

Richard Tollet and Thomas Cornish: two West Country early Tudor churchmen

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On 26 April 1528, John Gibbons, chancellor of Exeter Cathedral, was presented to the vicarage of Plymouth. The institution was essentially in common form, but also contained one additional and unconventional comment, describing the deceased incumbent. The anonymous clerk writing the register noted that the benefice had fallen vacant *per mortem venerabilis et iurisperitissimi viri M. Ricardi Tollet legum doctoris*.¹ These words serve as an obituary comment on a man who for almost two decades had played an active part in the administration of the diocese, without attracting fame or notoriety either within it or outside it. The Exeter records for this period are sufficiently full to show the range of tasks which this involved, and Tollet's life is worth examining to illustrate both the career structure of the middle ranks of the clergy and the workings of ecclesiastical administration in the decades before the English reformation. He served as archdeacon of Barnstaple, was one of the bishop's vicars-general, and played an active part in the life of the cathedral chapter. There are certain areas of administration in which he was not involved, but the gaps can be filled by examining the career of Thomas Cornish in the substantial records of Wells, where he ended his career as precentor, as well as serving as a suffragan bishop.

Tollet's family background is unknown, although his will shows that he must have had at least one brother and at least two sisters. Unlike many of the Exeter diocesan clergy, who frequently were local men, he was not originally from the south-west, for in the record of his ordinations, he is noted as an outsider. Unfortunately the registers display a discrepancy – that of his ordination as acolyte in June 1509 states that he was from the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, while those of his promotions to holy orders between September 1509 and March 1510, give his diocese of origin as Worcester.² His earliest recorded benefice, however, was a

prebend at Lichfield, to which he was admitted in 1501, so it is perhaps more probable that he originated in that diocese.³ He was admitted to this, however, by Bishop John Arundel, a Cornishman, who was later to return to the south-west to the see of Exeter for the last two years of his life. Arundel brought some diocesan officials with him when he moved south, and these may have included his successor Oldham, during whose episcopate Tollet received his earliest preferment in the diocese of Exeter. As Tollet was to ask in his will to be buried next to Oldham's chapel in the cathedral there, it is quite probable that he had a sense of loyalty and friendship to the older man.⁴ Oldham was also a friend of bishop William Smith of Lincoln, who conferred benefices on Tollet in 1505 and 1508, at Branston, Leicestershire and Ellington, Huntingdonshire. The connection of Tollet with Ramsey Abbey, which was patron of the latter, is unknown, but it may be significant that the former was in the king's patronage.⁵ As both Smith and Oldham were in the circle of the king's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, it is not unreasonable to suggest that their influence was at work in obtaining Tollet royal favour.⁶ Tollet also held the benefice of Wilmcote, Warwickshire, where he was described as vicar in the record of his ordination as a deacon in December 1509.⁷ At some stage – the date is not known, but most probably before he moved to the south-west – he also was granted a chantry in the church of Rousham, Oxfordshire, although he did not reside there, and a visitation record stated that it was scarcely worth 40s.⁸ Well before this date, Tollet had already embarked on his legal studies – he was a B.C.L. of Oxford by 1500, and in 1503–4 he incorporated as an LL.D. at Cambridge, so he may well have been recognised as a rising young man.⁹ He did not, however, obtain any benefices in the south-west until May 1509, when he was granted a prebend in the collegiate church of St Teath, Cornwall.¹⁰ He must already, however, have been involved in diocesan administration at Exeter, because a payment of money from him was recorded by Oldham's receiver on 14 July 1508.¹¹

By this time he had clearly committed himself to a clerical career, for he received the highest of the minor orders, that of acolyte, in June 1509 and at successive ordinations between then and March 1510 advanced to the subdiaconate, the diaconate and the priesthood. By this time he was already serving in Oldham's administration, being recorded as vicar-general for the first time on 31 August 1509.¹² He presided over the bishop's consistory court on 25 September in the examination of a witness in a matrimonial suit, and on the death of Thomas Hobbys was collated to a prebend in Exeter Cathedral on 29 October 1509, in time to participate in the second decanal election of that year.¹³ He remained

as a vicar-general and admitted a candidate to a benefice on 1 January 1510, but he was not the sole holder of this office, because the cathedral dean, John Veysey is also recorded as serving in this capacity at the same time. Indeed it is clear from the diocesan records that it was normal to have more than one man holding this post concurrently. At the end of January he was in London, from where he made a payment to the bishop's receiver for legal expenses.¹⁴

