins. Black rabbits cost more than grey rabbits. See also BRU 12/5/54.

49 Dyer, 'Crisis and Resolution', p. 96.

50 Gowns were lined with fur. It is not clear whether Coates was rearing rabbits himself for use in his tailoring or selling on a surplus from those he had bought in. Selective breeding of black rabbits would be difficult in a warren because of inevitable cross-breeding.

51 For example, BRU 12/5/90: goods carried by horse to Shipston market.

stealing clothes from her master in London and bringing them back with her to Stratford.[52]

In London, the carrier could deliver news to exiles and pick up their messages, as well as the goods ordered from London merchants by the other prosperous group in Stratford, the mercers. It transpires, for instance, that George Strange carried 17cwt. of merchandise from London to Stratford for 51*s*. (3*s*. per cwt.) on behalf of Nicholas Barnhurst, a mercer. On another occasion, Nicholas Jeavons 'hired Edward [Bromley] to carry for him from the City of London up to the borough of Stratford a fish called a thornback [a skate] for sixteen pence'. There are numerous suits over unpaid bills for sugar, spices and wine, together with silks, satins and laces, as well as the new continental-style cloths, Holland, fustian, baize and frieze, and the fancy felt hats that were putting cappers out of business. Some of these goods would possibly also have been traded north-west as far as Lancashire, along with the malt which features so largely in the court cases.

Prosperity and Poverty

During this period, despite some evidence for prosperity in the trading record, Stratford presented an appearance of being 'now much fallen into decay for want of such trade as heretofore they had by clothing and making of yarn, employing and maintaining a number of poor people by the same, which now lives in great penury and misery'.[53] In the 1590s recurrent bad harvests and epidemics were accompanied by two successive disastrous fires which destroyed many houses in the town.[54] In this crisis, one might expect to see an increase in actions for debt as people found it difficult to pay their bills.[55] Surprisingly, this is not apparent. Plotting a graph of the average amount of litigation per session over the decade shows remarkably little variation.

It is possible to see from the record the effects of well-intentioned government policies aimed at relieving the poor. For example, even as the government legislates to keep down the price of bread,[56] the price of grain and flour soars. As a result, Stratford bakers are regularly fined for failing to maintain the weight of loaves. Similarly, following the government's efforts

52 'that she robbed her master at London after the decease of her mystres of all her mystres clothes and came down into the Countrye and hyd her [deleted: selfe] heade for the space of halfe a yere, and afterwards flourished abroode with the saide clothes lyke a gentlewoman, and after that she was taken and carried to London where the same clothes were recevid agayne by her master without anye punyshement.' Elizabeth Trout v. Elizabeth Hancock: BRU 12/6/52.

53 W.B. Stephens (ed.), *Victoria History of the County of Warwick* (8 vols, London 1904–1969), vol. 3, p. 241. A common complaint in towns of the time. See Peter Clark and Paul Slack, *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500–1700* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 18 foll.

54 Dyer, 'Crisis and Resolution', p. 84.

55 Alison Wall, in *Power and Protest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Reconstructions in Early Modern History, 2000) p. 66, notes the increase in indictments for theft in the 1590s.

56 Dyer, 'Crisis and Resolution', p. 94.

to curtail profiteering,[57] Richard Spooner – possibly in some official capacity connected with the market – initiates a series of actions for engrossment (inflating prices by buying in one market to sell on at a higher price in another). Other evidence is open to different interpretations. Even where peaks in the number of actions involving debts are evident, it would be imprudent to state categorically that this was due to increased deprivation, rather than, on the contrary, to the possibility that some people had more money to spend on lawsuits. Similarly, if one looks at, say, unpaid bills for meat, an increase could be indicative of inability to pay, or could reflect the fact that people were eating more meat, or even that two of the butchers were more inclined than others to sue in the court as part of their business practice.

That conclusive evidence for poverty is lacking is probably explained by considering who is suing. Craig Muldrew, examining the records of Kings Lynn in the seventeenth century, found that all sections of society[58] were using the Court of Record. In Stratford in the sixteenth century we find, by contrast, only a few mentions of servants: one who is sued by a tailor after he tries to buy himself a livery he cannot afford,[59] and two others who sue for unpaid wages.[60] Even in these cases, the term 'servants' may refer to the more socially elevated children of local tradesmen. There are one or two clearly prosperous husbandmen who use the court, but litigants are predominantly the yeomen and tradesmen of the town suing each other over business deals.[61] Unsupported women, such as those who formerly made a poor living by spinning, have neither the money to spare for lawsuits nor can they secure the credit which might, in the case of repayment difficulties, put them in danger of litigation. The Stratford record has nothing to say about how the poor were faring. Even those who appear to be in difficulties when they are sued by several people at the same time seem to weather the storm. It is quite possible that people sued only those whom they considered likely to be able to pay, rather than wasting money chasing those they knew could not.

After the fires of 1594 and 1595 Henry Rogers, a prosperous butcher,[62] was able to rebuild his house opposite New Place as the elaborate and expensive dwelling now known as Harvard House. Nor was he the only person who

57 The Act Touching Badgers of Corn and Drovers of Cattle (1562) tightened the original act of Edward VI against 'Regrators, Forestallers and Ingrossers' (1552).

58 Craig Muldrew, 'Rural Credit, Market Areas and Legal Institutions in the Countryside in England, 1550–1700' in Brooks and Lobban *Communities and Courts* , p. 174 and 'Credit and the Courts: Debt litigation in a seventeenth century urban community', *Economic History Review* 46 (1993), 23–38; also Brooks, *Law, Politics and Society*, p. 1. For further information on a nearby similar court of the period see W.A. Champion, 'Litigation in the Boroughs: The Shrewsbury Curia Parva 1480–1730', *The Journal of Legal History* 15 (1994), 201–22.

59 BRU 15/6/99.

60 BRU 15/3/148 & 148a; BRU 15/4/145a.

61 Persons of higher rank, such as Sir Thomas Lucy and Sir Edward Greville, occasionally sue in the court.

62 The prosperity of the butchers and the number of their unpaid bills suggest that Stratford butchers may have been supplying quite a wide area with meat.

was able to spend lavishly on rebuilding, though some houses remained derelict for some time.[63] The record shows that collections were made in other towns for the relief of Stratford's disaster victims. The right to a share in the proceeds of the anticipated donations was sold by those in desperate need of cash-in-hand to those who could afford to part with funds now in the hope of a higher payout later.[64] The better off made money out of the fires while the needy lost out. The rich grew richer at the expense of the poor, who existed as best they could, a social and economic situation that seems to be mirrored in the record. During these 50 years, as the woollen industry around Stratford faltered, those who were resourceful, adaptable, and preferably had funds in reserve were able to prosper. Others were not so lucky.

Those farming in Arden, to the north of the town, were the most affected. To the south of the river, where most of the grain was produced, higher prices probably compensated to some extent for poor crops. When wool prices fell, however, those farming on the northern bank were obliged to seek alternative means to supplement their income. Towards Birmingham a cottage industry in metalwork sprang up, while in Snitterfield, a village north of the town, John Shakespeare decided to diversify by using his sheep not only for wool and meat, but also for making leather goods.

Politics, Religion and Personalities

While most historical developments at this period are measured in terms of economics, other factors can be discerned in Stratford as reflected in the court record. One of these is the productivity and quite probably the competence of the various bailiffs. Significant variation between them becomes apparent when we focus on the Stratford year and not the calendar year, that is the year starting in early October after the harvest with the election of the bailiff and other officials, and continuing to the end of the following September. In the year October 1596 to September 1597, a record average of 29 cases was heard per sitting, including one occasion when 48 cases, all at different stages, were heard.[65] The Bailiff that year was Abraham Sturley, a professional lawyer employed by Sir Thomas Lucy, and an educated and experienced man. His work rate stands out among his fellows. John Sadler, hearing an average of 15 cases per sitting, seems to have been much less widely admired and trusted. Another of those at the lower end of the scale was Richard Quiney. In 1592–93, when he was Bailiff for the first time, he presided over a record number of sittings that were adjourned for lack of business.[66] Quiney was unusually young and presumably viewed by

63 Dyer, 'Crisis and Resolution', p. 95.
64 See for example BRU 15/4/91.
65 See Hastings, *Common Pleas*, p. 35 for comparison.
66 His father Adrian had pressed for him to be elected bailiff, though Greville, then lord of the manor, objected.

litigants and potential litigants as inexperienced. He heard more cases when he was in office for the second time, and this is true of other bailiffs.

Stratford was a small town where its leading citizens knew each other very well. They operated in cliques of the kind that might be expected in such circumstances. These seem to have had some religious basis. In 1553 under Mary Tudor the leading citizens were Catholic, her Bailiffs being Thomas Gilbert, William Whateley, John Burbidge, Rafe Cawdrey, Francis Harbidge and Robert Perrott. When Mary died in 1558 and Elizabeth ascended the throne, the dominant clique changed to one with a Protestant emphasis, headed by Adrian Quiney, Humphrey Plumley, Richard Hill and Thomas Barber. These men were principally mercers, drapers, haberdashers and vintners, bringing in goods from London.[67] The bailiff had to be approved by the lord of the manor, in Quiney's case one of the Dudleys, who were fervent Calvinists and likely to favour bailiffs of whose religious leanings there was not any doubt. Of Mary's bailiffs, only Cawdrey became bailiff again.[68]

It is generally felt by historians that there was little animosity between the two groupings, Catholic and Protestant.[69] However, in the court record there are a few cases that hint otherwise. On 17 April 1595 'Richard Lane made a declaration against Dorothy Rainsford, recent widow of Thomas Rainsford gentleman deceased, in a plea of debt; and the defendant remains in gaol, for want of a surety.'[70] No-one on the bench will stand bail for her – an extremely unusual situation. She is known to have been a Catholic. Another widow[71] finds herself in the same situation: 'Magdalen Trussell, widow, was attached [arrested] by the borough serjeants-at-mace at the suit of George Badger in a plea of debt; & she remains [in prison] for lack of a surety.'[72] This lady was the widow of a man who for years had been one of the two attorneys attached to this very court. It is astonishing that no-one on the bench would stand bail for her. It may be pertinent to reflect that it was often the women who were most obstinate in their adherence to the old religion.

The existence of networks in the town becomes apparent when we consider who sues jointly with whom, who buys from whom, and

67 John Shakespeare, however, is closely allied with this group.

68 However, see J.H. Gleason, *The Justices of the Peace in England: 1558–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 69. Cawdrey appears to have been the leading Catholic on the Council and was Bailiff three times.

69 The wife of the town clerk, John Jeffries, seems to have been sufficient of an embarrassment to him to make him live in the village of Wolverton rather than in the town as his father had done. She was a listed recusant and eventually ran away. See Ann Hughes, 'Building a Godly Town: Religious and Cultural Divisions in Stratford-upon-Avon, 1560–1640' in Bearman, *History*, pp. 97–109; at p. 100 where Hughes discusses the Catholic/Protestant divide in detail. See also the chapter by Mulryne in this volume, pp. 188–92.

70 Record of 17 April 36 Eliz. (1594).

71 Married women had to sue through their husbands. Elizabeth Brace sues for herself when she is twice widowed and through two new husbands when she remarries, though the case she is involved in continues into further sessions.

72 Record of 20 December 39 Eliz. (1598).

who serves on the jury lists. These networks give a rare glimpse into the functioning of the town's society, and would be a productive area for further investigation. At first glance, it seems that where possible Protestants chose to do business with Protestants and Catholics with Catholics. The scars resulting from Marian excesses must have run deep in the case of the exiled Dudleys, whose influence in the town was very strong.[73] Nevertheless, the leading citizens of Stratford in 1558 were still the same men who had formerly been brothers in the pre-Reformation Guild.

The tradition among Stratford litigants seems to have been to seek for agreement. The word 'concord' is used to indicate that the case had been settled out of court, as most cases were. Some proved more intractable, and a few, such as that between William Tetherton and the formidable widow Ursula Field in 1596, seem to have degenerated into personal feuds. Very many cases are listed for one or two sittings and then disappear. Although written contracts became more common during the later years of Elizabeth, under Mary most of those who used the court would not be able to write a legally binding document. Employing a lawyer to do so was no doubt expensive, at least more expensive than visiting the Guildhall and paying 2*d*. for the steward to write down, as a complaint, the debt owed. Most of the cases involve no detail, just a bare statement of what is owed to whom by whom. This is sometimes followed by a few continuances, carrying the suit over to the following sitting.

Trade was based on credit rather than the use of coin.[74] According to the record, it was more convenient to pay in barley, the value being calculated in marks.[75] If people saved money, it was in gold angels,[76] preferably Flemish gold angels.[77] Life in Stratford operated seasonally. Payments were made when crops were sold. Debts were collected on quarter days or fair days, when people met and 'made a reckoning of' what they had bought from, and sold to, each other and what the difference was between the two.[78] It was useful to have a written record of what was owed. Many cases are probably no more than part of the town's business practice. This also appears to have been the case in other courts of record.[79]

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73 David Loades, *The Mid-Tudor Crisis: 1545–1565* (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 152 foll.

74 The coinage had become suspect after Henry VIII's devaluation and became scarcer after Elizabeth revalued it by legislating in relation to the adulteration of coins. See Muldrew, 'Credit and the Courts', pp. 23–38.

75 Marks (valued at one third of a pound) were not actual coins.

76 BRU 12/5/40 et al.

77 BRU 12/5/238. These coins were circulating in Stratford probably as a result of the influx of Flemish clothworkers in 1550. See Heard, *Edward VI and Mary*, p. 57. For inflation see Loades, *The Mid-Tudor Crisis*, pp. 60 foll. and R.B. Outhwaite, *Inflation in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London: Macmillan, second edition, 1986).

78 Griffin ap Robert sues William Whateley over 'meat, namely beef, mutton, veal etc. to the value of 58 shillings and two pence, as in accordance with various tallies and scores made between them, [he] made a reckoning [as to] what he owes him'. BRU 12/8/234.

79 Muldrew, 'Credit and the Courts', p. 27.

The Shakespeares and the Court

John Shakespeare appears in the court record from 1556 onwards, and probably featured earlier in the missing pages between 1553 and 1556. From leaving noisome muckheaps in the street[80] he moved on to being accepted as a *probus et legalis homo* fit to join the jury list, the first step in the Stratford *cursus honorum*. In Stratford a '*probus et legalis*' appears to mean someone of good character with some experience of the law. Men tend to appear on the jury list after they have been involved in litigation in the court. John Shakespeare evidently made a good impression on jury service, as shortly afterwards he became ale-taster, an official reporting to the court, although he was fined for absence on three consecutive occasions. He appears in around 30 lawsuits altogether, involving large sums,[81] and is chosen to arbitrate on a number of occasions, as well as acting several times as a surety. From entries in the record it is clear that he is doing business with a wide variety of people, notably Adrian Quiney, Humphrey Plumley, Richard Hill and Thomas Barber.

In 1568 Shakespeare became Bailiff and presided over the court as Master John Shakespeare. He does not seem to have inspired confidence, as doing business in his court is not popular and there are numerous adjournments. After being Bailiff, he is named in a dozen cases.[82] Following 1592 he is found only briefly, in 1595, in a case sued by Adrian Quiney and Thomas Barber against a number of people, including Shakespeare. The other defendants are pursued, but Shakespeare is dropped from the suit after the initial complaint. It is not clear whether this is because he was the first to pay, or because he was in such financial difficulties that his old associates did not consider it worthwhile to pursue him. His son William never appears in the surviving record, but associated documents reveal that he did sue in the court after 1601.[83]

The Court of Record as Social Icon

Both John and William Shakespeare, as can be seen from their petition for a coat of arms, were eager to improve their status in the community. The elite

80 Public Record Office, Special Collections, Court Rolls, S.C. 2/207, no. 82 (quoted in S. Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare, A Documentary Life* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press in association with The Scolar Press, 1975), p. 14 and in facsimile p. 15.

81 There seems to be another John Shakespeare who may have been a litigant in some of these cases, described as a cordwainer in BRU 12/5/300. It is debatable whether this term could cover a glover/whittawer. See also Fripp, *MA* vol. 3, p. 155.

82 For example, he sues John Thompson on 20 June 30 Eliz. (1588), though he drops the suit, and again on 22 October 31 Eliz. On the same date he sues Richard Sutton, and a few months earlier William Green on 23 April 31 Eliz. Two years later he sues Thomas West and Robert Jones on 21 April 33 Eliz. and the following month, 19 May 33 Eliz., he sues Thomas West again and Robert Young. He is sued by Quiney, Plumley and Hill on 24 February 33 Eliz. and by Henry Wilson on 21 February 35 Eliz. The final suit by Quiney and Barber was on 19 March 37 Eliz. (1595). John stood surety for Charles Harpley on 19 May 33 Eliz. (1591).

83 BRU 15/5/139, 127 a & b; BRU 5/15 & 16; ER 27/5, 6 & 7.

townspeople in Stratford made participation in the Court of Record part of their bid for status and dignity, a forum where they could exercise control over their own business without reference to, or deference towards, the lord of the manor, the gentry or the Church.

As the last 50 years of the sixteenth century progressed, the court became more experienced and professional, with qualified lawyers attached to it and educated bailiffs presiding.[84] The men of Stratford, it seems, were striving to recover from the nadir of the suppression of their Guild and the sequestration of the town's property to a degree of self-governance represented by the Council and self-regulation represented by the Court of Record. Both of these bodies were centred on the Guildhall and drew their civic importance, at least in part, from their location.

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84 Gleason, *Justices of the Peace*, p. 58.

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The Archaeology of the Guild Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon

Kate Giles and Jonathan Clark

The Guild buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford are located on a site bounded to the west by Church Street and to the north by Chapel Lane[1] (Fig. 7.1) and consist of the Guild Chapel, the Guildhall, the Pedagogue's House, and the Almshouses.[2] They are of Grade I status and are of national significance as one of the best-preserved examples of a pre-modern provincial public building complex. This chapter presents the results of a recent programme of archaeological survey on the Guildhall, supported by tree-ring dating and archival research.[3] It also discusses preliminary results from research on the Guild Chapel and the Almshouses.[4]

Antiquarian Research

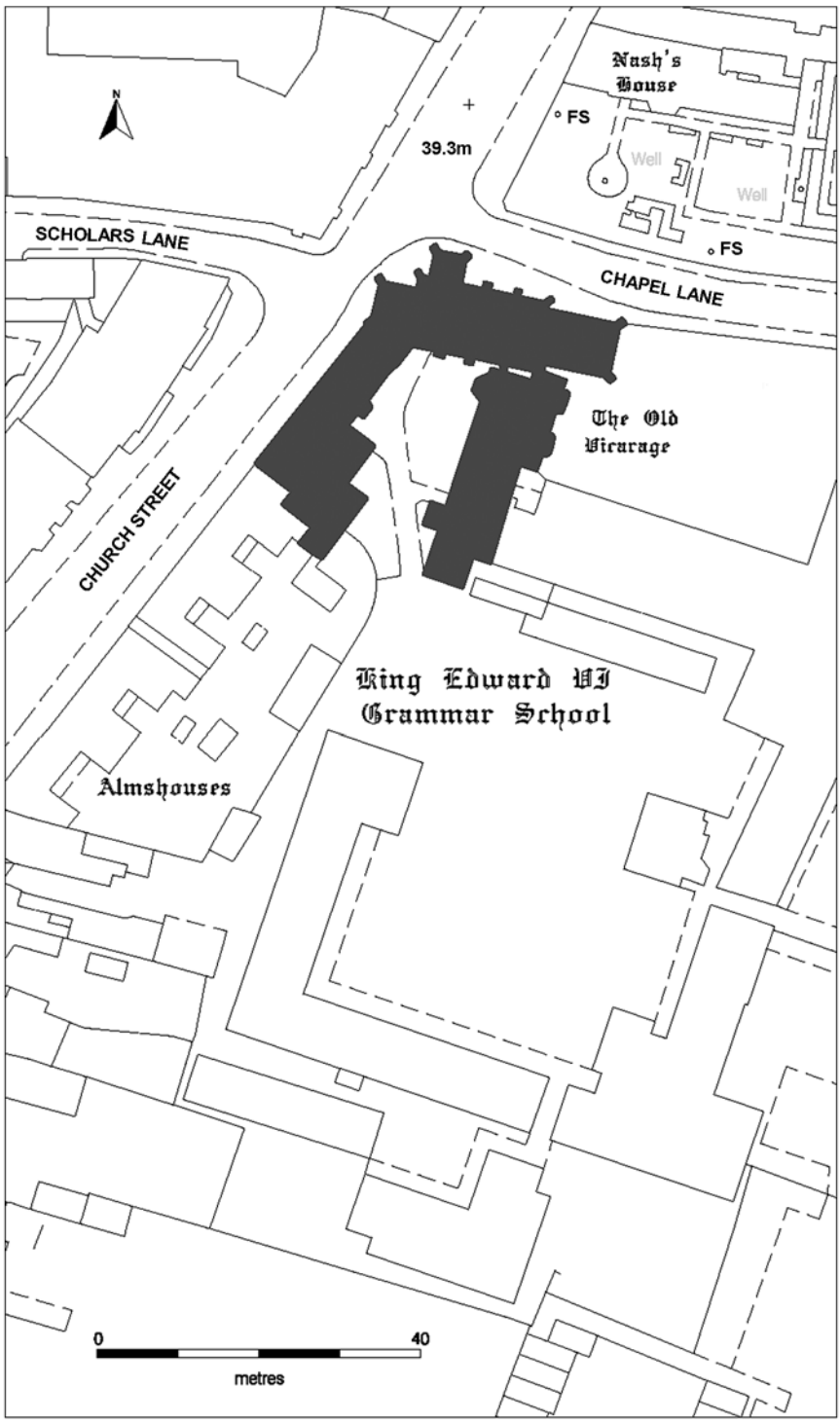
The importance of the Guild buildings, and their connection to the Guild of the Holy Cross and to patrons including Sir Hugh Clopton, were noted

1 National Grid Reference SP 2000 5470.

2 The Guildhall, South Wing and Pedagogue's House are part of the King Edward VI Grammar School. The chapel is maintained by the Friends of the Guild Chapel and owned by the Stratford-upon-Avon Town Trust, while the Almshouses are maintained by a charitable trust (The Stratford-upon-Avon Municipal Charities).

3 This chapter is based on survey work carried out by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd. in 2006, as part of a Conservation Management Plan funded by the King Edward VI Grammar School and the Heritage Lottery Fund: J. Clark and K. Giles, *Conservation Management Plan. The Guildhall and Pedagogue's House, King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire*, 3 volumes (2006), unpublished report; A. Arnold, R. Howard and C. Litton, 'Tree-ring analysis of timbers from the Guildhall complex and Pedagogue's House, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire' (English Heritage Research Reports Series 68, 2006). We are very grateful to Prof. Ronnie Mulryne for involving us in the Stratford project, and to Robert Bearman and Mairi Macdonald for their assistance throughout our research.

4 Research on the Guild Chapel lay outside the scope of the original project. See K. Giles, A. Masinton and G. Arnott, 'Visualising the Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon: Digital models as research tools in historical archaeology', *Internet Archaeology Journal* 32 (2012). A. Arnold and R. Howard, 'Tree-ring analysis of timbers from the "infill" building of the almshouses and guildhall complex, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire' (unpublished report, 2010).



7.1 The location of the Guild buildings, Stratford-upon-Avon. © FAS Heritage

by sixteenth-century antiquarians such as John Leland and John Stow.[5] The Guild buildings were of particular interest to Stratford's own antiquarians, such as Halliwell,[6] whose research on the early Corporation is well known, and Wheler, who not only set the buildings in the wider context of the history of the borough, but also provided one of the most important accounts of the rediscovery of the Guild Chapel's wall paintings in 1804.[7] The paintings were also drawn and made into lithographs by the contemporary antiquarian Thomas Fisher, for publication in 1807. However, his drawings were only finally published by another antiquarian, John Gough Nichols, in 1838.[8] Some twentieth-century studies of Stratford have considered the history of the complex as a whole,[9] and further light on the use of the buildings has also been shed by the transcription of the minutes and accounts of the early modern Corporation, and by the recent publication of the Register of the Guild by Mairi Macdonald.[10] However, most recent serious scholarship on the Guild buildings has focused attention on the Guild Chapel and its paintings, rather than the Guildhall, Almshouses and Pedagogue's House.[11]

One of the most important scholars to have worked on the Guild Chapel and the Guildhall complex is Wilfrid Puddephat, art master at the King Edward VI Grammar School from 1940–1974. In 1955, Puddephat uncovered the remains of the Dance of Death paintings in the Guild Chapel and this prompted him to embark on a more extensive programme of research into the Guild Chapel and other Guild buildings. Although he published a brief summary of his findings on the chapel in 1960,[12] a much more extensive set of research notes survives in the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive (SCLA).[13] Many of these relate to the preparation of a book on the Guild buildings which was never published. Reading his notes, one cannot fail to be struck by his passion for the buildings, his

5 *The Itinerary of John Leland, in or about the years 1535–1543*, ed. L. Toulmin Smith (London, 1964). John Stow's edition of Leland, further discussed below, contained additional information about the Dance of Death paintings in the chapel.

6 J.O. Halliwell, *A Descriptive Calendar of the Ancient Manuscripts and Records in the Possession of the Corporation at Stratford-upon-Avon* (London, 1863).

7 R.B. Wheler, *The History and Antiquities of Stratford-upon-Avon* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1806); *A Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon* (London, 1814).

8 J.G. Nichols, *Ancient allegorical, historical and legendary paintings … on the walls of the chapel of the Trinity, belonging to the Gilde of the Holy Cross at Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, from drawings made at the time of their discovery by Thomas Fisher* (London, 1838).

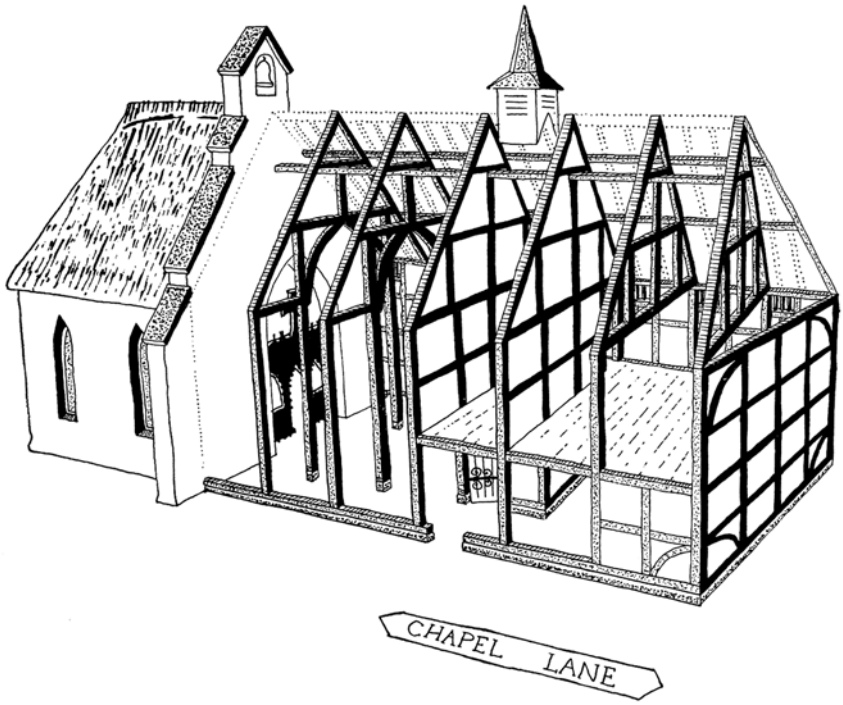
9 E.I. Fripp, *Shakespeare's Stratford* (London, 1928); L.F. Salzman and P. Styles, *Victoria History of the Counties of England: Warwick*, vol. 3, (London, 1945).

10 E.I. Fripp and R. Savage, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records, 1553–1620* (Dugdale Society, 4 volumes, 1921–1926); M. Macdonald, ed., *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society, 42 (2007).

11 C. Davidson, *The Guild Chapel Wall Paintings at Stratford-upon-Avon* (New York, 1988); L. Mooney, 'Verses upon death and other wall paintings surviving in the Guild Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon', *Journal of the Early Book Society* 3 (2000), 182–90.

12 W. Puddephat, 'The mural paintings of the Dance of Death in the Guild Chapel of Stratford-upon-Avon', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society* 76 (1958), 29–35.

13 Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives. Puddephat's notes are mostly contained within the series DR624/1–33 and drawings in DR399/1–8, but the originals of these are in the museum collection SBT 1994-19/133–144.



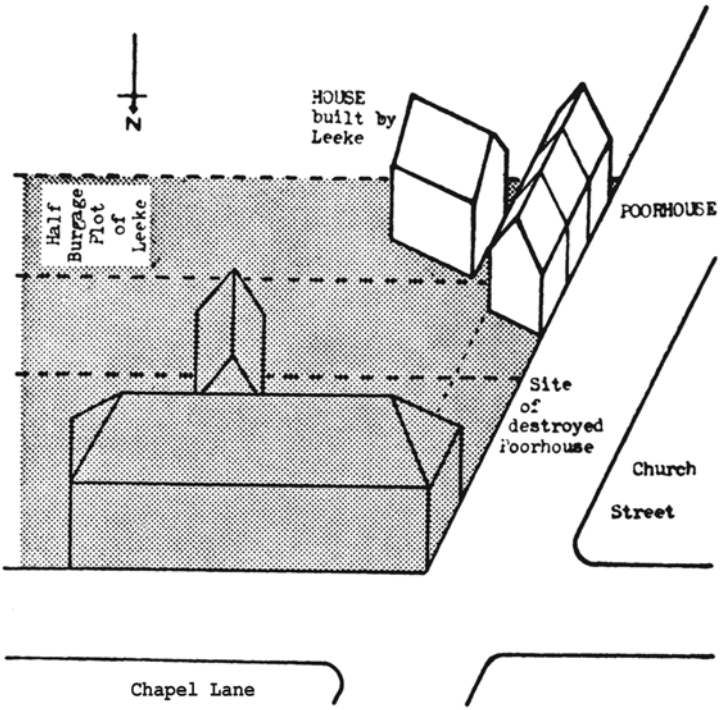
7.2 Wilfrid Puddephat's reconstruction drawing of the early Guild complex. © Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, DR624/1, reproduced with permission of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

meticulous attention to detail, and his insightful observations of both the buildings and their decoration. Although a short summary of some of his ideas has been published by Parker,[14] this chapter references his notes directly, since they form an important foundation for the archaeological research presented below.

The Early Guildhall

As Mairi Macdonald's chapter in this volume has noted, the early records of the Guild indicate that from 1292 onwards the Guild possessed some form of common hall, to which repairs are recorded as early as 1388/9.[15] In 1402/3, the accounts reveal further repairs to windows and doors in the Guildhall and to the chamber of the chaplains and the kitchen. In the following year, there are references to the 'houses of the guild' and the chamber in the hall occupied by John 'Scholemayster'.[16] More substantial repairs to the Guildhall were noted in 1406–08, when specific features within the hall are mentioned, including the making of a stone step, the cleaning of images,

14 K.T. Parker, *The Guild Chapel and Other Guild Buildings of Stratford-upon-Avon, based on the research of Wilfrid Puddephat* (Stratford-upon-Avon: The Guild School Association, 1987).
15 SCLA BRT 1/3/4.
16 SCLA BRT 1/3/16.



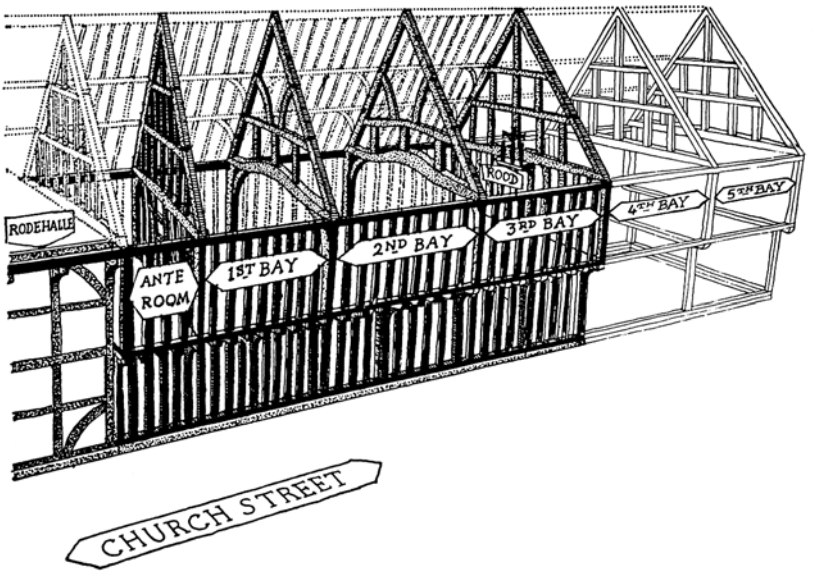
7.3 Wilfrid Puddephat's reconstruction of the plan of the fifteenth-century Guild complex. © Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, DR624/1, reproduced with permission of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

the construction of a porch and a 'tresauntes' (gallery), as well as repairs to existing almshouses.[17]

Puddephat drew on this evidence to produce a hypothetical reconstruction of the early Guild buildings as a range comprising a masonry 'oratory' on the site of the present-day chancel, abutted by a two-storeyed infirmary and 'Rodehalle' fronting onto Chapel Lane (Fig. 7.2).[18] He also proposed that a set of almshouses mentioned in the early Guild records were located at the north end of Church Street, associated with, but not connected to, the Guildhall. These were identified with a record in the accounts of 1413/14 which noted payments 'for burnt timber of two Almshouses after … [the fire]', and with a series of payments in the accounts of 1411–17 for the construction of three new almshouses.[19] Puddephat suggested that these were also 'in all probability … contained in a detached building fronting onto Church Street', but further south on land newly acquired by the Guild on the site of the southernmost bays of the present Guildhall (Fig. 7.3).

The precise location of these buildings was of considerable significance to Puddephat's interpretation of the rebuilding of the Guildhall, and his interpretation of the surviving buildings on the site. In 1417/18 the Guild's register recorded the donation to the Guild by the then Master, John Leeke,

17 SCLA BRT 1/3/20.
18 SCLA DR 624/1–6; Parker, *Guild Chapel*, pp. 13–16.
19 SCLA BRT 1/3/26; DR 624/1, p. 31.



7.4 Wilfrid Puddephat's reconstruction of the phasing of the Guildhall. © Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, DR624/14, reproduced with permission of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

of a burgage known as 'Geraudis' adjacent to the Guild's garden, on which he was to build a house 'next to the house of the poor now built'.[20] Puddephat suggested that Leeke's house was the South Wing of the Guildhall, built as a domestic building and subsequently incorporated into the Guildhall.[21] The records of 1417/18 also indicate that work had started on the rebuilding of the Guildhall itself, when Richard Swyfte, a carpenter, was paid 8 marks, 3*s*. and 4*d*. 'pro nova edificatione dictae Gildae'. The confirmation of the contract appears to have been something of an event, with a 'stockfish' and wine purchased for the sealing of the indentures.[22] Unfortunately, the records for the following years do not survive, and it is not until the early 1420s that references to a completed Guildhall appear. In 1424/5, John Grove, carpenter, was paid 'pro reformatione' of the new hall 'as far as the chamber of John Mortemer', a chamber previously referred to as being 'in' the Guild Chapel.[23]

Puddephat's analysis of the Guildhall itself built on these findings. He suggested that the present Guildhall was constructed in three phases, the first of which was the small, single-bay structure at the north end of the range, which he argued pre-dated the Guildhall and originally abutted the 'Rodehall' itself (Fig. 7.4). The second phase was a three-bay hall, with a dais located at its southern end. The third phase involved the extension of the Guildhall into its fourth and fifth bays, incorporating Leeke's house

20 Macdonald, *Register*, p. 68.
21 SCLA DR 624/1, p. 38–9; Parker, *Guild Chapel*, pp. 19–20.
22 SCLA BRT 1/3/31.
23 SCLA BRT 1/3/35; BRT 1/3/26.

7.5 The exterior of the Guildhall. © FAS Heritage.

into the design and involving the demolition of two of the three recently completed almshouses. Only the third of these was left standing – the so-called 'infill house' which survives on the site today.[24] Puddephat suggested that a phased construction process, involving the construction and then almost immediate demolition of the almshouses and rapid conversion of Leeke's house, was envisaged by the Guild from the outset. It is important to acknowledge Puddephat's research, because until recently it has provided the most comprehensive account of the early history of the Guildhall and its relationship to other buildings on the site. Moreover, Puddephat's work raises a series of important questions which require closer investigation, relating to the date and construction sequence of the Guildhall and the adjoining South Wing, the almshouses, other buildings on the site, and the Guild Chapel. It is to the archaeological analysis of the Guildhall, South Wing and almshouses that this chapter therefore now turns.

The Guildhall

The Guildhall is a two-storey, timber-framed building of five bays fronting on to Church Street, with an additional, smaller bay at its north end (Fig.

24 SCLA BRT DR 624/1, pp. 16–17.

7.5). The present building can confidently be identified with the 'new' Guildhall, referred to in the accounts of c. 1417/18. Tree-ring dating, carried out in conjunction with the archaeological survey of the building, concluded that the majority of dated timbers of the Guildhall complex were cut in a single programme of felling, between AD 1410 and 1435.[25]

The building makes conspicuous use of timber, in its use of 'close studding' and its jetties, which are decorated with roll-and-hollow mouldings. The ground floor has a stone plinth and continuous sole plate, made up of scarfed timbers. Principal posts and studs of similar scantling are pegged into the sole plate, and the posts provide structural support for the wall plate above. At the southern end of the elevation the principal post is supported by a curved arch brace. The jetty rests on a series of floor joists and small curved brackets bonded into the principal posts. The wall plate has the support of posts and studs, pegged into the wall plate at eaves level. The bay rhythm of the building is reflected in its fenestration. At ground-floor level there are currently two windows in each bay, with one in the smaller bay to the north and an inserted doorway and window in the first bay of the northern end. At first-floor level, there is again a small window at the north end, but only one window placed centrally in each bay. All of these are four-light windows, except the third from the south, which has only three.

