

## Livestock belonging to All Saints Church

from Cox - Churchwarden's Accounts

In Pre-Reformation times and even after, gifts of livestock to the church were frequent. They were often retained and farmed out at so much the year, by the wardens, pledges being expected for their safe keeping.

Another form of livestock was hives of bees, but Birchington does not appear to have had any.

Birchington had sheep and cows and some of the Churchwardens income came from the farming out of these animals. In Pre-Reformation times this method of raising money gradually died out and is rarely found after Elizabethan times.

### From Churchwarden's Account Books.

The Churchwarden's Accounts open 1531/2 and some of the first entries relate to livestock.

There appears to have been a flock of 24 sheep let out to Rychard Cates and Harre Baker for iii's each – each sheep for 4d per year and also 5 cows, one each to Laurens Martyn, John Jonson and Thomas Lynkolle. Johne Cates and Johne Jonson at iis each.

e.g. 1532 – ltm of Rychard Cates for ferm of sceppe iii s

ltm of John Jonson for ferm of one kowe ii s

The total is about a quarter of the year's income.

From the Churchwarden's Accounts it appears that Birchington Church owned sheep and cows from this date and perhaps before up to 1624, but the numbers varied slightly from year to year, but the number of cows never seemed to be more than 2 or 3.

In 1535 a cow was sold for 14/11.

'1535 – ltm for one kowe that I have solde to Johne Harwood                      xiiiis xi d'

In 1541 the church owned 24 sheep let out for 8s, and 4 cows let out for 8s.

In 1542 a cow was bought for ii's.

'1542 – ltm layt to the bying of a kowe ii's'

In 1560 an Acol farmer is mentioned

'1560 – ltm rec of Rycharde Martyn of Acole for a kowe                      ii s'

In 1572 the number of sheep is mentioned

e.g. 1572 – ltm of Henrie Archer for viii sheepe                      ii viii d

ltm of John Leere for viii sheepe                      ii viii d

In the following year the word "ewes" is mentioned

1573 – ltm of Richard Reynold for viii ewes ii s viii d

It seems as if some farmers had the sheep for several years.

In 1575 the stock seemed to be reduced to 8 ewes and 1 cow.

e.g. 1575 – ltm of the said Rich Ranold for viii ewes iis viiid.

ltm of Martinn of Accolte for a cow iis.

In 1577 there seems to have been difficulty over the farming out of the sheep and probably there was a law suit, for there is this item:-

ltm of John Abier for the farme of Sheepe and the charges in our suite against him for the said sheepe.                      Xxxiiis iiiid.

In this year the church stock was renewed.

1577 – Itm for a cow to renew the stocke of the church by the consent  
of the whole p[ar]ishe XLs. (40s)

The next year the church possessed according to the receipts accounts xii ewes  
bringing in iii s and a cow farmed out to Martin of Accolte for ii s

In 1580 to 1598 the cost of the sheep renewed at Vs.

In 1598, 12 ewes brought in vi s

In that year the church owned 24 sheep and 1 cow  
12 of these were let to Henry Archer

In 1613 this Henry Archer was presented at the Archdeacon's Court for refusing to  
pay for the use of them and for refusing to restore them.

Arch Cant 25 p14 – Archdeacon's Visitation

1613 – We present Henry Archer of Monkton for that he hath now since the year  
1602 detained and kept in his hands twelve ewes, parcel of our church stock for  
which he was to pay yearly six shillings for the use of them, but he hath refused not  
only to pay yearly rent but to restore the said twelve ewes again to the parish.

Arch Cant 25. p16 – In 1621 Henry Archer was again presented “for he doth detain  
from the Parish Church of Birchington twelve sheep with the rent at sixpence the  
year being behind thirteen years.”

In 1606 Henry Archer paid xxiii s for '4 yeares' last Michaelmas of 12 ewes.

The last entries referring to livestock are as follows:-

1623 – Itm for ye farme of 12 ewes for one whole yeare of Henry Archer 0-6-0

What happened to the sheep is not clear.

They may have been sold, as in 1625 is this entry on the receipts side.