Most of his time, however, was spent in the diocese, where he is frequently seen serving as one of the vicars-general. At some unidentified date, he also served as the bishop's commissary in Cornwall.¹⁵ He made various admissions to benefices between 12 July and 3 September 1510, although on 1 October Richard Norton was described as holding the post.¹⁶ Thereafter he does not appear to have acted in this capacity until late 1514,¹⁷ although he still remained active in diocesan legal activity. In 1511 he served as Wolsey's proctor when the latter was admitted to the parish of Great Torrington,¹⁸ and on two occasions, in October 1512 and April 1513, the consistory court met in his house to examine witnesses.¹⁹ He also sat as a member of the episcopal consistory which sat with the bishop in January 1515 in heresy proceedings against a certain Otto Corbyn.²⁰

During these years, he was rewarded with the grant of sundry benefices, including the rectories of St Breocke and St Erme in Cornwall, in May 1510 and May 1511 respectively.²¹ In 1511 a papal bull authorised him to unite the former with his prebend at St Teath.²² More indicative of his status in the diocese was his appointment to various offices, the precentorship of the collegiate church of Crediton, which he held from April 1513 to June 1518, when he resigned it (although retaining a canonry in the college), the subdeanery of Exeter Cathedral, to which he was collated in May 1515, though he vacated it by April 1518, and the archdeaconry of Barnstaple, to which he was appointed in January 1518 and which he held until his death.²³ These posts were in the bishop's patronage, a further indication of his closeness to Oldham.

Oldham's death and the succession of John Veysey as bishop saw a renewal of Tollet's commission as vicar-general in November 1519.²⁴ In the following January he served as the bishop's commissary to carry out the election of the prioress of Corneworthy, and over the next few years there are regular references to him carrying out the duties of vicar-general, which he shared at different times with various people.²⁵ Bishop Veysey renewed the commissions to his vicars-general regularly; Tollet received a new commission, along with Richard Norton and Thomas Brerwood in May 1521, and was again appointed, along with Thomas Wyse in April 1523, because the bishop was due to attend convocation.²⁶ The

practical advantages of having the office shared were well demonstrated in July 1522 when Brerwood was available to collate Tollet to the vicarage of Cullompton. This benefice was in the presentation of prior and convent of St Nicholas, Exeter, but on this occasion they had conceded the benefice to John Callwoodlegh. Again in January 1526, Tollet announced his intention to Brerwood (both of them being given the title of vicar-general) of travelling to visit a parish which he still held at Holy Trinity, Coventry.²⁷ He may well not have travelled to the Midlands immediately, possibly because of difficulties in making the journey in winter, for he is recorded as making an admission as vicar-general on 28 February, but does not do so again for almost eight weeks, on 24 April.²⁸ He continued actively in this role until the summer of 1527, but there is no record of him performing duties after 5 August in that year; Brerwood certainly made an admission on 12 August, and Tollet is not mentioned by name thereafter.²⁹

Admissions were one of vicar-general's main responsibilities, but he also exercised administrative authority on the bishop's behalf when he commanded the diocesan suffragan bishop to conduct ordinations, or to bless a newly elected abbot.³⁰ While only a man in episcopal orders could perform the sacrament, Tollet was involved in ensuring that the ordinands were suitable persons. In an ordination record in September 1525 it was noted that Tollet had examined Martin Robert of Totnes, one of four monks who was receiving ordination as a priest.³¹ One suspects that he also checked on the suitability of the person concerned when in June 1520 he granted licence to an unnamed Dominican friar of Exeter to preach in the diocese, provided that he did not do so when the rectors or vicars of the church wished to do so.³²