As early as the 1440s, the Guild's accounts indicate that the Guildhall was subdivided into a 'lower' and 'upper' hall, which are considered in turn below.[26] However, before analysing these spaces it is worth considering the northernmost bay of the range, which consists of a structure fitted rather awkwardly into the space between the north gable of the Guildhall and the western tower and nave of the Guild Chapel. The archaeological evidence of this area suggests that it post-dates both the construction of the west tower of the Guild Chapel and the Guildhall itself. There are important differences in the roof trusses here. That to the south is of the same form as the remainder of the Guildhall, with common rafters supported by purlins. However, the continuation of the wall plate and projection of the purlins suggest that this may once have formed a gable at the north end of the hall. The remaining trusses are of a different form, and were specifically designed to connect the Guildhall to the west tower of the chapel, the stringcourses of which were cut back to accommodate them. It seems likely that in the early 1420s, when construction work was under way on the Hall, this area accommodated some form of stair. In 1427/8, the accounts refer to works to 'le stayr', located between the chamber of John Palmer, chaplain, and the new hall.[27] Not long afterwards the northern room was rebuilt, to complete the Guildhall range.

25 Arnold et al., 'Guildhall Complex', p. 26.

26 This distinction can be found in the Guild accounts as early as 1440/1 (SCLA BRT 1/3/49), when payments for cleaning refer to the 'aulae supra' and the 'aulae inferioris'.

27 SCLA BRT 1/3/38.

The Lower Hall

The lower Hall appears archaeologically to have been completed in a single campaign of building, although it has been extensively altered over time. The sequence of construction is indicated by a series of carpenters' marks, preserved internally at the juncture of the principal posts of the lower Hall and on a series of curved brackets which support its ceiling (Plate 4). They are particularly visible on the east side of the Hall. The post immediately to the south of the passageway is marked with a II (externally and internally), and those in the remainder of the Hall are marked with a III, IV and V. The first and last (sixth) posts are obscured, but the series clearly indicates a construction sequence running north to south. However, there is no evidence for a major construction break between the third and fourth bays of the lower Hall, which Puddephat suggested was the original termination of the building.

The lower Hall preserves relatively little information about its original form or subdivision (Fig. 7.6). The west and east elevations have been heavily restored, but interestingly the west elevation contains no evidence for the original fenestration of the building. This might suggest either that there was very little, or that the windows in the west elevation were very small, and designed to accommodate a flexible use of the interior space. The east wall has also been much altered. A series of fillets in the wall plate at the northern end of the lower Hall, and surviving peg holes adjacent to the position of the current door to the nineteenth-century stair, may indicate the position of former windows in this elevation. However, the best-preserved section of this wall is at its southern end. Here, there is an ogival-headed, fifteenth-century doorway which originally provided access to the South Wing. Adjacent to it is a series of five studs, now open, but retaining grooves for infill panels which would have formed a partition wall. The studs also preserve evidence of an early decorative scheme consisting of a reddish background with stylised roses, while the door is decorated with a chevron design. Above the door are the remains of another, later decorative scheme of scrollwork patterning, possibly dating to the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

The south wall is the most intact elevation in the lower Hall. It is close-studded, with arch braces curving up from the sole plate to the corner posts. During the nineteenth century, restoration works uncovered an important decorative scheme in the five sections of plaster in the centre of the elevation (Plate 5).[28] In the centre is a crucifixion, flanked by figures interpreted as the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist, reflecting the devotional foci of the Guild. Behind the crucifixion more recent analysis has also revealed the figure of God, extending over the adjacent struts. Either side of these figures

28 L. Watkins, *The Story of Shakespeare's School* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1953), p. 38; J. Rutherfoord, 'The Guildhall, King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon. Analytical Survey and Proposals for the Conservation of the 15th-century Wall Paintings and Polychromy' (unpublished report, 2004).

7.6 The interior of the 'Lower Hall', looking south. © FAS Heritage.

are coats of arms. On the left is the royal coat of arms (England quartered with France) and on the right the arms of the Despencer family (possibly Henry de Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, who died in 1445). To the left of the elevation there is an original fifteenth-century window, now obscured by the wall of the almshouse to the south. At the base of the wall, hidden by a modern platform, are a series of mortices indicating the position of an original platform of some kind at this end of the Hall.

So what was the function of the lower Hall? In 1424/5 the Guild accounts record payments to Sir Thomas Burdet knight 'pro ratificatione of the chapel in the hall of the said Guild newly-built'.[29] The entry also refers to payments for bread and wine, and for 'rings', 'le wyre', 'hemyng' and a 'torch', suggesting the fitting out of an altar with curtains and a substantial light. This entry, often overlooked by previous scholars,[30] suggests strongly that the south end of the lower Hall was a small chapel, a feature common to many Guildhalls, even those located in close proximity to the adjacent chapels or churches, as at Stratford. The paintings would have formed a reredos for the altar, which was raised on a small platform, with mortices into the sole plate. Although Puddephat believed that the window was a squint *into* the chapel from the surviving early almshouse beyond, this seems unlikely.[31] Rather, it suggests that, when completed, there was some open

29 SCLA BRT 1/3/35.

30 But not by Puddephat, see SCLA DR 624/1. The mention of a 'torch' probably refers to a portable large light, on or near the altar.

31 Puddephat acknowledged that the levels between the two buildings would have made this difficult and required the construction of a step or platform in the almshouse/infill house to facilitate it.

7.7 The roof trusses in the 'Upper Hall' looking north. © FAS Heritage.

ground or space to the south of the lower Hall, through which light could fall to illuminate the altar. The completion of the 'infill' house subsequently prevented this window from being used. Other rooms recorded in the accounts of 1427/8 which may have been accommodated within this space include the 'parlour' for the chaplains, which was tiled.[32]

The Upper Hall

Although no carpenters' marks were found in the upper Hall to confirm the sequence established at ground-floor level, it nonetheless preserves sufficient archaeological evidence to hypothesise about its original form and function.[33] The roof trusses are carried on a series of principal posts, which subdivided the hall into five bays (Plate 6, see also Fig. 8.3). The first, fourth, fifth and sixth trusses consist of a tie beam and a collar, between which are a series of posts forming a rectilinear pattern; three above the collar and five below. The first and sixth trusses are closed, forming the gable ends of the Hall. The fourth and fifth are not, but retain grooves along their length, indicating that these, too, were once closed trusses, infilled with wattle or daub panels. In contrast, the second and third trusses in the Hall have always been open. They are of a Queen post form, with additional central posts and braces to the collar (Fig. 7.7).

32 SCLA BRT 1/3/38.
33 Clark and Giles, *Conservation Management Plan*, vol. 2, pp. 61–5.

Guildhalls were modelled on contemporary domestic halls, and usually incorporated a hierarchy in their design, with a 'low' service end, accommodating services such as a buttery and pantry, and a 'high' dais end, where the master and wardens of the Guild would sit during business meetings and feasts.[34] Puddephat argued that the 'high' end of the Guildhall in Phase I of its construction was in bay 3 of the Hall. Further, he suggested that the dais was framed by a Rood (see Fig. 7.4), indicated by a payment of 5*s*. in the accounts of 1406–08 for the cleaning of images in the Guildhall.[35] However, Puddephat failed to observe the evidence of further grooves, empty peg holes and traces of plaster, which indicate the presence of a longitudinal partition, extending from the fourth truss to the south gable end of the Hall. This partition, which was clearly an early feature of the upper Hall, effectively created a corridor along the eastern side of the Hall's southern end. Moreover, the lower face of the fifth truss also preserves evidence for a partition below its tie beam, suggesting that this area of the hall was subdivided into two rooms.

This evidence strongly suggests that the southern end of the Guildhall was, in fact, its lower end, containing a buttery and pantry accommodated within the two partitioned service rooms and a corridor providing access to both. The corridor also provided access to the South Wing, through an original door accommodated in the design of the southern bay of the east wall. This interpretation may help to explain some of the features in the south gable end. This wall has close studding similar to that on the south wall of the lower Hall, with arch braces from the sill beam to the principal corner posts. However, the eastern arch brace has been omitted to accommodate a small doorway. This may well have been the 'privey' for which a catch was purchased in 1445/6.[36] To the west of the privy door are two short timbers, which may indicate the position of a former window, designed to illuminate the southern service room. Interestingly, these features are mirrored in the north end of the Hall. Here, there is a more substantial door, which may have provided direct access from the high (dais) end to the stair beyond.[37] To the west of the doorway is another pair of horizontal rails, which might, once again, indicate the position of a former window in this elevation.[38]

Before analysing the relationship between the Hall and the South Wing, it is also worth considering the west and east walls of the upper Hall. Both of these are characterised by close studding, and although many of the full-length studs have been replaced, those below the windows appear

34 K. Giles, *An Archaeology of Social Identity: Guildhalls in York c. 1350–1630*, British Archaeological Reports 315 (2000), pp. 63–4; K. Giles, 'Guildhalls: A short contribution', in M. Carver, *The Archaeology of Medieval Europe* (Aarhus, 2011), pp. 396–9.

35 SCLA DR 624/1, p. 13–14; BRT 1/3/20.

36 SCLA BRT 1/3/52.

37 This room has been referred to in recent years as 'The Museum Room'.

38 Puddephat thought this was the 'low' end of the hall and therefore interpreted this as a possible serving hatch, accessed from the stair beyond.

original. These studs contain a series of peg holes which, although they vary in height across the elevation, are consistent within each bay. It is possible that the pegs relate to the position of brackets for projecting oriel windows. However, they may also relate to features such as benches, running under the windows along both walls of the upper hall.[39]

The South Wing

The South Wing is a two-storeyed, two-bay structure which connects directly with the lower and upper Halls, extending eastwards towards the Pedagogue's House (Fig. 7.8). Only two of the three external elevations of the building are now visible, with the third concealed by a stair and 'muniment room' to the south. Although extensively restored, the east elevation preserves the form of the original, characterised once more by close studding. The lowest row of studs is pegged onto the sole plate and girding beam, and the upper row between the girding beam and the tie beam. There are inserted windows at both ground and first-floor level, but early illustrations suggest that there were originally two smaller windows in the lower part of the elevation. The north elevation is also characterised by close studding, and features a blocked window at ground-floor level. Pre-restoration photographs indicate the presence of a roof scar, running along the elevation to the top of the upper storey, indicating the presence of a former structure or building abutting this elevation.

Internally, the South Wing contains important evidence for its stratigraphic relationship to the Guildhall. As noted above, the west wall of the South Wing features a now-open partition wall abutting the south end of the lower hall. The section of ceiling between the west wall and first principal post of the South Wing is now plastered, but the lower height of the ceiling of the South Wing suggests that the present-day jetty originally continued along this section of the east elevation of the Guildhall (Fig. 7.9). The northern post of the doorway, one of the principal posts of the lower hall, also contains a bracket identical to those between the posts and jetty further north, again suggesting that when the Guildhall was designed, no provision was made for the abutment of the South Wing. This is supported by the timber-frame structure of the South Wing, which abuts the Guildhall at several points, indicating it was completed after the initial phase of construction.

However, other evidence indicates that the South Wing was added almost immediately to the complex. Dendrochronological dating of the timbers suggests that the timbers of the Guildhall and South Wing were probably cut in a single programme of felling, and were probably derived

39 Such benches might have been a feature of the Guildhall, or its later use as a courtroom or school. Clark and Giles, *Conservation Management Plan*, vol. 2, p. 63.

7.8 The exterior of the 'South Wing', east elevation. © FAS Heritage.

from the same woodland source.[40] There are also important similarities in the form of the truss associated with the principal posts in the upper floor of the South Wing and the Guildhall. This consists of a cambered tiebeam, with a Queen Post rising to a collar. The purlins are clasped by the common rafters and by curved wind braces which rise from the wall plate either side of the principal rafters at both gable ends (Plate 7). Originally, the roof of the South Wing was intended to be seen from below, and surviving paintings in the west gable end of the upper floor suggest

40 Arnold et al., 'Guildhall Complex', p. 4.

that it remained so at least until the end of the fifteenth century. During the sixteenth century, a ceiling composed of squared panels, supported by an additional transverse and bridging beam, was inserted.[41] The east wall of both the ground and first floors of the South Wing is a restoration, and it is possible that the range originally continued further east, towards the Pedagogue's House.[42]

The archaeological evidence of the South Wing therefore further challenges Puddephat's interpretation of the sequence of the Guildhall's construction. The South Wing looks less like Leeke's freestanding domestic building and more like a two-storeyed wing designed as a swift afterthought to the Guildhall itself. If so, Leeke may well have been behind the design, for the South Wing appears to have been intended from the outset as a 'counting' or council house – a meeting room for the elite of the medieval Guild. The archaeological evidence supports this hypothesis. At ground-floor level, the south wall is close-studded and contains evidence for two inserted features. To the west is a doorway, inserted in the position of a former stud whose position is indicated by an empty peg hole. The principal post adjacent to the doorway has also been cut back to accommodate this feature. However, the form of the door is consistent with a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century date, and so this appears to have been an early alteration to the room. Much of the eastern bay of the south wall at both ground and first-floor levels is occupied by a large fireplace of dressed stone. On the ground floor, the sole plate running along this elevation has been cut to accommodate the fireplace, indicating that it was an insertion. However, it preserves a hollow moulding on the inner edge of its surround, which is consistent with a fifteenth-century date. Circular depressions on either side of the upper edge may indicate the position of brackets to support an original plaster hood or to serve as lamp brackets. The north wall of the ground floor originally contained a single window, but was subsequently covered by seventeenth-century wainscot. At first-floor level there is also evidence for an early window in the north wall, as well as an early decorative scheme composed of armorial shields. It is not clear whether these are contemporary with the late fifteenth-century paintings in the west gable end, or whether they too date to the early modern period.

Although the construction of the Guild's counting house is not recorded in the documents, in 1427/8 the accounts record the construction of two chimneys, one serving 'the Cowntynhows', and the other in the chamber above, 'where Master John Harrys now lies'.[43] In 1430/1, two carpenters were hired for three days to make the tables and the doors of the pantry as well as a 'basyngbord', dressers, 'scanna' and 'shelfes' in the counting house and the pantry.[44] These references might explain the function of the doorway at

41 This was removed during nineteenth-century restorations.
42 This extension, if built, must have been removed prior to 1847, when early photographs show the South Wing in its present form.
43 SCLA BRT 1/3/38.
44 SCLA BRT 1/3/40.

the west end of the south elevation of the counting house, which provides access to a stair and a two-storey building with substantial fireplaces at both ground and first floor levels, which appear to have been designed for cooking rather than simply heating. The ground floor of this adjacent building may have functioned as some form of pantry and kitchen, with further chambers abutting the first-floor chamber of the South Wing.

After the dissolution of the Guild, it appears that Stratford's early modern Corporation simply appropriated the former counting house as a 'councell chambur' for their meetings. The Orders of the Chamber, made on 29 September 1557, note that

> there be ones euery monethe yn ye yere at ye least a hall to be kept in the Councell chambur at whuche Hall the belyf aldermen and capytall burgeses shalbe to commen & consoult to gether of thynges nessesary & to redress thos thynges that shall forten to be enormyd and out of ordor & yt euery alderman & Capytall burgesez be then & ther present vnder the peyne to forfet euery offender vjs viijd …[45]

The records indicate that although the Corporation was meeting in the former counting house, like their Guild predecessors they used the term 'hall' to describe their governing body, appropriating both the physical space of the Guildhall and the ancient authority of the Guild to reinforce their new political status.[46] Throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the accounts record expenditure on the fittings and fixtures of the council chamber, including a 'foote stoole' purchased for the bailiff in 1581/2,[47] and benches which were repaired in 1608/9.[48] In 1614/15 payments were made to 'Henry Abel, for wainscote set up in the Council Chamber', at which time the chamber was also painted and the ceiling whitewashed.[49] The accounts also record payments for staples, hinges, locks, keys and other door furniture. Great emphasis was clearly placed on the secrecy of matters discussed within the council chamber:

> Fromhensfurthe non of ye aldermen nor Capytall Burgesez do dysclos nor declare furthe of ye Councell chamber eny wordes or dedes spoken or done in the Councell chambur vnto eny other persones but only vnto thos persones yt be of the Councell vnder ye payne of euery person so offendynge to forfet for the fyrst defalt and pay to ye chamber v*li* – for the Second defalt x*li* – & for the thyrd defalt to be expulsed and after yt neuer not to be exceptyd nor to be taken to be of the Councell'.[50]

45 Fripp et al., *MA* vol. 1, p. 64.

46 Tittler has identified this as a common linguistic convention whereby the term was used as a shorthand reference to the authority of the governing bodies utilising these buildings: R. Tittler, *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community, c. 1500–1640* (Oxford, 1991), p. 97.

47 *MA* vol. 3, p. 98.

48 SCLA BRU 4/1 f.196.

49 SCLA BRU 4/1 f.281. This is likely to be the wainscot preserved on the north wall of the ground floor.

50 *MA* vol. 1, p. 64.

7.9 The roof of the first floor of the 'South Wing'. © FAS Heritage.

Chests were also purchased, presumably for the storage of documents and other Corporation regalia. In 1563/4 a key was purchased for a chest, and in 1585/6, 5*s*. rent was received 'for one other chamber next to the scole where now the chest dothe stand'.[51] In 1605, 25*s*. was paid for 'a coffer with furniture', and in 1613, 1*d*. was spent on beer, 'when the great cheste was removed into the chamber over the counsel house'.[52] It is not certain whether the council chamber also functioned as a 'court house', or whether the court functions described elsewhere in this volume were accommodated within the Guildhall itself. In 1570/1, 1571/2 and 1574/5 there were substantial repairs to the 'court house', involving tiling, 'ground sillinge' and 'plasteringe', and the 'dressinge of whood in the chamber'.[53]

The function of the upper floor of the South Wing is also unclear. It was heated, and as we have noted, and decorated with both late-fifteenth- and possibly sixteenth- or seventeenth-century decorations. During the medieval period it may simply have functioned as an additional chamber. By the late sixteenth century, it may also have been used as a 'harness' or 'armour' chamber. In the 1570s there are references to the making of racks for the storage of guns, and in 1579/80 William Evans was paid for sorting and hanging up the armour, including the 'George armour', and scouring swords

51 *MA* vol. 1, p. 127, vol. 3, p. 164. The chest was identified by Savage as that which survives in the New Place Museum.
52 SCLA BRU4/1 f.142; BRU 4/1 f.248.
53 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 48, 59, 105.

and mending 'caleuers'.[54] From this date onwards, the 'chamber where the Armour hangeth' or 'harness chamber' is mentioned regularly, often by the chamberlains who petitioned to be exonerated for it, for the sum of 5*s*. This suggests that the room may always have had a dual function – as storage facility and as a space which could be let to the right tenant. In 1585/6 it was let to Robert Coxe, who both paid the 5*s*. rent and provided the Corporation with a 'Corselett furnyshed'.[55] In 1612–13 the armoury was still located in this chamber, when Henrie Bloome was paid 2*s*. 4*d*. 'for removeing, oileing and setting up the armour in the Chamber over the Counsell hose', and the same account refers to the relocation of the 'great chest' into this chamber. Payments of 2*d*. made on the same day refer to the cleaning of the armour chamber and an associated 'cockloft', which may well be the attic space above the inserted ceiling.[56]

The Pedagogue's House, Almshouses, Chambers and the School

1. The Pedagogue's House

The Pedagogue's House is a two-storey range, running north–south along the eastern edge of the Guildhall complex (Fig. 7.10). There is some evidence to suggest that originally the Pedagogue's House abutted or extended into a further timber-framed range to the north, on the site of the surviving eighteenth-century Old Vicarage. The exterior of the building has been extensively restored, but originally was characterised by the close studding found in the other Guild buildings, with the exception of the porch, which features square-panelled framing. The fenestration of some of the elevations can be reconstructed. The northern section of the west elevation contains a three-light window at first-floor level, and a small, blocked window at ground-floor level adjacent to the modern doorway. The north and west elevations of the porch contain evidence of former doorways, which probably provided access to an open lobby, lit by now-blocked windows. Although the porch has been extensively restored, surviving evidence in its south elevation indicates that originally it contained three-light windows at both ground and first-floor level, the former roughly central but the latter slightly offset to the east.

Internally, the building is divided into a northern and southern range, separated by a porch to the west, which now houses a staircase (Plate 8). Originally, the archaeological evidence suggests that there was only one room to the north of the range, roughly in the same location as the current open ground-floor corridor and northern room. Although the northern range

54 *MA* vol. 3, p. 45. A 'caleuer' or 'caliver' was an early form of hand gun. The 'George armour' was presumably the costume of St George, originally used in the Guild pageant and subsequently requisitioned as part of the civic armour.

55 *MA* vol. 3, pp. 84, 164, 171.

56 SCLA BRU 4/1, f.248.

7.10 The western façade of the 'Pedagogue's House'. © FAS Heritage.

is currently two-storeyed, the floor is a later insertion, and two surviving Queen Posts in the upper chamber indicate that this was once an open hall (Fig. 7.11). The room to the south, however, was always two-storeyed. At ground-floor level there is an original ceiling, formed by transverse joists resting on tie beams. At first-floor level the southern gable preserves an original truss, which consists of close studding used between the tie beam and collar and between the collar and the rafters, with clasped purlins supporting the common rafters and curved wind braces running from the principal rafters to the purlins (Fig. 7.12). A third room appears to have been located in the porch, originally accessed by a short corridor running south from the entrance.

Traditionally, the Pedagogue's House was so named because it was believed to be the 'Scolehowus', whose construction was detailed in the accounts of Hugh Salford, Master of the Guild in 1427/8. The accounts indicate that the school was on the ground floor of this building, with a chamber above. They also refer to repairing the 'new parlur', although it is not clear whether this formed part of the school complex.[57] However, this interpretation has been challenged by the dendrochronological dating of the existing building, which firmly indicates a felling date of 1502.[58] This date is significant, because it coincides with the will of the Stratford merchant Thommas (or Thomas) Hannys, which was made in 1502, proved in 1503, and is discussed by Mairi Macdonald earlier in this volume.[59] Hannys's will made provision for the rebuilding of the Guild's

57 SCLA BRT 1/3/38.
58 Arnold et al., 'Guildhall Complex', p. 5.
59 See Chapter 1, pp. 25–6, in this volume.

7.11 The roof of the hall in the 'Pedagogue's House'. © FAS Heritage.

almshouses, including the construction of a hall, parlour, buttery, kitchen and oratory. Although he envisaged these buildings being constructed to a courtyard design, it seems possible that his designs were altered during construction.[60] The Pedagogue's House can therefore be tentatively identified as the hall and parlour of the almshouses, rather than as the schoolhouse of 1427. The re-analysis of the Pedagogue's House therefore has important implications for the analysis of the current Almshouses, and for discussions of the school.

2. *The Almshouses*

Although the Almshouses have not yet been subject to a systematic archaeological analysis or dendrochronological dating, their structure and appearance are consistent with an early sixteenth-century date. The Almshouses are contained within a two-storeyed, timber-framed range running north–south along Church Street. Once again, the range has a stone plinth, and is characterised by close studding and a jettied first floor supported by braces rising from the principal posts. Nine of the ten almshouses share a common structure and plan, in which a pair of doors is set adjacent to each other, providing access to single-bay ground floors which are a mirror image of each other. At the other end of each of these

60 The National Archives (TNA), PROB 11/13. Hannys's will anticipates this, suggesting that the Almshouses be built 'moche after the patron and forme of a platt therefore drawen by me and hereunto annexed. Or as better wise if they can devise and order hit'.

7.12 The ceiling in the parlour of the 'Pedagogue's House'. © FAS Heritage.

pairs is a large chimney stack, set back-to-back with the stack of the adjacent building. A tiled roof runs the full length of the Almshouses. However, the northernmost almshouse is of a slightly different construction (Fig. 7.13). Structurally, it abuts, and is therefore later than, the Guildhall. For this reason it has often been referred to as 'the infill house'. Its relationship with the remaining almshouses is less clear. They appear to abut the infill house itself, suggesting that they may have been constructed at a slightly later date than both it and the Guildhall.

What is the date and function of this 'infill' building? According to Puddephat, it was the surviving example of the three almshouses rebuilt after a fire in 1411–1417. However, an alternative and more arresting interpretation has recently been proposed by Robert Bearman.[61] It is possible to trace the history of the 'infill house' from 1555, when a chamber occupied by the schoolmaster, William Dalam, is described as being 'the chamber next the house or hall lately called the guild hall'.[62] By January 1567/8, Robert Hall had taken over its lease, paying 5*s*. rent for half a year for a tenement 'some time imployed to a schole house'. The precise location of this building is revealed in March of the same year, when it is recorded that Robert Hall leased for 21 years, at a cost of 10*s*. a year, a 'house in Church Street, commonly called the old school with chamber over'.[63] It can therefore be proposed that the 'infill house' is in fact the schoolhouse

61 We are extremely grateful to Robert Bearman for sharing these ideas with us. See also pp. 81–2.
62 *MA* vol. 1, p. lvi.
63 SCLA BRU 8/5/5.

7.13 The 'infill' almshouse at its point of juncture with the Guildhall. © William Mulryne.

of 1427/8, providing a school at ground-floor level with a schoolmaster's chamber above. This helps to explain the wording of Hannys's will of 1502, which describes the 'newe building and setyng up of the almeshouses… adjoining next unto the Scolehowse'. Further evidence to support this hypothesis has recently been provided by dendrochronological dating of the infill house, which suggests a felling date of 1425. Like the South Wing, this building therefore seems to have structurally post-dated the Guildhall, but to have been constructed only shortly afterwards, using the same source of timber.[64] These ideas raise a series of further questions about the date and construction of the Almshouses, and about the location of the school after it moved from the infill house in the 1560s.

3. The School

By the 1560s, it is clear that Stratford's small grammar school had outgrown its existing premises. In 1565/6 the Schoolmaster, John Brownsword, gave 12*d*. towards the 'makynge' of a new school, and the Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of that year record extensive expenditure on tiles, laths, nails, pins, eaves poles and the carriage of four loads of timber to the site for work on the chapel, the school and tiling the

64 Arnold and Howard, '"Infill" Building', p. 5.

schoolmaster's house.[65] However, it seems likely that rather than building a new structure, the Corporation simply converted an existing building into a larger schoolroom.[66] That this space was being enlarged is suggested by references to the removal of a 'Soller over the Scole' at a cost of 12*d.* in 1567/8.[67] However, locating the new school precisely is difficult, partly because of the variety of terms in the records used to describe the 'school', including 'schoolhouse', 'schoolroom' and 'schoolmaster's chamber'. The school was certainly located at first-floor level, since repairs were made to the school stairs in 1615 and again in 1623.[68] Previous scholars have concluded that it was probably accommodated in the upper Hall of the Guildhall. Initially perhaps, it could have been located in the former service rooms at the low end of the Guildhall. This might well explain references to the removal of the ceiling in 1567/8. However, this could not have provided the school with a much larger space and it may have spread quickly into the remainder of the upper hall, where it was certainly located by the eighteenth century.[69]

Throughout the early seventeenth century there are records of repairs to the roof, floors and studding of the school.[70] Some form of heating was also provided in 1586/7, when three score bricks were purchased 'for makinge of the harthe in the schoole howse'.[71] Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the presence of schoolboys, many of the repairs related to the mending of the schoolhouse windows, and for 'covering and liming of the walls'.[72] The security of the schoolhouse was also of concern. In 1579/80, 6*d*. was spent on mending the lock and making a key for the 'schole howse dore'. A lock and staple for the 'little dore next to the scole howse dore' were also provided at the same time.[73] There must have been items of value stored in the school such as, later, the books given in 1625, for which some form of shelving may have been provided in 1630.[74] Finally, it is worth highlighting the close relationship in the accounts, and perhaps in physical terms too, between the school, schoolhouse and the 'Gylde kytchyn' from which, in 1567–8, a chimney was removed and sold to John Sadler for the impressive sum of 3*li* 10s.[75] If, as proposed above, the Guild kitchen was located in the building containing large chimney stacks abutting the South Wing, then this might provide further support for the location of the school within the upper Hall.

65 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 150–51.
66 In 1634, the Rev. Thomas Wilson complained that the Corporation had neglected to build a new school, despite the order of the King: *MA* vol. 1, p. lvi, and p. 19.
67 *MA* vol. 2, p. 10.
68 SCLA BRU 4/1, f.280; BRU 4/2, ff.7–8.
69 The present desks in the hall date to this period.
70 SCLA BRU 4/1, f.127, f.173, f.198; BRU 4/2, f.6; *MA* vol. 2, p. 77.
71 *MA* vol. 4, p. 17.
72 SCLA BRU 4/2, f.15, f.56, f.75. One window appears to have been a dormer: BRU 4/1, f.248.
73 *MA* vol. 3, pp. 48–9.
74 SCLA BRU 4/2, f.15, f.56.
75 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 7–10.

Shakespeare's Guildhall

Other chapters in this volume consider in detail the role of the Guildhall as a venue for court hearings, civic events and travelling companies of players. The building itself continued to be maintained throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. Floors received regular attention, and it is clear that some form of dais, or raised area for the Corporation elite, was retained, probably at the northern end of the upper Hall. In 1574/5 a series of entries record payments for 'bordes', nails and workmanship 'to repaire the yeld haule', and the sum of 3*d*. paid to 'besell' for 'pavinge wtin the yeld haule where the masters sitt'.[76] As evidenced by the surviving decorative scheme, the walls were painted or part painted. In 1588/9, chalk, clay and ochre to the value of 4*s*. 7*d*. were used 'abowt the gilde Hall'.[77] The glazing and heating of the Guildhall were also the focus of expenditure. Somewhere in the upper Hall, perhaps associated with the dais, was the 'Chequer wyndo' within which eleven-and-a-half feet of glass were set up, at a cost of 5*s*. 6*d*. in 1587/8.[78] In 1610, 9*d*. was given 'To Bray for planeing the bourdes in the hall window, for a hatch and two catches', 12*s*. to 'the Glasier for xxv foote and a halfe of glasse, and dressing two payns' and a further 4*s*. for 'vij foot and iij quarter of glasse'. The following year, a scaffold was erected and a window constructed with a 'cap' and four 'pillars', suggesting perhaps that the former oriel window was being enhanced. A glazier was then paid 11*s*. 6*d*. for 'glasing the windowes conteineing xxvij foot and ix perches'.[79] At the same time, new chimneys seem to have been inserted into the hall. A feature described as a 'kyll' (kiln) was removed, while poles 'to lay in the chimneys' were purchased, together with two pieces of elm to make four 'mantletrees' and brick for the chimneys themselves. The sum of 4*d*. was spent on beer 'at the proveinge of the new chymnys' and 6*lb* of red ochre was purchased for the chimneys, suggesting they too may have been sized and painted. The Guildhall was also decorated with hangings such as the 'painted shete' nailed in the Guildhall in 1603–4, and the cloth painted at the hall in 1618–19.[80] There was also undoubtedly other furniture in the Hall, including benches. In 1581/2, 11*d*. was spent on 'the plancke to make the new forme in the Halle' and 6*d*. 'for the feete and the making', as well as 2*d*. for 'the foote stoole yt Mr bayliff standeth on'.[81] The records suggest that the hall continued to be a flexible space, used for a variety of ceremonial, judicial and educational functions throughout the later part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This raises interesting questions about how the Hall was also used by travelling companies of players, whose performances are considered by other contributors to this volume.

76 *MA* vol. 2, p. 98. Fripp, however, presumed that these repairs were to the former 'counting house' in the South Wing.
77 *MA* vol. 4, p. 56.
78 *MA* vol. 4, p. 32. The 'chequer' window was probably a prominent, projecting window, subdivided into small panes of glass, which may have been alternately coloured.
79 SCLA BRU 4/1, f.212, ff.224–225.
80 SCLA BRU 4/1, f.127; BRU4/1, f.322.
81 *MA* vol. 3, p. 98.

Chambers

Before turning to the Guild Chapel, it is finally worth considering a range of other buildings within the complex. From 1562 onwards, the Corporation rent rolls record the receipt of rents for a series of tenements described as 'chamburs in chappell'.[82] In 1562/3 there were five chambers, including one rented to Robert Hall the mason, for the sum of 4*d*.[83] However, by 1567/8, as noted above, Hall had moved into the old schoolhouse. In 1569/70 rents from four chambers are recorded, including the substantial sum of 10*s*. received from Richard Burford, and 5*s*. from Thomas Mylner for 'A howse within the chapell'.[84] In 1570/1 Richard Binford (sic) was paying 10*s*. for his 'inhabitacion within the chapell', together with Richard Simmons, the town clerk paying 6*s*. 8*d*. 'for a chamber their' and 'lampsons' wif' who paid only 6*d*. for a quarter's rent 'of a chamber' there.[85] Burford and Simmons were still in residence in 1571/2. However, in 1572/3, Simmons appears to have been replaced by 'edward tiler', who paid 5*s*. 8*d*. for 'on quarters rent of a rome of howsinge within the chapell', together with Burford, still paying 10*s*. 'for his inhabitacon wthin the chapel', William Rawbone paying 5*s*. 'for a chamber rome in the chapell' and John Salisburie paying 3*s*. 9*d*. for three-quarters of a year's rent for 'a chamber that [he] … holdethe their'. In 1573/4, Rawbone and Burford were still in residence, while Tiler had expanded his rents, paying the substantial sum of 25*s*. 8*d*. for 'certene Romes of howsing within the chapell'.[86]

The chamberlains were less successful at obtaining rent from the schoolmasters' chamber and petitioned 'to bee exonerated' for the 10*s*. owed for 'Mr Jenkins howse' in 1580/81, 'Mr Cottams Chamber' in 1581/2, and for 'Mr Aspinall the Schoolemasters Chamber' in 1582/3.[87] William Rawbone was still leasing a chamber in 1580/81, although for the lower sum of 15*d*.[88] In 1590, the separate tenancies of the 'chambers in the chapel' appear to come to an end, when Aspinall agreed to lease for his step-daughter Anne Shaw and son-in-law Henry Smith the

> tenemente & romes of howsinge scituate and beinge within the chappell yarde withe the cole howsse and garden thereunto adjoyned which late were in the tenure or occupation of Edward Tyler & Burford wydo.[89]

Aspinall himself appears to have moved, either into the chamber/armoury over the council house or, more likely, a chamber in the adjacent former kitchen range. In 1599, a survey of Corporation property including the old

82 Although Fripp presumed these were simply located within the vicinity of the chapel, it is possible that they were partly located within the Chapel itself. This hypothesis is further discussed below.
83 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 120–21.
84 *MA* vol. 2, p. 33.
85 *MA* vol. 2, p. 44.
86 *MA* vol. 2, pp. 56, 67, 74.
87 *MA* vol. 3, pp. 84, 98, 120.
88 *MA* vol. 3, p. 84.
89 SCLA BRU 15/3/8.

schoolhouse, let to Robert Mason, noted that 'the backside wanted much tilinge, a gutter there hurteth a principall coller poste of Master Aspinall's study and rotteth his own house sill'.[90] This appears to be an exact description of the structural relationship between the 'infill house' and the chamber at first-floor level, over the old Guild kitchen abutting the South Wing. By 1612/13, Henry and Anne Smith had been replaced by the vicar, Rogers, and the 'chamber over our council chamber where Mr Aspinall dwelled' was let to Richard Williams, and the following year to the curates Edward Wilmore and Richard Watts, together with 'studies in the same'.[91]

The Guild Chapel

The chapel is located at the corner of Chapel Lane and Church Street. It is built of squared sandstone and, although it has been heavily restored, retains substantial evidence of its fifteenth-century appearance. It consists of a four-bay nave with a western tower, a low, two-bay chancel and a north porch. The nave has a deep plinth, offset and diagonal buttresses and a crenellated parapet. Each bay contains a four-light, transomed window with Perpendicular tracery. There is a small further entrance in the south wall which links the Chapel to the Guildhall complex. The main entrance is via a door with a four-centred head within the gabled north porch. This has an ogival hood with tracery panel, crocketted pinnacles and a central niche with a nodding ogee head. The west tower rises in three stages, has diagonal buttresses, string courses and a crenellated parapet with pinnacles at each corner. There is also a west door with a four-centred arched head above which is a tall, three-light transomed west window with Perpendicular masonry and in its final stage, two-light louvred belfry openings. There is a clock on the north face below which is a shield in a panel bearing the Clopton arms. The low chancel has an east window of five cusped lights under a four-centred arch. There are similar pairs of windows in the north and south wall and a further door in the south wall. The interior of the chapel is divided into two principal spaces: the nave and the chancel (Plate 9). The nave has an early nineteenth-century coved plaster ceiling and flagged floors. Most of the walls are whitewashed. The chapel was extensively restored in 1804, when the roof was replaced and the present coved ceiling was introduced, the plaster stripped from many of the walls, and a new gallery and organ inserted at the western end. Further restoration work was carried out in the 1950s, when extensive restoration was undertaken by S.E. Dykes Bower.[92]

90 SCLA BRU 15/12/54, p. 6.
91 SCLA BRU 2/2, ff.220, 242.
92 SCLA DR 624/33 includes copies of S.E. Dykes Bower's reports on the chapel; SCLA DR 409/6/3–41 preserves photographs of the restoration of the chapel in 1955.