Itm of Geo. Stancombe Clerke for ye interest of iii? Of mony ye church stocke 0-4-9

This payment of 4/0 continued to be received for interest of “iii? of money ye church  
stocke” until 1632 when 3? was given to Mr Stancombe of the church stocke  
“towards the new building annexed to the church house wherein he now dwells.”

[what we would now call a Vicarage]

p41 – Henry Archer of the parish of Monkton was presented at court for not paying  
his cess towards the reparation of St. Nicholas at Wade 1616. [This obligation was  
because he held land in St Nicholas, as Monkton had no obligation towards St  
Nicholas in law.

The gifts of livestock to the church were frequent and although we have no actual  
documentary record of such gifts to Birchington Church, from early times up to the  
1600s Birchington Church owned sheep and cows.

The sheep and cows were retained and farmed out at so much per head for  
the year by the church wardens, pledges being expected for their safe custody.

From early times part of the income of the church was derived from the farming out  
of the sheep and cows. Occasionally the stock was renewed by the purchase of  
animals.

On more than one occasion the churchwardens were obliged to “prosecute” farmers  
for not paying the rent for the sheep or for not restoring them. When the  
Churchwarden's Accounts open in 1531 the church owned 5 cows and 24 sheep

which were farmed out, the sheep at 4d a head bringing in 8/- for the year, and the cows at 2/- each.

From C/W. Ac.

1532 – “Itm of Rychard Ca(n)tes for ferm of scheppe	iiiiis	
Itm of Harrie baker for ferm of Scheppe	iiiiis	
Itm of Laurens Martyn for ferm of one kowe	iis	etc.

In 1535 a “kowe” was sold for 14/11.

    This gives an idea of prices at that time.

In 1542 a “kowe” was bought for iis.

    “Itm layt to the bying of an kowe 11s.

The stock of cows seemed to vary from 2 to 5, & the stock of sheep from 8-24 ewes.

    In 1572 it is actually stated the sheep were farmed out at 4d each.

    From c/w’s Ac. 1572 – “Itm of Henry Archer for viii sheepe ii s viii d.

In 1573 the Churchwardens went to Court as a farmer did not pay the rent for the sheep. In the records of Archbishop Parker’s Visitation 1573 (see Arch Cant Vol 25) we learn that “John Abbeare hath viii sheepe in stocke of the church and he doth denye to pay the rente thereof.”

John Abbeare paid in the end as we read in the C/W Ac of 1577.

    “Itm of John Abier for the farme of sheepe and the changes in our suite against him for the said sheepe xxxiii s iiiii d”

A cow was then purchased to renew the church stock.

    1577 “Itm for a cow to renewe the stocke of the churche by the consent of the P[ar]ishe XLs.”

In 1580 the cost of farming a cow was increased to 3/- and sheep to 5d each.

1581 – from C.W’s A/c.

    “Itm of Rich Sherley for farme of a cow iiiis”

    “Itm of John Sherley for farme of (12) sheepe vs.”

Early in the 1600s the ewes were farmed to Henry Archer of Monkton, but it appears he did not pay for the use of them.

    In 1613 he was “presented” at the Archdeacon’s Court for refusing to pay for the use of them and for refusing to restore them. In the records of the Archdeacon of Canterbury’s Visitation we read (Arch Cant Vol 25).

    1613 “Further we present Henry Archer of Monkton for that he hath now since the year 1602 detained and kept in his lands twelve ewes, parcel of our church stock, for the which he was to pay yearly six shillings for the use of them, but he hath refused not only to pay the yearly rent but to restore the said twelve ewes again to the parish” (Fol 8)

    In 1621 Henry Archer was again “presented” by the Churchwardens for non-payment for we read in the Archdeacon’s Visitation records for the year 1621 –

    (Arch Cant Vol 25) “1621 we present Henry Archer for that he doth detain from the Parish Church of Birchington twelve sheep, with the rent at sixpence the year, being behind thirteen years.” (Fol 28)

    From his we learn that the rental had increased to 6d per ewe per year. Whether Henry Archer paid we do not know for after the year 1624 there is no further mention of the church stock.

The last entry is:-

    1624 “for ye farme of 12 ewes for one whole yeare 0-6-0.