Much diocesan business involved routine handling of problems as they arose, and an active man such as Tollet could ensure that the Church's day to day business would be carried on. He is recorded as commanding men to serve in a parish (and sequestering the goods of a rectory when a cure was left unserved), giving leave to a beneficed priest to negotiate for a pension, issuing commands to the precentor and college of Crediton to observe statutes which had been issued by bishop Oldham, but which were not currently being obeyed, and commissioning two vicars to investigate reports of defects in another church.³³ When a parish priest, Richard Huntingdon, went blind, the bishop ordered Tollet and Thomas Sotheron to appoint coadjutors for him in the two benefices which he held.³⁴ Presumably, as an archdeacon, he was involved in visitations within the diocese – certainly the bishop issued mandates to his archdeacons to carry these out.³⁵ He and three of his fellow canons were even involved in resolving a dispute between the dean and chapter of

Wells and the prioress and convent of Buckland over the right to tithes and offerings of their churches during vacancies, finding in favour of the nuns and ordering that the canons make a payment to the costs of the suit. It is not quite clear why the case was heard before a group of Exeter clergy as the chapter, the convent and benefice specifically mentioned in the suit all lay within the diocese of Bath and Wells.³⁶

Tollet presumably played a part in the life of the Exeter chapter from the time of his admission to it, and the survival of the capitular act-book from 1521 onwards gives some indication of what his duties were. In 1521 he was elected as one of the stewards of the chapter exchequer and was re-elected a year later.³⁷ On a number of occasions during these years, in the absence of the dean, he presided at chapter meetings.³⁸ In July 1524 he was allowed fourteen days leave of absence to ride (at his own expense), to supervise various chapter properties at Ide and Dawlish, and eighteen months later he was engaged in negotiations with the widow of a former mayor of Exeter for money to be left to the chapter for obits for herself and her husband.³⁹ His personal associations and friendships within the chapter were brought out when he named two of his fellow canons as his executors.⁴⁰

Like other middle ranking churchmen of the period, he received substantial rewards of office. Various of his earlier benefices have already been noted, and there is no record of when he obtained the vicarage of Plymouth, in the presentation of the prior of Plympton, or the rectory of Lanivet, Cornwall, in the presentation of Sir William Courtenay, both of which he held at the time of his death.⁴¹ In 1524 he was granted a prebend in the collegiate church of St Crantock, although he resigned this within a year, retaining, however, an annual pension of four marks.⁴² He was able to live comfortably; the assessment of his property in Henry VIII's Military Survey of 1522 noted that he had £120 in goods, and had nine servants, including a personal chaplain.⁴³ Only one of the other canons had as many servants – around five was more common – but the majority of them had rather more valuable goods.⁴⁴

Tollet's will, made on 27 March 1528, about a month before his death, was mainly in English, although occasionally it slips into Latin, possibly because in his professional duties he was equally accustomed to thinking in it. Its contents suggest that he was a man of modest affluence, but one who had no wish to flaunt the fact. He left £3 to the fabric of the cathedral and 30s. to the common chest there, and also made a bequest of £4 to the collegiate church of Crediton. He left three payments of £10 each to the repair of roads and highways, perhaps significantly all in areas where he had held benefices, between Plymouth and Ashburton, between Exeter and Crediton, and between Exeter and Cullompton. This

might well reflect the activity of a man whose work had kept him constantly on the move through a busy working life, and suggests that he made some attempt to visit his various benefices. He left his legal books and sundry items of bedding to a nephew Roger, and bequeathed him £10, in the hands of the archdeacon of Northumberland Dr Robert Davell, 'to fynde hym to scole', but Roger does not appear to have shared his uncle's ability. He was ordained as an acolyte in March 1528, shortly before Richard's death,⁴⁵ but there is no record of him as a graduate of either Oxford or Cambridge, so he does not appear to have pursued his studies further. Roger's brother Richard also received a bequest from his uncle and namesake. Two other nephews are mentioned in the will, presumably, from their differing surnames, the sons of two of his sisters; one of these, 'Hydley', was left £8 'to fynde hym to lernyng' but the other, Richard Atwill, was left items of silver plate.⁴⁶