Although the Guild's return of 1388/9 makes no mention of a chapel, it is likely that one had been established by this date, and the chancel certainly contains fragments of thirteenth-century fabric, which informed Puddephat's reconstruction of the Guild's early oratory and infirmary.[93] There are records for the refurbishment and consecration of parts of the chapel in 1427/8.[94] The chancel was rebuilt from 1449/50, when rafters and a scaffold were purchased.[95] The following year gifts were received from two of the chaplains for the building of a new chancel, and further bequests followed in 1451/2.[96] The accounts also record expenditure on stone from quarries at Warwick, Rownton and Drayton, slate and glazing, including a window dedicated to St Martin. The chancel was consecrated in 1452/3, but work on the roof and floor tiling continued into 1453/4.[97] Repairs were also made in 1494/5, and 1495/6, which included the construction of a wall, repairs to the font, the soldering of a candelabrum, and the clock.[98]

Traditionally, it has been assumed that the site of the present nave was occupied by an early infirmary and 'rodehall' until 1496, when the wealthy Stratford and London merchant and alderman Hugh Clopton left money in his will to the mason, William Dowland, for the 'belding and setting up of the Chapell of the holy Trinitie … and the Towre of a Steple to the same'.[99] Clopton's contribution to the reconstruction of the chapel was also recorded by the sixteenth-century antiquarian, John Leland.[100] Unfortunately, the Masters' and Proctors' accounts do not survive for the period 1496–1498, but the relative absence of references to the construction of the nave in the Guild accounts seems to support the traditional hypothesis. Although Clopton's reference to the dedication of the chapel to the Holy Trinity might seem puzzling, it is telling that in the Masters' and Proctors' accounts for 1495/6, the Master, Richard Buggy, describes himself as 'Master of the Guild of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Mary the Virgin and S John the Baptist', a variation of the title not found anywhere else in the Guild accounts, indicating an intention to re-dedicate the Guild to the Holy Trinity at this date.[101] The executors of Clopton's will included his friend, Thomas Hannys, and it seems likely that Hannys played a crucial role in rebuilding the nave, before imitating Clopton's generous gesture in his own vision for the rebuilding of the Almshouses some six years later.

93 See footnote 13 for the location of Puddephat's notes.
94 SCLA BRT 1/3/38.
95 SCLA BRT 1/3/55.
96 SCLA BRT 1/3/56; BRT 1/3/58.
97 SCLA BRT 1/3/59; BRT 1/3/60.
98 SCLA BRT 1/3/103; BRT 1/3/105.
99 TNA PROB/11/11.
100 Toulmin Smith, *The Itinerary*, p. 27. From 1483 onwards, Clopton also rebuilt the house opposite the chapel, which became known as New Place, subsequently purchased by William Shakespeare and excavated by Halliwell and more recently by Birmingham University Archaeology Unit.
101 SCLA DR 624/13(ii); SCLA BRT 1/3/105.

7.14 Thomas Fisher's drawings of the Holy Cross sequence in the chapel, reconstructed within the chapel by Heritage Technology Ltd. © Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, reproduced with permission of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

The Chapel Paintings

In 1804, restoration works uncovered a series of wall paintings on the walls of the chancel, nave and west wall of the chapel. They were described, as noted, by the antiquarian Robert Wheler, drawn by Thomas Fisher, and finally published in 1838 by Nichols.[102] The scheme as uncovered in 1804 can be reconstructed in some detail, thanks to Fisher's drawings. The chancel contained images of the legend of the discovery of the True Cross (Fig. 7.14). On the north wall were two tiers of scenes including the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon (upper tier A), Constantine's vision of the cross (lower tier B), the invention of the cross (upper tier C and D), the testing and veneration of the cross (lower tier E and F), Heraclius's victory at the bridge (upper tier G) and Heraclius beheading Chosroës (lower tier H). On the south wall were images of the exaltation of the cross (I and K), together with an image of a bishop and a crucifix (L) and dragons in the spandrels over the priests' door. Images of the Eucharist and the five wounds were also located here. Over the chancel arch was a 'Doom', or Last Judgement, with Christ

102 Wheler, *History and Antiquities*. Fisher made lithographs of his drawings, but due to a dispute with his publisher, they were never published and the plates were destroyed. The drawings were finally published in 1838 by another antiquarian, John Gough Nichols.

7.15 Thomas Fisher's drawing of the Doom painting over the chancel arch, reconstructed within the chapel by Heritage Technology Ltd. © Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, reproduced with permission of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

seated on a rainbow, located just above the Rood, whose outline, including the flanking images of St John and Mary, can still be traced (Fig. 7.15).

In the nave, the restorations exposed figures of St Modwena (north wall, west end) and St Ursula (south wall, west end). On the west wall, flanking the tower arch, were two-tiered images of the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket (west wall, south side) above an allegorical 'memento mori' painting of the poem 'erthe out of erthe',[103] and an image of St George and the Dragon (west wall, north side) over an image of the Whore of Babylon (Fig. 7.16). Sadly, although Stratford's antiquarians recognised the significance of the paintings, they were subsequently destroyed, as was the case with the chancel images, or whitewashed. It was not until 1928 that the Last Judgement, over the chancel arch, was re-exposed and 'restored' by the famous wall paintings expert, E.W. Tristram.[104]

No paintings were discovered on the walls of the nave in 1804. However, in 1576, the antiquarian John Stow annotated his edition of Leland's Itinerary with the following remark:

103 L. Mooney, 'Verses upon death', 182–90.

104 Victoria & Albert Museum MA/1/T1339; V & A Prints and Drawings Room E553/1930; E554/1930; The National Art Library 86/22/122, Warwickshire notebook.

7.16 Thomas Fisher's drawings of the west wall and Puddephat's drawing of the Dance of Death on the north wall of the nave, reconstructed within the chapel by Heritage Technology Ltd. © Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, reproduced with permission of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Around the nave of this chapel there was carefully painted the Dance of Death, popularly known as the Dance of Pauls, because there was a similar painting at St. Pauls around the cloisters on its north west side, which were destroyed by the Duke of Somerset during Edward VI's reign.[105]

During the restoration works in February 1955, Puddephat found fragmentary traces of the Stratford Dance of Death on the north wall of the nave. Through painstaking recording, transcription and analysis, he identified and then reconstructed the original appearance of the Dance of Death sequence, and compared the Stratford sequence with studies of the surviving texts of John Lydgate's original fifteenth-century poem, *The Danse Macabre*, and with records of depictions of the dance, such as that painted in the precincts of the Cemetery of the Innocents in Paris c. 1425–6. He suggested that the order of the Stratford Dance of Death was closely related to that contained in two of the 'Group B' manuscripts of Lydgate's poem: Oxford, Corpus Christi MS 237

105 The original Part V of John Leland's *Itinerary* is now lost. Stow's copy is in the Bodleian Library, Tanner MS 464, vol. 5, fols. 53–105. The extract quoted here is taken from L. Toulmin Smith, *The Itinerary*, vol. 2, p. 49. Puddephat's detailed notes on the wall paintings are in the SCLA DR 624/13 (iii), 624/16, 624/17, 624/22, 624/23, 624/27–31.

and Bodley MS 686.[106] He also explored other surviving visual representations of the Dance of Death in England and concluded that the closest recorded example was probably that in the Hungerford chapel in Salisbury Cathedral (Wiltshire), painted c. 1470, but destroyed in the eighteenth century.

Puddephat's detailed working methods also allowed him to decipher the fragmentary scenes and texts on the south wall, which he interpreted as scenes from the 'Lyf of Adam', a text contained, like the legend of the True Cross, in the standard medieval anthology of saints' lives, Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*.[107] The earliest edition of Caxton's illustrated English version of the *Golden Legend* was published in 1483, and it is likely that it was one of the sources which informed schemes such as that at Stratford. However, close comparison of Puddephat's transcriptions with the original indicates that neither it, nor later editions such as those of Caxton's successor, Wynkyn de Worde, served as a direct source for the Stratford images. Rather, a whole series of contemporary manuscript sources, devotional texts and the decoration, fittings and fixtures of nearby sites in Coventry and Warwick probably informed and inspired the decoration of Stratford's chapel.[108] Puddephat's analysis of scenes on the west wall of the chapel allowed him to identify minor errors in Fisher's transcriptions and illustrations associated with the poem 'erthe out of erthe', which have not been discussed by subsequent scholars of the paintings. Most significant, perhaps, was his discovery that Wheler's written description of the True Cross sequence differed slightly from Fisher's pictorial illustration of the scenes.[109]

To what extent the chapel paintings survived the early stages of the Reformation is unclear. Stratford and its inhabitants appear to have adopted an equivocal but pragmatic attitude to the religious changes of the sixteenth century, as Robert Bearman's and Sylvia Gill's chapters in this book suggest, as did one of its most famous and controversial chamberlains, John Shakespeare, father of William.[110] Indeed, as chamberlain, John Shakespeare may have been involved in the destruction of some of the paintings. The records of the Stratford Corporation include payments of 2*s*. made in 1563/4 for 'defasyng ymages in ye chapell' and in 1564/5, another 2*s*. for 'takynge doune ye rood loft in ye Chapell'.[111] In 1804, Wheler noted that although

106 Puddephat, 'The mural paintings', p. 30. Davidson, *Guild Chapel Wall Paintings*; on p. 7 it is noted that there are also close links with the 'Group A' manuscripts. See F. Warren and B. White (eds), *The Dance of Death*, Early English Text Society, 181 (London, 1913).

107 SCLA DR 624/31.

108 Davidson, *Guild Chapel Wall Paintings*, pp. 4, 35. C. Davidson and J. Alexander, *The Early Art of Coventry, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick and Lesser Sites in Warwickshire*, Early Drama, Art and Music Ref. Ser. 4 (Kalamazoo, 1985).

109 SCLA DR 624/13 (i) and SCLA DR 624/29. Puddephat never resolved this problem, but it is addressed in more detail (see note 4) in K. Giles, A. Masinton and G. Arnott, 'Visualising', *Internet Archaeology* (2012).

110 R. Bearman, 'John Shakespeare's "Spiritual Testament": A reappraisal', *Shakespeare Survey* 56 (2003), 183–202; R. Bearman, 'John Shakespeare: A Papist or Just Penniless?', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56/4 (2005), 411–33; R. Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530–1580', *Midland History* 32 (2007) 68–109.

111 *MA* vol. 1, pp. 128, 138.

some of the paintings were 'found to be nearly in a perfect state', 'many parts of them, especially the *crosses*, had been evidently mutilated by some sharp instrument by the ill-directed zeal of our early reformers'.[112] Wheler's reference to crosses suggests that the paintings targeted by iconoclasts were those in the chancel depicting the legend of the cross. However, Puddephat challenged this assumption, arguing that the Holy Cross paintings may actually have been preserved due to the construction of a wall separating the chancel from the nave, converting the chancel into a room or passage.[113] Although the construction of this wall does not appear to be documented in the accounts, as we have noted above, the late sixteenth-century Corporation accounts record payments for various 'chambers in the chapel'.[114] Tantalising evidence that one of these chambers was indeed in the chancel, still decorated with the True Cross paintings, is provided by a record of 1641, when the Rev. Thomas Wilson was criticised

> that he hath profaned the Chapple by sufferinge his children to playe at bale and other sports therein, and his servauntes to hange clothes to drye in it and his pigges and poultrie to lye and feed in it, and also his dogge to lye in it, and the pictures therein to be defaced, and the windowes broken.[115]

More recent scholars have suggested that other scenes, including the Dance of Death, may also have escaped whitewashing in the 1560s.[116] Further evidence to support the rather slow progress made in Protestantising the chapel is indicated by the fact that the chapel's collection of matching sets of velvet and damask vestments were sold only in 1571/2.[117] By the mid-seventeenth century, it does appear that scenes such as the Dance of Death had been whitewashed over, and replaced by a grisaille architectural scheme, also recorded by Puddephat.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide an introduction to the archaeology and architecture of the Guild buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford. Analysis of the buildings can shed important light on the religious, social and cultural activities of the Guild of the Holy Cross within the medieval town. Moreover the Guild buildings also tell the story of the gradual transformation of Stratford-upon-Avon during the sixteenth century, when the buildings continued to be at the heart of civic life, and when they are likely to have played a central role in the daily lives of the young William Shakespeare and his father, John. But

112 Wheler, *History and Antiquities*, p. 50, 97.
113 SCLA DR 624/13 (ii).
114 See the discussion and references above, p. 159.
115 Wheler MSS, I, 97, quoted in Halliwell, *A Descriptive Calendar*, p. 105.
116 Davidson, *Guild Chapel Wall Paintings*, p. 11; K. Giles, 'Seeing and believing: Visuality and space in pre-modern England', *World Archaeology* 39/1 (2007), 101–21.
117 *MA* vol. 2, pp. xxv, 54. Of course, it is possible that these were relatively new vestments, purchased during Mary's reign.

this chapter has also revealed how the story of the Guild Buildings is also the story of those scholars who have been drawn to Stratford over the centuries: antiquarians like Halliwell and Wheler, and more recent scholars in this volume, have explored in minute detail the documentary records of the Guild and Corporation, while others, such as Fisher, Puddephat and ourselves, have sought to record and interpret the material remains of the buildings. We have been incredibly privileged to have access to the Guild Buildings and the archives and to have enjoyed the generosity of past and present scholars in sharing their ideas and knowledge with us. But we also know there is much more to discover. We hope that this chapter will therefore act as a starting point for future work on the Guild Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford.

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Professional Theatre in the Guildhall 1568–1620: Players, Puritanism and Performance

J.R. Mulryne

It will be clear from chapters throughout this book that the Stratford Guildhall was deeply embedded in the civic, religious and educational life of the town during the sixteenth century. The present chapter[1] summarises a further role for the building as the receiving venue – or one of the venues – for professional theatre in Stratford in the years 1568 to 1597 (and occasionally thereafter), a period when payments for more than 30 visits to the town by travelling companies are recorded in the *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon*.[2]

In these years, Stratford was a fairly average Midlands town with a population of 1,500–2,000, one of any number of towns visited by the professional companies, an aspect of England's theatre culture being progressively revealed by the *Records of Early English Drama* series (*REED*). The present chapter is indebted to the generosity of Alan Somerset, editor of the forthcoming Warwickshire volume of *REED*, who has allowed me to quote from his unpublished work, and of Robert Bearman, who has been untiring in answering enquiries and bringing fresh references to light. I am also much indebted to Sally-Beth MacLean, whose remarkable *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, written with the late Scott McMillin, has set a standard for everyone working in the field. I have also profited from Professor MacLean's numerous essays on companies and touring, and from her ongoing work with Professor Somerset on the provision of on-line resources. Published studies by Andrew

1 This chapter is an extended, revised and corrected version of an essay which was first published in *Shakespeare Survey* 60 (2007), 1–22. I am grateful to Peter Holland, Sarah Stanton and Cambridge University Press for permission to include the revised essay here.

2 *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1553–1620 and Other Records*, 6 volumes, vols 1–4 transcribed by Richard Savage, with introduction and notes by Edgar I. Fripp (London: Oxford University Press for the Dugdale Society, 1921–29), vol. 5 edited and with an introduction by Levi Fox (Stratford-upon-Avon: Dugdale Society, 1990), vol. 6 edited and with an introduction by Robert Bearman (Stratford-upon-Avon: Dugdale Society in association with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 2011). The originals on which the volumes are based are held in the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Gurr and Siobhan Keenan have made the present chapter possible. Research by Edgar I. Fripp, J.O. Halliwell, Richard Savage, Levi Fox and John Tucker Murray, sometimes neglected by today's scholars, has also been called on, as well as recent historical and sociological studies by Robert Bearman and others.[3] Much of the detail underlying what follows stems from archaeological research by Jonathan Clark and Kate Giles, reported and updated earlier in this book.[4]

Travelling players, members of professional troupes, were required by legislation to present a 'command' performance before civic authorities in order to secure a licence permitting performances in any of the towns they visited. The Guildhall is the almost certain location for 'command' performances of this kind, authorised and paid for by the Stratford Corporation, an inference strengthened by documentary evidence mentioned below, and by current scholarship.[5] I have referred briefly to another possible venue – the town's inns – for performances other than those presented before the bailiff. Innkeepers did not compile records, and no legal action took place in Stratford in relation to an inn-based performance (as happened, for example, at Norwich) so it is impossible to be certain about follow-up performances at inns in the town.[6] Other possible locations such as the parish church go unmentioned in the Stratford records in connection with professional theatre, and are not pursued here.

It is perhaps surprising that, while the main facts relating to the players' visits are well known, detailed work on the Guildhall as a setting for

3 Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin, (eds), *Locating the Queen's Men* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996); Siobhan Keenan, *Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Edgar I. Fripp, introductions to *Minutes and Accounts* (see footnote 1); James O. Halliwell, *The Minute Book of Stratford Corporation* (London: Adlard, 1863); John Tucker Murray, *English Dramatic Companies 1558–1642* (London: Constable, 1910). For a compelling account of the development of relevant electronic data on playing in the provinces see Sally-Beth MacLean and Alan Somerset, 'From Patrons Web site to REED Online', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 24 (2011), 25–37, and for searchable information, currently under development, the Patrons and Performances database (http://link.library.utoronto.ca/reed/). See also Park Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare for All Time* (London: Macmillan, 2002); Alan Somerset, '"How Chances it they Travel?": Provincial Touring, Playing Places and the King's Men', *Shakespeare Survey* 47 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 45–60; G.E. Bentley, *The Professions of Dramatist and Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590–1642* (Princeton, NJ and Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1986).

4 Three-volume unpublished Conservation Management Report funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (July 2006, 2007) prepared by Jonathan Clark and Kate Giles, with others, for King Edward VI School.

5 Gurr, *Playing Companies*, p. 39, writes that 'from 1559 plays had either to be licensed directly by the mayor, or seen in performance by the whole corporation' and cites instances in Bristol and York where the Common Hall or Guildhall is specifically named. Keenan, *Travelling Players*, p. 24 indicates that while the official performance 'might be staged within the mayor's house … the more usual venue for civic-funded performances appears to have been the town hall or its equivalent' – in Stratford's case the Guildhall. See also *REED: Devon* ed. John Wasson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986) where a distinction is drawn between the preferred playing place of amateurs (the parish church) and that of professionals (the Guildhall). King Edward VI School is in process of restoring the Guildhall and seeking support to make it possible to open the hall to public access.

6 David Galloway (ed.), *REED: Norwich 1540–1642* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), and Keenan, *Travelling Players*, especially pp. 99–106.

performance has not been widely published, especially given the Guildhall's associations with William Shakespeare. Shakespeare's presence in Stratford for part or even the whole of the period 1568–1620 remains a subject for debate, but a better understanding of the physical conditions under which the playwright may well have seen professional companies in performance – a topic explored by Oliver Jones in this book in relation to one contemporary play – may throw light on the dramatist's concept of theatre as he embarked on his acting and playwriting career.

Drawing on published research, this chapter also attempts to map players' visits and the Guildhall on to the micro-history of Stratford during the given period, so far as this can be reconstructed from surviving documents. We may ask, for example, whether bumper and lean years for visits can be attributed to events in the town, and whether cultural and religious change over the period can be discerned through the partial prism of travelling theatre. Puritan influence on the town's corporate life during the last third of the century has over recent years been a topic of much discussion, by Patrick Collinson, Ann Hughes and Robert Bearman among others.[7] The interaction of a changing religious climate with visiting performance, and more particularly with the – at the least general – cessation of these performances, may tell us something about the relationship between the Guildhall and the period's confessional upheavals, a topic discussed from other perspectives elsewhere in this book.

The Stratford Records, the End of Playing and the Religious Climate

The Stratford Corporation's *Minutes and Accounts*, so far as they relate to travelling theatre, have been newly read and checked by Alan Somerset and myself, separately by Oliver Jones and in some detail by Robert Bearman. The occasions on which travelling players visited the town, according to the *Minutes and Accounts*, are listed in Appendix 2 to this chapter, together with the companies' names, the year of the visit, and the monetary reward each was given. We cannot be sure the accounts record every professional visit over the period but, given the fairly rigorous – and tightening – official control of travelling theatre, it seems probable that all performances taking place before the town officials are in fact included.

To draw conclusions from the chronological record, it may be most revealing to start at the end – the end, that is, of civic-authorised playing in

7 For studies of radical Protestantism in England, see Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church and English Society 1559–1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) and *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (London: Macmillan, 1988). For a closer focus on Stratford, see Robert Bearman (ed.), *The History of an English Borough: Stratford-upon-Avon 1196–1996* (Stroud and Stratford-upon-Avon: Sutton, 1997) especially the essays by Robert Bearman, Christopher Dyer, Christine Carpenter, Alan Dyer and Ann Hughes. See also Ann Hughes, 'Religion and Society in Stratford-upon-Avon, 1619–1638', *Midland History*, 19 (1994), 58–84 and Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530–1580', *Midland History* 32 (2007) 68–109.

the Guild buildings, an occurrence that took place, so far as the documentary evidence tells us, in the first years of the seventeenth century. The Borough Council Minute Book (1593–1628), the best source for this information, records a meeting of the Council on 17 December 1602, at which a decision was taken to ban play performances in 'the Chamber the guild halle nor in any p[ar]te of the howsse or Courte'. The full text of the minute is reprinted in Appendix 1, and this chapter will return to details of its phrasing. For the moment we can note that a fine of a considerable, though not crippling, 10*s*. will be levied on 'whosoeuer of the Baylief Alderman & Burgesses' might in future give leave for playing in the named civic buildings.

An altogether saltier minute was written 10 years later for a Council meeting on 2 February 1612. This reveals that the earlier decision had not achieved the desired effect, or not without exception (see Appendix 1 for the full text of the February 1612 minute). Referring to plays, it says 'The sufferance of them is againste the orders hearetofore made', which must mean that, despite the ban, plays have continued to be performed in the Guild buildings. No payment for performance is recorded in the Chamberlain's accounts for 1612, presumably because none was made, at any rate by town officials. Perhaps the Council in 1612 is simply reaffirming a principle: that plays are not compatible with the decorum and dignity of the town's civic buildings, a view, as Robert Tittler has shown, that was becoming widely held across the country in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[8]

There are further inferences to be drawn from the 1612 minute. The revised imposition of a fine of 10 *pounds*, which really is crippling, together with its castigation of what the minute calls 'the *inconuenience* of plaies' (my emphasis) – their impropriety or unfitness – suggests beneath the phrasing an earnest, perhaps heated, discussion among Council members. The matter was, in the words of the minute, 'verie seriouslie considered of'. The extraordinary twenty-fold increase in the fine reads like an excitable gesture, provoked perhaps by some unrecorded incident, and meant to impress a local constituency. The rather limp tailing-off that follows may be equally revealing: the order will stay in effect, the minute says, 'vntill the nexte common councell' (only weeks or at most months away) or until such time as it is revoked – a statement of the blindingly obvious. The full minute suggests there may have been moderating or opposing voices present – which would line up with inferences below, and elsewhere in this book, about the religio-cultural climate of the town in the early years of the seventeenth century, at the point when touring tailed off or ceased.

The Council, it seems, returned to the matter yet again some five or six months later. Robert Bearman has recently drawn attention to an instruction in the Council's Book of Orders (16 July 1612):

8 Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

It[e]m yt is ordered that the Bayliffe and chiefe Alderman … shall not at any tyme hereafter licence or suffer any mann[er] of playes or enterludes to be played or acted wthin the Towne hall, Councell Chamber, Schoolehouse or the place called the Guyld Courte or yarde there or any p[ar]te thereof … upon payne that the Bayliffe & chiefe Alderman … that shall licence or suffer any such playes to play in any of the said places shall forfeyte for ev[er]y such licence or sufferaunce fowretie shilling[es]. (SCLA BRU 3/2)

Our inference about the temper of the earlier meeting looks valid. The newly calibrated fine, though four times that levied in the 1602 Order, is no more than one fifth of that threatened five or six months earlier in 1612. Some cooling off must have occurred, or wiser or less bigoted heads intervened, between February and July – a supposition that sits comfortably alongside the divisions in religious affiliation among councillors discussed later in this chapter. It may be that an incident taking place shortly before the February meeting had prompted outrage on the councillors' part, or on the part of some of them. The July Order appears to imply reversion to less contentious governance. It also names very intriguingly what we may take to be possible or actual playing areas within the Guildhall (here named the Town Hall) and its immediate vicinity, a matter to which we shall return.

Sectarian Politics and Performance in Stratford 1618–1620

It may be apt at this point to explore a little further the interrelation between players' performance and Stratford's sectarian politics, a discussion facilitated by Robert Bearman's rediscovery of a payment relating to a visit by players in 1618 (quoting accounts drawn up in January 1619, SCLA BRU 4/1 p. 312). The payment to 'a Company of players' comprises, as Appendix 2 notes, a sum of 5*s*., an average amount, and was authorised – in apparent violation of the banning order – by the current bailiff. Payment for a second visit in the same year reads 'Delivered Mr bayliffe which was gyven to a company that came with a shew to the towne iiis iiiid'. The matter of particular interest is that the two payments were made, and the visits took place, some six or seven years after the 1612 prohibitions were issued. The second of the visits may not have involved performance of a play by a professional company, but rather a different type of entertainment – as the term 'shew' suggests, and the relatively low level of reward appears to confirm. In addition to these two occasions, a third post-prohibition performance, this time in all probability a play and not an alternative form of entertainment, took place in 1620, a date established by the re-assignment to 1621 (for events taking place in the 1620 calendar year) of accounts previously and erroneously attributed to 1608.[9] It looks as if the 1602 and 1612 prohibitions on the use of civic buildings for

9 The assignment of the records to 1621, and the visit therefore to 1620, is secure, due to a reference in the same accounts, immediately following the reference to players, to a certain Richard Venner or Venour, a curate who was in post in Stratford for no more than a month or two in 1620.

public performance were allowed to lapse by the authorities, or by some members of the authorities, on several occasions in the years from 1618 to 1620.

It is worth noting that these post-prohibition visits came at a particularly fraught time in the sectarian politics of Stratford, shortly before and just after the incumbent vicar John Rogers, a long-serving and mild-mannered cleric of moderate opinions, was sacked in peremptory fashion as the result of politicking by a Puritan faction, and replaced, in May 1619, by Thomas Wilson, 'a godly learned minister' of well-known Puritan sympathies. Stratford was in uproar over this intrusion into the normal processes for the appointment of a vicar, with indignation fuelled no doubt by sympathy for Rogers. Malicious libels were put into circulation alleging Wilson's sexual incontinence and moral hypocrisy. The simmering row boiled over in a virtual riot, with Wilson and his followers barricading themselves in the church as, in Ann Hughes's words, 'walls were damaged and windows smashed'. As Hughes notes, 'For opponents of Wilson communal festivities symbolised the nostalgic social unity they believed was threatened by Puritanism.'[10] We may take it that play performance and other types of entertainment in the town's Guildhall were seen in the same light. Can we infer that at a time of especially severe sectarian tension the staging of players' visits, in defiance of existing regulations, was initiated and authorised by an anti-Puritan faction on the Borough Council, or was sanctioned with their support, as a strike against the town's strengthening Puritan tendency? It is telling that a Council resolution in May 1619, petitioning the Lord Chancellor to confirm Wilson's appointment, was passed by 18 votes in favour with seven opposed, a clear indication of divided allegiances among Council members.

It may be that the reference in *Minutes and Accounts* (see Appendix 2) relating to a 1622 payment to the King's Men as a reward for *not* playing represents a further extension of the tussle between factions supporting and opposing festive entertainment in the town – a riposte by the Puritan faction, in this case, to the promotion or at the least indulgence of illicit performances, as they technically were, in the immediately previous years.[11] Hughes notes that during his early period in Stratford 'Thomas

10 Ann Hughes, 'Building a Godly Town' in Bearman, *History*, pp. 97–109, p. 106. For a more extensive account of the episode, see Hughes, 'Religion and Society', p. 62. Something of the technicolour quality of the riot can be deduced from the Star Chamber case brought by the Attorney General on Wilson's behalf and quoted by Hughes from PRO STAC 8/26/10. The rioters are described as alleging 'that the said Thomas Wilson was an ill-liver, and incontinent person, that he had the French pox, and was burnt by means of his incontinency with lewd women.' The rioters, it was said, yelled 'hang him, kill him … cut off his pocky and burnt member, let us pull, drag and haul him out of the church'.

11 It is possible that these performances took place in locations other than the Guildhall (and so technically evaded the prohibitions), but the fact that they were paid for under the authority of the bailiff still casts them as command performances. Rewards 'not to play' occur in other locations even if they represent, as Barbara D. Palmer calculates, less than 10 per cent of recorded payments/non-payments: 'Playing the Provinces: Front or Back Door?', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 22 (2009) 81–127.

Wilson enjoyed the active support of the majority of the corporation and, with their help, was able to exercise significant "godly" influence in the town'. She even hazards that 'for the early 1620s a plausible picture can be constructed of a well-ordered Puritan borough'.[12] Evidently, however, the to and fro in regard to entertainment as a feature of the town's civic life went on with unabated vigour in these years, a supposition underscored by the parallel, extended and spirited controversy sparked by the erection of a maypole in May 1619 by supporters of the ousted vicar John Rogers. Playing by professional companies in Stratford in the last years of the century's second decade was caught up, it seems plain, in prolonged skirmishes over religion and social morality – complicated no doubt by other factors such as a struggle for precedence, or simply esteem, between the tradesmen who composed the great majority of the Council and a social elite. Gaps in the performance record for these years, and the partial filling of the gaps by Order-defying shows, must be seen as both local in origin and complex in motivation, and understood as the outcome of a continuously rising but disputed Puritan temper in the town over the previous half-century at least.

The Wider Picture

It may be useful to place Stratford and its prohibitions within a wider context. Other towns and cities issued banning orders in the last years of the sixteenth century and the first years of the seventeenth. Chester, for example, issued a ban in 1596, one of the earlier prohibitions on record. A genuinely gutsy order, in contrast to the waverings discernible in Stratford, was drawn up in the town's official documents 20 years or so after the 1596 ban. This later order comes in the Chester Assembly Book for 20 October 1615 and is transcribed in Appendix 1. The City of Chester, it says, has incurred 'Common Brute and Scandall' through permitting 'Stage Plaiers to Acte their obscene and vnlawfull Plaies or tragedies in the Common Hall of this Citie', a type of phrasing reminiscent of the lexicon employed by the period's anti-theatrical writers. A little less second hand is the indignation that arises from the alleged unsuitable use of the civic buildings. The Common Hall, we are told, has been desecrated by being turned into 'a Stage for Plaiers and a Receptacle for idle persons', whereas by contrast it was 'ordained for the Iudiciall hearinge and determininge of Criminall offences and for the solempne meetinge and Concourse of this howse'. Such

12 Hughes, 'Religion and Society', 64, 66. She also hazards that the town may 'provide an example of a community divided between a culture of reformation and a contrasting vision of festivity and neighbourliness', 'Religion and Society', p. 78. In addition see, for example, Patrick Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), Chapter 5 'The Puritan Character', pp. 101–28 for countrywide contextualisation of the squabbles sparked by Puritanism versus the outlook and practices of the old religion.

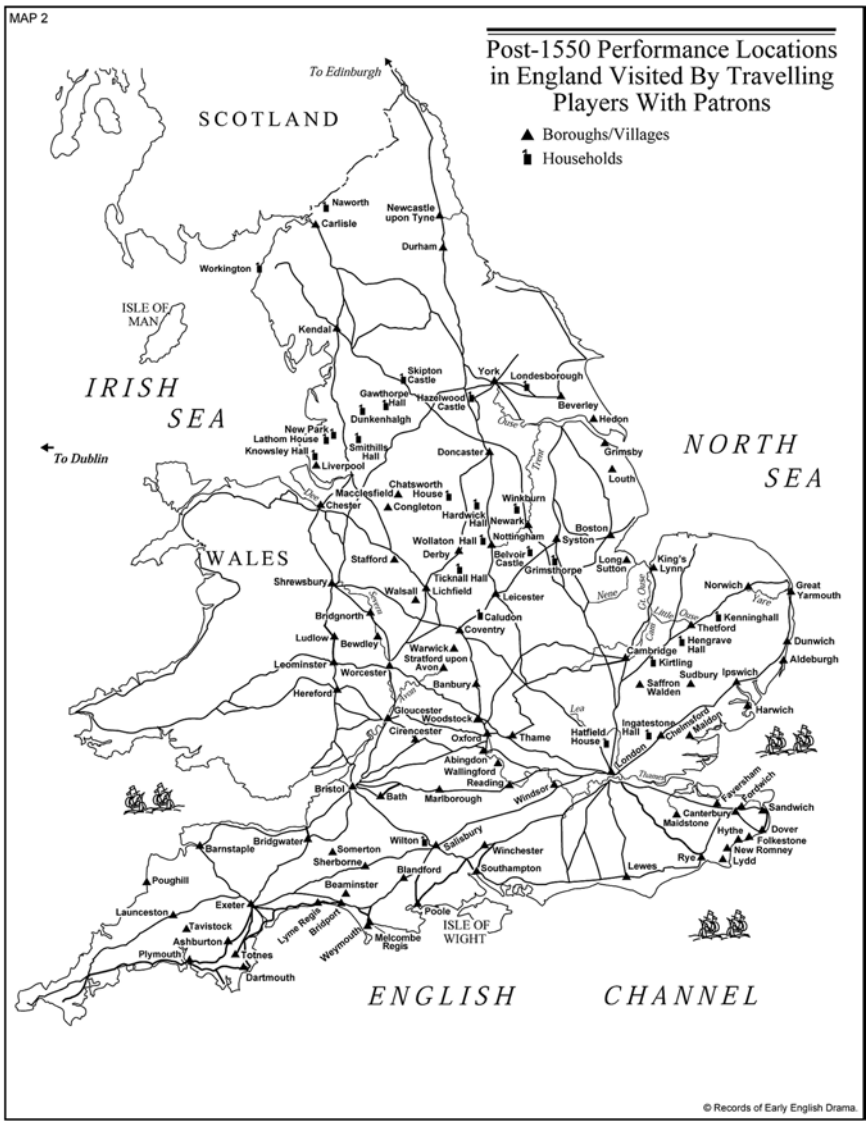
sentiments speak plainly to a growing sense of civic dignity, as well as to sectarian prejudice, a mixture of motives seemingly active also in Stratford, if the above discussion holds water.

A regard for commercial profit, unsurprisingly, appears in the Chester minute: the apprentices, we hear, 'manie times wastfullie spende their Masters goodes' by attending play performances. It is of further interest that the Order concludes, not in a total ban but in a ban on playing in the Common Hall or elsewhere, 'in the night time or after vje of the Clocke in the eveninge', a restraint not unique to Chester. Admittedly, the expression when read in full is ambiguous: a total ban on playing in the Common Hall may be intended. But it looks as if the wretched minute-taker is trying to summarise a lively meeting at which various factions weighed in with their individual views without the meeting reaching a coherent outcome – a situation possible to infer behind the Stratford documents as well. This reflects poor chairmanship, perhaps, but is also characteristic of the complex – positive and oppositional – attitudes to playing obtaining at the time, in Stratford as elsewhere.

The Stratford Visits

The list of visits to Stratford by professional companies (Appendix 2) allows a number of inferences about playing and its context in the later sixteenth century, as well as illuminating the Guildhall's role in the town. There were, it turns out, more visits than one might expect for a small market town in the midst of Warwickshire – more than 30 over the period to 1597, 25 of them by named companies. This is somewhat less surprising, perhaps, given that Stratford lies close to the hub of a communications network that links the important provincial centres of Leicester and Coventry to the north with Banbury and Oxford to the south and Gloucester and Bristol to the south-west. In the years we are looking at, England became a network of touring routes for professional theatre companies, as two of the maps in Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean's *The Queen's Men and their Plays* graphically illustrate (See Figs 8.1 and 8.2). The town-to-town itineraries of companies who visited Stratford, identified in the *REED* volumes and detailed by Andrew Gurr (and in less complete form by J. Tucker Murray and E.K. Chambers), show that these touring routes were habitually used by the professional companies. Coventry, less than 20 miles away, was a major city and a major touring centre for theatre and entertainment troupes of all kinds, the axis of a Midlands network that was among the busiest in the country. In an obvious sense, therefore, Stratford was well placed to play host to professional touring theatre, requiring on the companies' part no more than a short detour from the main inter-urban roads.

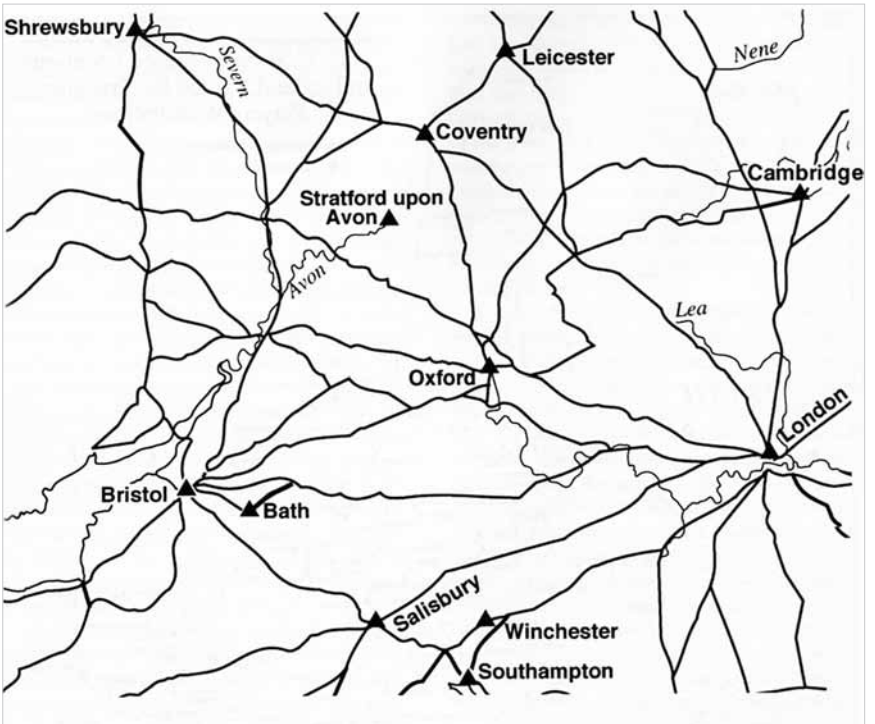
It may be informative to consider three of the more prominent visiting companies, Leicester's Men, the Queen's Men and the Earl of Worcester's



8.1 Post-1550 Performance Locations in England visited by Travelling Players with Patrons. © *Records of Early English Drama*.

players, a selection representative of the surviving record. These companies were in no way marginal to mainstream theatre of the time. On the contrary, they and in particular two of them were major players in every sense. It is worth considering each in turn, to assess the nature and scope of touring theatre in Stratford during the relevant years.