The remainder of the will consists largely of personal bequests, including the gift of a gilt cup with a cover and St George on the top to Bishop Veysey, whom he asked to assist his executors. Apart from the gifts to road repairs there are no institutional endowments nor is there any long term provision for services to be said after his death. Members of his household were particular beneficiaries. He bequeathed 40s. and a featherbed, with a bolster, a pair of good blankets, two pairs of coarse sheets and a coverlet to his priest, Sir Tryggis, and asked that each of his servants be left half a year's wages. One of these, Lancelot Harnage, was also left a bed and its appurtenances and some items of plate, and he additionally bequeathed a silver bowl and six silver spoons to Lancelot's son Richard, to whom he was godfather. There is no indication of what his connection was with Thomas Chartsey of Chelmsford, described as the brother of William Chartsey, grocer of London, and William's wife Elizabeth, who received respectively £8 and a gilt goblet, but they may have been unidentified relatives. All that he requested by way of commemoration was that obits be said for him in three places, Plymouth, Cullompton and 'Lambret',⁴⁷ and that the balance of his goods after his bequests had been paid, should be disposed for the good of his soul at the discretion of his executors. At the end he wrote 'and thus committe my soule to the mercy of god'. Davell and two of his fellow canons, Thomas Michell and William Parkhouse, were his executors. All of these received bequests of plate. What Davell's association with Tollet was is not known, nor indeed are the details of his career clear, not least because the Durham registers are missing between 1501 and 1530.⁴⁸

Tollet's functions in the Church were organisational, and he could not perform certain important spiritual functions, namely those associated with the possession of episcopal orders, such as ordination, confirmation

and the conferment of episcopal blessings. Administratively he was superior to the suffragan bishops who possessed these powers, although spiritually he was of a lower grade. The careers of most suffragan bishops are hard to trace, although a number can be identified who were heads of monastic houses. Some, however, were drawn from secular clergy, and in one such, Thomas Cornish, titular bishop of Tenos, who was about a generation older than Tollet, one can see a man who had certain parallels to him, and who appears to have been equally industrious in performing his duties.

He probably originated in Wells, where he obtained his first recorded benefice, the mastership of the hospital of St John the Baptist, in August 1483, to which he was collated by Bishop Robert Stillington, to whom the right had fallen because the normal patron had failed to make a nomination within six months of it falling vacant. Cornish evidently remembered Stillington with gratitude, because in May 1491 he sought and obtained leave from the Wells chapter to say the office at Stillington's burial, despite the fact that the latter had died in disgrace.⁴⁹ The toponymic character of Cornish's name suggests an origin from the far south-west, but the Wells civic records show that several men with that surname were already settled there by the mid-fifteenth century. A John Cornish obtained the freedom of the city by marrying the daughter of a burgess in 1423, and a Henry Cornish was admitted to it by the same method in 1453. Another John, described as a baker of 'Corscomb' (Croscombe, some three miles east of Wells) was admitted in 1471, and another Henry, also a baker, married a burgess's daughter in 1490.⁵⁰ It is impossible to ascertain what, if any, were the ties of kinship among these men, but it seems likely that Bishop Thomas was related to some or all of them.

He probably also had lay relations in the city during his own lifetime. The grant of the freedom of Wells by patrimony in 1518, five years after the bishop's death, to another Thomas Cornish proves that the family was now well-established there, and the shared Christian name makes kinship with the bishop probable.⁵¹ In the bishop's will, the only kindred whose relationships are clearly identified are two nieces, one living in Bristol and one in Taunton, and a nephew, John Welshote, who was one of his executors. In the will, however, there are two beneficiaries of this latter name, differentiated as the son of John and the son of Thomas. It was probably John, son of John, who was the bishop's executor, as he received a bequest of six or eight of Cornish's best books, a gift most likely to be left to a man of some education, although not apparently a churchman, who might be expected to be able to cope with the problems of executry.⁵² The connection between the suffragan and the Welshot

family was evidently a close one – in 1511 the vicars-choral of the cathedral granted a lease of eighteen and a half acres of land to Cornish and John Welshot of Wells, mercer, and in 1512 John Tyler, a clothmaker of Wells, appointed both the bishop and John Welshot, mercer and burgess, as his executors to dispose of goods for the benefit of his soul.⁵³

Like Tollet, Cornish began his ecclesiastical career with academic training. He was educated at Oxford, and was a fellow of Oriel between 1475 and 1484, holding various college offices, as a collector of rents and as junior and later senior treasurer.⁵⁴ The dates of his degrees are not known, but he is recorded as an M.A. in a notarial document of 1479.⁵⁵ He was apparently recalled to Oxford when he was elected as provost of the college in 1493, holding the post till 1507 when he resigned.⁵⁶ In fact he still seems to have spent much of his time outside Oxford, and in 1504 his absence was clearly noted, for the college restricted the commons which he could obtain to the times when he was actually resident. He had some disputes with the fellows over whether he had a casting vote in the election of new fellows, and he certainly was present at such an election in August 1507.⁵⁷ Although his name appears in various legal documents as provost, there is little sign that he played an active part in college life.⁵⁸ He does not appear to have taken a degree in one of the higher faculties, although the only surviving book which he is known to have possessed, now Lincoln's Inn MS. 70, *Liber altercationum Christianae Philosophiae contra erroneas et seductiles paganorum philosophorum versucias*, suggests that his interests were more likely to be theological than legal.⁵⁹ Although he bequeathed certain books in his will, their titles are not given.

As already noted, his first benefice in the diocese of Bath and Wells was the hospital of St John Baptist in Wells, which he obtained in 1483 and in the following year he was granted the parish benefice of Backwell.⁶⁰ His career may have seemed promising in the reign of Richard III, as his patron Stillington was in the king's favour, and an entry on the patent roll suggests that he exchanged Backwell for the church of St Pierre outside Calais in December 1484.⁶¹ Nothing may, however, have come of this, because in November 1485, when Backwell was conferred on John Newlande, it was noted that it had been vacated by Cornish's resignation.⁶²

In 1485, however, he was created bishop of Tenos, probably on Stillington's recommendation. The bull of provision, of 16 September, was accompanied by an indult of the same day, in which it was noted that he could not reside in his see as it was in *partibus infidelium*, and granted him permission to exercise his pontifical offices in the diocese of Bath

and elsewhere when requested to do so by the diocesans. On the following day he was given faculty to be consecrated by any bishop of his choice.⁶³ He was probably consecrated between November 1485 and March 1486, for he conducted an ordination for Stillington in the latter month.⁶⁴ He was still described as elect of Tenos in a bull of July 1486 which dispensed him to hold a third benefice, even a monastery, along with the hospital of St John and the parish church of Backwell, but this had presumably been sought before both his consecration and his resignation of Backwell in November 1485.⁶⁵ Delays in communication between England and Rome probably explain why the bull still described him by his earlier title as late as July 1486. In the following summer, he conducted an ordination in the diocese of Exeter as suffragan for Richard Fox and indeed held several more on his behalf there between 1487 and 1492. When Fox moved briefly to Bath and Wells he continued to act on his behalf.⁶⁶ In June 1488 he also officiated on behalf of bishop Peter Courtenay of Winchester.⁶⁷ Association with these two bishops, both of whom were close to Henry VII, probably prevented his career from stumbling after Stillington fell foul of the new king. These were not his only episcopal duties, for is also recorded as preaching at the election of the prior of Barlinch in October 1488, blessing land for a cemetery, and reconciling graveyards which had been polluted by the effusion of blood.⁶⁸