To take the non-royal company first, Leicester's Men came early (in 1572–3 and 1576–7) and stayed late – they were in Stratford in 1587, on the brink of the company's dissolution (their patron Leicester died in 1588). When they first visited the town the company was the most celebrated in the land, dominating the London court seasons of 1572–3 and 1573–4,



8.2 Detail of map of touring routes used by professional players after 1550, showing Stratford-upon-Avon in relation to major touring centres and cities. © *Records of Early English Drama* and FAS Heritage.

during which they gave six of the nine royal command performances.[13] As a touring company they derived prestige from their patron Leicester's own eminence: favourite of Elizabeth, 'practically', in Simon Adams's phrase, 'a surrogate husband',[14] Leicester was a leading political figure who exercised from court and from his seat at Kenilworth – even closer than Coventry, a dozen miles down the road from Stratford – an extraordinary influence.

Whether Leicester's patronage of a theatre company was motivated by religio-political considerations, given his reputation as the protector

13 See E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923, 1951) vol. 2, pp. 85–91, and Gurr, *Playing Companies*, pp. 185–95, especially pp. 187–8.

14 Simon Adams, 'Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* on-line edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, May 2006). The visits of Leicester's Men to Stratford may be part-explained by increasing evidence that, in Suzanne Westfall's words, 'these touring patterns are not difficult to understand; profits were highest where patrons held most sway', Suzanne R. Westfall, *Patrons and Performance: Early Tudor Household Revels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 137. Sally-Beth MacLean notes that 'only with the refurbishing of Kenilworth Castle in the early 1570s did he [Leicester] take up sometime residence in Warwickshire, in the heart of his father's former estate and close by his brother's seat at Warwick Castle', a view Adams underscores in observing that 'Throughout the greater part of the reign of Elizabeth I, Leicester and his brother Ambrose, earl of Warwick, presided over the largest aristocratic interest in the region, an interest that was in turn the successor to the one that their father, the Duke of Northumberland, had created': MacLean, 'Tracking Leicester's Men' in Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall (eds), *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 248 and Adams, 'Robert Dudley … and the West Midlands', *Midland History* 20 (1995), 21–74, p. 21.

of advanced, albeit moderate, Protestantism, and whether his Company disseminated his opinions and supported his cause on their days at the Guildhall in Stratford, it is hard to tell. At the least, the date of the early visits chimes with Leicester's active build-up of his visible presence in the region, so that local and personal if not national politics are evidently in question. Richard Dutton has written that patronage 'involved [for company members] a genuine relationship with a patron, whose public face in important ways the actors were'.[15] But just what this particular patron stood for in this context is not crystal clear, especially given the apparent tension between his protection of the Puritan faction and his simultaneous maintenance of a theatre company, an activity by no means always welcome to Puritan sympathisers. The rift between Leicester's aristocratic leaning towards display (one element in which was his patronage of a theatre troupe) and his championing of Puritan values was, it seems, apparent to his contemporaries, especially to those of a decided Calvinist bent. Eleanor Rosenberg reports a letter from the Protestant propagandist John Field exhorting Leicester to avoid aiding the players 'to the greate greif of all the Godly'.[16] Whether the visits of Leicester's Men raised thorny political and religious issues similar to those Oliver Jones highlights in his discussion, elsewhere in this book, of *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*, a Queen's Men play, is an intriguing question but impossible to resolve.[17]

Some separate inferences relating to Leicester's Men and their Stratford visits are possible. Up to 1583 and the formation of the new Queen's company, Leicester's Men, to quote McMillin and MacLean, 'were by far the most widely travelled, the most knowledgeable professionals on the road'.[18] Their performances must also have benefited from the wealth of a very influential patron. As MacLean points out in a further essay,[19] Leicester

15 Richard Dutton, 'Shakespearean Origins' in Takashi Kozuka and J.R. Mulryne (eds), *Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson: New Directions in Biography* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006) pp. 69–84, p. 75. For Leicester's campaign to establish his and Ambrose Dudley's place in the West Midlands see Adams, 'Robert Dudley … and the West Midlands' especially pp. 33, 34. Elza C. Tiner endorses Dutton's view of the close association of patron with players, arguing that the companies who visited Stratford were predominantly those whose patrons had estates and financial interests in the Warwickshire area: Tiner, 'Patrons and Travelling Companies in Warwickshire', *Early Theatre* 4.1 (2001), 35–52. Sally-Beth MacLean puts the matter succinctly in relation to Leicester's patronage of players during his years of building a reputation: 'In return for his patronage, the players carried Dudley's name across England at a time when he was seeking popularity and wider influence (as well as financial benefits) in the form of local appointments': 'The Politics of Patronage: Dramatic Records in Robert Dudley's Household Books', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993) 175–82, p. 179. For a series of wide-ranging studies of patronage see White and Westfall, *Theatrical Patronage*.

16 Eleanor Rosenberg, *Leicester, Patron of Letters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 255. Field made his views plain in the same letter, dated 25 November, 1581, referring to 'those impure enterludes and playes that were in vse. Surely the schooles of as greate wickednesses as can be'.

17 Paul Whitfield White makes a strong case, if necessarily a speculative one, for supposing that Leicester's players promulgated their patron's religio-political views at touring locations: *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 62–6.

18 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, p. 21.

19 'Tracking Leicester's Men: The patronage of a performance troupe' in White and Westfall, *Theatrical Patronage*, 246–71, p. 260. Westfall, *Patrons*, p. 18 points out that 'Poorly dressed players could not properly represent their patron, who was concerned with impressing local populations'.

was prepared to spend the considerable sum of £20 kitting out his players in expensive silks, satins and taffetas for court performances, suggesting that the players or their propaganda value must have seemed to their patron worth the investment. In Stratford they may have made something of a splash, though we know almost nothing about players' costuming on tour. Did they carry expensive metropolitan finery with them? Common sense might suggest otherwise, yet common sense is not always a reliable guide to travelling players and their ways. Leicester's livery, which would almost certainly have been worn by the players, will at the least have caused a stir among Stratford citizens, and impressed, if it did not overawe, the bailiff and his fellow councillors. While nothing guarantees high quality in theatre, the combination of a nationally renowned company and politically exalted sponsorship must have ensured that the visits of Leicester's Men proved memorable occasions for those who saw the company perform in the Guildhall and quite probably elsewhere in the town.

The Queen's Men, to refer to our second company, in effect took over from Leicester's. Formed in 1583 through the agency of Secretary of State Francis Walsingham, with the advice of the Master of the Revels Edmund Tilney, they swept up the country's most talented actors, including three of Leicester's Men.[20] Whether their formation could be called political is arguable, though it is true that almost everything Walsingham did was politically motivated. There are grounds, at the least, for supposing that in the unsteady 1580s the Queen's advisers felt that theatre-touring in her livery would assist the further integration of her realm, an endeavour parallel to her assiduous distribution of her image by other means.[21] Whether it was in that spirit or not, the 'new' Queen's Men came at least four times to Stratford, in 1587, 1592 and 1593, the only professional players to do so in the latter two years, with a further newly identified visit in 1597 (see Appendix 2). The Queen's company was inevitably high profile, being repeatedly awarded coveted slots in the entertainment programme at court: three performances in 1583–4 and five commissioned (four given) in the following season, a year or two before their first Stratford visit. It has been suggested, on evidence from Shakespeare's re-writing of Queen's Men's plays, that the actor-playwright travelled to London and joined the celebrated company after seeing their performances in Stratford.[22] This is debatable territory, and only one of several hypotheses

20 For information on the Queen's Men see Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, pp. 104–15; Gurr, *Playing Companies*, pp. 196–217; McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, *passim*.

21 See John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London: Faber, 2011) and, for example, Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), *passim*. The Queen's Men's formation dates close to the notorious Throckmorton plot (1583) and to the 'Bond of Association' (1584), directed at unrest centring on Mary Queen of Scots, orchestrated in part by Walsingham, and signed by leading individuals across the country. The flurry of references in the 1580s to the Guildhall Armoury (see the chapter by Giles and Clark in this volume, pp. 151–2) may be connected with the nationwide concern with plots and possible invasion.

22 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 160–6.

relating to Shakespeare's early career. Nevertheless, the possibility, raised by McMillin and MacLean and others, serves to underline the potential influence of professional theatre in the Guildhall, and specifically Queen's Men's theatre, as a stimulus to the playwright's life-choices.[23]

The most frequent visitors, the third company, were the Earl of Worcester's players: a troupe somewhat different in background, and one supposes in esteem, from Leicester's Men or the Queen's. Worcester's came to town six times between 1568 and 1583–4. A wholly provincial company, they specialised in the Midlands circuit, in contrast to the two companies just mentioned, both of which toured nationwide and were based in London. The company patron, William Somerset, third Earl of Worcester, was an altogether less prominent nobleman than Leicester, or than those of Privy Council status associated with the Queen's Men. Worcester's troupe, we may suppose, offered entertainment in Stratford less remarkable than that staged by Leicester's or the Queen's, which suggests a mixed theatre economy for the town – and for assessment in the Guildhall by the bailiff and his colleagues. Standards of performance, it seems, may have varied from year to year, although it is worth considering that in the increasingly regulated and restrictive theatre climate of the later sixteenth century the standard of touring performance across the board may never have dropped seriously low.[24] The repeated visits of Worcester's Men to Stratford also suggest an element of habit, or customary arrangement, in the structure of sixteenth-century professional touring, in addition to the attraction of touring to locations where the company's noble patron exercised or wished to exercise influence.

Some conclusions may be drawn from the town's payments to the named visitors, including the three just discussed. A pattern emerges, if rather uncertainly. One unambiguous feature, however, stands out. The highest reward, 20*s*., went to the 1583 Queen's Men, suggesting a correlation between the patron's status and the level of payment offered. To some extent this bias towards elite patronage is followed through, but not without exception. The Earl of Leicester's Men received a considerable sum, 15*s*., in 1576–7, echoing their patron's standing, but only three or four years earlier they received no more than 5*s*. 8*d*. In 1587, the same Company's reward fell back from its peak of 15*s*. to no more than 10*s*. Perhaps – but this is far from proven – this lower sum is influenced by Leicester's mixed fortunes in the Netherlands (1586–7). In the case of the visit of 1576–7, the reward may have been boosted, in contrast, by the acclaim surrounding Leicester's staging of a series of spectacular royal entertainments at Kenilworth from 1566, climaxing in 1575. The Stratford

23 The company of 'Queenes Players' mentioned at the head of the list of visitors (1568–9) is an altogether more obscure group, a purely provincial company whose status Gurr is inclined to question, even wondering whether it was a theatre company in the accepted sense or a group of tumblers. See Gurr, *Playing Companies*, p. 196.

24 The regulations on patronage of companies had the effect, even if sometimes flouted or circumvented, of ensuring that a relatively restricted number of companies were in existence to be received by town officers as part of the officially sanctioned touring network, thus broadly maintaining standards.

Borough officials, that is to say, may have been influenced in their relative generosity by the fame of the theatricals presented before the Queen herself just a few miles down the road. The town garnered reflected glory, the officials may have reasoned, as a result of hosting a company associated with, if not definitely participants in, such splendour – a company that may indeed have brought some of the Kenilworth splendour with them, not only in their liveries but also, though this can only be speculation, in the stage costumes and properties they used.

Can these variations tell us anything about the level of rewards more generally? On the larger platform provided by the city of Coventry, Leicester's Men received 30*s*. in 1580 and 20*s*. in 1582, rewards deemed fit, in the latter case, for a company of the standing of the Queen's Men in smaller Stratford. Rank and file visitors to the town, or rather companies with rank and file patrons (though never less than noble) are good in the Stratford accounts for three, four and five shillings, as indeed such companies are at Coventry if we translate Stratford earnings to a big-city scale: the parallel Coventry payments did not normally rise above 10*s*.[25] Social and political status seems, therefore, to play a part in the calculation of rewards, even if these are sometimes affected by temporary fluctuations of esteem. A similar pattern of political privilege is replicated in other towns, where the Queen's Men are routinely given the highest sums, not infrequently well above, even double, the Stratford payment.

What looks like an anomaly in the Stratford accounts, the large sum of 17*s*. paid, as early as 1574–5, to 'my lord of warwicke players' tends on the contrary to confirm the payment-by-patronage hypothesis since, in Christine Carpenter's words, 'the earls [of Warwick] were territorially and politically … dominant around Stratford' in the fifteenth century and after. Ambrose Dudley, the current Earl, had been restored to royal favour by 1573, a year or so before his company's Stratford visit, despite a conviction for treason in 1554 arising from his assistance with the momentarily fulfilled but disastrous royal ambitions associated with Lady Jane Grey.[26] In the minds of the Bailiff and his colleagues, that is to say, the local influence of a company's patron may properly be reflected in the level of payment.

It is difficult to know whether features other than the patron's prestige played a part in the calculation of rewards, for example how elaborate the show was, or how large the playing company, or (as may have been the case in 1587 when payment to Leicester's company fell) the number of visiting

25 For payments in Coventry see R.W. Ingram (ed.), *REED: Coventry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press and Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1981).

26 Christine Carpenter, 'Town and "Country": The Stratford Guild and political networks of fifteenth-century Warwickshire' in Bearman, *History*, pp. 62–79, p. 68, and Patrick Collinson, 'Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* on-line edition (Oxford University Press, 2006). Simon Adams writes: 'Throughout the greater part of the reign of Elizabeth I, Leicester and his brother Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, presided over the largest aristocratic interest in the region.' ('"Because I am of that Countrye & Mynde To Plant Myself There": Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and the West Midlands', *Midland History* 20 (1995), 21–74, p. 21). See also Bearman pp. 102–05 above.

companies paid for by the town during a busy year, a consideration that may well have been in the mind of the Borough Treasurer. As ever with matters theatrical, a simple answer appears untenable. It seems sensible to conclude that when the authorities met in the Guildhall to decide the level of reward they will have been influenced by a whole series of practical and micro-political considerations, from the size of the company and the elaborateness of their show to the prestige attached to the current reputation of their patron.

The Players

Further analysis of the visitors' list, coupled with information from other studies, will help to reveal a possible membership for the touring companies. Borough officials in Stratford did not think it worthwhile to record the names of visiting actors, a lack of interest shared by other towns. We are in the dark therefore about touring company membership countrywide, except in the rare instance when a legal hearing took place associated with a theatre visit, or some other newsworthy event occurred. Appendix 3 gives information, from sources such as Chambers, Murray and Gurr, about the three companies discussed above. What this shows – to summarise – is that Stratford audiences may well have had access to performances by some of the leading names in contemporary theatre. The membership of the companies that came to Stratford and its Guildhall may have differed from the membership of companies of the same name who visited elsewhere, and who in a number of cases performed in London also. We have no means of knowing. But it seems probable nevertheless that Edward Alleyn, the most celebrated actor of his day, came to Stratford with Worcester's Men in 1583–4, although this was at the age of 17 or 18, before the triumphs of his later career. James Burbage, theatrical entrepreneur, actor and irascible leader of men was, we know, one of the Earl of Leicester's company in 1572–3, the year of one of their two Stratford visits, and may have come with them in 1576–7 also. The famous comic actor Richard Tarlton, a founder member of the Queen's Men in 1583 who remained with the company until his death in 1588, very likely played Stratford in 1587. Given the complex history of the Queen's Men and the company's split into two troupes in 1587–8 (Gurr says 'by 1590')[27] we cannot, however, be sure. These are all, nevertheless, names to conjure with. There were others only a little less high profile who came to town, especially when the star-studded Queen's company became almost regulars after 1587. In brief, experience of theatre in the Guildhall, and it may be elsewhere in Stratford, seems likely to have measured up to the

27 Gurr, *Playing Companies*, p. 71.

best in the land, so far as casting was concerned, even if shows of high calibre were far less regularly available than in London.

Increasing evidence shows that touring theatre greatly exceeded in scale the four or five men, a cart and a drum of popular caricature.[28] This becomes apparent from documents relevant to the three companies considered above. In 1577, the Earl of Worcester's Men had *ten* players at Southampton and the same number at Norwich and Leicester in 1583–4. They visited Stratford in 1576–7, presumably with a similarly numerous company as on the Southampton visit of the same year, and in 1583–4 are likely to have had as many players as on the Norwich and Leicester legs of that year's tour. The Earl of Leicester's Men comprised *twelve* players at Southampton in 1577, and took in Stratford on the same tour. The Queen's Men were formed with *twelve* players in 1583 and were in Stratford in 1587 before, so far as we can tell, the company split. These are viable numbers for the performance of even elaborate plays, with doubling as necessary. Whether companies also recruited locally for minor parts and backstage assistance – perhaps among schoolboys, choristers and local amateurs – it is hard to say. There is, to my knowledge, no reliable information. In any case, nothing suggests that plays were scaled down from their London performances when they came to Stratford, or were under-cast. The evidence in fact tends towards the contrary.[29]

One chance feature of the list of visitors suggests what is apparently the case: that Stratford had a talent for attracting the more robust companies, or companies at their more robust moments, though admittedly it looks as if robust behaviour was commonplace across the countrywide circuits. An entry in the 1587 *Minutes and Accounts* recording payment 'for mendinge of a forme that was broken by the queenes players xvj d.', is a token of the risk to civic property that hosting theatre entailed, even in the case of official performances. Robert Tittler notes that records of damage are widespread at Bath, York, Bristol, Leicester and Canterbury, and speculates that the decline in – and bans on – Guildhall performances after 1590 may have been connected with defensive local pride in increasingly elaborate civic buildings.[30] However that may be, Stratford's visitors, just at the time they visited the town, can be connected with some of the more spectacular run-ins with authority elsewhere. In 1583–4, the Earl of Worcester's

28 For rebuttal of the common view see, for example, Gurr, *Playing Companies*, pp. 42–3 and David Bradley, *From Text to Performance in the Elizabethan Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 58–74. Barbara D. Palmer in the course of an extended and detailed vindication of the importance, longevity and entrepreneurial interests of travelling players writes that, from the 1570s on, 'the average company size … when numbers are recorded in the accounts is 11.6 players'; her evidence is however based chiefly on performers and playing in great households. See 'Playing in the Provinces', p. 84.

29 The figures for company numbers given in this paragraph are taken from Gurr, *Playing Companies* and Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*. For more details, see Appendix 3, below. Westfall, *Patrons*, Appendix A, pp. 210–12, lists the typical number of players employed or visiting great houses in the pre-1550 period as four to (exceptionally) six, suggesting a steep rise in membership during our period.

30 Tittler, *Architecture and Power*, pp. 146–7.

Players got into hot water with the mayors of both Norwich and Leicester, accused of defying proclamations issued by these dignitaries. They were in Stratford during the same accounting period. The Queen's Men, right at the start of their illustrious career (June 1584), precipitated the most notorious theatrical incident of the period when three of their leading actors, Tarlton, Singer and Bentley, stage-swords in hand, were involved in a brawl at Norwich that led to the death of an innocent local. They may have cooled off by the date of their next visit to Stratford four years later, but the incident serves to suggest that at this date professional theatre in the Guildhall was in all likelihood a full-blooded activity, as well as theatrically high level and relatively well-resourced.[31]

Guildhall Performances and Local History

It is tempting to try to map the list of theatre visits on to Stratford's local history, though the discussion will necessarily be brief and, in the absence in a majority of cases of unequivocal evidence, a matter of inference rather than proof.

The overall economic pattern of the century from 1540, countrywide, was, to quote Alan Dyer, 'marked by rising social and economic stress caused by an expanding population and price inflation, coupled with rapid economic change'.[32] In Stratford, this pattern was particularly marked, exacerbated by local disasters including famine, fire and epidemic. Bubonic plague struck in 1564 (Shakespeare's birth year), just before the period of recorded theatre visits, when 13 per cent of the population died. Mortality from disease, probably typhus and dysentery, linked with malnutrition and crop failure, occurred throughout the period and peaked from November 1596 until the spring of 1597. Does the virtual cessation of playing from 1597, or at any rate playing in the Guildhall, have anything to do with the town's distressed state? There are no documented visits between 1597 and the bans on playing in 1602 and 1612, even if unrecorded visits may have taken place. Or were the disease-related deaths, which occurred chiefly among the poor, irrelevant to hosting players? There may be a glimpse here of the socially select nature of Stratford audiences, though the evidence is too slight to support a conclusion.

The town burned in 1594 and 1595, when, it was claimed, 'over 200 houses were destroyed' and total damage, including goods spoiled, was estimated at the huge sum of £12,000. Collections for the relief of the Stratford poor were taken in neighbouring counties, in the city of Oxford and in London.[33] Yet as

31 For further information about the incidents mentioned, see Appendix 3.

32 Alan Dyer, 'Crisis and Resolution: Government and Society in Stratford, 1540–1640' in Robert Bearman (ed.), *History,* pp. 80–96, p. 80.

33 Alan Dyer in Bearman (ed.), *History*, p. 95; Levi Fox (ed.), *MA* vol. 5, pp. xix and 133; L.F. Salzman and Philip Styles (eds), *Victoria History of the Counties of England: Warwick* (London: Oxford University Press for the University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1945) vol. 3, pp. 221–82. Lewis Bayly, vicar in 1597 of Shipston-on-Stour, a few miles away, attributed the Stratford fire in his hugely popular *The Practice of Pietie* (12 editions by 1620) to 'prophaning the Lords Sabbaths, and

many as four companies, including, as it turns out, one high-profile troupe, visited in 1597, as if nothing of financial significance had happened. The visit of the Queen's Men among the four companies is notable for the further reason that it took place despite the fact that by 1594 the company's players were, in Gurr's words, 'ripe for reallocation'.[34] There is another possibly significant item in, or rather missing from, the visits list. Jeanne Jones's study of the Borough Chamberlain's accounts reveals that in the 60 years from 1570 to 1630 the accounts were in deficit on only 12 occasions, three of these being the years 1570, 1571 and 1572.[35] There are no records of players in the town in the first and second of those years and quite possibly not in the third, if the visit of Leicester's Men took place in the latter part of the 1572–3 accounting year. Is there a correlation, due to the depletion of the treasury, between the town's financial deficit and the absence of visiting players? Overall, these scraps of information are intriguing, but, in the absence of more detailed documentary evidence, not easily woven into a local-history explanation for the visits' irregular pattern.

The Puritan Tendency

What are we to make of the fact that Stratford was one of the earlier towns, a few years after Great Yarmouth in 1595 and Chester in 1596, to impose a ban on playing in the Guild or Common Hall? Historians are agreed that an accelerating trend towards Puritan confessional attitudes made itself apparent in the town in the last years of the century and perhaps earlier, before the first of the recorded bans and the spectacular Puritan-related events of the 1610s and 1620s discussed above. Jeanne Jones writes: 'the puritan faction within the [Stratford] Corporation became more powerful … It began to show its hand in the 1590s'.[36] Patrick Collinson sees such a development as part of a national movement of opinion, led by the Protestant earls including, notably, Leicester. The trend, he suggests, may be discerned in Stratford in the issues chosen for discussion and resolution by the Borough Council, and reflected, we may infer, in the Council's attitude to hosting professional players. In contrast to an earlier preoccupation with commercial

… contemning his word in the mouth of his faithfull Ministers' (quoted Fox, *MA* vol. 5, p. xix), suggesting that, as noted below, the godly did not hold unrestricted sway in late sixteenth-century Stratford.

34 Gurr, *Playing Companies*, p. 71. The size of the reward, 15*s*. 4*d*. in total, may well reflect a reduced company size for the Queen's Men.

35 Jeanne Jones, *Family Life in Shakespeare's England: Stratford-upon-Avon 1570–1630* (Stroud: Sutton, 1996), p. 124.

36 Jones, *Family Life*, pp. 110–11. The Puritan tide probably began its rise in Stratford at least as early as the appointment of the Puritan John Bretchgirdle as vicar in 1561, in replacement for Roger Dyos, a man 'of Romish inclination', though flexible in his views (see Introduction to this volume, p. 4). Also see, for example, Edgar I. Fripp, *Shakespeare Studies: Biographical and Literary* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 1930, pp. 13–17). Bearman sees early stirrings even before this date, largely in response to Latimer's determination in the 1530s to introduce Protestant forms of worship in his diocese ('Early Reformation Experience' p. 108).

and broadly social matters, with prices and larceny for example, 'by the early 1600s', Collinson notes, 'Shakespeare's neighbours were concerned with offences against God: swearing, contempt for God's ministers and God's Sabbath, and drunkenness. Stratford had become a little Geneva …'. This last is a striking phrase, if difficult to reconcile with detailed contemporary records as an overall assessment of the town's outlook: prominent as well as less noted townspeople varied in their religious convictions and behaviour. It nevertheless becomes clear from the records that the direction of trend among opinion formers, including the clergy, the social elite and town officials, lay in an increasingly Puritan direction.[37]

This inclination towards Puritan attitudes, while unmistakable, was not, in Stratford, abrupt in origin, or new at the date of the first ban in 1602. A 1586 survey of Warwickshire ministers found that of 186 incumbents fewer than 30 were able to 'preach the Word', a Puritan preoccupation, and many of them were not resident in their cures. Stratford seems to have been different in these respects from some neighbouring parishes. A notable exception to the seeming tide of incompetence and neglect was Richard Barton, vicar of Stratford, presented by the Earl of Warwick at Michaelmas 1584 and instituted on 17 February 1585. Barton was found in a contemporary survey to be 'learned, zealous and godlie, and fit for the ministrie. A happie age, yf our Church were fraight [provided] with manie such'. Barton features in this account as a contrast to Martin Delane, the incumbent of neighbouring St Mary's, Warwick, who was judged to be a lover of the alehouse and 'verie much subiect to the vice of good felowshippe', a coded formula for a boisterous and unreliable tippler.[38] The survey was Puritan-inspired, and biased, and cannot therefore be taken as more than a hint of clerical opinion (and by implication of lay opinion) in Stratford. It may nevertheless stand as one indication of a theological climate that may have precipitated or hastened the cessation of playing in the town's Guildhall.

A detail from the list of theatre visits to Stratford in the 1582–3 'season' offers what may be a further, token, corroboration of emerging Puritan sentiment in the town. The entry reads: 'Payed to Mr Alderman … & to a preacher …' The preacher on this occasion is unnamed, but preachers were front-line troops in the Puritan-Calvinist mission, so that the Corporation's payment to one in an official role may therefore be thought significant. The Corporation's favoured preacher three or four years later, in 1586, was the learned and unquestionably Puritan Thomas Cartwright, opponent of Archbishop Whitgift and critic of most things episcopal, whom Leicester had appointed Master of the Lord Leycester Hospital in Warwick the previous year. Cartwright was a noted controversialist, and a highly popular preacher, who preached in Stratford by invitation of the Corporation at least twice, in 1586 and 1587, and was entertained at the Swan. He was accompanied in 1586

37 Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, especially pp. 182–3, and *The Birthpangs of Protestant England*, p. 55.
38 Fripp, *MA* vol. 4, pp. xv–xvi; Ann Hughes, 'Building a Godly Town' in Bearman, *History*, p. 102.

by Job Throckmorton of nearby Haseley, an altogether more confrontational writer and controversialist than Cartwright, and a suspected author of some at least of the notorious Martin Marprelate tracts.[39] The unlikely coupling of a theatre company and a preacher in the visits list, surely a matter of chance, represents just possibly a sign of the times – and, it may be, of the divided views of Stratford's potential audiences and authorities.

It may be of interest to take this point one step further. It is impossible to recover, at this distance in time, and in the absence of written records, either the theme or the detail of Cartwright's sermons. Given the tenor of his published work, however, their emphasis would have been, it seems certain, on the godly life and the absolute need for 'the lampe of a preaching ministery'.[40] The surviving writings emphasise these matters repeatedly, together with Cartwright's unwavering preference for a Presbyterian form of Church government. If he turned in his preaching, in Stratford or elsewhere, to matters of public entertainment, it is unlikely he would have endorsed play performance as more than at the very best an occasional diversion.

Cartwright's friendship with Throckmorton, reciprocated by the latter's admiration, was qualified by a difference of style and temperament, and by an earnestness and moderation of argument in contrast to Throckmorton's altogether more ebullient and sometimes outrageous views. Throckmorton himself was an influential resident of the Stratford area, who in 1586 secured the parliamentary seat of Warwick by some distinctly unparliamentary lobbying. If the *Theses Martinianae* (1589), attributed to him, are indeed his work, it is not difficult to infer the opinion of theatre he may have shared with Cartwright and with any Stratford resident who cared to listen to his preaching. 'The stage players,' he writes,

> poore seelie hunger-starued wretches, they haue not so much as an honest calling to liue in the common-wealth: And they, poore varlets, are so base minded, as at the pleasure of the veryest rogue in England, for one poore pennie, they wil be glad on open stage to play the ignominious fooles, for an houre or two together. And therefore, poore rogues, they are not so much to be blamed; if being stage-players, that is, plaine rogues (saue onely for their liueries) …[41]

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39 For Cartwright and Throckmorton, see the articles on both men by Patrick Collinson in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* on-line edition (Oxford University Press, 2006), and appended bibliographies. The early biographer is S. Clarke in *A generall martyrology* (1651), quoted by Collinson. Throckmorton's authorship of some at least of the Marprelate tracts is now widely accepted. See Leland H. Carlson, *Martin Marprelate, gentleman: Master Job Throkmorton laid open in his colors* (San Marino, Calif: Huntington Library, 1981). While Collinson, *ODNB*, thinks Carlson takes his case too far, he broadly agrees with him in the attribution to Throckmorton of at least a number of the Marprelate tracts. The story of Cartwright's defending the proposition 'Monarchia est optimus status Reipublicae' when Elizabeth visited Cambridge in 1564, an undertaking that looks like an act of reckless folly, has to be understood, as Collinson points out, in the context of a formal academic exercise. It is nevertheless by no means inconsistent with Cartwright's courageous facing up to hardship and persecution both before and after his appointment as Master of the Lord Leycester Hospital.

40 Cartwright's letter as printed in Robert Browne, *An answere to Master Cartwright* (London, 1585) p. 87.

41 *Theses Martinianae* (1589), printed by John Hodgskin (or Hodgkins) at Wolston Priory, Warwickshire, sig. Dii v. As the well-informed internet source www.oxford-shakespeare.com/drk/marprelate notes, 'all the Marprelate tracts with the exception of Martin's *Epistle* were printed within a few miles of

This prejudiced rant goes on for some time. The concession relating to the players' liveries is however of some interest, since it represents Throckmorton's otherwise less than evident regard for the players' social status, and suggests that in regard to their liveries at least the players were sharply dressed and their allegiance to their patron clear. The general opinion is unmistakable, as is the bias of Throckmorton's outlook in another treatise in which, while he concedes that audiences may on occasion be 'edified' by 'these plaies or Theater Spectacles' he nevertheless asserts that theatres are places where God's 'holy ordinance is prophaned'.[42] If Throckmorton's views are typical of Stratford opinion in the 1580s, or at the least of an influential strand of Stratford opinion, it is hardly surprising that playing ceased within a few years, and was banned by the town authorities shortly thereafter.

The prevailing socio-religious climate in Stratford in the years preceding and surrounding the cessation of playing looks, then, to have been of a broadly Puritan cast. When the Throckmorton faction or its fellow travellers were in the ascendant, plays in the Guild buildings were always likely to be banned. We should not forget, however, that several prominent families, including leading members of the Corporation – there are multiple references in the *Minutes and Accounts* – were not only recusants of the clerical left or right, but declared Papists.[43] The town remained, even at the end of the century, we have to conclude, a mixed-faith community. Ann Hughes, referring to an essay by Patrick Collinson, has remarked on the comparative lateness of Stratford's elimination of its 'papist' images in the Guild Chapel, under John Shakespeare the poet's father as official paymaster, a sluggishness of response suggesting the town's reluctance to embrace wholeheartedly the Protestant spirit.[44] What we are seeing, I suggest, is a developing cast of mind, not so much confessional in nature – Catholic or Calvinist – but more broadly cultural, increasingly moralistic and Borough-proud.

Yet a disinclination to support playing on the part of an influential section of town opinion, even in combination with adverse local circumstances, may not

Leicester's brother Ambrose Dudley's seat of Warwick Castle and Leicester's own Warwickshire seat of Kenilworth'.

42 *M Some laid open in his coulers* (La Rochelle: R. Waldegrave, 1589) p. 118. 'M Some' was Robert Some (1542–1609), Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, and Fellow of Queens' College. He took a middle course between high Anglicans and Puritans, and tried to moderate in the Marprelate controversy.

43 Bearman, however ('Early Reformation Experience', p. 70), points out that by the end of the sixteenth century 'persistent Catholic recusancy can be shown … to be limited to less than a dozen households'. The most colourful and controversial of the Papist members of the Corporation was probably George Badger, subsequently and distantly connected with the Gunpowder Plot, who on 27 July 1597 'for his wylfull refusinge to come to the Halle havinge lawfull warninge shalle forfeit the some of ffyve poundes' – a considerable fine (*MA* vol. 5. pp. 105–6). Evidently Badger had his supporters among members of the Corporation, for he was elected Bailiff at a meeting on 7 September 1597. He refused to serve, despite having stood for election. Local politics, within which religious politics undoubtedly played their part, may well have been as complicated and fraught as they are now. The episode is only one of a number of similar tussles relating to the Corporation's affairs in the last years of the century, suggesting, as outlined above, that the town was not of a uniform mind in matters of religion.

44 Hughes, 'Godly Town', p. 97. Adams is in accord with this view of mixed allegiances, in this case among Leicester's household staff and clientele ('Robert Dudley … and the West Midlands', pp. 46–7).

of itself have been responsible for touring theatre's effective disappearance, or at the least suspension. Several scholars[45] have noted the larger casts that became characteristic of playscripts, and therefore one assumes of touring productions, in the post-1583 period, making a performance venue in a small and comparatively low-paying town such as Stratford a less than attractive proposition financially. Visits may have largely fizzled out, that is to say, for commercial reasons. They may have ceased, furthermore, in response to national initiatives rather than local opinion. Robert Bearman has drawn my attention to a note scribbled by a local hand on a printed copy of James I's revision of Elizabeth's Act dealing with 'rogues and vagabonds', which refers among other individuals and groups to travelling players (1 James c 7, 1603/4; SCLA BRU 16/3). At a point where the Act mentions players enjoying immunities while travelling under noble patronage, the scribbled note reads: 'Barons may not give licence to players'. It looks from this as though some locals at least sympathised with the Corporation's hardening stance against players as evidenced by the banning order of 1602. In keeping with most events of any consequence, the causes of the cessation of playing, unsurprisingly, are unlikely to have been simple or singular.

Other Stratford Venues?

The focus of this chapter has been on the Guildhall, in line with the interests of the volume as a whole. It should not be thought, however, that the Guildhall was, as a matter of choice or necessity, the only performance venue for professional players in Stratford. It seems likely, on the model of other towns, that after the official preview performance the companies played in one or other of the inns – so making their visit financially viable. Four inns were in existence in Stratford in the later sixteenth century, if we observe Peter Clark's distinction between *inns* ('large, fashionable establishments offering wine, ale and beer, together with quite elaborate food and lodging'), *taverns* ('selling wine to the more prosperous, but without the extensive accommodation of inns') and *alehouses* ('normally smaller premises serving ale or beer').[46] The relevant Stratford inns were all located in Bridge Street, the town's main traffic axis. The two principal were the Bear and the Swan, both situated at the foot of the street, the former on the south side, the latter on the north. The Bear, now known as the Encore, survives today in a much altered form. The Swan

45 See, for example, Gurr, *Playing Companies*, p. 43; McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, p. 108.

46 Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200–1830* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1983), p. 5. If Clark is right in his generalisation (p. 145) that 'a storm of criticism erupted against alehouses in the late sixteenth century … Puritan preachers, government ministers, magistrates and village worthies all raised their voices loud in condemnation', this further illustrates the divisions of sectarian opinion in Stratford, for the Bear and the Swan (inns rather than alehouses) were much favoured by the authorities, and were by no means regarded with a 'hostility [which] was also fuelled by a fear, sometimes bordering on the hysterical, that alehouses were being transformed into the strongholds of a populist world which aimed to overthrow established, respectable society'.

has been demolished and its site swallowed into BHS, the department store. Both inns were extensively used by the Borough Council for entertaining, with local celebrities including Sir Thomas Lucy and Sir Fulke Greville wined and dined, as well as national figures including, in 1582, Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick and in 1577, Stratford's diocesan bishop and Cartwright's opponent John Whitgift, bishop of Worcester and subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury.[47] A surviving inventory of the Swan shows it to have been a large country inn, its contents valued in 1602–03 at £327 19*s*. 7*d*., a formidable sum. The Inn incorporated a 'hall', five chambers (Dickenson's, Lyon, Cock, Talbot and the 'lower parlour') and a 'greate upper chamber', with a yard, stables and outbuildings.[48] Performances could have taken place in the 'hall', the 'great upper chamber' or, perhaps more probably, the yard. Inn yards such as those of the Bear and the Swan no doubt shared dimensions and layout with those contemporary examples still surviving, physically or in detailed drawings at, for example, Southwark, Gloucester, Cambridge and Norton St Philip near Bath. It is not unlikely that visiting companies would have taken the opportunity to play at one or other of the Inns in whatever accommodation each afforded. There is good evidence that this was indeed the case in other locations across the land.[49]

Playing the Guildhall: Using the Space

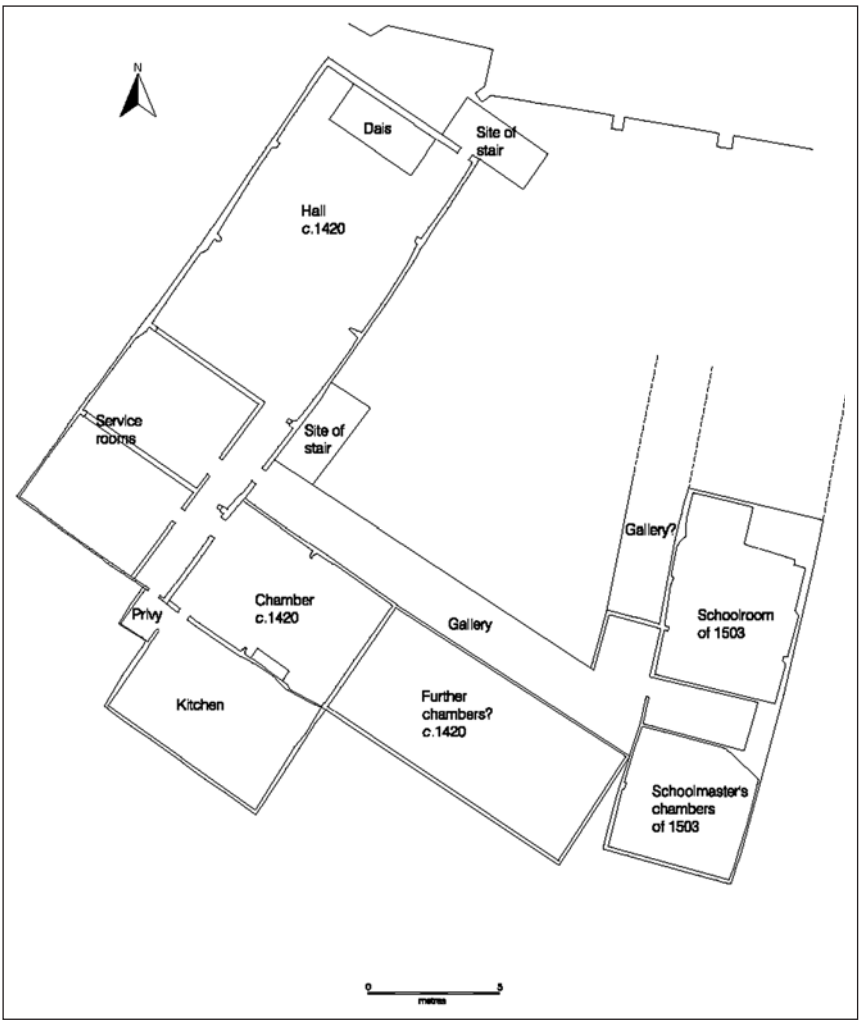
As a previous chapter of this book records, the Guildhall has recently been the subject of archaeological and historical investigation, on behalf of King Edward VI School.[50] A scale drawing (see Fig 8.3) prepared by Jonathan Clark and Kate Giles shows the first floor of the Hall as it probably was in the sixteenth century, together with the 'Chamber' adjacent to it. The feature of the drawing of immediate interest, assuming for the moment that the players performed in this first-floor space, is the configuration of the upper Hall (or 'over' Hall) during the relevant years. There is clear evidence, outlined by Giles and Clark in this book, that the Hall was originally divided by partitions

47 For the two inns, see, among other references, *MA* vol. 1, pp. xxxi n. 5, xliii and liv; vol. 3, p. 97; vol. 4, p. 56 n.1; vol. 5, pp. 20 n.2 and 31 n.2. Illustrations of inns contemporary with those at Stratford appear in Clark, *English Alehouses*, Keenan, *Travelling Players*, and on the website of Norton St Philip, which shows a plan of the George Inn in its sixteenth-century guise, including a 'timber framed gallery running the length of the courtyard', rather as it is thought was the case at the Guildhall in Stratford (see later pages in this chapter).

48 J.O. Halliwell's pamphlet, *An Inventory of the Furniture, Etc., of a Tavern at Stratford-on-Avon, Taken in the Time of Shakespeare* (n.p., n.d.), presented to the Shakespeare Museum, March 1864. See also a report of a talk given by Edgar I. Fripp on 'The Bear' and 'The Swan', collected in the 'Summary of Papers read before the Shakespeare Club, Stratford-upon-Avon, during the session 1924–1925', Shakespeare Club Papers 1920–1928, Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive. Fripp's measurements of the wainscoting for the hall and chambers do not suggest very large rooms.

49 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, Chapter 5, 'Drama at Drinking Houses: Inn Performances', pp. 87–106.

50 The archaeological research was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund under a Project Planning Grant, and carried out by a team from Field Archaeology Specialists of York, led by Dr Jonathan Clark and Dr Kate Giles.



8.3 Scale drawing of the Upper (or Over) Guildhall. © FAS Heritage.

closing off two smaller rooms at its southern end to serve, probably, as buttery and pantry, with a corridor running along the eastern side giving access to the 'Chamber'. In the mid-1560s the interior partition of the buttery-and-pantry space was removed, probably at the time of the migration of the school from its earlier schoolroom into the Guildhall. At the dates on which the travelling players visited, the upper Hall would have had, that is to say, two distinct areas, one used by the Corporation (at the northern end) and the other (the buttery-and-pantry space) possibly used as a classroom by the school. The alternative possibility – that the school made use of the larger, northern, part of this upper floor – as Ian Green suggests in Chapter 4 (pp. 84–5) above – would not affect the argument that follows.

It is uncertain whether the players performed in the upper or lower Guildhall, and opinion on the matter has varied. The upper Hall seems more

probable, chiefly on three counts, none of them decisive: if the players built a stage, which seems to have been a frequent if not invariable practice[51], the lower Hall is altogether too low-ceilinged to permit this; second, any actor/producer/director, then or now, would prefer the commodious, bright and ample upper Hall to the smaller, low-ceilinged Hall below, though it needs to be remembered that fenestration has changed in both spaces since the sixteenth century, thus affecting available light; and, third, some references in the documentary evidence suggest, though they fall short of proving, that the upper Hall was traditionally used in the relevant period for formal Guild occasions, including feasts, allowing us to guess that use of the upper Hall for plays would be accepted as a natural development.[52] It remains entirely possible, it has to be said, that the lower Hall was used instead; the partitions which had subdivided it in the medieval and immediately post-medieval period had gone by the later sixteenth century, in this way clearing a viable performance space.

Where, assuming the upper Hall was indeed used, did performance take place? One strong possibility is that the actors performed with their backs to the service-room area, which they could use as tiring-room accommodation and for temporary storage of stage properties. An audience would gather at the northern end of the Hall, probably seated on benches.[53] The 'Chamber' could serve for additional costume and stage-management purposes, except one supposes when it was occupied by the schoolmaster, as we know it was for a period in the 1580s. There is archaeological evidence for the existence of a dais measuring approximately 11'8" by 5' in the upper Hall. This could be used as a stage, though a cramped one, if the players were to perform at the northern end of the room. It seems more likely, however, that the dais was occupied by the Bailiff for his 'command' performance, rather as, we know, a parallel arrangement was set up for Elizabeth (and James) on royal occasions.[54] If we accept this suggestion, it is appealing to reflect that John Shakespeare would have sat there during his term as Bailiff in 1568–9, with,

51 We may ask, however, whether the expense, in both time and money, would have been justified for a single performance.

52 See Introduction, p. 12. Jonathan Clark writes that 'the feasting references in the later 16th century accounts do not clearly differentiate between upper and lower halls … I think the most telling reference is from 1610–11, in which a new chimney is being erected for the hall. It was necessary to take up the boarded floor and to lay the 'somers' (bressummers) and joists where the former 'kyll' (presumably the former heating system) had stood in the hall (SCLA BRU 4/1/225). This work would only have been necessary at first floor level in the upper hall. That it was felt necessary to upgrade the heating at this time would strongly suggest that the upper hall was still intended for relatively high status activities such as feasting' (by private email). It might be added that the discovery of a medieval kitchen on the first floor (a rare survival) would tend to support this theory.

53 The space available for performance in the upper Hall, on the present assumptions, would be approximately 38'4" by 21'8", a fairly small area, but considerably larger than the upper chamber in Cambridge Town Hall (approximately 25' by 17½'), where there is clear evidence of performance taking place, and not much smaller than the average size of civic halls, as reported by Keenan (20–25 feet in width and 45–50 feet in length): Keenan, *Travelling Players*, pp. 28–9. The upper Guildhall as used by Oliver Jones for his production of *Troublesome Reign* (see Chapter 9 below) proved entirely adequate for an audience of, on that occasion, more than 30 spectators.

54 See, for example, the discussion in John H. Astington, *English Court Theatre, 1558–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) especially Chapter 2, pp. 35–74.

we might like to think, four- or five-year-old William by his side. William would have had subsequent opportunities to join his father at Guildhall plays as he grew older, when, after his term as Bailiff, John would have attended visiting shows as Alderman and civic leader.

Outdoor Playing at the Guildhall?

There is a final matter of some interest, for which we have to return to the banning order of 1602. The Order specifies that 'there shalbe no plays or enterlewdes playd in the Chamber the guild halle nor in any p[ar]te of the howsse or Courte'. Where were these several spaces? The Chamber referred to could be the 'Chamber c. 1420' shown on the archaeologists' drawing, especially if the minute-taker in 1602 were thinking of its use as a 'green room' when performances were taking place in the upper Hall – it is too small to serve as a primary playing space. Equally, 'Chamber' might be a name for the lower Hall in reference to its role as the Council's normal working space. The *Minutes and Accounts* quite frequently use the term 'Chamber' to refer to the Borough Council as a whole, and therefore by association to the Hall in which the Council met, including of course the lower Hall.

The tantalising feature of the Order comes in the phrase 'any p[ar]te of the howsse or Courte'.[55] The Order's terms are presumably intended as a blanket description, referring to every space the Guildhall offered. There is in addition the intriguing possibility that performance may have taken place outside the building itself. One conclusion by the York archaeologists is that a gallery may have existed on the southern side of the outdoor space, immediately next to the Hall, and may also have extended along the eastern side of the courtyard – at the time occupied by half-timbered buildings. The location of these features is indicated by 'Gallery' or 'Gallery?' on the drawing (see Figure 8.3). There is warrant in the minutes of the Borough Council for January 1596 for use of the term 'the Chapell Courte' to refer to 'the court or quadrangle behind the Guildhall [i.e. to the east of the Guildhall], adjoining the Guild Chapel'.[56] It is possible, following this line of thought, that plays were performed, and were banned from future performance, not only within the building but also in the open-air courtyard, with the gallery used as audience or performance space.

Fortunately, Robert Bearman's notice of a fresh reference to playing in the Guildhall, mentioned earlier in this chapter, goes a long way towards confirming the conclusion just reached. The Order dated 16 July 1612 (the

55 A mistranscription of *Borough Council Book B*, 1593–1628, repeated in several commentaries but corrected in *MA* vol. 6, p. 205, gives this entry as 'howsse and Courte'. Careful checking makes it clear that the correct reading is 'or' not 'and'.

56 Levi Fox (ed.), *MA* vol. 5, pp. 73–5. It is just possible that 'Courte' could refer to the Court Room, probably at this period in the lower Guildhall, or even to the building as a whole (a less probable interpretation, given the specificity of other items in this list).

second banning order of that year) alludes to 'any mann[er] of playes or enterludes to be played or acted wthin the Towne hall, Councell Chamber, Schoolehouse or the place called the Guyld Courte or yarde there or any p[ar]te thereof.' The 'Towne hall' refers to the Guildhall as a whole. The 'Councell Chamber' may refer either to the room abutting the upper Guildhall to the east or to the room immediately below on the ground floor. The latter may be more probable as it represents the space used by officials of the Council as their headquarters; Borough officials would be more than anxious to prohibit intrusion into this working area.

The relevant phrase is the one that mentions the 'Guyld Courte or yarde', spelling out the implication of the reference to the 'Courte' in the 1602 Minute. Plainly the official who drew up the Order had in mind the open courtyard just discussed, so we may conclude on this evidence that playing took place outdoors as well as indoors in the pre-1612 period. It is true of course – caveats are never far away in this discussion – that it may have been 'entertainment' of any kind which had taken place in the courtyard and is now specifically banned, not necessarily play performance. And if the outdoor performances were indeed plays, it seems at first blush improbable that a command performance would have taken place outside the building itself. The performances that were 'played or acted' outside may have been, on these grounds, follow-up shows staged in the courtyard once specific licence to perform in the town had been granted. Equally, an enterprising or influential visiting company may have persuaded the civic authorities to shed a little of their dignity to watch the command performance out of doors – with the objective of making theatrically telling use of the courtyard, the balcony and the windows overlooking the outdoor space. It may even be that the similarity of the 'Guyld Courte or yarde' to the usual dimensions and configuration of inn yards would have been attractive to visiting companies, on the grounds that performance there would obviate the need for re-rehearsal and re-blocking when the play transferred to or from an inn yard elsewhere.

Outcomes

There is a great deal that remains speculative about professional players in the Stratford Guildhall of Shakespeare's time. It may be hoped that further archaeological and documentary discovery will tell us more about the spaces in which the players performed, and that advancing local history will further illuminate the social, commercial and political-sectarian circumstances the players encountered. Much, however, seems irrecoverably lost, a regrettable outcome given the proportion of their acting lives the players of major companies spent on the road – and the influence their work may well have had on the imagination of the greatest of English dramatists.

Appendix 1

The Banning Orders

1) The orders for the cessation of playing in the Stratford Guildhall. Transcribed from the Borough Council Book B, 1593–1628 (SCLA BRU 2/2) held in the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon. And see the transcription in *MA* vol. 6 p. 205. The 16 July 1612 Order is from a transcription by Robert Bearman of an entry in SCLA BRU 3/2.

1602 (17 December)

At this halle yt ys ordered that there shalbe no pleys or enterlewedes playd in the Chamber, the guild halle, nor in any parte of the howsse or Courte From hensforward upon payne that whosoeuer of the Baylief, Alderman & Burgesses of this boroughe shall gyve leave or licence thereunto shall forfeyt for everie offence x s.

1612 (2 February)

The inconuenience of plaies being verie seriouslie considered of with the unlawfullnes, and howe contrarie the sufferance of them is againste the orders hearetofore made, and againste the examples of other well governed Citties and Burrowes The companie heare are contented and there conclude that the penaltie of x s. imposed in mr. Bakers yeare for breakinge the order shall from henceforth be x l. vpon the breakers of that order: and this to holde vntill the nexte common councell, and from thencforth, for euer excepted, That [it] be then fiinally revoked and made voide.

1612 (16 July)

It[e]m yt is ordered that the Bayliffe and chiefe Alderman … shall not at any tyme hereafter licence or suffer any mann[er] of playes or enterludes to be played or acted wthin the Towne hall, Councell Chamber, Schoolehouse or the place called the Guyld Courte or yarde there or any p[ar]te thereof … upon payne that the Bayliffe & chiefe Alderman … that shall licence or suffer any such playes to play in any of the said places shall forfeyte for ev[er]y such licence or sufferaunce fowretie shilling[es].

2) The order for the cessation of playing at Chester. Reprinted from Lawrence M. Clopper (ed.), *Records of Early English Drama: Chester* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979) pp. 292–3.

(20 October 1615) (Chester Assembly Books)

Moreover at the same Assemblie Consideracion was had of the Comon Brute and Scandall which this Citie hath of late incurred and sustained by admittinge of Stage Plaiers to Acte their obscene and vnlawfull Plaies or tragedies in the Comon Hall of this Citie thereby Convertinge the same, beinge appointed and ordained for the Iudiciall hearinge and determininge of Criminall offences, and for the solempne

meetinge and Concourse of this howse, into a Stage for Plaiers and a Receptacle for idle persons. And Consideringe likewise the many disorders which by reason of Plaies acted in the night time doe often times happen and fall out to the discredit of the government of this Citie and to the greate disturbance of quiet and well disposed People, and beinge further informed that mens servantes and apprentices neglectinge their Masters business doe Resorte to Innehowses to behold such Plaies and there manie times wastfullie spende thar Masters goodes ffor avoidinge of all which inconveniences It is ordered that from hensforth noe Stage Plaiers vpon anie pretence or color Whatsoever shalbe admitted or licenced to set vp anye Stage in the said Common Hall or to acte anie tragedie or Commedie or anie other Plaie by what name soever they shall terme hit, in the said Hall or in anie other Place within this Citie or the Liberties therof in the night time or after vje of the Clocke in the eveninge.

Appendix 2

Visits of Professional Players to Stratford-Upon-Avon 1568–1620: A Chronological List

Transcribed in simplified form from the Borough Council Books, vols A and B, (1554–1594 and 1593–1628) and the Chamberlain's Accounts 1590–7 and 1585–1619, held in the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford-upon-Avon. Emboldening added. The full list will appear in Alan Somerset (ed.), *Records of Early English Drama: Warwickshire* (forthcoming). Payments are recorded and accounts signed off by the Chamberlain(s) during the calendar year (in January or February normally) following the year(s) in which the payments were in fact made. These payments may refer to visits taking place up to the end of the accounting year in December, or to the term of office of the town's bailiff, i.e. Michaelmas to Michaelmas (29 September) in each year. This explains the two-year span of dates given in some instances. I am grateful to Oliver Jones, who has checked this list and made two corrections to the Appendix to my *Shakespeare Survey* article, entered here under the dates 1572–3 and 1582–3. I am also grateful to Robert Bearman and Alan Somerset who have been especially helpful in sorting out perplexities relating to visits by companies of players in the mid-1590s, in the wake of Robert's rediscovery of contemporary annotations to documents held in SCLA which have allowed identification of three companies visiting in 1596–7, including an exact date for the visit of the Queen's Men (16–17 July). The reference in the Chamberlains' Account, dated 13 January, 1598, (*MA* vol. 5, p. 123), to 'foure companyes' may possibly refer, Bearman suggests, to four performances, rather than four separate troupes of players, with the Queen's Men paid for two performances. The payment to the King's Men for *not* playing comes from SCLA BRU 4/2: 'Richard Robine Accomtes Ano 1622' (accounts submitted 10 January 1623) 'Payd to the Kinges players for not playinge in the hall – vi s'. This does not rule out a performance or performances by the King's Men elsewhere in the town. As a note of

caution, it may be worth referring to Sally-Beth MacLean's description of the activities of Lord Strange's Men (who visited Stratford in 1578–9) where it emerges that they were rewarded for 'feats of activity' and 'tumbling' during their visit to Southampton in 1577, rather than play performance. See MacLean, 'A family tradition: dramatic patronage by the Earls of Derby' in Dutton et al., (eds), *Region, Religion and Patronage*, pp. 205–26, p. 217.

1568–9 Item payd to the **Quenes Players** ix s.
Item to the **Erle of Worcesters pleers** xij d.
1572–3 paid to mr bayly for the **earle of lecesters players** v s. viij d
1574–5 geven my **lord of warwicke players** xvij s.
paid the **earle of worcester players** v s. vij d.
1576–7 Paid to my **Lord of Leyster players** xv s.
Paid to my **lord of Wosters players** iiij s. iiij d.
1578–9 Paid to my **lord Straunge men** the xj th day of february [1579?] at the comaundement of Mr. Baliffe v s.
Paid at the commaundement of Mr baliffe to the **countys of Essex plears** xiiij s. vj d.
1579–80 Paid to the **Earle of Darbyes players** at the commaundement of Mr Baliffe viij s. iiij d.
1580–1 Paid to the **Earle of Worcester his players** iij s iiij d.
Paid to the **Lord Bartlett his players** iij s. ij d.
1581–2 Payed to Henry Russell for the **Earle of worcesters players** v s.
1582–3 Payed to Mr Alderman that he layd downe to ye **lord Bartlite his players** & to a preacher v s.
payd to the **lord shandowes** [**Chandos'**] **players** iij s. iiij d.
1583–4 geven to my **lord of oxfordes pleers** iij s. iiij d.
geven to the **earle of worcester pleers** iij s. iiij d.
geven to the **earle of essex pleers** iij s. viij d.
1586 paide to Mr Tiler [Mr Bailiff] for the players [**? Sussex's**] v s.
1587 It pd for mendinge of a forme that was broken by the **quenes players** xvj d.
Item gyven to the **Quenes players** xx s.
Item gyven to my **Lord of Essex players** v s.
Item gyven to **therle of leycester his players** x s.
Item gyven to **an other Companye** iij s. iiij d.
Item gyven to **my Lord of Staffordes men** iij s. iiij d.
1592 payd to **the queenes players** xx s.
1593 paid vnto **the Queenes players** xx s.
1597 payd to him [Abraham Sturley, recently bailiff] for **foure companyes of players** [including **the Queen's Men** (known date of visit 16–17 July)[57]] **Lord Derby's** and **Lord Ogle's**] xix s iiij d.

57 The date for the Queen's Men's visit is taken from a rough set of accounts in Richard Quiney's hand (drawn to my attention by Bearman): BRU, 5/1/19: 'Julii 16 and 17 paid the Queens plaiers 10s'. This

1618 Delivered per Mr bayliffes apoyntment to **a Company of players** (perhaps the King's Men)[58] v s.
Delivered Mr bayliffe which was given to **a company** that came with a shew to the towne iiis iiiid.
1620 paid p. Mr. Bayliffe apoyntment to **players** vj s.

[No record of payment thereafter appears to be extant, except for a payment compensating players for *not* playing: '1622 Payd to the **kinges players** fore not playinge in the hall vi s' – perhaps a sign of failure of nerve on the part of the anti-Puritan faction or a response by their opponents to previous breaches of the prohibitions. An untraced 1633 record has been said to refer 'to the players at Christtide by Mr Aldermans appointment'.]

Appendix 3

Playing companies: Three representative professional companies visiting Stratford-upon-Avon, 1568–1620.

Earl of Worcester's Players

Size of Company

'Item paid by Consent to the Earle of Worcester his players the 14 of June [1577] beinge x of them'. Source: John Tucker Murray, *English Dramatic Companies 1558–1642*, 2 volumes (London: Constable, 1910) vol. 2, p. 397, transcribing the *Liber de Finibus Ville Suthampton 1489–1593*. Ten players are also recorded at Norwich and Leicester, 1583/4.

Licence dated '14 of Januarye Aº 25º Eliz. Re' [1583] lists a company of eight: Robt. Browne, James Tunstall [Dunstan], Edward Allen [Alleyn], Wm. Harryson, Tho Cooke, Ryc. Johnes, Edward Browne, Ryc. Andrewes. Murray adds two others for the visit to Leicester (6 March 1584), 'Wm. Pateson my lord Habards [Herbert's] man. Tho. Powlton my lord of Worcester's man'. Source: Murray vol. 1, pp. 44–5; Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 42–3.

Worcester's Men visited Stratford in both 1576–7 and 1583–4.

is supplemented in the same document by a scribbled note in a lighter ink: 'Therle of Darbies' 'mi Ld Ogles'.

58 The possible attribution to the King's Men is from G.E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941–1956), p. 92, citing E.A. Barnard, *New Links with Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), p. 5.

Troubles with authority

Norwich 1583: the city authorities, worried 'for fear of any infection as also for that they came from an infected place' banned their performance. The company defied the ban, playing 'in theire hoste his hows' (an inn?). The Mayor ordered 'that their Lorde [i.e. the Earl of Worcester] shalbee certyfyed of their contempt & that hensforth the sayd players shall never receive any rewarde of the citty whensoever they shall come agayn And that they shall presently depart owt of this citty & not to play uppon payn of Imprysonment'. The wrongdoing was apparently not reported to the Earl. Source: Gurr, *Shakespearean Playing Companies*, p. 317, citing *REED: Norwich* pp. 65, 66.

A similar dust-up occurred with the Mayor of Leicester (6 March 1584), when the company defied the Mayor's order not to play by performing at their inn, giving him 'evyll & contemptyous words'. They repented, begged him not to write to their Master, and were permitted 'to play this night at there inn'. Source: Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage* vol. 2, pp. 223–4.

Worcester's Men played the Stratford Guildhall in 1583–4.

Earl of Leicester's Players

Size of Company Behaviour

'Item paid [in Southampton] to my Lorde of Leycesters plaiers xii of them the xxiith of September 1577.' Source: Murray vol. 2, p. 397 transcribing the *Liber de Finibus Ville Suthampton 1489–1593.* Payment in Mayor's accounts at Bristol (1577) of 3*s*. 6*d*. for 'mending the borde in the yeld hall and dores there, after my lord of Leycesters players who had leave to play there'. Source: Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies,* p. 194.

Leicester's Men visited Stratford in 1576–7.

Personnel

A letter of 1572 asking to be upgraded to being the Earl's household servants (as against liveried players merely), in order to meet the terms of the proclamation on company patronage of 3 January that year, is signed by James Burbage, John Perkin, John Laneham, William Iohnson, Robert Wilson and Thomas Clarke. A royal patent (10 May 1574) names the same players (except Clarke). Burbage was elsewhere described as 'a man of violent temper and not over-honest'.

The Company visited Stratford in 1573–4 (as well as 1576–7 and 1587). Source: Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 186, 187; Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 306.

Queen's Men

Size of Company and Personnel

Twelve players were named at the formation of the company in 1583, including John Bentley, John Dutton, William Johnson, John Singer, Richard Tarlton and Robert Wilson. The Queen's Men probably divided into two companies c. 1587/8. Source: Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 196–211, McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, *passim* especially pp. 194–7.

Trouble with Authority

On 15 June 1583 an affray took place in connection with a performance at the Red Lion Inn, Norwich, occasioned by the reluctance of a would-be audience member to pay the entrance fee; this led to the death of a bystander. The squabble involved Tarlton, Singer and Bentley, the latter two of whom were committed to gaol. Source: Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 105; McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 42–3; Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 203–4; Keenan, *Travelling Players*, pp. 99–106.

The Company played Stratford in 1587, 1592, 1593, 1597.

Repertoire

Plays included *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *King Leir*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John, The True Tragedy of Richard III*. Source: Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 211, McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 160–66.

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The Queen's Men in Stratford and The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England

Oliver Jones

In 1587, after four years travelling the length and breadth of the kingdom, the royal troupe of players, the Queen's Men, presented themselves to the high bailiff and aldermen of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon at their headquarters in the town's medieval Guildhall. Formed in 1583, this elite company contained the most talented and most celebrated actors of the age. Hand-picked by Elizabeth's Master of Revels, Edmund Tilney, they presented plays both at court for the monarch's 'solace' and across the realm, maintaining a royal presence-by-proxy throughout a politically and socially turbulent kingdom.[1]

The Queen's Men's visit to Stratford in 1587 was not extraordinary. Stratford was a routine stop for many companies on their perambulations along the touring circuits of late-sixteenth-century England, and the Corporation hosted and rewarded numerous performances by both local and national companies.[2] In 1587 alone the Corporation received and rewarded a further four companies, spending £2 1*s*. 8*d*. in the process.[3] Yet the 'new' Queen's Men's first visit to the town merits further attention for a preceding entry in the chamberlain's accounts for 1586/7, where it is recorded

It. p^{d} for mendinge of a forme that was broken by the quenes players xvj^{d}.[4]

1 See Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 8 and E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (4 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), vol. 1, p. 267. For a convenient listing of travelling players in Stratford see Appendix 2 to J.R. Mulryne's chapter in this book.

2 For a general overview of touring routes see Sally-Beth MacLean, 'Tour Routes: "Provincial Wanderings" or Traditional Circuits?', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 6 (1993), 1–14; for the Queen's Men in particular see McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 37–83. Printed records of payments to players visiting Stratford can be found in the *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon* (*MA*), ed. R. Savage, with introduction and notes by E.I. Fripp (4 vols, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1921–29), L. Fox (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1990) and R. Bearman (Stratford-upon-Avon, 2011).

3 *MA* vol. 4, pp. 30–33.

4 Ibid., p. 31.

Such a record is rare, bringing us closer to the performance event as it does. The vast majority of pages in the published volumes of the *Records of Early English Drama (REED)* series, and other studies focused on specific early modern companies,[5] contain nothing more informative than the sums of money paid to visiting troupes. The information given in the great majority of these records allows us to track a theatrical company's geographical presence – although the precision of such an exercise depends on the conscientiousness of the record-maker – but it does not tell us which plays the companies performed nor, except in rare instances, where they performed them. The occasional reference that does go beyond mere remuneration – the damage to the form, for example – prompts us to probe more carefully into the phenomenon of provincial performance, and to ask how the practice of theatre intersected physically and ideologically with the social spaces and the audiences of provincial England.

The *REED* project has shown that visits to provincial towns and performances in the spaces made available there represented common practice for Elizabethan companies. The London theatres may have grown and eclipsed such practices through the later years of the sixteenth century, but the knowledge that informed and drove their rise stemmed from touring traditions and the facilities players encountered on the road. In spite of this premise being more widely acknowledged by scholars in recent years, much discussion of early modern theatre continues to view it primarily as a metropolitan phenomenon.[6] The supposition that performances designed for London audiences and London spaces were then adapted for a provincial audience and locale still underlies most critical examinations of play texts.[7] Inevitably, this has involved thinking about staging in relation to purpose-built theatre spaces in London, north and south of the river, about which we know less perhaps than we imagine.[8] Some headway has been made identifying those spaces used for provincial performances, which include inns, churchyards and guildhalls.[9] Nevertheless, study of the plays themselves

5 Notably McMillin and MacLean, pp. 170–88.

6 See Leslie Thomson, 'Staging on the Road, 1586–1594: A New Look at Some Old Assumptions', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61 (2010), 526–50 ; Roslyn Knutson, 'What's So Special about 1594?', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61 (2010), 450–51; and Barbara Palmer, 'Early Modern Mobility: Players, Payments, and Patrons', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56 (2005), 259–305, especially p. 259. Peter Holland has expressed his frustration that London-centric theatre historians have not 'theorized the position within the central strategies of theatre history of almost any form of event that is non-metropolitan and/or non-professional ... [abandoning] the work to those working on the *REED* project itself, as if they have taken over our more general responsibility for investigating such materials': 'Theatre Without Drama: Reading REED', in Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (eds), *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 43–67, here pp. 53–4.

7 The most recent critical edition of any of the Queen's Men's plays, George Peele, *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England,* ed. Charles R. Forker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), considers the play only within the context of London playhouses and unnecessarily looks to the full range of theatre machinery available in these theatres for the staging of several key scenes.

8 See Holger Schott Syme, 'The Meaning of Success: Stories of 1594 and Its Aftermath', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61 (2010), 490–525.

9 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men,* pp. 67–83; Siobhan Keenan, *Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); J.A.B. Somerset, '"How chances it they travel?" Provincial touring, playing places, and the King's Men', *Shakespeare Survey* 47 (1994), 45–60; John

in the spaces for which they were written and in which they were performed is as yet undeveloped.

This chapter represents a modest contribution to a new beginning. It seeks to situate aspects of one play within the context of the Stratford Guildhall, in order to investigate both the play itself and the building in which it was performed. It is my thesis that ephemeral performance is constrained by the material conditions in which it is situated, and that greater understanding of text and performance can only be achieved through studying the spaces that informed and framed them. Andrew Gurr has argued that play texts 'must be related to the distinctive repertoire of the company that performed them and the kinds of playhouse the company was using'.[10] Moreover, as archaeological excavation has made earlier speculation over the construction and dimensions of the London venues less secure, it seems appropriate to turn the spotlight on those buildings we know to have hosted early modern performance that are still extant.[11]

The study of medieval and early modern vernacular buildings has thrived in the past 20 years. Discussion of the relevant archaeological, historical and sociological theories and methodologies employed could occupy a complete chapter.[12] For present purposes, however, they can be summed up as follows: buildings should not be seen as merely functional but rather as dynamic spaces. Buildings, through their occupants' practice of everyday activities and ingrained habits of mind, are imbued with symbolism and expectations that carry social weight, which in turn inform and mediate the actions undertaken within and around them.[13] To understand a building we must understand its occupants and *vice versa*.

The preceding chapters of this book have investigated various activities held within Stratford's Guildhall, the specific spaces with which they were associated, and the often complex political and social negotiations they entailed. The question now arises, what happens when something unusual and non-routine is introduced, when the space is appropriated for a new,

Wasson, 'Professional Actors in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 3 (1984), 1–11.

10 Andrew Gurr, 'A New Theatre Historicism', in Holland and Orgel, *Script to Stage*, pp. 71–88, here p. 72.

11 R.A. Foakes, 'Henslowe's Rose/Shakespeare's Globe', in Holland and Orgel, *Script to Stage*, pp. 11–31; see J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (eds), *Shakespeare's Globe Rebuilt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). The most extensive and authoritative account of the archaeological evidence for early London theatres is Julian Bowsher and Pat Miller, *The Rose and the Globe* (London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2009).

12 The best and most accessible overview is provided by Kate Giles, *An Archaeology of Social Identity: Guildhalls in York c. 1350–1630* (Oxford: J. & E. Hedges, 2000). See also Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community c. 1500–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Matthew Johnson, *Housing Culture: Traditional Architecture in an English Landscape* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1993); John M. Steane, *The Archaeology of Power* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001); Anthony Quiney, *Town Houses of Medieval Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003); Matthew Johnson, *English Houses, 1300–1800: Vernacular architecture, social life* (Harlow: Longman, 2010).

13 See W. Hillier and J. Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984); and Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

transitory purpose? How did the 'performance' of everyday life engage with the performances presented by travelling companies?

I will explore in this chapter the ways in which the Guildhall at Stratford may have been used by the Queen's Men in staging one of their plays. I wish to show that in order to understand more fully the play concerned, and by extension early modern theatre generally, we need to ask how the performances by visiting companies may have engaged with the hall's day-to-day function, to whom the plays were addressed, and what changes the players may have made to the space in order to accommodate their performances.

The Queen's Men and *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*

A combination of historical circumstance and modern scholarship favours the selection of the Queen's Men as a case study. An ample body of surviving documents and texts has prompted a rapid growth of work on the company.[14] The present study is greatly indebted to this work. It is fortunate, too, that Stratford-upon-Avon's Guildhall is one of the few locations visited by the company that still stands and remains accessible to modern scholars for study.[15]

The Queen's Men visited Stratford at least four times over their 20-year career. A new examination of the Minutes and Accounts of the Stratford Corporation confirms that payments were made to the company in 1587, 1592, 1593 and 1597.[16] McMillin and MacLean's study identifies nine extant plays that can confidently be attributed to the company, with 12 further plays having aspects of authorship, construction or publication that might suggest the company's ownership.[17] While there is rarely definite evidence for the

14 See in particular Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean; Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (eds), *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583–1603* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); and Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

15 See McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 67–83. While the Guildhall at Stratford is not one of the six venues identified by McMillin and MacLean for which the space used for performance is explicitly noted in the records, John Wasson has noted that 'virtually every borough town for which we have records identifies the guildhall as the normal playing place if any site is mentioned at all': Wasson, 'Professional Actors in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 3 (1986), 1–11, here p. 6. In addition, the 1602 order for the cessation of playing, recorded in the Stratford Council Book, specifically bans 'plays or enterlewdes' from being 'played in the Chamber the guild halle nor in any p[ar]te of the howse or Courte', strongly suggesting that these were the spaces used by players. Transcribed in J.R. Mulryne, 'Professional Players in the Guild Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1568–1597', *Shakespeare Survey*, 60 (2007), 1–22, and see Mulryne's chapter in this volume, pp. 171–206.

16 McMillin and MacLean note a fifth payment of 20*s*. in 1591, but this does not seem to appear in the archive held at the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive. Robert Bearman has recently identified the Queen's Men as being one of the companies paid a share of 19*s*. 4*d*. for performances in 1597 after discovering a rough set of accounts in which a payment of 10*s*. is noted for two performances on 16 and 17 July (SCLA BRU 5/1/19; see Mulryne's Appendix 2 in this volume).

17 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 84–96; Roslyn Knutson, 'The Start of Something Big', in Helen Ostovich et al., *Locating*, pp. 99–108. I do not include those plays identified as being 'lost' by McMillin and MacLean.

specific plays companies presented to their provincial hosts, we can at least suggest possibilities by matching composition and publication dates with those for recorded visits.

The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England, composed after the publication of the second edition of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* in 1587 and itself published in 1591, is one of the nine plays confidently identified as belonging to the Queen's Men, and is a strong contender for having been presented at Stratford during a company tour in the early 1590s. The play has received more scholarly attention than other plays attributed to the Queen's Men, though seldom as a significant text in its own right.[18] Questions surround the work's relationship to the play on the same theme by William Shakespeare, *The Life and Death of King John*, while scholars have offered conflicting arguments for authorship and order of precedence.[19] These important issues, however, have little bearing on the performance of the play itself, and so in this instance may be set to one side.