These duties did not go unrewarded, and in 1491 he received a papal dispensation to hold benefices to a value not exceeding £100 in *commendam* along with his titular diocese.⁶⁹ Even before this, in December 1489, he had been granted the wardenship of the college of Ottery St Mary, which was in the collation of the bishop of Exeter,⁷⁰ and seems to have used this as his base in that diocese because it was there that he held ordinations on Fox's behalf, and later, in 1499, the canons of the college presented him to the parish church of Ipplepen.⁷¹ From 1494 he held a residentiary canonry at Wells but continued to live in St John's Hospital till 1502, because his canonical house assigned to him was ruinous.⁷² In fact he resigned the mastership of the hospital in 1497, although he still retained an annual pension of 20 marks, along with the chamber he had there.⁷³ He held various chapter offices, travelling to London on capitular business and acting as steward of the deanery during a vacancy in 1498.⁷⁴ He also occupied various major cathedral dignities; he was chancellor of Wells from 1499 till 1502, when he obtained the higher ranking post of precentor, and it is noteworthy that in his will he described himself by this title as well as his episcopal one.⁷⁵ Along with these, he accumulated a number of parish benefices in both dioceses where he served.⁷⁶

Wells was his main residence. When he was appointed to act as a papal judge-delegate in a matrimonial plea in 1490, along with the bishops of

Salisbury and Exeter, he was described as resident in Wells.⁷⁷ His only recorded service to the crown, membership of a commission *de wallis et fossatis* in 1505, was also, significantly, in the shire of Somerset.⁷⁸ He evidently had the friendship and respect of his fellows and his superiors, serving as an executor of John Vowell, another Wells canon, in 1502, and of Bishop Oliver King in 1503. A priest, Thomas Beamount, also from Wells, nominated Cornish as supervisor of his will in 1507.⁷⁹

Cornish died in 1513. His will is dated 31 March, and probate was granted on 20 July. He asked to be buried in the cathedral, and requested his executors to make a canopied tomb with a representation of the Resurrection. He made bequests to the common chest of the cathedral and to various places where he had held benefices, St John's Hospital, and the parish churches of St Cuthbert at Wells, St Andrew at Chew, St Andrew at Halberton and St Mary at Wedmore. Although he made no bequest to Oriel College, he did make one to one of the fellows there. His fellow cathedral clergy at Wells were left money to be present at his funeral and at his month-mind, the service thirty days after his death, and he made provision for his anniversary service to be kept in the cathedral. In the longer term, he instructed his executors to dispose of two properties which he owned to found a chantry at the altar of St Katherine in St Cuthbert's parish church. After naming his executors and supervisors of his will, he not only made monetary bequests to them, but also granted them, and those who helped them, forty days indulgence in virtue of the authority 'conferred upon me by God and the Church'.⁸⁰

There certainly are ways in which the careers of Tollet and Cornish reflect some of the abuses of the pre-Reformation Church. As pluralists, they were inevitably absentees from some at any rate of the benefices which they held. On the other hand, they were certainly not men who exploited the resources of the Church without giving service to it in return. They were industrious men in the offices which they held, and some of the provisions in their wills suggest that they may well have made some attempt to ensure that they did not lose touch with the life of those benefices which involved cure of souls. Tollet won the respect of those with whom he worked, being entrusted with responsible duties by his fellow canons, and receiving a favourable comment from the diocesan clerk who noted his death. Cornish equally was entrusted with responsibilities beyond the formal duties of conducting ordinations and other episcopal duties. And whatever criticisms were later launched by the reformers against the old order in the Church, it is worth noting that neither of these men seems to have attracted any accusations of personal failure. Although their roles were different, Tollet's being purely administrative and Cornish's also involving spiritual powers, there were

common features in their background, in that both had studied in the higher faculties of the universities, and it is clear that this was, if not an absolute prerequisite for ecclesiastical promotion, at least a valuable qualification for it. While neither of them reached the élite status of the diocesan episcopate, this was probably due to the fact that they had not attracted, possibly not even sought, the patronage of the Crown, which was essential for advancement to the top positions. But the bishops could appreciate their administrative and personal talents, and were happy to harness these to ensure that its day to day business of the Church was properly carried out. If the routine administration of the English Church on the eve of the Reformation was running smoothly, as it appears to have been, it was the hard-working and well-educated middle ranking clergy who ensured that this was the case.