As Stephen Orgel, among others, has argued, there are numerous differences between a play in performance and a play in print, and it is often difficult to bridge the gap between the two.[20] This gap is immediately evident in *Troublesome Reign*. The play was published by Samson Clarke in 1591 without entry in the Stationers' Register. Though written as a single piece the text was separated in print into two parts.[21] The title pages to both parts declare the play was '(sundry times) publikely acted by the Queenes Majesties Players, in the honorable Citie of London',[22] although no record survives noting when or where the London performances took place. The *Reign* draws heavily on the chronicles of Raphael Holinshed, with further reference to the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris and John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.[23] The life and reign of John is omitted from Holinshed's first edition, but inserted

18 The most recent exception is the new Revels edition of *Troublesome Reign* (*TR*), edited by Charles Forker; see also J.F. Domonic, 'The Troublesome Reign of King John: A Critical Edition', unpublished PhD thesis (1969, Michigan State University) and J.W. Sider (ed.), *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* (New York and London: Garland, 1979); recent articles have included Tara L. Lyons, 'Male Birth Fantasies and Maternal Monarchs: The Queen's Men and *The Troublesome Reign of King John*', in Ostovich et al., *Locating*, pp. 183–97. *TR* has been considered in relation to the Shakespeare canon by Geoffrey Bullough (ed.), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, (8 vols, London: Routledge, 1957–75), E.B. Everitt and R.L. Armstrong (eds), *Six Early Plays Related to the Shakespeare Canon* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1965), S.T. Gary, 'The Relationship between *The Troublesome Reign of John King of England* and Shakespeare's *King John*', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Arizona, 1971) and in editions of Shakespeare's *King John* by E.A.J. Honigmann (London: Routledge, 1954), A.R. Braunmuller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) and L.A. Beaurline (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

19 See also B. Boyd, 'King John and *The Troublesome Reign*: Sources, Structure, Sequence', *Philological Quarterly*, 74/1 (1995), 37–57 and B. Groves, 'Memory, Composition and the Relationship of *King John* to *The Troublesome Reign of King John*', *Comparative Drama*, 38/2–3 (2004), 277–90.

20 Stephen Orgel, *The Authentic Shakespeare and Other Problems* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 21–48; Orgel, 'The Book of the Play', in Holland and Orgel, *Performance to Print*, pp. 13–54; Gurr, 'Historicism'; Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1996); Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

21 Bullough, *Sources*, vol. 4, p. 4.

22 Sider, *TR*, pp. 4 and 110.

23 Raphael Holinshed, *The first and second volumes of Chronicles* (London, 1587); Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. H.R. Luard (7 vols, London, 1872–83); John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1583).

into his second edition of 1587, thus we can safely suggest a *terminus a quo* of 1587 for the play's composition. Whatever connection might be made between Shakespeare and the *Reign*, it is to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine,* and its commercial success on stage and in print, that the Queen's Men's play owes its two-part format.[24] The *Reign*, in print at least, attempts to pick up the gauntlet thrown down by Marlowe in the prologue to *Tamburlaine* where he sneered at the 'jigging veins of rhyming mother wits/And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay' (1–2).[25] In riposte, the author of the *Reign* asks his 'Gentlemen Readers',

> You that with friendly grace of smoothèd brow
> Have entertained the Scythian Tamburlaine,
> And given applause unto an infidel,
> Vouchsafe to welcome with like courtesy
> A warlike Christian and your countryman. (Prologue, 1–5).[26]

Marlowe's mighty line is all well and good, the author says, but here is a subject with which the audience, provincial or metropolitan, can and should feel a patriotic and Protestant connection. The prologue may or may not have been presented as part of a Stratford performance. However, it serves, in print or on stage, to endorse the attitudes of a company generally agreed to have been created to present a pro-Protestant, pro-monarchical face – a stance that would chime with the increasingly orthodox religious and social attitudes of many late-sixteenth-century Stratford townspeople.

However, the Queen's Men did not invariably present the united face of Elizabethan orthodoxy. Should they have done so, we might expect the *Troublesome Reign* to follow the lead of John Bale's earlier Tudor propaganda play *King Johan*, which 'dramatizes events not primarily in the interests of reconstructing the past but with the idea of illuminating the present' in seeking to justify the Henrician Reformation.[27] In consequence, *King Johan* discards any reference to John's more questionable episodes with a view to presenting a clear-cut parable of good (King John) versus evil (the pre-Reformation Church). While the *Troublesome Reign* ultimately endorses the religious policies of Henry and Elizabeth, this is not its primary or necessarily its strongest emphasis. Rather, the *Troublesome Reign* focuses on issues of legitimacy, presenting an ambiguous and complex John who is both tyrant and victim. While it may be that Cynthia Bowers presses too hard when

24 See McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 155 foll.

25 Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, ed. Anthony B. Dawson (London: Methuen, 1997).

26 Passages from *TR* are taken from Forker's edition. Although Forker follows Brian Vickers's attribution of *TR* to George Peele, I would nevertheless follow McMillin and MacLean's practice of conservative caution and navigate the uncertain waters of authorship by continuing to refer to an anonymous author; Brian Vickers, '*The Troublesome Reign*, George Peele, and the Date of *King John*', in Brian Boyd (ed.), *Words that count: Essays on early modern authorship* (Wilmington, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 2004), pp. 78–116.

27 Robert Potter, *The English Morality Play* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 101, cited in Cynthia Bowers, '"True" History and Political Theory: The Problematic Orthodoxy of *The Troublesome Reign of King John*', *Quidditas,* 22 (2001), 5–20; John Bale, *King Johan*, in John S. Farmer (ed.), *The Dramatic Writings of John Bale* (London: Early English Drama Society, 1907), pp. 171–294.

stating that the author is 'attempting to write "true" chronicle history' – any mention of Magna Carta, for instance, is conspicuously absent – I agree with her that the stable Tudor orthodoxy is called into question.[28] The interaction between key episodes and 'unstable contemporary political theory' recasts the *Reign* not as John's *apologia* but as an interrogation of political, religious and monarchical authority – and thus offers a notable challenge to accepted ideals widespread in England and in Stratford itself.

John faces three sustained threats to his authority over the course of the play: his nephew Arthur's questioning, supported by the King of France, of John's territorial claim to English lands in France; the threat of excommunication and opposition from an opportunist Roman Church; and the rebellious machinations of his own nobility. The events portrayed – John's campaigns on the Continent, his aggression towards the English monasteries, religious wrangling with the papal legate, and the uprising of the nobles and attempted invasion by the French prince Lewis – all appear in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, but in the *Reign* the chronological order has been significantly altered. The playwright's deft conflation and telescoping of chronicled events serves to maintain a persistent threat to the stability of John's rule, favouring dramatic momentum over the inertias of 'true' chronicle. While Stratford audiences might have expected a play performed by the royal company to treat John purely as a proto-Henry VIII, with the king facing adversity full of Protestant morality and decisive royal authority, the *Troublesome Reign* does not do this. John is shown at times as a strong king, a ruthless critic of the corrupt Church and brave on the battlefield – unlike Shakespeare's protagonist, this King John, not Philip the Bastard, rescues his captured mother from the French. Yet John is also shown falling into madness and tyranny, seeking the counsel of a charlatan prophet, inept and vacillating in his treatment of his nephew Arthur, and demanding a second coronation that leads his barons to question his legitimacy.

Set against these thematic anxieties, the play's structural principle is that of a series of confrontations in order to 'expostulate' John's shortcomings, as Lady Margaret Falconbridge does, 'with *pro et contra*' (1.1.408–9).[29] Legal process, oath-taking and breaking, questionable paternity and legitimate inheritance are all examined and shown repeatedly. The play exhibits an 'insistent verbal repetition', establishing overarching themes through repeated expressions of concern over law, tyranny and the 'Senecan rhetoric of revenge'.[30] Physical repetition – of actions and the arrangement of stage space that are not explicitly required by the original stage directions but must of necessity be explored in performance – reinforces and renegotiates the play's political and moral concerns. The spatial arrangements on stage, the location of people and objects of temporal and spiritual authority relative

28 Bowers, 'Problematic Orthodoxy', p. 8.
29 See Forker, *TR*, p. 57.
30 Forker, p. 69.

to others, immediately inform a knowledgeable audience of an accepted hierarchy which then proceeds to be tested.

In the *Reign* these stage tactics are most apparent in a series of tableaux that frame scenes involving key events in the play's narrative: John's arbitration of the dispute between Robert and Philip Falconbridge; the citizens of Angers' arbitration of the claims made by John and King Philip of France; John's second coronation; the oath of fealty made by the rebel nobles to Lewis at the shrine of Bury St Edmunds; and the nobles' reconciliation with John on his deathbed at Swinstead Abbey. Stage directions give some idea of the requirements for stage configuration for only three of these scenes: King Philip and King John 'summon the town; the Citizens appear upon the walls' (1.2.191.0); at John's second coronation, 'Enter the Nobles [...] and crown King John, and then cry "God save the King"' (1.13.84.0); and finally, as Salisbury swears allegiance to Lewis at Bury St Edmunds 'upon the holy altar', 'All the English Lords swear' (2.3.225–6.0) and Lewis swears 'on this altar in like sort' (2.3.229). The first of these, when the Citizens of besieged Angers appear on the walls, is the most problematic for an acting company playing provincial halls without a gallery, and one reason why some commentators have assumed that the play was performed on a London stage where an elevated space was available.[31] As it is unlikely a company who less frequently played the capital would have accepted a play impossible, or notably awkward, to perform on tour, we must assume the Queen's Men were comfortable staging such scenes in the spaces available. It therefore seems helpful to address the basic requirements of each of the five scenes and situate them within the context of Stratford's Guildhall.[32] For the sake of brevity I will omit discussion of hand properties and costume, and will discuss only space, set and, for want of a suitable Early Modern term, 'blocking' requirements.

Staging the *Reign*

The dispute between the Falconbridge brothers is the primary subject of the play's first scene. This opens with the entrance of 'King John, Queen Eleanor his mother, William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, the Earls of Essex, and of Salisbury' (1.1.0). Although there is no necessity that John should be attended, he is elsewhere regularly accompanied by 'followers' (1.2.74.0, 1.6.131.0), or enters 'with two or three' (2.2.0) or is 'carried between two Lords' (2.6.0). Might we expect John to be waited on by two or three attendants at all times?

31 See Forker, p. 151 n. 191.1–2.

32 Whether companies used the upper or lower levels of the Guildhall remains a matter of conjecture, as there is no direct documentary evidence that names either space as being used for performance. The arguments supporting the use of the upper Hall have been outlined by J.R. Mulryne, 'Professional Players', pp. 15–16. As I will argue below, it seems the staging opportunities offered to players by sharing a space used for education, feasting and other Guild business strongly favours their appropriation of the upper, rather than lower, Guildhall. See, further, Mulryne's chapter in this volume, pp. 194–5.

McMillin and MacLean, basing their estimate on the minimum number of cast needed to perform a play's largest scene, allocate to the *Troublesome Reign* the largest cast of any of the Queen's Men's plays, 17 members in all. Indeed in this estimate they break their own rule, which requires them to allow for two extras whenever an unspecified number of attendants, priests or citizens is needed. Counting this way would require at least 18 actors to handle the 'many priests' (2.4.0) and 'all the Nobles from France and England' (2.4.19.0) who feature in the scene.[33] A possible solution to large cast numbers will be offered below, but the estimated minimum requirement for the *Reign* suggests 'a large company relatively unconcerned about matters of doubling and economy of casting'.[34] It seems sensible, then, to accept that at least two attendants to the King are in question here.

While the stage direction gives no instruction as to the manner of the King's entrance, there are clues in the text and from across the Queen's Men's repertory that suggest a certain level of accompanying ceremony. McMillin and MacLean stress the visual emphasis of the Queen's Men's dramaturgy, the frequency of 'unwritten text' and mime, and demonstrate how the notably brief stage directions imply that a more fully populated scene should be presented.[35] The company evidently specialised in lavish processional entrances, notably in two of their plays, *Selimus* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. With this in mind, and if John is to be presented truly as his country's 'second hope' (1.1.6), equal to his deceased brother Richard I, we should expect an entrance which expresses more pomp and circumstance. We might surmise that John would process in, attended by as many as can be spared, and installed on a throne. Given Elizabethan notions of hierarchy and status it seems reasonable to suggest that the throne would be placed upstage centre, dominating the playing space and easily visible to the audience. Proximity to the throne would be determined by rank and influence with the king. It is also possible that John would sit in state under a canopy. Several other Queen's Men's plays, notably *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, appear to require throne and canopy, for example when Hal is crowned King and Friar Bacon sits in his 'cell ... his consistory court' (6.1–3).[36] However, Barbara Palmer has argued that, in the absence of evidence for a company's means of transporting large set items, we should suppose that the Queen's Men 'left their canopied State, curtained bed, curtained pavilion, and other editor-invented appointments back [in London]'.[37] This may well be the case, although Palmer makes certain unsupported assumptions: that the company had a permanent London base, and that it would automatically have access to and use existing dais structures usually occupied by authority

33 McMillin and MacLean, pp. 99–100, 109.
34 McMillin and MacLean, p. 109.
35 McMillin and MacLean, pp. 128 foll.
36 Robert Greene, *The Honourable Historie of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, ed. J.A. Lavin (London: A. & C. Black, 1969).
37 Barbara Palmer, 'On the Road and on the Wagon', in Ostovich et al., *Locating*, pp. 27–39, here pp. 29, 31.

figures such as the bailiff and thus understood figuratively to represent the throne or State. There seems to be no strong evidence for these speculations, which makes me less willing to abandon the possibility of such items as a canopy completely. Whether the company travelled with a canopy or not, it certainly had access to some of their hosts' furniture, and at Stratford the schoolmaster's chair would surely have made an excellent throne, over which a canopy could easily be rigged.[38]

There is no explicit evidence that the bailiff and aldermen would have ceded the dais to the players, and at Stratford the small room accessible at the north end of the upper Guildhall behind the dais would not have provided a particularly suitable tiring room. A more workable set up would have been to use the formerly partitioned rooms that occupied the south end of the Guildhall as a 'backstage' area, and to play towards the dais with the actors' backs to the northernmost partition wall.[39] Moreover, positioned carefully, the tableau would mirror its audience, with player king and bailiff facing each other across the room, creating a visible connection to the authority wielded by each within their respective domains. A confrontation such as this would serve to underscore the sometimes uncomfortable political messages the play is exploring.

The processional entrance and the organisation of the stage both present visually John's secure authority, which he immediately manages to undermine verbally, declaring himself 'far unworthy of so high a place' (1.1.10). The legitimacy of John's claim to the throne is further challenged with the subsequent demands of the French ambassador Chatillon, who requires John to resign the crown and rule of England, Ireland and the English lands in France to Arthur, son of John's elder brother Geoffrey. Although John dismisses Chatillon and commands Pembroke to prepare a force to travel to France, by the time the scene turns to its primary concern, the quarrel between the Falconbridge brothers, the audience already questions John's position.

The dispute between Philip and Robert Falconbridge is a matter of paternity. The younger, Robert, proclaims Philip's illegitimacy and asserts that he himself is 'lawful heir' (1.1.108) to his father 'by certain right of England's ancient law' (1.1.110), that is by primogeniture. In the face of his late father's belief and his mother's testimony that Philip is legitimate, Robert supplies purely circumstantial evidence that King Richard was Philip's true father.[40] John himself dismisses Robert's proof as 'frivolous' (1.1.210) and should immediately rule in favour of Philip. He does not. Instead he demands that Philip and Lady Falconbridge disclose the true paternity, causing Robert to exclaim 'My Lord, herein I challenge you of wrong/To give away my right and put the doom/Unto themselves' (1.1.218–20). As Cynthia Bowers

38 Unfortunately the surviving masters' chairs date to the eighteenth century; however, a sixteenth-century illustration shows a master's chair remarkably similar to those that survive. See Ian Green's chapter in the present volume, Fig. 4.1.

39 See Mulryne, 'Professional Players', pp. 16–17, and in this volume.

40 See Bowers, 'Problematic Orthodoxy', 11–12.

comments, 'John's response inhibits, rather than advances, justice ... he is simply superseding the law by nullifying a decision [already] made by the lower Northamptonshire court. In this episode, John rules by whim, the action of a tyrant'.[41] Ultimately the issue is resolved not by the king, but by Philip himself after he succumbs to a trance in which he becomes aware that he *is*, in fact, the bastard son of Richard Coeur de Lion. Philip's retracted claim and withdrawal from the judicial process brings the matter to a conclusion, not royal judgement. Royal authority and judicial process is seen to be arbitrary, potentially tyrannical and unstable. At the outset of the scene, the formation of the tableau and the centring of John in the middle of the stage evoke the stability and authority of established law. When John refuses to meet the expectations of due process, an anxiety is created: the audience become wary that the stable relationships and practices to which they are accustomed may not be upheld, that justice has become unstable, and that visual references and tableaux may question deep-rooted assumptions. Though we cannot know the extent to which all audience members would immediately recognise this staging as explicit subversion, the instability of this first scene has now been inextricably associated in their minds with the spatial configuration of the stage. As the tableau is repeated throughout the play, the audience will grow to recognise the implied anxiety.

The first episode to echo this tableau is the scene before the walls of Angers. Verbal echoes are given to the Citizens who, as John before, demand proof from the competing monarchs (1.2.211, 223) and then refuse to choose their sovereign. Recourse to trial by battle is equally unsuccessful, as neither French nor English forces evidently defeat their opponent. Only in the face of the Bastard's threat to unite French and English forces to destroy the town do the Citizens suggest a solution through the marriage of King Philip's son, Lewis, to John's niece, Blanche. Conflict is again settled outside a legal process.

The staging problems of this scene are possibly the most difficult of the play. There is no evidence for the construction of a stage platform within the Guildhall, still less for a galleried stage, which in any case could not have fitted within the upper hall without being obscured by the roof trusses. One option is to avoid representing the walls altogether. Only one stage direction makes a claim for height, stating that the citizens appear '*upon*' the walls. King Philip in contrast says he has come '*before* this city of Angers' (1.2.178) and King John that he has summoned the citizens '*to* the walls'. It is possible to interpret 'upon' as indicating an upstage location. The meeting could take place downstage at the foot of 'the walls', rather than with the citizens a storey above.

An alternative staging arrangement could make innovative use of the construction of the formerly partitioned rooms at the south end of the hall. The northernmost partition wall of these rooms rose from the floor to the main roof truss beam, but the frame of the truss itself was blocked

41 Ibid., p. 12.

by plastered, wattle infill panels. Payments for repair and upkeep of these panels are frequently recorded in the Corporation accounts, and surviving grooves in the beams suggest it may have been possible to remove the panels altogether.[42] By positioning furniture as a 'platform' just behind the partition wall, and removing a number of panels, a cast member might appear aloft at the opportune moment, visible to all. Such interference with the fabric of the building may not, of course, have been condoned by Stratford aldermen. Nevertheless, the regularity of payments for upkeep of relatively sturdy components of the partition wall poses the question of how they were damaged in the first place. If visiting companies were not permitted to alter the building fabric, the same effect might be achieved if the stage space was moved one bay further north of the partition wall. This would allow a 'back stage' space to be provided, as in fairground stages. The cross-beams of each bay between the partition and the dais-end walls do not have grooves of the type required for infill panels and would have been left open, as at present. By hanging a backcloth under the truss beam and arranging furniture or steps as platforms in the newly created backstage area, the same effect of an actor appearing at height might be managed.

In this way, the tableau presented at King John's court could now be repeated, with Philip of France, John and their respective armies assuming the place of the Falconbridge brothers, while the citizens take up John's judicial role. The anxiety and instability connected with the visual tableau is reiterated by means of the scene's structural and thematic ordering, and compounded by the displacement of authority from royal prerogative to a dangerously independent citizenry, a shift of power which could only be recovered through a threat of violence by the Bastard.

By the time John demands his second coronation, the tableau arrangement becomes a symbol of tyrannical whim. The Earl of Pembroke warns:

My liege...
Once were you crowned, proclaimed, and with applause
Your city streets have echoed to the ear
'God save the King'; 'God save our sovereign, John.'
Pardon my fear; my censure doth infer
Your Highness, not deposed from regal state,
Would breed a mutiny in people's minds
What it should mean to have you crowned again. (1.13.32–9)

His concerns are dismissed by John with no explanation: 'Thou knowst not what induceth me to this' (1.13.41). The coronation is denoted by a typically brief stage direction: 'Enter the Nobles [...] and crown King John, and then cry 'God save the King'' (1.13.85.0). We might guess that the company would have presented at this point some representative elements of a Tudor coronation ceremony, informed by the well-documented coronations of Henry VIII and his

42 See Giles and Clark in this volume pp. 146, 157–8 and Fig. 7.7.

children.[43] 'Encased' within the office of a mass, these coronation ceremonies included an elaborate processional entry, ritual obeisance by the monarch, absolution by the presiding priest (usually the Archbishop of Canterbury), the monarch's anointment with holy oil and chrism, ritual dressing in coronation robes, and the presentation of the trappings of royal office – the crown, spurs, sword and ring.[44] We cannot know which, if any, of these elements might have been presented by the Queen's Men, but the ceremonial language accompanying the bestowal of the royal ring, for example, 'alludes to the conferral of sacerdotal powers' and would accordingly invest later scenes, discussed below, with greater symbolic potency.[45]

The coronation procession echoes John's first entrance when he was declared his country's 'second hope'. Now the true nature of the king's 'rule and virtue' is displayed. John has demanded a second ceremony to test his nobles' 'constancy' (1.13.95), but too soon satisfied of their fidelity he offers to grant any request they might make. Essex demands the release of the captive Arthur, insisting that it is the only way 'to guerdon all our loyalties' (1.13.109). This is a request to which John accedes, fully aware he has already ordered Arthur to be blinded. John is sufficiently secure to offer the release of his main rival, whose claim he has successfully undermined. Yet his own authority is undermined once the prophet Peter predicts his downfall by Ascension Day. John must 'cut off the cause, and then effect will die' (1.13.195). Arthur must be killed, and the nobles' boon rescinded. John's 'will is law enough' (1.13.203), and his tyranny is fully fledged.

The barons must seek 'rule and virtue' elsewhere and turn to the French Prince Lewis, who through his marriage to Lady Blanche 'Hath title of an uncontrollèd strength/To England' (2.3.90–1). They gather at the shrine of St Edmund to swear allegiance to their new liege-lord. In this tableau the king's throne, now the symbol of unstable rule, has been replaced by the shrine's altar, a potent spiritual symbol in opposition to the excommunicate king. As the lords lay their hands on the altar, swearing homage and allegiance to Lewis, the tableau inverts its predecessors. Spatial hierarchy is maintained while the act of legal process – the oath of loyalty – breaks the same oath first made to John at his coronation. Lewis, like John before him, swears 'Love to you all, and princely recompense/To guerdon your good wills unto the full' (2.3.230–31). The scene parodies true justice: Lewis is a perjurer. He dismisses the nobles as 'traitors to their sovereign state' and 'not to be believed in any sort' (2.3.240–41), while planning to break faith as soon as expedient:

... Let's smooth with them awhile,
Until we have as much as they can do.
And when their virtue is exhalèd dry,
I'll hang them for the guerdon of their help (2.3.248–51).

43 See Alice Hunt, *The Drama of Coronation: Medieval Ceremony in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
44 Ibid., pp. 26–30.
45 Ibid., p. 31.

Ironically, the nobles' belief that they have a right to depose John and bestow the crown on Lewis is not shared by Lewis himself, who appears to think loyalty to one's sovereign supersedes foreign claims to that sovereignty, however legitimate.

The scene at St Edmund's shrine is one of the largest in terms of cast numbers, with some dozen barons being named in stage directions and speech, together with Lewis and the French onlookers. One possibility is that actors in addition to the core company may have been drawn from hired men – jobbing actors – some of whom may have travelled with the company, while others may have been drawn from the towns the company visited.[46] The grammar school, housed either in the partitioned rooms of the upper Guildhall or in the larger northern section of the hall, may have offered visiting companies an additional resource not often considered by modern scholars: the schoolboys themselves. School drama, and instruction in the rhetorical performance skills described as *actio* and *pronunciatio*, in some schools at least were integral components of the Tudor curriculum.[47] Students would have been accustomed to memorising large tracts 'without book', trained in the 'manner of speaking', and used to acting out scenes by classical authors in the classroom.[48] The boys would have been well equipped to take on small, non-speaking roles, and in the case of speaking roles could have learned short passages for performance with the briefest of rehearsal. This suggestion is no more than speculation, of course. I have found no record to indicate that a boy took part in a show by a visiting company. However, neither was there any restriction, so far as we know, on the boys taking part. It would have been hard for the visiting company to pass up an opportunity to use trained boy actors at little or no cost.[49]

The final instance of symbolic tableau comes at Swinstead Abbey, as John lies dying, poisoned by one of the monks. The English nobles, having learned of Lewis's treachery, are reconciled to their penitent, proto-Protestant, king, who sits at the banquet table divested of the trappings of state, wishing 'no pomp in penury' (2.8.9). The dying king is unable to speak – in itself a powerful contrast to the behaviour of the previously eloquent king – but raises his hand in forgiveness to the nobles kneeling before him, who offer their daggers and their lives in recompense for their treachery. John's twice-raised hand, once to pardon the nobles and again as he dies to assure all that he has returned to the true faith, mimics by these gestures a Eucharistic absolution or final blessing. Within the play John recovers his legitimacy,

46 McMillin and MacLean, pp. 11–12, 60–61, 142.

47 Ursula Potter, 'Performing Arts in the Tudor Classroom', in L.E. Kermode, J. Scott Warren and M. van Elk (eds), *Tudor Drama before Shakespeare* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 2004). See Green, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 206–9, 214–16, and the chapters by Sylvia Gill and Ian Green in this book.

48 Potter, pp. 145–7 and passim.

49 For discussion of the possibility of a company of boy actors visiting Stratford see the chapter by Margaret Shewring in this volume, especially pp. 229–30 and 244–6. A visiting boy company could perhaps have stimulated the Stratford boys to take part in adult shows.

and his rule, through returning to Rome, a spiritual instability to parallel the political. For the audience, however, who moments ago heard John declare 'From out these loins shall spring a kingly branch/Whose arms shall reach unto the gates of Rome,/And with his feet tread down the strumpet's pride' (2.8.105–7), the scene recalls Lewis's perjury as he swore on the altar of Bury St Edmunds. Even as the rule of law is reinstated through John's reconciliation and the coronation of Prince Henry, instability remains, informed by the audience's foreknowledge that Reformation lies ahead.

The *Troublesome Reign* would have meant different things to different audiences, but all would have felt an anxious awareness of currently debated questions of legitimacy, rebellion, invasion and religious authority. The *Reign* was written around the date of the Armada and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots; the successor to Elizabeth was still unknown. The audience at Stratford, well aware of political and religious tensions within their own town, must have viewed certain scenes with apprehension. Several members of the audience were or had been officers of the court, so that the presentation of due process in the first scene would have been intimately familiar, and John's refusal to engage with the law would have caused disquiet. Equally, the independent-minded citizens of Angers must have struck a chord in a town such as Stratford that had struggled to gain a charter of incorporation, and where disagreement with their local lord over jurisdiction in the courts was a recent experience.[50]

I have tried to show how we might begin to pick apart a complex text in an attempt to identify some of the problems we face in imagining its performance, and moreover to situate the whole within a surviving stage space. I hope I have shown that if we aim for a more holistic approach to text, performance space and wider social and theatrical history, we can come closer to a full understanding of plays staged in provincial England in the later part of the sixteenth century.

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50 See A. Dyer, 'Crisis and Resolution: Government and Society in Stratford, 1540–1640' in Robert Bearman (ed.), *The History of an English Borough: Stratford-upon-Avon 1196–1996* (Stroud and Stratford-upon-Avon: Sutton, 1997), pp. 80–96, here p. 82; Robert Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530–1580', *Midland History* 32 (2007), 68–109, here pp. 87 and 93.

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Repertoire of the Professional Players in Stratford-upon-Avon, 1568–1597

Margaret Shewring

This chapter offers a new kind of repertory study in the context of Early Modern England – one which records the plays and entertainments offered to a particular regional community in a particular period of 30 years or so. Since the publication of the *Records of Early English Drama* (*REED*) volumes, it has become possible to trace the movement of individual playing companies.[1] Such a record is included here for those companies that visited Stratford-upon-Avon in the late sixteenth century (see Appendix 2 to J. R. Mulryne's chapter in this book). Recently scholars have also begun to study plays not in the context of a particular author's work, but in the context of the group of plays owned and performed by a particular company.[2] This chapter brings together what can be inferred about the plays in the repertoires of companies at the time of their visit(s) to Stratford (Appendix 1, below) and considers the changing tastes and fashions indicated by the range of plays performed.[3]

1 For references to the *REED* project see Mulryne, Chapter 8 above, pp. 171–2 and fn. 3 in the present chapter.

2 See, for example, Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Roslyn L. Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company 1594–1613* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), Lucy Munro, *The Children of the Queen's Revels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

3 Andrew Gurr's principal emphasis in *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996) is on companies and plays that featured in the London performance scene between 1560 and 1642, in the public playhouses and, often, at Court. For such companies he also documents provincial performances, sometimes drawing on the *REED* volumes that were already in print and sometimes drawing on the work of E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (4 vols, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923, 1951) and of John Tucker Murray, *English Dramatic Companies 1558–1642* (2 vols, London: Constable, 1910). As Gurr notes, Murray's listings are selective and often inaccurately transcribed, but up to now they have been only partially checked. More recent work has come to depend on the major *Records of Early English Drama* (*REED*) project at the University of Toronto. Eleven *REED* volumes were available when Gurr's *Shakespearian Playing Companies* went to press and Gurr consulted other records in the *REED* office. The *REED* volume that includes Stratford-upon-Avon, edited by Alan Somerset, is still in preparation. He has generously shared his unpublished work with Mulryne to assist in the preparation of this book. Court performances also draw on the chronology set out by John H. Astington, *English Court Theatre, 1558–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) who notes that 'court years are taken to run from July 1 to the following June 30', but in his chronology of court performances, 'dates are given in the modern correction' (p. 221).

This is a far from straightforward task. Many plays from the relevant period have been lost. Of those which have survived, it is almost impossible to be certain which were part of a tour to a particular place in a particular year, as the civic records almost never list the titles of plays performed in their towns or cities.[4] It is necessary, therefore, to infer which plays were most likely to have been toured in a particular year by looking at which plays are recorded at court or in other London venues in the time immediately preceding the known regional visit date, as well as which might have remained in individual company repertoires.[5] Sometimes it *is* possible to find details of a particular company's repertoire during a given period. Recently, for example, two book-length studies have focused on the Queen's Men and their plays.[6] For some companies it is possible to list plays known to have been in their repertoire – but only the titles, not the scripts, survive. It is safe to assume that plays known to be in a company's repertoire in the months immediately prior to a tour would at least be candidates for inclusion in that tour. And, given the number of plays listed as 'lost', it is also necessary to infer something of the content of particular plays from their titles.

In some cases there are no titles that can safely be assigned to the repertoire of a particular company from any contemporary records or sources. So, although Keenan is right in noting that 'professional troupes are likely to have used the same repertory for most of their public and private performances on tour', it is hard to establish those repertoires with any certainty.[7] However, it is necessary to consider details of the full range of companies that visited Stratford, even when no record of their plays has been found to date, as these companies form part of the overall economy of playing in the region.

What becomes clear, with even a cursory glance, is that the professional companies performing in Stratford in the late sixteenth century fell into three broad categories: companies whose patrons encouraged performance on purely provincial circuits (for example, the troupes under the patronage of Worcester, Chandos, Stafford, Ogle and Berkeley); patrons, usually of a higher status and public profile, including the Earls of Leicester and Warwick,

4 No play titles are given in the *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon* (*MA*). Indeed, almost no details of repertoire are given in the records of other civic authorities either. A rare exception is included in the *REED* volume for Bristol, in which Mark C. Pilkington notes: 'It is an unusual feature of the Bristol Mayors' Audits that six entries mention the title of a play or describe in some way the main character or theme. The titles of these plays are "The Red Knight" (1575–6), "Myngo" (1577–8), and "The Court of Comfort" (1577–8). Descriptive notes on three other plays – which may in fact be titles – include "what mischief workith in the mynd of man", "the Queen of Ethiopia" (both in 1577–8), and "quid pro quo" (1598–9). Unfortunately all six plays are lost' (*REED: Bristol*, p. xxxiv).

5 Siobhan Keenan in *Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) notes that 'some scholars have suggested that the texts chosen for touring were abridged … other scholars, such as Gurr, have challenged such arguments, noting that, in theory, adapted play texts would need to have been re-licensed by the Master of the Revels. Yet the Master's papers contain no evidence that he ever approved any texts that had been revised specifically for touring' (p. 13).

6 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*; Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Green (eds), *Locating the Queen's Men* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

7 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, p. 14.

whose companies toured more widely (including in London and at court); and the exceptional company brought together in 1583 and performing in the Queen's name in London and the provinces. At least one visit to Stratford came under female patronage (that of the Countess of Essex), and one could well have been by a group of boy players with their adult master.[8] These distinctions conceal other variations at company level including moves by individual performers from one company to another.

Any consideration of performance and touring also needs to be seen in the broader context of the social, political and economic life of the host community. So it is important that the present chapter is read in the context of issues raised elsewhere in this volume in general, as well as in the particular context of the chapters on playing by Mulryne and Jones.

The Regional Context: Amateur Performances

Professional playing almost certainly came to Stratford against the background of a range of local, amateur performances that could well have been a significant feature of the annual cycle of local town occasions in Stratford-upon-Avon from the medieval period through to the early seventeenth century. It is inconceivable that there would have been no performance occasions in such a significant provincial town, although few such events may have taken place in the Guildhall (or in other Guild buildings in the town). Such occasions may have ranged from mystery cycle and morality plays through to moral interludes as well as all manner of folk traditional performances, including mummers' plays and morris dancing in the surrounding community.[9] Performances may well have featured in the annual calendar of the Guild Chapel and Holy Trinity Church as well as contributing to public street festivals in the town and folk-based performances in the immediate Warwickshire countryside. There may also have been religious and civic processions marking the annual election of the bailiff and corporation, or the arrival of circuit judges, as well as the holy days of the Church's year and the quarter days in the local community. Regional performances included musicians of all kinds. Musicians figure repeatedly in the Coventry records, along with payments to the 'boyes of bablake on the choyse daye'.[10] They form an important backdrop to any discussion of repertoire as they will have coloured the audiences' expectations and provided a context for visits of professional playing

8 See pp. 238–9 and 244–5 for a possible visit by players travelling in the name of the Countess of Sussex, and p. 229 for details of the Earl of Oxford's Boys.

9 See R.J.E. Tiddy, *The Mummers' Play* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923) and Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 4.

10 Carpenters' Account Book CRO: Acc 3/2 f212v (1587); Carpenters' Account Book II CRO: Acc 3/2 f 216 col b (1588); Carpenters' Account Book II CRO: Acc 3/2 f 230v. Transcribed in *REED: Coventry* (p. 315 and p. 344).

companies, whether travelling under the names of their local, regional patrons or with the protection of some of the most influential aristocracy in the country (including those with family seats in the immediate vicinity).

Many such occasions are detailed in the records for the nearby City of Coventry, in which it is possible to trace the preparation, presentation and decline of the mystery cycle plays as well as performances of the local 'Hock Tuesday' play (sometimes banned) and even a play apparently especially written for Coventry, *The Destruction of Jerusalem*.[11] A note in the Coventry Council Book for 19 May 1591 indicates the popularity of such events: 'It is agreed by the whole consent of this house that the destruction of Ierusalem the Conquest of the Danes or the historie of K E the 4 at the request of the Comons of this Cittie shalbe plaid on the pagens on Midsomer daye & St peters daye next in this Cittie & non other plays'.[12] Even though no parallel records for Stratford have yet come to light it is reasonable to assume that some Stratfordians could have seen the events in Coventry.

Local aristocratic patrons were instrumental in bringing the Queen to the county on royal progresses. Arguably the most lavish of all of the progress visits took place in 1575 when the Queen was the guest of the Earl of Leicester at his castle in Kenilworth (about 10 miles away from Stratford). During this visit there were both private and public entertainments of all kinds involving both professional and amateur performers and contributing to the political agenda of the Queen and her nobles as well as to the rich tapestry of provincial courtly entertainments in the late sixteenth century.[13] Stratfordians may have been among those who lined the Queen's route or who watched popular entertainments in the immediate vicinity of Kenilworth Castle.[14] Leicester's own players may well have contributed to the royal entertainments, giving them an additional cachet when visiting the Stratford Guildhall in the following year.[15] There is no record to confirm the presence of Leicester's Men in Kenilworth in 1575. As MacLean points out:

> The 1575 payment to Dudley's players [by the City of Coventry], which cannot be more closely dated, is especially tantalizing … Beyond the Coventry payment in the same year we have little evidence that they were in the neighbourhood. But we may question where they were, if not at Kenilworth, that year … Their customary summer tour cannot be traced elsewhere in 1575.[16]

11 The Coventry 'Hock Tuesday' play featured in a performance for the Queen at Kenilworth Castle in 1575.

12 Council Book CRO: A 14 (a), p. 216 (*REED: Coventry*, p. 332).

13 The court was deemed to be located wherever the Queen was based at a given moment. (See Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), *passim*, and Astington, *English Court Theatre*, p. 1.

14 See Alex Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 82–9 for a discussion of the bride-ale, Hock-Tuesday show, quintain, and morris dancing as part of the entertainments in the grounds of the castle.

15 See Mulryne, pp. 183–4.

16 Sally-Beth MacLean, 'Tracking Leicester's Men: The patronage of a performance troupe', in Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall (eds), *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 257–8.

Local audiences would have been familiar, too, with Ambrose Dudley, the Earl of Warwick (Leicester's brother). The visit of Warwick's players to Stratford in 1574–5 may have had more to do with the Queen's proximity on her progress to the Midlands (including the castles of Warwick and Kenilworth), keeping Warwick's company in the provinces in the summer, than with the attraction of the town itself. But from the point of view of the Guildhall, their visit must have been considered to be prestigious as they were rewarded with the considerable sum of 17*s*.[17]

Boy performers made a significant contribution to performances in England in the sixteenth century. In the early years of her reign the Queen's patronage had been of 'child actors from the chorister schools' and two boy companies 'had been appearing on the holiday calendar for years: the Children of the Chapel and the Children of St Paul's'.[18] In 1583, after the death in 1582 of the Master of Paul's, Sebastian Westcote, 'these companies were combined under the patronage of the Earl of Oxford'.[19] The introduction to the *REED* volume for Bristol is helpful:

> It is from the second half of the sixteenth century that unequivocal records survive to connect schools to plays and performance. Extant accounts in the Mayors' Audits and other sources indicate that successive schoolmasters and the students of the free school of St Bartholomew [previously St Bartholomew's Hospital] provided plays for the civic celebrations of Christmas as well as orations for the annual festivities associated with both the Michaelmas swearing-in of the mayor and Accession Day. They also contributed to celebrations for the infrequent but important royal entries of this period.[20]

Closer to home for Stratford's community and Guild buildings would have been the activities of local schoolboys. As Green points out, 'the increased prominence given to secular drama and poetry in many grammar schools, including some acting out of authors like Terence and sometimes Plautus' may have featured in the Stratford curriculum, too.[21] The introduction to the *REED* volume for Bristol points out that 'whatever the Christmas plays may have been, it is reasonable to assume that the students of the free school would have performed classical drama as part of their studies'.[22] The editor of the *REED* volume for Coventry notes that 'the mayor and his bretheren were usually entertained by a performance of some kind when they paid their annual visit to the [Coventry] grammar school'.[23] Did similar performances take place in Stratford? It may also have been the case that local boys would have been taken on as 'extras' by visiting troupes of travelling players. Ian

17 This may have been the only visit by Warwick's Men to Stratford-upon-Avon. For comments on the level of payment see Mulryne, pp. 183–5.
18 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, p. 2.
19 Ibid., p. 3.
20 *REED: Bristol*, p. xxxii.
21 Green, p. 92 above.
22 *REED: Bristol*, p. xxxiii.
23 *REED: Coventry*, p. xx.

Green raises this possibility for the young William Shakespeare.[24] At the very least it is feasible to assume that Shakespeare would have had the possibility of seeing some of the leading professional performers in his day during their visits to Stratford-upon-Avon.[25] It is also possible that interaction between schoolboys and players was not always welcome in the regions. McMillin and MacLean have pointed out, for example, that the 'Canterbury records have recently shown that players named "Symcox" and "Edwards" were accused in 1592 of trying to "inveigle" Canterbury schoolboys into joining them as actors. These may have been the Queen's Men'.[26]

Travelling Players in Late-Sixteenth-Century England

From 1568 to 1597, there were more than 30 recorded visits to Stratford by companies of travelling players.[27] Appendix 2 to Mulryne's chapter in this book provides a transcription of the entries in the *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon* that document the basic details of players' visits.[28]

What is crucial to any study of the range and repertoire of playing companies that visited Stratford-upon-Avon in the last three decades of the sixteenth century is the fundamental significance of touring in this period. In her study of *Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England*, Keenan notes that 'in 1910 J.T. Murray estimated that at least thirty-seven Great Men's companies, seventy-nine Lesser Men's companies, five Players' companies and twenty-seven Town Companies were active outside London between 1559 and 1645'.[29] It is likely that there were many more. Stratford-upon-Avon was ideally placed to attract such visits.[30] The journeys of travelling players should also be seen in the context of Early Modern developments in cartography. The routes they used followed (and, perhaps, contributed to the development of) newly recorded highways and byways. 'In 1579, Christopher Saxton's publication of his great collection of maps, *The Counties of England and Wales*, launched an interest in mapping and describing terrain … that became something of a mania.'[31]

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24 Green, p. 93 above.

25 Green, p. 92 above.

26 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 212–13, note 94.

27 'Travelling companies toured in Warwickshire from 1431, when performers of Lord Astley and the earl of Warwick were at Maxstoke Priory, until 1636/7, when rope dancers of the king, Charles I, were rewarded 2s for a performance in Warwick' (Elza C. Tiner, 'Patrons and Travelling Companies in Warwickshire', in *Early Theatre*, 4/1 (2001), 36).

28 *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-Upon-Avon, 1553–1620 and Other Records*, 5 vols, 1–4 transcribed by Richard Savage, with introduction and notes by Edgar I. Fripp (London, 1921–29), vol. 5 edited by Levi Fox (Stratford-upon-Avon: Dugdale Society, 1990). See Mulryne, Appendix 2, pp. 199–201.

29 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, p. 9.

30 Mulryne, 'Professional Players in the Guild Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1568–1597', *Shakespeare Survey* 60 (2007), p. 4, and above, p. 178.

31 Rhonda Lemke Sanford, *Maps and Memory in Early Modern England: A Sense of Place* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 15. Saxton's maps were soon to be followed by William Camden's *Britannia* (1586), John Norden's *Speculum Britanniae* (1598) and John Stow's *Survey of London* (1598).

It is not clear whether towns and cities had the opportunity to select specific plays from the repertoire of travelling companies, but the fact that each company was required to present a performance before the bailiff and town councillors in order to be granted permission to play in that area on a particular visit makes clear that regions could refuse to receive certain performances and it is likely that the reasons for the refusal could have included the play(s) being offered.[32] Refusals could also have political or religious grounds. A particular patron's men or boys may not have been welcome due to that patron's beliefs or political actions. If such motives were behind refusal of a license to play, it is unlikely that they would be made explicit. As Chambers notes: 'When Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558, she lost no time in issuing a proclamation 'Prohibiting Unlicensed Interludes and Plays, Especially on Religion or Policy' … and by 1581 full powers to censor the performance of plays were invested in the Master of the Revels'.[33]

The 'Quenes Players', the first company with the Queen's name to visit Stratford-upon-Avon, was described by Chambers as 'the interlude players'. He explains that 'the *doyen* of the Court companies, when Elizabeth came to the throne, was the royal company of Players of Interludes […] Its beginnings are possibly traceable in the reign of Henry VIII'.[34] Their last performance at court seems to have been on 6 January 1559.[35] The only known member to continue with the company beyond 3 June 1568 was John Smith 'probably to be identified with the "disard" or jester of that name who took part in George Ferrers's Christmas gambols of 1552–53'.[36] Until around 1573 Smith 'kept up some sort of provincial organization … and the Queen's players are therefore traceable in many municipal Account-books'.[37]

It is this group who are listed as performing in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1568–9, when William Shakespeare's father was town bailiff. Little is known about this travelling group beyond some details of when and where they performed. Gurr notes that a company 'known in civic listings as the Queen's players is frequently recorded performing around the country in the 1560s and 1570s'.[38] He goes on to speculate:

> The queen's bear-ward appears regularly in the provincial records, and her early 'players' may have been tumblers or performers of 'activities' of the sort that did not demand written playscripts. They may have been a company of boys […] Companies

32 See Mulryne, p. 172, above.

33 Jeanette Dillon, 'The Early Tudor History Play', in Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (eds), *English Historical Drama 1500–1660: Forms Outside the Canon* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 47–8. Dillon is citing Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin (eds), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 115. This proclamation was issued on 16 May 1559.

34 Chambers, *The Elizabethan* Stage, vol. 2, p. 77.

35 Ibid., pp. 83–4: 'The last 'reward' to the company, not improbably for the anti-papal farce of 6 January 1559, is to be found in the Chamber Account for 1558–60'.

36 Ibid., p. 84. It was Edmund Strowdewick who died on 3 June 1568.

37 Ibid., p. 84.

38 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 196.

of children did sometimes go on tour with plays, and it may be that up to 1583 chorister groups from the Chapel Royal or from Windsor claimed the royal title when travelling.[39]

It is just possible that this first recorded visit by the 'Quenes Players' to Stratford could have been undertaken by a group of boys. They were paid 9*s*., which is more than tumblers seem to have been paid although, of course, this group were travelling under the Queen's name so perhaps they commanded more than the usual touring reward.

Visits to Stratford and the Court Repertoire

Entertainments offered to Elizabeth I, whether at court, at the Inns of Court, or on progresses, were likely to fall into several categories: celebrations of the Queen – often depicting her in a mythical context; spectacular, themed tournaments in her honour; tales with moral allegorical stories (like the moral interludes) that purported to celebrate the Queen's strengths and virtues while perhaps encouraging her to live up to these exacting standards; plays about the nature of rule and authority; and plays that tried to advise the Queen on future action – particularly on the touchy subject of marriage and the need for an heir in order to ensure her kingdom's security. Alex Davis goes so far as to assert that the 'theme of courtship was the constant burden of royal pageantry'.[40] Plays and entertainments could also relate to foreign policies – to actions against Spain, France, or the relationship with the Ottoman Empire, as well as tales of the New World.

It is clear that a number of the plays performed in the provinces in the late sixteenth century were presented by players who had also performed at court on a regular basis. As Tiner points out, 'of the companies that toured in Warwickshire, those on the court calendar, the players of the countess of Essex and the earls of Leicester and Warwick, both members of the privy council, are also the ones that received the highest rewards in Stratford'.[41]

Leicester's Men were active between 1559 and 1588.[42] Payments to them are recorded in the Stratford-upon-Avon *Minutes and Accounts* for performances in 1572–3, 1576–7 and 1587. It was Leicester's Men who received the first ever patent to tour safely as a company of players (1574). They also 'dominated the festivities through the 20 court seasons from 1563 to 1582. They performed altogether 19 times in 11 of the 20 court seasons'.[43]

39 Ibid., p. 196.

40 Alex Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance*, p. 73.

41 Tiner, 'Patrons and Travelling Companies', p. 42. The Earl of Leicester was appointed to the Privy Council in 1562 and granted a peerage, as well as the chancellorship of Oxford University, in 1564.

42 'A company known as "Lord Dudley's" players can be found in provincial records from the late 1550s'. See Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 185–6 and Sally-Beth MacLean, 'The Politics of Patronage: Dramatic Records in Robert Dudley's Household Books', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993), pp. 175–82. For maps illustrating touring routes see Figs. 8.1 and 8.2 pp. 179 and 180 above.

43 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 167.

The Earl of Leicester had two spheres of influence: 'his principal duties centred on the court where he had the Queen's ear and many opportunities to pursue his own self-agrandizement'.[44] He also had considerable territorial influence across the country, 'originating in the West Midlands and the East Riding of Yorkshire, but rapidly spreading to counties such as Cheshire and Berkshire, and eventually to Northamptonshire, Hampshire and Herefordshire where he never had property of significance'.[45]

Leicester was Queen Elizabeth's 'most durable and powerful favourite'.[46] The company of his brother Ambrose Dudley, the Earl of Warwick, appeared in the court Christmas festivities 12 times within a span of 14 years.[47] They seem to have had strong support both at court and in the country at large although they are absent from the records in the early 1570s.[48]

> After an interval of ten years there are Warwick's Men at Court on 14 February 1575 and also at Stratford-upon-Avon in the course of 1574–5, at Lichfield between 27 July and 3 August [1575] during the progress, and at Leicester before 29 September 1575. At the following Christmas they gave three plays at Court, on 26 December 1575 and on 1 January [1576].[49]

During the next four winters Warwick's Men 'appeared regularly at Court, and are recorded at Leicester in 1576 and Nottingham on 1 September 1577'.[50] Indeed, Gurr notes that 'Warwick's played at court each year from the 1574–5 season until 1580, being eminent enough to present the opening St Stephen's Day play in 1575, 1576, and 1578'.[51] During the winter season at court in 1575–6 the Earl of Warwick's Men played *The Painter's Daughter* (26 December 1576) and, the following winter, they played *The Irish Knight* (18 February 1577). Both plays are now lost.[52] They may have had these plays in their repertoire when they toured in 1574–5, but there is no evidence to support this. At the very least these titles, along with several plays known to have been in their repertoire in the late 1570s, may suggest something of their performance preferences (and those of their, often royal and aristocratic, audiences).

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44 MacLean, 'Tracking Leicester's Men', p. 246.

45 Ibid., pp. 248–9.

46 Curtis Perry, *Literature and Favouritism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 23.

47 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 167.

48 Chambers notes that Ambrose Dudley seems to have had players travelling between 1559 and 1565 (*Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 97). Gurr suggests that Jerome Savage 'may even have had to re-establish them in 1574 as part of a general enterprise to compete with Leicester's' (*Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 172).

49 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, pp. 97–8. 'John and Lawrence Dutton and Jerome Savage were their payees' (Ibid., p. 98).

50 Ibid., p. 98.

51 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 172.

52 Other plays (now lost) from Warwick's Men in the last years of the 1570s included *Three Sisters of Mantua* (at court, 26 December 1578), *The Knight of the Burning Rock* (1 March 1579) and *The Four Sons of Fabius* (1578–80). See Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 98 and Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 181.

The London success of Leicester's Men, particularly at court, has resulted in a more complete list of plays in their repertoire than for most other companies that included Stratford-upon-Avon in their travelling circuit. Sadly, for the most part, only the titles have survived. The plays are lost, and are almost all listed as anonymous in the *Annals of English Drama*.[53] The same year as their first recorded visit to Stratford, Leicester's played at court during the Christmas season staging *Predor and Lucia* (26 December 1573) and *Mamillia* (28 December). Both plays are described as 'Romance?' in the *Annals*. They may have already been in the company's repertoire during the period up to Michaelmas 1573, and so available for performance in their Stratford visit in late autumn 1573.[54] By the 1574 Christmas season at court Leicester's Men had added *Panecia* (Romance?) and *Philemon and Philecia* (Romance) to their repertoire.[55] Keenan suggests that all four of these early plays included in the Leicester's Men's repertoire probably belonged 'to the classical and romance veins associated with humanism'.[56] They may also have touched a more political vein. Mulryne has pointed out that the Greek word 'panakeia' (therefore Panecia) means 'all healing' (hence 'panacea'). Panecia was sometimes personified as the daughter of Aesculapius, the Roman god of medicine. The name Philecia may be invented, perhaps suggesting the lover of some quality or object, just possibly 'philekklesia' (lover of the Church).[57] If this is correct then at least two of the titles in the company's repertoire in the early to mid-1570s seem to suggest a potential combination of romance and politics; the same may have been true for the other titles in the same period.

At the time of their second recorded visit to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1576–7, the company had a new play in their court repertoire. An anonymous piece, *The Collier*, was performed at court on 30 December 1576 and is described in the *Annals* as a 'Comedy?'[58] Leicester's Men may also have owned two plays by Stephen Gosson, thought to have been written in the 1576–7 period: *Captain Mario*, a 'Comedy', and *Praise at Parting*, a 'Moral' play. Both are thought to have been performed by Leicester's Men at James Burbage's playhouse, the Theatre – but not until 1581–2.[59] Two further plays, thought to have been written between 1576 and 1579, were in the repertoire of Leicester's in 1578:

53 Alfred Harbage, revised by S. Schoenbaum, *Annals of English Drama, 975–1700*, third edition revised by Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).

54 The accounts were drawn up by William Smith on 17 February 1574 (modern dating) and refer therefore to the '72–'73 year, probably Michaelmas to Michaelmas. A footnote in *MA* points out that Leicester's Men 'were in Nottingham on 1 September and in Bristol in the week 20–27 October 1573', suggesting that they visited Stratford in the intervening few weeks, over the Michaelmas 'boundary'.

55 The performance of *Panecia* is listed in *Annals* as Christmas, 1574–5 and of *Philecia* as 21 February 1574.

56 Keenan, *Travelling Players*, p. 58. The company may have included one or more of these plays in their repertoire when they performed in the church in Aldeburgh in 1573–4, offering their audience 'a taste of the humanist culture important in academic and elite circles', (Keenan, p. 58).

57 Personal discussion, February 2012.

58 *Grim the Collier of Croydon* may also have been in the Leicester's Men repertoire although the date is very far from certain. Chambers suggests 1600 but then wavers towards a possible sixteenth-century dating.

59 See *Annals*, pp. 46–7.

Stephen Gosson's play, *Catiline's Conspiracies*, is described in the *Annals* as a 'Didactic History'. It may have had some influence on Ben Jonson's later use of Roman history in his own *Catiline*.[60] The anonymous *The Blacksmith's Daughter* is described as an 'Historical Romance'. Both are listed as under the auspices of 'Leicester's at the Theatre (?)'.[61] Another play is known to have been in the touring repertoire of Leicester's Men in 1577: they played the anonymous *Myngo* in Bristol on their visit of 13–19 October.[62] In the early 1580s there were no new plays available to be read. 'By 1583 some of the older interludes might still have been on the bookstalls, along with translations from the classical drama'.[63] McMillin and MacLean note that 'the first play to be published which can be connected with the adult professional companies in the late 1570s/early 1580s was *Three Ladies of London*, which came out in 1584' and suggest that this was a play from the Leicester's repertoire.[64]

Another company was associated with the Earl of Leicester's Men in 1578. The Earl of Essex's players emerged in the early 1570s, first appearing under the first Earl's name in the records for 'Nottinghamshire and the west, Bath, Bristol, and Gloucester, in 1573'.[65] When the first Earl of Essex died in 1576, the countess retained the company 'and under her name it appeared at Coventry and Oxford in 1576–7'. In 1578–9 'the countye [Countess] of Essex plears' received 13*s*. 6*d*. in Stratford-upon-Avon according to the *Minutes and Accounts*. On 11 February 1578 this company gave its only performance at court, taking the place of Leicester's Men, 'to whom that day had originally been assigned'.[66] Gurr notes that the Countess of Essex's Men were called to perform at court 'at the queen's command … It might have been an insult to Leicester, who was not in great favour at that time. It could have been meant as a form of sympathetic gesture to the Countess over the death of her husband'.[67] Gurr records a further payment of an unspecified amount to the Countess of Essex by Stratford in 1580 (although this is not noted in the *Minutes and Accounts*). The company continued to use the countess's name through 1578–80, after which 'the revelation of her remarriage to Leicester probably helped to make it vanish from the records'.[68] It may be that their court repertoire mirrored others in the late 1570s and 1580s in being concerned principally with legend and romance. What makes their visits to Stratford's Guildhall so interesting is the social and political acceptance of a

60 See the introduction to the Regents Renaissance Drama Series edition of Jonson's *Catiline*, W.F. Bolton and Jane F. Gardner (eds), (London: Edward Arnold, 1973).

61 See *Annals*, pp. 48–9. Felix E. Schelling comments that '*The Blacksmith's Daughter*, "containing the Treachery of the Turks," suggests the breezy drama of adventure soon to rise into popularity' (*Elizabethan Drama 1558–1642*, 2 vols (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910), vol. 2, p. 404.

62 See footnote 4 above.

63 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, p. 4.

64 Ibid., p. 4 and p. 22.

65 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 170.

66 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, pp. 102–3.

67 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 169. Whatever the motivation for the last-minute switch for the performance at court, it is worth noting that Leicester married the widowed Countess, secretly, the following September.

68 Gurr, p. 170.

female patron during the years of transition in the late 1570s and the positioning of the countess in relation to courtly faction and intrigue.

The changing fashions in court entertainments will have had an impact on the fashions for performances in the provinces, too. Dillon comments that the 'early court play addressed a social and international elite, many of whom were active participants in the decision-making process of international politics'.[69] McMillin and MacLean have joined the speculation as to the subject matter of the court plays (many of which are now lost), but have titles which

> sound as though they were meant to make a broad cultural assertion about England's position in a European world. To prove that England had a literature and a drama that could stand among those of the continental nations – that was a challenge being met by the companies that were called to play such pastoral and classical pieces at court, and it was a full-fledged motive in what we call humanism.[70]

As G.K. Hunter notes: 'It is true that the records of the court in the 1570s and 1580s show a clear bifurcation of the repertory, the boys performing plays unremittingly classical in subject matter' while the adult companies were performing plays that were 'predominantly post-classical'.[71] However, he draws attention to the problem of judging the content of lost plays by their titles: 'Classical titles do not require classic (as against romantic) dramaturgy'.[72]

Court tastes can be seen to have intermingled with more local considerations. In the provinces the choice of plays may sometimes have been specific to their patrons while, according to Dillon, 'the Elizabethan commercial-theatre history play addressed a popular audience that included those seen by the government as potentially disruptive and rebellious'.[73]

By the visit to Stratford in 1587, Leicester's company had undergone various changes of personnel including the transfer to the Queen's Men of some of Leicester's best players. The payment of 10*s*. seems to reflect these changes, down from the 15*s*. listed in 1576–7. Three of Leicester's Men were included in the newly formed Queen's Men in 1583: Lanham, Johnson and Wilson. 'Several payments to the Queen's Men suggest their former patron maintained his personal contact with them and that he may have taken a continuing interest in their court appearances … and their tours'.[74]

The Earl of Leicester seems to have taken the opportunity of the inclusion of three of his principal players in the newly formed Queen's Men to restructure the patronage arrangements for his remaining players. This was

69 Dillon, 'The Early Tudor History Play', p. 49.
70 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, p. 35.
71 G.K. Hunter, *English Drama 1586–1642: The Age of Shakespeare*, Oxford History of English Literature, VI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 132.
72 Ibid., p. 132.
73 Dillon, 'The Early Tudor History Play', p. 49.
74 MacLean, 'Tracking Leicester's Men', p. 262.

coloured, in part, by Leicester's strong support for England's active military involvement against Spain in the Netherlands – and he drew his players to the Netherlands with him. 'Will Kemp, who was clearly one of Leicester's Men, set out on 4 January but he was back with Dudley [in England] … by early May.'[75] 1586 was, according to MacLean, 'a remarkable year' in the life of the Earl of Leicester and his players. 'It was his quasi-regal household they performed for at Christmas, and, as governor-general of the Netherlands, he may have recalled some of them by April for the St George's Day celebrations at Utrecht with the traditional Garter ceremony and elaborate banquet following'.[76] The entertainment for this banquet included 'a show of tumbling and dance titled "The Forces of Hercules"'.[77] In May 1586 Leicester paid a group of players to tour Europe under his name: 'Five players – Thomas Stephen, George Bryan, Thomas King, Thomas Pope, and Robert Percy – were dispatched, with the requisite letter from their patron, to tour parts of northern Europe where the courts of Frederick II of Denmark at Elsinore and Christian I, Elector of Saxony, made them welcome'.[78]

It is just possible that Leicester's Men included a show by Thomas Churchyard (now lost) in their 1587 tour to Stratford.[79] If so this show, concerned with *Leicester's Services in Flanders*, might have been taken from their repertoire in the Low Countries. It is possible that it was a response to Leicester's vilification in the notorious *Leicester's Commonwealth* (1584) and an attempt to restore the Earl's reputation.[80]

Two other companies that visited Stratford in the early 1580s had London connections – not necessarily with the court but with the popular playhouse: Lord Berkeley's Men and Sussex's players. Volume three of *Minutes and Accounts* lists visits by 'Lord Bartlett his players' to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1580–81 and 1582–3.[81] These were Berkeley's Men who 'were a long-lasting touring group' that 'played in London in July 1581, though they were never called to play at court'.[82] (When in London they may have played at the Curtain and at the Theatre.) The company 'appeared

75 Sally-Beth MacLean, 'Leicester and the Evelyns: New evidence for the continental tour of Leicester's Men', in *Review of English Studies* 39 (1988), 492–3.

76 MacLean, 'Tracking Leicester's Men', p. 265.

77 Ibid. MacLean refers to John Stow, *The Annals of England* (London, 1592; STC: 23334), 1214–15).

78 Ibid. Kemp and his boy, Daniel Jones, were to follow later and they returned home sooner than the others. See 'Tracking Leicester's Men', p. 265, note 73.

79 *Annals*, pp. 54–5.

80 Perry, *Literature and Favouritism in Early Modern England*, p. 9. See also D.C. Peck (ed.), *Leicester's Commonwealth: the Copy of a Letter written by a Master of Art of Cambridge (1584) and Related Documents* (Athens: 1985). *Leicester's Commonwealth* was a Catholic tract, in the form of a dialogue, which depicted the Earl of Leicester as 'a fully protean and rapacious figure, an upstart from an upstart family unrestrained by any larger system of religious or political loyalty'. It was one of a number of conspiracy theory tracts 'written to serve the interests of the Catholic aristocracy by depicting Protestant courtiers like Leicester and Burghley as dangerous machiavellian innovators' (Perry, *Literature and Favouritism*, pp. 24–7.)

81 The payment of 5*s*. for the second visit included payment to 'a preacher'. See Mulryne, p. 189, 200.

82 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 168: Lord Berkeley 'had come into his baronage in 1553. He married a Howard, daughter of the Earl of Surrey, and his daughter married the son of George Carey in 1596, shortly before Carey became Lord Chamberlain'.

intermittently in provincial records from 1578 until shortly before his [Lord Berkeley's] death in 1611'.[83] One play, now lost, has been attributed to Lord Berkeley's players. This is *What Mischief Worketh in the Mind of Man*, played in Bristol in July 1578.[84] It is just possible that this piece remained in their repertoire in at least the first of their visits to Stratford-upon-Avon, particularly as they may have needed to return to touring following their involvement in a legal dispute in London in July 1581.[85]

The visit to Stratford-upon-Avon listed in Mulryne's Appendix as by '? Sussex's' players in 1586 took place at a time when that company was dealing with difficult circumstances. Gurr notes that the death of the third earl in June 1583 had meant the company's 'automatic dissolution, and it took his heir some time to assemble a new company'.[86] The third earl had been patron of a group of players 'which proved [to be] one of the most long-lived of the theatrical organizations of Elizabeth's time and held together, now in London and now in the provinces, under no less than three earls'.[87] The third earl, Thomas Radcliffe, was Lord Chamberlain from 1572 until his death in 1583. The company then passed to his brother, Henry. As Chambers explains, 'either the death of their patron in June 1583, or possibly the formation of the Queen's Men in the previous March, eclipsed them, but in 1585 they reappear[ed] as a provincial company'.[88] (Tarlton may well have been a member of the third earl's company before being summoned in 1583 to join the newly formed Queen's Men.) They visited Coventry twice in 1585–6 and again in September 1587. They also visited Leicester in 1586–7 where 'they were playing under the name of the Countess of Sussex'.[89] This visit is also listed by Gurr (p. 183) with a payment of 20*s*. In 1585–6 a payment of 20*s*. is made in Nottingham 'at our townes hall to the Erle of sussex musicians & players'.[90] So the company that visited Stratford could well have been touring in the name of the countess. And if a company under the patronage of the Sussex family did, indeed, visit Stratford then this could well add some information to our knowledge of the plays performed in the Guildhall as some evidence of their plays has survived. In 1583 they played the *History of Ferrar* at court, perhaps before the death of the third earl. The play is now lost but it is possible that it might have remained the property of the company as it went through its period of transition, in which case it could have been among their plays at the time of their visit to Stratford in 1586. Tarlton may

83 Ibid., p. 168.
84 They were paid 10*s*. on this occasion.
85 See Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 168–9 for Lord Berkeley's strong support for his players during this dispute in July 1581 when students from Gray's Inn provoked a fight with the players.
86 Ibid., p. 175.
87 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 92.
88 Ibid., p. 94.
89 Ibid. This visit is also listed by Gurr as 'the Countys of Sussexe playors, 20s' (*Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 183).
90 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 183.

have retained his actor's part in this play when he moved to the Queen's Men and the newly re-structured Sussex's Men might have found a new clown.

Purely Provincial Touring

Occasionally a company that was not known to have been active in London, in the playhouses or at court, was welcomed on a provincial tour perhaps owing to the local influence of their patron or, indeed, the influence of that patron in attracting royal favour.

The Earl of Worcester's Players visited Stratford-upon-Avon six times. This company, under the patronage of William Somerset, third Earl of Worcester, was 'a wholly provincial company, [that] specialized in the Midlands circuit'.[91] Gurr notes that there are 'records of a Worcester's company travelling the country from the 1550s. On 10 October 1563 they were at Leicester and the third earl's playing company, known as "hamond and his fellowes", gave some of the Christmas festivities at Haddon Hall [in Derbyshire] as early as January 1565'.[92] Their first recorded visit to Stratford took place in 1568–9 when they were paid just 12*d*. They probably brought up to 10 players on their visits to Stratford in the late 1570s and mid 1580s: 1574–5, 1576–7, 1580–81, 1581–2, 1583–4.[93]

In 1583 a later version of the third earl's company, including new personnel, 'is noted at Norwich in a dispute over playing there in that year'.[94] As Chambers comments, 'there was a fear of plague, and the company was given 26s 8d, on a promise not to play'.[95] They caused offence by playing 'in their host's house', in spite of the ban.[96] The Norwich records include the names of the players James Tunstall, Thomas Cook, Edward Browne and William Harrison. The company also included Edward Alleyn, Robert Browne and Richard Jones (included in records in Leicester for 6 February 1584). Chambers notes that it is possible that 'the company passed from Worcester's service into that of Lord Howard, when the latter became Lord Admiral in 1585'.[97] Unfortunately there is no record of the repertoire of Worcester's Men although the presence among the players of the young Edward Alleyn is of interest given his later success as a leading player in the Admiral's Men.

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91 Mulryne, 'Professional Players', p. 7, and above, p. 183.

92 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 317.

93 Mulryne, 'Professional Players', p. 9; and above, pp. 183. There were 10 players on the visits to Southampton in 1577, and to Norwich and Leicester in 1583–4. See also John Tucker Murray, *English Dramatic Companies 1558–1642*, vol. 1, pp. 44–5 and vol. 2, p. 397.

94 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 318.

95 Chambers, *Elizabethan* Stage, vol. 2, p. 221. The same incident is recorded in the *REED* volume for Norwich, p. 65. Chambers also notes a similar incident in Leicester the following March (vol. 2, pp. 221–4).

96 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 221. See also Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 317, who glosses this last reference with the comment, 'presumably an inn'.

97 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 224.

In 1582–3 the record in the Stratford *Minutes and Accounts* lists a payment of 3*s*. 4*d*. to the 'lord shandowes players'. These were Chandos's players who, Gurr points out, 'had been in existence since at least 1582, though with no sign of any periods being spent in London as part of [their] touring circuit'.[98] Their patron, Giles Brydges, third Baron Chandos, owned Sudeley Castle, 8 miles north-east of Cheltenham and so within comfortable touring distance of Stratford. Brydges 'came from a family which traditionally ran a major company with a long and fairly distinguished record of touring'.[99] He hosted the Queen at Sudeley in 1576 and 1592, although the Chandos company never performed at court. Gurr notes that the Queen's entertainment at Sudeley in 1592 included the 'usual Arcadian pastoral' with 'speeches by an old shepherd, and an elaborate masque'.[100]

Chandos's players travelled to Dover in 1577–8, to Ipswich and Ludlow in 1581–2, Bath in June 1582 with Gloucester on 7 November 1582 and Norwich on 19 October 1583. They were in Stratford in 1582–3 and back in Bath in June 1583 returning to Gloucester on 11 January 1584. The payments of 20*s*. received on their visits to Gloucester probably reflected more on the local influence of their patron rather than on the content or reputation of the performance offered, while the payment of 3*s*. 4*d*. in Stratford-upon-Avon seems to have been the lowest they received. The entry in the Stratford *Minutes and Accounts* does use the plural for 'players' – but that might have been habitual for the Chamberlain – and 3*s*. 4*d*. is low, which suggests a much reduced number of players.

Establishing the content of the touring repertoire of the Chandos players is almost impossible. Certainly there is no reference to the company under plays' 'Auspices' as listed in the third edition of the *Annals of English Drama*, nor, indeed, any reference to the company at all. What we do know is that by the 1590s the clown Robert Armin was a player, and singer, with Chandos's company. He also performed 'one-man acts' and may have toured alone.[101] A note on the website of the rebuilt Globe in Southwark suggests that Armin, who was serving as an apprentice under the London Company of Goldsmiths from 1581–92, started to write plays and pamphlets during that time and, between 1582 and 1588, became a protégé of the actor and clown Richard Tarlton (who was one of the 12 players creamed off from professional companies to be a member of the newly formed Queen's Men in 1583).[102]

98 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 312. Chambers does not include Chandos's Men among the companies of adult players discussed in *The Elizabethan Stage*.

99 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 310. Giles Brydges (1547–1594) was MP for Gloucestershire in 1572 and succeeded to the Baronetcy in 1573. 'William Brydges, who became fourth Lord Chandos in 1594, kept the company on until his death in 1602, and his son continued with it after that' (ibid., pp. 312–13).

100 Ibid., p. 312.

101 'There are some hints that through the 1590s he [Armin] might have used Chandos's livery for a one-man touring act that took him on quite different paths from the company's' (ibid., p. 313).

102 See http://www.globe-theatre.org.uk/robert-armin-actor.htm

By the time that the Essex Players returned to Stratford in 1583–4, Robert Devereux had succeeded as the second Earl of Essex.[103] It is possible that his company included at least some players who had been members of the first company and, of course, of his mother's company. The company was paid just 3*s*. in Stratford in 1583–4 and 5*s*. for a visit to the town in 1587.[104] It was the second Earl's men that 'went with the Queen's to play in Dublin in 1589 on what was probably at least a semi-official visit'.[105] They continued to tour the provinces until 1596–7.[106]

The only visit by 'my Lord of Staffordes men' to Stratford-upon-Avon took place in 1587. From 1574, Edward, third Baron Stafford, was patron of a company of players.[107] Lord Stafford's Men seem to have played in the provinces rather than at Court.[108] The *Chamberlains' and Wardens' Account Book II* for the City of Coventry records visits to Coventry by a company bearing Lord Stafford's name in 1577, 1583, 1585, 1588, 1599 and 1600.[109] It may be that their visit to Stratford in 1587 was in place of a visit to Coventry (as they are not recorded in that city in either 1586 or 1587). Their payment in Stratford is rather less than their payments in Coventry in the 1580s. It may be that the group visiting Stratford was smaller or less experienced, or the payment may simply reflect the differential between payments in a town compared with in a major city.[110]

Lord Ogle's players may well be one of the 'four companies of players' to visit Stratford in 1596–7. Cuthbert Ogle (1540–1597) was seventh Baron Ogle from November 1562 until his death.[111] Sixteen visits are recorded for this company between 1578 and 1602.[112] A company under his patronage visited St Mary's Guildhall, Coventry, on five occasions between 1594 and 1602 (including a visit there in 1596/97). In January 2012 Robert Bearman drew attention to a handwritten scribble in a rough draft of Richard Quiney's accounts for 1597 (that is the chamberlain's accounts for Stratford-upon-Avon submitted in January 1598).[113] The addition (a scribbled note below the main list of items and in a different ink) lists the names of the companies that visited Stratford in 1597, including Lord Ogle's Men.[114]

103 Devereux was born in November 1566. He became second Earl of Essex in 1576.
104 As recorded in the *Minutes and Accounts*.
105 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 170.
106 Ibid., pp. 178–9.
107 He was married in 1566 to Mary Stanley (daughter of Edward Stanley, third Earl of Derby).
108 After the third Baron's death in 1603, the group continued until at least 1617 under the patronage of Edward, fourth Baron Stafford, who succeeded his father.
109 CRO: A 7 (b).
110 The payments received in Coventry were: 5*s*. (1577), 6*s*. 4*d*. (1583), 10*s*. (1585), 6*s*. 8*d*. (1588).
111 He was a member of the Council of the North from 1572 and JP for Yorkshire, North Riding, from 1584 as well as commissioner to survey forts and castles in the Marches towards Scotland (1580–1588). This northern focus does not seem to be reflected in the travels of his players, although there is a payment to them in 1593 for a performance at the Common Hall, York.
112 *REED* on-line.
113 See Mulryne, pp. 200–201, above.
114 See Mulryne, pp. 200–201, fn. 57, above.

The interest in such regional performances is partly in the local patrons, partly in the places in which their companies played (including private houses) and, perhaps most importantly from the perspective of a theatre historian, the players emerging from these provincial companies to take their place on the London stage.

Patronage from the House of Stanley

In 1579–80, the Earl of Derby's Men performed in Stratford and received 13*s*. 6*d*.[115] Henry Stanley, known as Lord Strange, succeeded as fourth Earl of Derby on 24 October 1572. As Lord Strange he had a company of players 'which is only recorded in the provinces, in 1563–70'.[116] Four years later he had a company as the Earl of Derby, the earliest mention of which is in Coventry in 1573–4. 'In the last three months of 1579 it was at Leicester; and during the following Christmas it made its first appearance at Court with a performance of *The Soldan and the Duke of* ___ on 14 February 1580. In 1579–80 it was at Stratford-upon-Avon, Exeter and Coventry.'[117] *The Soldan and the Duke of* ___ is described as a 'Historical Romance' in the *Annals* and may well have been in their repertoire when they visited Stratford. Mulryne has suggested that this might have been a celebration of the third Earl of Derby, who died at the Siege of Acre in 1190 during a Crusade. If so, it might be seen to underpin the notion that travelling companies spread the word about their patron's noble history and ancestry.[118]

Lord Strange's company also appears to have visited Stratford just once in the late 1570s. Both companies were under the patronage of the Stanleys: 'the companies connected with the great northern house of Stanley present a history perhaps more complicated than that of any other group, partly because it seems to have been not unusual for the heir of the house to entertain players during his father's life-time'.[119] Gurr points out that the Stanleys 'were the largest landowners in Lancashire, and they liked plays: most of the major companies made regular visits to perform at their great houses'.[120] Chambers tries to clarify the connections between the Stanleys' companies. He writes:

> I think that the Earl of Derby's players must be taken to be distinct from another company, which was performing during much the same period of years under the name of Lord Strange. These [Lord Strange's Men] are found in 1576–7 at Exeter,

115 Sally-Beth MacLean, 'A Family Tradition: Dramatic Patronage by the Earls of Derby', in Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay and Richard Wilson (eds), *Region, Religion and Patronage: Lancastrian Shakespeare* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 218.

116 Chambers cites Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, vol. 1, p. 294.

117 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol 2, p. 118. Chambers also cites Murray, 'In 1579–80, "the Earle of darbyes players" performed in Stratford and received 13s 6d' (vol. 1, p. 294). This does not accord with the entry in the *Minutes and Accounts*, where the payment is a more modest 8*s* 4*d*.

118 Personal discussion, February 2012.

119 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 118.