Notes

1. D[evon] R[ecord] O[ffice], Reg[ister of Bishop John] Veysey, I. f. 35v.
2. DRO, Reg[ister of Hugh] Oldham, ff. 100, 101-IV, 103.
3. B[iographical] R[egister of the] U[niversity of] O[xford to 1500], ed. A. B. Emden (Oxford, 1957-59), III, p. 1882.
4. P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], PROB/11. f. 270.
5. L[incoln] RO, Reg[ister of William] Smith, ff. 254, 377v. I am grateful to the staff of the Lincolnshire Archives for verifying these references for me.
6. The connections between Smith and Oldham, and their association with Lady Margaret, are noted in A. A. Mumford, *Hugh Oldham* (1936), pp. 56-9.
7. Reg. Oldham, f. 101v.
8. *Lincoln Visitations*, 1517-31, I. ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, Lincoln Record Society, 33 (1940), 131. It is uncertain if this visitation took place in June 1517 or April-May 1520.
9. BRUO, III, p. 1882.
10. Reg. Oldham, ff. 34-4v.
11. Exeter Cathedral Library, D[ean] & C[hapter] MS. 3690 (Account Book of Richard Sydnor), f. 16v.
12. Reg. Oldham, f. 35.
13. *Ibid.*, ff. 35v-6. DRO, Consistory Court Deposition Book, c. 1511 (sic)-c. 1517. f. 198.
14. D. & C. MS. 3690, f. 16v.
15. Reg. Oldham, f. 47v.
16. *Ibid.*, ff. 41-IV.
17. *Ibid.*, ff. 57v-8v.
18. *Ibid.*, f. 42v. 14.
19. Consistory Court Deposition Book, c. 1511-c. 1517, ff. 283-6, 317-22. This was probably in the parish of St Martin, Exeter, as he left money in his will to the parson there for his dues. PRO, PROB 11/22 f. 270.

20. Reg. Oldham, f. 179v.
21. *Ibid.*, f. 40v, 43, 44.
22. *Ibid.*, ff. 43–3v.
23. *Ibid.*, ff. 50v, 60v, 74–4v, 76v–7.
24. Reg. Veysey, I. f. 1.
25. *Ibid.*, I. ff. 3–5, 5v, 6v, 8v–12v, 15v–17, 21–1v, 25.
26. *Ibid.*, II. ff. 8v–9, 16v.
27. *Ibid.*, I. ff. 12v, 26v.
28. *Ibid.*, I. ff. 27, 27v.
29. *Ibid.*, I. ff. 27v–9, 30–ov, 31v–3.
30. *Ibid.*, I. ff. 153v, 161, II. f. 20v.
31. *Ibid.*, I. f. 158.
32. *Ibid.*, II. f. 3.
33. *Ibid.*, II. ff. 1, 3, 4–4v, 6, 8–8v, 10v–12, 41v, 50v–1.
34. *Ibid.*, II. f. 13v.
35. *Ibid.*, II. f. 15.
36. H[istorical] M[anuscripts] C[ommission] Rept MSS. *Dean and Chapter of Wells*, II (1914), pp. 699–700. The name of the church is given in the record as ‘Kemersdon’, which most probably was Kemerton in Gloucestershire.
37. Exeter Cathedral Library, D. & C. MS. 3551, ff. 4v, 8v. The normal practice seems to have been that men served for two years.
38. *Ibid.*, ff. 5v, 7, 8.
39. *Ibid.*, f. 19v, 29v.
40. PRO, PROB 11/22, f. 270.
41. Reg. Veysey, I. ff. 35v, 36v.
42. *Ibid.*, I. ff. 21, 24v.
43. M. M. Rowe, ed. *Tudor Exeter* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 22 (1977)) p. 31.
44. *Ibid.*, 30–2.15.
45. Reg. Veysey, I. f. 164.
46. PRO, PROB 11/22, f. 270.
47. I cannot identify where this was, although it is certainly the name which appears in the register – possibly it is meant to be Lanivet, Cornwall, of which he held the rectory.
48. According to Emden, the reference in Tollet’s will is the earliest mention of him holding the archdeaconry, although the last previous recorded holder of it, Ralph Scrope, died in 1517. *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300–1541*, VI (ed. B. Jones, London, 1963) p. 115. J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500–1714* (Oxford, 1887–92), I, 375, gives an alternative spelling of the name as Dobell, and states that he was archdeacon from 1518. Emden, *Biographical Dictionary of the University of Oxford, 1500–1540* (Oxford, 1974), p. 170, does not identify Dobell with Davell but notes that the former was a bachelor of both canon and civil law. The fact that he was collated to the rectory of Silverton in Devon in 1531 suggests a southern connection for a man whose main career was in the North – in addition to the archdeaconry of Northumberland he was a prebendary of York from 1541 till his death in 1558. *Fasti*, VI, 57. His legal training may have been what connected him