120 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 258.

> in 1578–9 at Bath, Ipswich, Rochester, Nottingham, Coventry and Stratford-upon-Avon. They also made their appearance at Court in the winter of 1579–80. Their performance [at Court] was on 15 January 1580, and they are spoken of, not as players, but as tumblers.[121]

In 1577, this troupe, under the patronage of Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, heir to Henry Stanley (fourth Earl of Derby), was in Southampton: 'The Southampton payment in June 1577 is of particular interest as it bears out Chambers's reference to tumblers: the reward of 10s in Southampton is for five "vaulters" and "tumblers"'.[122] It is this troupe that is recorded in Stratford-upon-Avon, in 1578–79.

Meanwhile, by the late 1570s, the Earl of Derby's company was 'one of the most prominent, and probably prosperous, of the Elizabethan acting companies'.[123] A great deal of detail relating to the various companies under the patronage of the Stanley family has recently been documented by MacLean in 'A Family Tradition: Dramatic Patronage by the Earls of Derby'.[124] They are also important in Richard Dutton's research for his essay on 'Shakespearean Origins'.[125] They were successful both in the provinces and at court. But in 1583 they vanish from the records. This may well have had something to do with the creation of the Queen's Men – although there is no clear indication that they lost players to the newly formed company.

Chambers thinks it 'possible that those [players] of the 5th Earl of Derby's Men who did not take service with the Lord Chamberlain, passed into a provincial period of existence under his successor, the 6th Earl'.[126] As Gurr explains:

> In 1594 [the fifth Earl of] Derby's widow took an interest in her husband's players, because they are recorded at Winchester on 16 May 1594 under her name. That, though, was a remnant company trying to re-establish itself … What the relationship was between the new earl's and his ex-Strange's company and the old earl's [sic] Derby's company in this period it is impossible to tell.[127]

Certainly a troupe of players under the patronage of the sixth Earl of Derby maintained 'their touring career for an extraordinary thirty years, starting in

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121 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, pp. 118–9. See Chambers, ibid., p. 119, for the connection in the early 1580s between this company, their payee John Symons, the Earl of Oxford and Ferdinando Stanley, the son of Henry Stanley, fourth earl of Derby, and summoned to Parliament as Lord Strange in 1589 (during his father's lifetime). By 1591 'the Lord Strange's Men had climbed to the peak of esteem in the eyes of the Master of the Revels, since he gave them an unprecedented season at court for the 1591–2 season … and from early in 1591 they had Edward Alleyn as a player'. See Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 258–9.

122 MacLean, 'A Family Tradition', p. 217.

123 MacLean, 'A Family Tradition', pp. 215–16. See also MacLean, 'Tracking Leicester's Men', pp. 246–71.

124 See footnote 115, above.

125 See Richard Dutton, 'Shakespearean Origins', in Takashi Kozuka and J.R. Mulryne (eds), *Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson: New Directions in Biography* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

126 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, pp. 126–7.

127 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 265: 'Unfortunately nothing about the membership of this re-formed company is known. All the players who were identified as Strange's in the pre-1594 records turn up in the two duopoly companies [the Lord Chamberlain's and the Lord Admiral's] after that time.'

1594'.[128] The dates of some of the provincial performances of this company are interesting in relation to the performances in Stratford-upon-Avon in the 1590s by unnamed companies of players (as listed in the *Minutes and Accounts*). According to Chambers:

> A company bearing his [the 6th Earl's] name was at Norwich on 15 September 1594, at Dunwich in 1594–5 and 1595–6, at Coventry, Bath and Stratford in 1595–6, at Leicester between October and December 1596, at Bath in 1596–7, at Malden in 1597, at Coventry twice in 1597–8 [and] at Leicester in 1597–8.[129]

'Therle of Darbies' was also one of the four companies visiting Stratford on 'Julii 16 and 17' [1597].[130] These visits by the Earl of Derby's men might offer a further clue to the repertoire of the various players visiting Stratford. According to the *Annals*, an entry for 1599 includes the following: 'Heywood, T. (?), and others (?), *I and II Edward IV…* [Date] limits: 1592–1599, History, Derby's.'[131] This history play may well have been in the company's repertoire by their 1597 visit to Stratford.

Men and/or Boys?

In 1583–4 the players of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, 'my lord of oxfords pleers', performed in Stratford.[132] A few years prior to this visit, in 1580, 'the Duttons and the rest of the Earl of Warwick's men transferred themselves to his [Oxford's] service'.[133] This group, newly brought together, were 'traceable provincially in 1580–3'.[134] A payment was made in Norwich in 1580–81 to 'the Earl of Oxenfordes lads', and at Bristol (September 1581) there were 'nine boys and a man' touring under Oxford's name.[135] Chambers suggests that these were 'probably boys of the Earl's domestic chapel, travelling either with the Duttons or as a separate company'.[136] Chambers attempts to separate a men's and a boys' company in the service of the Earl:

> The Duttons joined the Queen's company, John on its first establishment in 1583. It is in the following winter, however, that an Oxford's company first appeared at Court. Here the Earl's 'servauntes' performed on 1 January and 3 March 1584. Their payee was John Lyly, who had probably been for some years in the Earl's service. Provincial

128 MacLean, 'A Family Tradition', p. 219.
129 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 127. The Stratford visit listed by Chambers does not appear in the *Minutes and Accounts*.
130 See Mulryne, p. 200 and fn. 57.
131 *Annals*, pp. 72–3. See also Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 266.
132 Edward de Vere (1550–1604) succeeded as 17th earl and Great Lord Chamberlain on 3 August 1562.
133 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 100. Laurence and John Dutton 'were thrustful enough to make their new company prominent in London from the start. They were playing at the city's leading playhouse, the Theatre, in April 1580, as we know from a brawl the players got into there with some of the Inns-of-Court students' (Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 307).
134 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 100. Chambers refers to Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, vol. 1, p. 348. See also Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 306–7.
135 See Gurr, ibid., p. 314. They were paid 2*s*. 'per piece', i.e. 20*s*.
136 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, pp. 100–101.

performances continue during 1583–5, and in the records the company are always described as 'players' or 'men'.[137]

Gurr describes the Earl of Oxford as 'an independent and very persistent promoter of playing groups, both of men and of boys, [from 1580] for the next twenty years'.[138] He lists a number of provincial visits, but his listings for 1583–4 do not include Stratford-upon Avon where, in the *Minutes and Accounts*, the visit to Stratford is recorded by 'my lord of oxfords pleers', with their payment of 3*s*. 4*d*. Again, this is a low payment which may, perhaps, reflect the fact that the men's company had only been formed just prior to the date of the visit – or it may reflect a performance by juveniles.

It may be that the company of 'my lord of oxfords pleers' that visited Stratford in 1583–4 were an adult group while the Earl's players who performed at Court in 1584 (in January and in the following December) were boys. Or were the group in Stratford the 'boys of the Earl's domestic chapel' who travelled to Bristol in 1581? Had the Duttons left the Earl's company before the Stratford visit? The payment of 3*s*. 4*d*. was certainly the lowest received by a company associated with the Earl of Oxford in the early 1580s.[139] Chambers notes that

> after the performances of December 1584 Oxford perhaps ceased to maintain boy players and contented himself with another company of his servants who made an appearance at Court on 1 January 1585, under John Symons, in feats of activity and vaulting. These tumblers had apparently been Lord Strange's Men in 1583, and by 1586 had returned into the service of the Stanley family.[140]

Had they been servants of the Earl of Oxford during 1584 (before their January performance at Court in 1585)? If so, could it have been a version of this group that visited Stratford?

As the *Minutes and Accounts* refer to the period from Michaelmas 1583 to Michaelmas 1584 it is likely that a company belonging to the Earl had in their repertoire the play offered at Court in January 1584. Comparing this entry with the details gathered in the *Annals*, there are two court performances dated c. 1583; both are described as 'Classical Legend (Comedy)' and both were performed by Oxford's Boys.[141] The plays in question were Lyly's *Campaspe* and *Sappho and Phao*. In the introduction to their Revels Plays edition, Hunter and Bevington explain that '"Lord Oxford's servants" were paid for the court performance of a play that most likely was *Campaspe* on "newyeares day at night", 1584 [modern dating]. Again, on 3 March (Shrove Tuesday) they were

137 Ibid.

138 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 307.

139 According to Gurr, the next lowest payment was 6*s*. 8*d*. See Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 314.

140 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 101.

141 *Annals*, pp. 52–3. The title page of *Sappho and Phao* says the piece was acted for the Queen 'on newyeares day at night'. This performance probably took place in the Great Chamber at Whitehall. See David Bevington, 'John Lyly and Queen Elizabeth: Royal Flattery in *Campaspe* and *Sappho and Phao*', *Renaissance Papers 1966* (1967), 57–67 and David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics: A critical approach to topical meaning* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 65.

paid for another play, most probably *Sappho and Phao*, John Lyly being the payee on both occasions. But the title pages of both these plays tell us that they were performed before the Queen by 'her Majesty's children and the children [boys] of Paul's". Under Oxford's protection Lyly seems to have aimed at the mantle of Farrant [who had died in 1580], seeking the theatrical authority, even if not the other functions of a choir-master.'[142]

Certainly John Lyly 'counted the Catholic Earl of Oxford among his patrons'.[143] 'The mythological and fantastic comedies of John Lyly … were the product not only of a particular talent but of the tradition of using English choirboys as actors.'[144] Indeed, Hunter and Bevington confirm that the 'evidence available to us suggests that Lyly wrote most of his plays for particular companies of boy actors to perform' and that these were usually 'Oxford's servants'.[145] Astington comments that 'As with *Campaspe*, much of the play's appeal [in the case of *Sappho and Phao*] is aural; the crisp and agile delivery of the witty arabesques of the intricately constructed speeches must have been the chief concern for the director of the children in rehearsals, perhaps Lyly himself'.[146] 'The implied reference to the court context of his plays is handled by Lyly with a deft lightness of touch which politicizing critics have been anxious to load down by the discovery of specific political allegories … [Yet] the plots Lyly uses, narrating the threats to hierarchical coherence, whether internal or external, and ending with the recovery of balance or control, can be made to refer to particular political occasions only because these tend to follow recurrent general formulae.'[147]

In 1584 there is a further performance recorded at court, this time a 'Classical Legend' performed on 27 December, again by Oxfords' Boys.[148] The play in this case is *Agamemnon and Ulysses* and it is attributed as 'Anon. (poss. De Vere, E.)'.[149] 'For this the payee was Henry Evans, probably the same who in 1600 set up the Chapel plays.'[150] McMillin and MacLean note that, before 1583, the Queen's theatre patronage 'was mainly bestowed on the child actors from the chorister schools […] Two boy companies had been appearing on the holiday calendar for years: the Children of the Chapel and the Children of St Paul's'.[151] They go on to add that 'in 1583, after the death the year before of the long-term master of Paul's, Sebastian Westcote, these companies were combined under the patronage of the Earl of Oxford'.[152] Chambers writes: 'I do not feel much

142 G.K. Hunter and David Bevington (eds), *'Campaspe' and 'Sappho and Phao'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991; reprinted 1999), p. 34.
143 Suzanne R. Westfall, '"The useless dearness of the diamond": Theories of patronage theatre', in Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall (eds), *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage*, p. 26.
144 Hunter, *English Drama 1586–1642*, p. 279.
145 Hunter and Bevington (eds), *'Campaspe and Sappho and Phao'*, p. 33. Performances also took place at the Blackfriars.
146 Astington, *English Court Theatre*, p. 195.
147 Hunter and Bevington (eds), *'Campaspe and Sappho and Phao'*, pp. 146–7.
148 *Annals,* pp. 52–3.
149 Ibid. The De Vere referred to was, of course, the 17th Earl of Oxford.
150 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 101.
151 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, p. 3.
152 Ibid.

doubt that the companies listed under Lyly and Evans were the same, or that in 1583–4 they in fact consisted of a combination of Oxford's boys, Paul's and the Chapel, working under Lyly at the Blackfriars theatre'.[153]

The companies associated with the Earl of Oxford offer much opportunity for speculation as to their repertoires in the early 1580s but, ultimately, it can only be speculation since which of Oxford's 'pleers' visited Stratford is unknown.

Visits to Stratford Under Royal Patronage

Of all the companies travelling to Stratford-upon-Avon in the late sixteenth century, by far the most prestigious was the company of Queen's Men, brought together in March 1583 by Tilney (the Master of the Revels) on the instruction of Sir Francis Walsingham.[154] This company, 'originally founded expressly for touring',[155] visited Stratford in 1587, 1592, 1593 and 1597.[156] The royal patronage was significant as it was almost certainly 'part of a quite deliberate programme of royal propaganda'.[157] Twelve leading players of the time were creamed off from other companies: William Johnson, John Lan(e)ham and Robert Wilson from Leicester's Men; John Adams and Richard Tarlton from Sussex's Men; John Bentley, Lionel Cooke, John Dutton, John Garlend, Tobias Mills, John Singer and John Towne. On each of their first three visits to Stratford they were paid 20*s*., the highest amount given to any players by the town's Corporation.[158]

The formation of the Queen's Men marked a major shift in the business of playing. The new company 'would hold the advantage on the calendar of holiday performances at court, would claim royal privileges for securing playing places in the inn yards of London and in the new purpose-built playhouses outside the city walls, and would receive higher reward than their competitors as they toured the countryside'.[159] There can be little doubt that the motives behind the formation of this company were complex. Walsingham, who had joined the Privy Council, became the Earl of Leicester's 'closest supporter against the faction that backed Burghley'.[160] Bevington agrees that 'art as a weapon of propaganda was a commonplace in the sixteenth century, taken for granted by the politically active noblemen who provided the financial support for many of

153 Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 101.

154 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 197. The illness of the Lord Chamberlain, Sussex, may well have been a factor. 'Equally urgent must have been the weight of the City's hostility to playing, and the need, now that adult-company playing had become the favoured form of Christmas entertainment, for the court to give some protection to the leading players' (ibid., p. 196).

155 Ostovich, Syme and Griffin, eds, *Locating the Queen's Men*, p. 12.

156 See Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp. 186–211 and McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, *passim*, especially pp. 194–7.

157 Astington, *English Court Theatre*, p. 5.

158 See Mulryne, p. 200 above.

159 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 1–2. They played at court 26 December and 29 December 1583 and 3 March 1584.

160 Ibid., p. 197.

England's writers.'[161] But, as Gurr points out, the politics of such factionalism were complicated: 'Charles Howard, for instance, who worked closely with Burghley from his appointment at the beginning of 1584, also worked closely once he was made Lord Admiral with the Leicester and Walsingham group, a key alliance so long as the war against Spain was at issue'.[162]

One of the earliest plays thought to have been in the Queen's Men's repertoire is *Clyomon and Clamydes*. As Walsh explains, this play 'adapts the language of the chronicles and other works of historiography as it promises to provide "famous facts." In actuality, the play provides none, but, like *The Old Wives' Tale*, it evokes a kind of mythical, chivalric past'.[163] The Queen's Men's early plays at court reflect a mixture of pastoral and chivalric romance, and potentially politically motivated themes. McMillin and MacLean also see these plays as part of a wider attempt to place the tastes of the English court alongside their European counterparts:

> When the new Queen's Men brought *Phillyda and Corin* along with *Felix and Philomena* to court in 1584 (both lost, but the titles are clearly pastoral), they were participating in a movement which can be thought of as humanist so long as humanism retains its edge of association with the specific political interests of men like Walsingham and Leicester.[164]

There have been a number of recent studies of the Queen's Men, most notably the seminal study by McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, and a volume edited by Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin, *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583–1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing*. The former makes almost no reference to Stratford-upon-Avon (although McMillin and MacLean do discuss performances in several provincial guildhalls and do include Stratford in their listings of visits); the latter makes no reference to Stratford at all, and almost no reference to any performances in guildhalls in provincial towns or cities. Nevertheless, both these studies put a good deal of emphasis on the Queen's Men's repertoire, so each provides clues as to what may have been offered in Stratford on the various Queen's Men's visits. Indeed, more plays in their repertoire have survived than for any other company active on the provincial touring circuit in the last decades of the sixteenth century.

For Christmas 1584/5 the Queen's Men's repertoire at court included *Phillyda and Corin* and *Felix and Philomena* as well as *Five Plays in One*. By 23 February 1585 they were playing an 'antic play' and 'a comedy'. (They

161 Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics*, p. 3.
162 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 198.
163 Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p. 31. See also *Clyomon and Clamydes*, ed. W. W. Greg (New York, 1985) and Appendix 1 on the repertoire of the companies in Stratford, p. 257–8 below.
164 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 34–5.

had prepared *Three Plays in One* for 21 February but it was not called for.)[165] Presumably these plays could have been in their repertoire when they visited Stratford-upon-Avon in 1587 where, Malone speculates, they might have 'enlisted Shakespeare'.[166] Did they also have *The Famous Victories of Henry V* in their touring repertoire in Stratford in 1587? This play requires the skills of Richard Tarlton who died in 1588. His death seems to have hit the company hard. Indeed, Gurr comments that it may have been around 1588 'that the company's official membership split into two parts'.[167]

By the time of their visits to Stratford in the early 1590s their repertoire had increased substantially and offered an eclectic mixture of styles. Peele's *The Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* was a play in the comic tradition concerned with the 'romantic contradiction between social duty and personal passion'.[168] (By 1592 this was listed as belonging to Strange's Men.) For David Bevington, the 'jubilation, excitement, and open contempt for the Spanish in Robert Wilson's *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (printed 1590) are perhaps closer than Lyly's attitudes to those of the average theatregoer in 1589'.[169] 'Wilson belonged to the acting company of the Earl of Leicester, who aspired until his death in 1588 to be viceroy of the Netherlands, and who may have been behind the House of Commons' attempt to dictate a hard line in foreign policy. Wilson's mood of impatience with social corruptions in his earlier, *The Three Ladies of London* (early 1580s), has given way to a model of exuberant defiance'.[170] This quasi-allegorical play 'is set in near-contemporary London, but it included a representation of the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588'.[171] As a dramatic genre, *Three Lords* is ritualistic and celebratory, 'close to civic street pageantry in its elaborately ornate spectacle'.[172] As Bergeron has made clear, pageants and royal entertainments were often politically motivated in the Tudor period.[173]

For the most part, by the late 1580s and early 1590s, the repertoire of the Queen's Men concentrated on plays based in chronicle history and legend. An emphasis on facts seems to be integral to the company's choice of these historically based plays, an obvious example being the *The True Tragedy of Richard III*. Even *Selimus*, Robert Greene's response to Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, claims truth – not to the English past but to that of the east – drawing on a chronicle history of the Ottoman Empire.[174]

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165 Chambers has suggested that these last two may have been parts of Tarlton's *Seven Deadly Sins* (*Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 2, p. 107).

166 Ibid.

167 Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p. 204. One part was led by the Duttons and the other by Lan(e)ham and Symonds.

168 Hunter, *English Drama 1586–1642*, p. 103.

169 Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics*, p. 189.

170 Ibid.

171 Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and Elizabethan Performance of History*, p. 32.

172 Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics*, p. 191.

173 David Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry: 1558–1642* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971).

174 See *Selimus*, ed. W. Bang (Oxford, 1964). See also Walsh, *Shakespeare*, p. 32.

By 1594 the Queen's Men had given their last performance at court. 'In April 1594, they joined Sussex's Men for eight shows at the Rose … a little later that year we find the troupe in Coventry, and they went back to their regular touring patterns with undiminished energy for at least another five years'.[175] The last entry under their name in the *Annals of English Drama* is in 1595. By then they had been associated with up to 17 plays, eleven of them in print. Even allowing for the many uncertainties in dating, this list suggests some of the plays that could well have been in the Company's repertoire on their various visits to Stratford as well as to neighbouring Coventry. The Company that visited Stratford in 1597 under the name of the Queen's Men is likely to have been a very different group than on their earlier visits.[176] Certainly a great deal had changed in relation to playing in London where, in 1594, a joint monopoly over the right to perform in the playhouses was granted to the newly formed Chamberlain's Men and Admiral's Men.

Histories in the Provinces

This is not the place to offer a detailed analysis of all the surviving plays in the repertoire of the Queen's Men. Like the plays in the court repertoire of the earlier decades, some of these plays obliquely expressed similar concerns about succession, an issue becoming more urgent as it was now clear that the aging Queen would remain unmarried. Some of their plays were concerned with the appropriate conduct of authority. Some of the plays on tour in the provinces also fulfilled a role in linking regional authority to the sense of national identity, and taking the tensions within this link very seriously. So, for example, in *The Troublesome Reign* we see the townsfolk trying to do the right thing in relation to the expectations both of their regional and their national masters.[177] This last example raises the importance of one particular genre in understanding the attention that the Queen's Men commanded in the provinces. As McMillin and MacLean argue, the most important genre in the repertoire of the Queen's Men was the English history play.[178] Indeed they go so far as to claim that with the English history play the Queen's Men 'hit upon the kind of drama that would revolutionize the theatre of the 1590s'.

As Dillon comments, 'Within a regime which forbids plays to dramatise matters of contemporary politics or religion, the apparently literal dramatisation of historical events and concerns can become a veil for

175 Ostovich, Syme and Griffin, *Locating the Queen's Men*, p. 6 and McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, pp. 184–8.
176 See Mulryne, Chapter 8, p. 182 above.
177 See Jones, Chapter 9, p. 214 above.
178 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, p. 35.

dramatising contemporary events and concerns.'[179] She also comments on the use of historically based entertainments/shows in the Elizabethan period in terms of their elements of contemporaneity and internationalism as well as allegory and strong political agendas.[180] Walsh qualifies such a sense of political topicality; almost without exception, 'scholars have tended to focus on the genre's topical relevance for Elizabethan … questions of national identity, kingly authority, and the interpellation of subjects', rather than taking account of 'the pleasure such plays offer and the range of intellectual power they exert, especially in regards to the concept of history itself'.[181] And, of course, 'of all the forms of history, performance alone supplies a pretense of sensual contact with the vanished past through the bodies that move and speak on the stage'.[182] So in playing *The Famous Victories*

> and other plays on history that draw much of their power from the present-tense centered presence of clowns such as Tarlton, the Queen's Men make awareness of history as an absence, as precisely what's not present in the presence of theatre, a central aspect of the experience of their plays and the consciousness of history they promote.[183]

Above all, the company's style was audience-orientated.

By the time of the Queen's Men's visits to Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakespeare would have been a young man in his twenties who had long since moved on from his former grammar school in Stratford. But it is tempting to assume that he heard reports of their performances or even returned to see them for himself.[184] He may, of course, have taken the opportunity to see them in the context of the rapidly expanding activities of the London playhouses. Four of the extant plays from the Queen's Men's repertoire seem to have provided extensive source materials for Shakespeare's plays: *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *The True Chronicle of King Leir*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, and *True Tragedy of Richard III*. It is not surprising that McMillin and MacLean are of the opinion that such 'appropriation' suggests insider information: 'Shakespeare knew the plays of this company better than those of any other company but his own, and the long-standing speculation that he may have begun his career with the Queen's Men seems to us the most likely possibility'.[185]

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179 Dillon, 'The Early Tudor History Play', p. 48. (Such an approach has recently been adopted in Eastern Europe where the staging of plays by Shakespeare has served as commentary on contemporary political choices.)

180 Dillon, 'The Early Tudor History Play', p. 42.

181 Walsh, *Shakespeare*, p. 2.

182 Ibid., p. 1.

183 Ibid., p. 4.

184 See Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the age: the life, mind and world of William Shakespeare* (London: Penguin Books, 2009).

185 McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men*, p. xv. The entry for *The Troublesome Reign* in the third edition of the *Annals* suggests that the debt was the other way round with the anonymous play drawing on Shakespeare's *King John*.

Stratford and the Development of Playing in England in the Late Elizabethan Period

Playing in the provinces was dependent on a whole intricate web of 'patronage networks'.[186] Moreover the audiences' taste for plays, in the provinces as well as in London, changed over the 30 years or so that are discussed in this chapter. There is a satisfying sense of progression that runs from moral interludes, translations of classical plays and plays drawing on the classics as source materials, chivalric romance, myths and legends to the tastes of the 1580s and 1590s in which a fascination for historical dramas took hold. But such an overview is far too simple. Some of the earlier entertainments, described as shows, may well have had historical (and topical) content. As ever, the developments ran alongside each other throughout the period.

Equally, the years in question are also those of the first phase of the development of playing in London, from inn yards to the large-scale public playhouses located just outside the walls of the City of London (from the conversion of the Red Lion in 1567 to the building of the first Globe in 1599). The demands made on the playing companies were increasingly commercial and increasingly subject to checks and balances. It was still the case that the Master of the Revels was able to summon companies to give royal performances, often drawn from their repertoire in the public playhouses. While regional companies were more closely linked to their patron's requirements – familial, local, religious and political – they also took opportunities to perform for the London audiences. A number of critics have sought to place touring companies and, in particular, the Queen's Men, at the cutting edge of political and religious performance content. Yet, 'taken as a whole, the repertory of the Queen's Men can hardly be reduced to a coherent political or even theological agenda'.[187] Commercial concerns can never have been far from the minds of the players, and London audiences were likely to be both more numerous and more lucrative.

Dillon points out that the 'early court play addressed a social and international elite, many of whom were active participants in the decision-making process of international politics, while the Elizabethan commercial-theatre history play addressed a popular audience that included those seen by government as potentially disruptive and rebellious'.[188] There is a similar distinction to be made on the touring circuit, too. We have no real sense of the average size of the audiences in Stratford in the late sixteenth century. The numbers probably ranged from the select few who attended the initial performance probably in the Guildhall for the purpose of licensing each play for local performance, to groups of several hundred. These audiences would have had far less regular access to plays than the London audiences.

186 Westfall, 'Theories of patronage theatre', in Paul Whitfield White and Suzanne R. Westfall (eds), *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage in Early Modern England*, p. 21.
187 Walsh, *Shakespeare*, p. 31.
188 Dillon, 'The Early Tudor History Play', p. 49.

They may also have had far less knowledge of political issues at a national level, both domestic and foreign. They would certainly have found their lives affected both by the local social hierarchy and by changes at national level in the government's policies on religious beliefs and, perhaps, by pressure to support foreign wars (both financially and with recruits). Plays would have offered a window on the relationship between the provincial population and national issues that could potentially affect the everyday lives of individual audience members. Audiences in the Guildhall and perhaps its courtyard, as well as in local inns and inn yards, would be very likely to have interpreted the plays that they saw in the context of their own relationship to local authority – even if such issues were implicit rather than explicit. It is, of course, possible that the companies would have made allusions to whichever local area they found themselves in. Such allusions could well have drawn the attention of the bailiff and aldermen licensing each play. Some improvisational elements may have been added in subsequent performances.

There is no doubt that the visiting companies included increasing numbers of history plays in their repertoires. These included classical history as well as English history (often including a European context) and stories of the Ottoman Empire. Their style for the most part, at least early in the period, was of chronical-style storytelling rather than of sophisticated thematic analysis. They seem, too, to have put emphasis on making the narratives easily approachable for the ordinary audience members, sometimes by the inclusion of ordinary, everyday characters commenting on the turns of fortune of the elite. What we see here is a real appreciation on the part of the playing companies for the ways in which different audiences could 'read' plays differently. A Queen's Men's play at court could well have been viewed in the context of current issues of state concern, while the inclusion of ordinary folk might have been viewed through patronising eyes as entertaining, perhaps even a little unsettling. In the London playhouses the popular repertoire may well have been viewed as political in that it could drum up a nationalistic pride in the country's achievements in an international context. In the provinces, as Ostovich, Syme and Griffin have pointed out, although the Queen's Men 'performed both ideological and diplomatic work, they would not have drawn audiences had they not also been hugely entertaining'.[189] The sense of occasion would have been enhanced by the use of costumes and spectacle, and the role of comedy would have been crucial. It is no surprise that the popularity of the Queen's Men declined after the death of their popular clown, Richard Tarlton.

Visits to Stratford by travelling companies declined steeply in the last years of the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth century. As Mulryne discusses in his chapter in this book, this decline is closely related to active decisions on the part of the town council to suppress playing. At

189 Ostovich, Syme and Griffin, *Locating the Queen's Men*, p. 16.

the same time it seems that the nearby authority of the City of Coventry was attracting not just companies that had been visiting on a fairly regular basis but the newly established London companies: the Admiral's Men (including Edward Alleyn among their players) and Hunsdon's Men under the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain (including Richard Burbage and William Shakespeare as well as Will Kemp). Nevertheless, in the crucial last decades of the sixteenth century, when professional playing was taking on an increasing social, economic and cultural role, Stratford-upon-Avon played its part.

Appendix 1

The Repertoires of Playing Companies Visiting Stratford-upon-Avon, 1568–1597

This Appendix should be read alongside Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 to Mulryne's chapter in this book. There is no record of the titles of any of the plays performed in Stratford in the relevant period. This list is based on the titles that were in the companies' repertoires in the appropriate years. It is indicative at best. The dating given here relies on the listing in the third edition of *The Annals of English Drama*, supplemented by Chambers, Gurr and Astington as well as by the work of McMillin and MacLean.

1568–9 The Queen's Players

John Smith led a company of tumblers and entertainers in the provinces. It is just possible that the company was made up of boys. No further details of repertoire are known.

1568–9 Worcester's Players

Provincial company: no details of their repertoire are known.

1572–3 Leicester's Players

Leicester's company performed at court in the early 1570:

26 December 1573 Anon., *Predor and Lucia.* Romance? Lost.

28 December 1573 Anon., *Mamillia*. Romance? Lost.[190]

190 By Christmas 1574/5 Anon., *Panecia*. Romance? Lost; Anon., *Philemon and Philecia*. Romance? Lost.

1574–5 Warwick's Players

Warwick's players were active at court in the years following their visit to Stratford.[191]

1574–5 Worcester's Players

Provincial company: no details of their repertoire are known.[192]

1576–7 Leicester's Players

30 December 1576 at court. Anon., *The Collier*. Comedy(?). Lost.

October 1577, at Bristol. Anon., *Mingo* [or *Mings*]. Lost.

1576–9 at the Theatre (?). Stephen Gosson, *Catiline's Conspiracies*. Didactic History. Lost.

1576–9 at the Theatre (?). Anon., *The Blacksmith's Daughter*. Heroical Romance. Lost.[193]

1576–7 Worcester's Players

Provincial company: no details of their repertoire are known.

1578–9 Lord Strange's Men

Probably tumblers.

1578–9 Countess of Essex's Players

11 February 1578 at court. No details of performance.[194]

1579–80 Derby's Players (fourth earl)

14 February 1580 at court. Anon, *The Soldan and the Duke of* – Historical Romance. Lost.[195]

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191 26 Dec. 1576 Anon., *The Painter's Daughter*. Romance? Lost; 18 Feb. 1577 Anon., *The Irish Knight*. Heroical Romance. Lost; 26 Dec. 1578 Anon., *The Three Sisters of Mantua*. Comedy? Lost; 1 March 1579 Anon., *The Knight in the Burning Rock*. Heroical Romance. Lost; 1578–80 Anon., *The Four Sons of Fabius*. Classical. Pseudo-History (?). also at the Theatre(?).

192 NB Aug. 1575 Royal Entertainment at Worcester. Lost.

193 4 Jan. 1579. Anon., *The Greek Maid*. Pastoral. Lost; 26 Dec. 1580 at court. Anon., *Delight* (same as *The Play of Plays and Pastimes* (1582)?). Comedy. Lost; 1581 (late 1570s–early 1580s: pub. 1584). Robert Wilson, *The Three Ladies of London*. Moral. Auspices unknown but assumed to be Leicester's; 1581–2 (written c. 1576–7). Stephen Gosson, *Captain Mario*. Comedy; 1581–2 (written 1576–7); Stephen Gosson, *Praise at Parting*. Moral Play; 10 Feb. 1583 at court. Anon., *Telomo* (poss. same as *Ptolome*, c. 1578). Lost.

194 That year it seems that Leicester hosted an entertainment for the Queen at Wanstead: Philip Sydney, 'The Lady of May' (limits 1578–82).

195 30 Dec. 1582 at court. Anon., *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*. Mythological Moral. Lost.

1580–1 Worcester's Players

Provincial company: no details of their repertoire are known.

1580–1 Berkeley's Players

6–12 July 1578 in Bristol. Anon., *What Mischief Worketh in the Mind of Man*. Moral. Lost.

1581–2 Worcester's Players

Provincial company: no details of their repertoire are known.

1582–3 Berkeley's Players

No further repertoire known beyond the 1580 entry in *Annals* (see above).

1582–3 Chandos' Players

Provincial company: no details of their repertoire are known.[196]

1583–4 Oxford's Players

c. 1583 John Lyly, *Campaspe*. Classical Legend (comedy). Oxford's Boys.

c. 1583 John Lyly, *Sappho and Phao*. Classical Legend (comedy). Oxford's Boys.

27 December 1584. Anon. (poss. De Vere, E.?), *Agamemnon and Ulysses*. Classical Legend. Lost.

1583–4 Worcester's Players

Provincial company: no details of their repertoire are known.

1583–4 Essex's Players (second earl)

No details of their repertoire are known.

1586 Sussex's Players

6 January 1583 at court. Anon., *A History of Ferrar*. Lost.[197]

196 May have taken part in entertainments for the Queen at Sudeley Castle in 1576 and 1592 (royal progresses). In *Annals* the 1592 entertainment is tentatively attributed to John Lyly (pp. 58–9).

197 A good deal is known of the earlier repertoire of a company under the patronage of Sussex, at court and in Bristol, from 1576–1580. See *Annals*, pp. 44–9. All the plays are lost.

1587 Queen's Men

Anon., *Clyomon and Clamydes*. Heroical Romance.[198]

1584 at court. Anon., *Phillyda and Corin*. Pastoral. Lost.

3 January 1585 at court. Anon., *Felix and Philiomena*. Pastoral. Lost.

By 23 February 1585 at court. Anon./ Tarlton R. (?), *Five Plays in One*. Moral. Lost.[199]

1586 (date limits 1583–88) Anon./ Tarlton, R. (?), Rowley, S. (?), *The Famous Victories of Henry V*. History. Queen's at Bull Inn. History.

1587–88 Queen's (?). Robert Greene, *Alphonsus, King of Aragon*. Historical Romance.

1587 Essex's Players

No details of their repertoire are known.

1587 Leicester's Players

1586 Thomas Churchyard, *Leicester's Services in Flanders*. Show. Lost.[200]

1587 Stafford's Players

No details of their repertoire are known.

1592 Queen's Men/1593 Queen's Men

NB: It is virtually impossible to distinguish between the plays in the repertoire of the Queen's Men in these years. This appendix lists the plays together, although it may well be the case that the company divided into two groups, perhaps triggered by the death of Tarlton (and, indeed, the death of the Earl of Leicester, original patron of at least three of the players) in 1588.

Plays from the 1587 list (above), plus:

Anon., *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (History. Queen's) could have been in the repertoire as early as 1587. It is usually dated as between 1587 and 1591.[201]

198 *Clyomon and Clamydes* (c. 1570), was in the repertoire of the Queen's Men in the late 1560s/early 1570s and was first printed in 1599. It was a chivalric piece telling the history of two valiant knights 'Syr Clyomon of the Golden Sheeld, sonne to the King of Denmarke: And Clamydes the white Knight, sonne to the King of Suauia' (Facsimile title page from the Malone Society Reprints Series, 1913). See *Annals*, pp. 42–3 and p. 215.

199 This piece, perhaps at least partly by Tarlton, who died in 1588, was 'revised as *I The Seven Deadley Sins*. c. 1590'. Also *Three Plays in One* was 'revised as *II The Seven Deadley Sins*, by Strange's, c. 1590 and as *Four Plays in One*, 6 March. 1592(?)'.

200 Some of Leicester's Men had been in the Netherlands during 1586 with entertainments including 'The Forces of Hercules', tumbling and dance. Lost.

201 The third edition of *Annals* describes it as 'A play in two parts; may be derived from Shakespeare's *Life and Death of King John*' (pp. 58–9). See Jones, Chapter 9 of this book.

c. 1589–90 Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Comedy. Strange's by 1592.

c. 1588–90 Robert Wilson, *The Three Lords and Ladies of London* (printed 1590).

Peele, *Old Wives' Tale* (not earlier than 1590 or later than 1594). *Annals* notes 'revised for provincial performance?'

Anon., *Selimus* (not earlier than 1591 or later than 1594).

1590 (1588–1594). Anon., *The True Chronicle of King Leir.* Legendary History.

1590 (1588–1594). Anon., *The True Tragedy of Richard III*. History.

c.1590. Anon., *The Scottish History of James IV*. Romantic Comedy. Queen's?

1591 Robert Greene (and S. Rowley?), *Orlando Furioso.* Romantic Comedy. Queen's and Strange's.

1591 (1590–1593) George Peele, *Edward I*. History. Queen's?

NB: By 1594 one branch of the Queen's Men joined Sussex's at the Rose.

1597 Queen's Men

It is very likely that this company, which visited Stratford 16–17 July, was formed from part of the divided Queen's Men. This is suggested by the level of payment. Mulryne, p. 182. No details of their repertoire are known, although they may have drawn on the repertoire listed above.

1597 Derby's Men (sixth earl)

1592–99 (date limits) Heywood, T. (?), and others (?), *I and II Edward IV* (See *The Siege of London*, 1599 add., and *The Tanner of Denmark*, 1592. History.)

1597 Ogle's Men

No details of their repertoire are known.

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The names of present-day scholars and the titles of journal and book length studies are not listed in this Index, nor are the primary sources on which they draw (with the exception of plays and tracts). This information will be found in the Bibliographies which follow each chapter. Footnotes (n. and nn.) are specified when they provide information not covered in the main text or when they significantly expand that information, but not otherwise. Factual appendices are normally not indexed. Names of individuals are selected on the basis of their relevance to the topics of this book.