with Tollet, although from the length of his career he was clearly a much younger man.

49. *Reg. Stillington and Fox*, ed. H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 52 (1937), pp. 119–20. *HMC Rept. MSS. Dean and Chapter of Wells*, II. 121.
50. *Wells City Charters*, ed. D. O. Shilton and R. Holworthy, *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 46 (1931), pp. 139, 148, 154, 160.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
52. *Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501–1530*, ed. F. W. Weaver, *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 19 (1903), pp. 168–9. The Wells freeman admissions of 1494 name a John Welshot who obtained the freedom by marrying a burgess's daughter, and it is possible, although this can only be conjectured, that this may have been a sister of the bishop and a daughter of one of the other Cornishes previously mentioned. Certainly a man admitted at that date might well have had an adult son in 1513. *Wells City Charters*, p. 162.
53. *HMC Rept. MSS. D. & C. Wells*, II. 698. *Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501–1530*, pp. 159–60.
54. *BRUO*, I. 491.
55. *Oriel College Records*, ed. C. L. Shadwell and H. E. Salter, *Oxford Hist. Soc.*, 85 (1926), p. 104.
56. *The Dean's Register of Oriel, 1446–1661*, ed. G. C. Richards and H. E. Salter, *Oxford Hist. Soc.*, 84 (1926), pp. 4, 15.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7, 12.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 10–11, 13–14; *Oriel College Records*, p. 141. His absence was also noted in the chancellor's register in 1505. *Registrum Cancellarii, 1498–1506*, ed. W. T. Mitchell, *Oxford Hist. Soc.*, New Ser., 27 (1980), p. 191.
59. *BRUO*, I. 492.
60. *Reg. Stillington and Fox*, pp. 119–20, 125.
61. *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1476–85*, p. 488.
62. *Reg. Stillington and Fox*, p. 134.
63. *Cal[endar of] Pap[al] Reg[isters]*, 1492–98, XVI, pp. cxvii–cxviii.
64. *Reg. Stillington and Fox*, p. xvii.
65. *Cal. Pap. Reg.*, 1484–92, XV, p. 75, See above, n. 62.
66. *DRO, Reg. Fox*, ff. 151–60. *Reg. Stillington and Fox*, p. xx.
67. *Hampshire RO, Reg. Courtenay*, f. 13.
68. *Reg. Stillington and Fox*, pp. 117, 193. *Reg. King and Castello*, ed. H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, *Som. Rec. Soc.*, 54 (1939), pp. 11, 16.
69. *Cal. Pap. Reg. 1484–92*, XIV, p. 41.
70. *Reg. Fox*, f. 120.
71. *DRO, Reg. Redman*, f. 9v.
72. *HMC Rept. MSS. D. & C. Wells*, II, pp. 138, 141, 167.
73. *Reg. King and Castello*, p. 23.
74. *HMC Rept. MSS. D. & C. Wells*, II, pp. 144, 151.
75. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 155, 167.
76. *BRUO*, I, p. 492.
77. *Cal. Pap. Reg.*, 1484–92, XV, p. 303.
78. *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1494–1505*, p. 423.
79. *Somerset Medieval Wills, 1501–30*, pp. 36, 45, 113.
80. *Ibid.*, pp. 167–9.