



# St. Margaret's Church

I P S W I C H

## The Commissioners' Return of 1552 on behalf of Edward VI

Although Henry VIII had made himself the head of the Church of England in 1535, services in this church, and across England, remained much as they had been under Catholicism. Henry never permitted the renunciation of Catholic doctrine or ceremony and reasserted this doctrine in The Act of Six Articles of 1539.

Edward, born in 1537, was the only son of Henry VIII. His mother was Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour. His education was provided by tutors who were influenced by the Protestant ideas spreading across from Europe, which, although rejected by Henry, had been warmly embraced by advisers such as Thomas Cromwell who was executed in 1540 during Henry's reign.



In 1543 Henry signed the Treaty of Greenwich bringing peace between England and Scotland through the betrothal of Edward to the seven month-old Mary, Queen of Scots. The Scots later repudiated the treaty and they renewed their alliance with the French, which led to an invasion of Scotland by Henry in 1544. This war was to continue into Edward's reign.

When Henry died in 1547 Edward VI became king at the age of nine and a Regency Council was appointed to exercise power on his behalf. His reign was to last just six years, but it brought about major religious and political change. The years were also marked by economic problems, partly due to the cost of the war with Scotland, and partly due to social unrest.

Edward, influenced by his Lord Protectors, Somerset and Northumberland, was much more radical than his father in his establishment of the Church of England in line with Protestantism. Services were required to be said in English rather than Latin, many of the liturgical furnishings and some items of precious metal were no longer used during the services, and clerics were no longer required to be celibate.

In 1549 the crown appointed Commissioners to demand that incumbents and churchwardens provided inventories of church valuables. Ostensibly this was to ensure that those items no longer in use were not removed from the church without the permission of the congregation, and that any money raised was used for the benefit of the parish. In effect, however, it was to enable the crown to establish the value of the items held by the church so that they could be removed and used to support the exchequer and to pay for the cost of wars.

The following is a transcript of the 1552 return for St Margaret's Church. Where necessary explanatory notes have been included for ease [*thus*], although most words when spoken will sound like their modern equivalent.

Saynt  
margarete

John Brend e Richarde  
Cattell churchwardens

Inne primis vij payer of chellis  
all gylte chellis one wayeth xix ownce  
the other wayeth xvj ownce  
Item one chrysmatory of sylver  
with gylte chellis one wayeth xvj ownce  
Item one pax of sylver gylte  
chellis one wayeth xvj ownce  
Edmunde Wythepowle  
William Hopton  
John Brend e Richarde  
Cattell churchwardens

## Saynt Margarete

John Brend and Richarde Cattell  
churchwardens.

Inn primis [primarily] vij payer [seven pairs] of  
challis [chalices] all gylte [gold or gold plate]  
wherof one wayeth xix ownce [19oz, 540g]...  
.... The others wayeth xvj ownce. [16oz, 450g].  
Itm [item] one crismetory [a chrismatory – a  
small receptacle containing consecrated oils  
used in religious rites] of silver parcel gylte  
[silver and gilded on part of the surface]  
waying xxij ownce [22oz, 624g].

Edmunde Wythepowle  
William Hopton  
John Brend e Richarde  
Cattell churchwardens

Item in thande of Edmunde  
Wythepowle Esquyer one  
sepulchre clothe e in  
velvet of redde velvet  
Item one cope of white  
satten of brydges  
Item one stayned linnen  
clothe for a crosse  
Item six alter clothes of  
playne cloth  
Item six alter clothes of  
diap  
Item one herse clothe  
of black worsted wt  
a crosse of tawny  
chamblatt  
Item one herse clothe  
of black worsted wt  
a crosse of red  
chamblatt  
Item one surpluse  
Item one rotchete  
Item six in the stepyll

Item in thande [the hands] of Edmunde  
Wythepowle esquyer [More recently known  
as Withipoll Esquire] one sepulchre clothe  
and iij [3]. of redde velvet. [possibly sold to  
this person]

Itm one cope [a long cloak worn by a priest] of  
whyght satten [white satin] of brydges  
[thought to be modern day Bruges]  
Itm one stayned linnen clothe for a crosse  
clothe [a banner attached to a processional  
cross]

Itm iij [4] alter clothes of playne cloth  
Itm iij [4] alter clothes of diap [unknown].  
Itm six .... towelle

Itm one playne towel  
Itm one carre [square, from the French carré]  
clothe of sylke

Itm one herse clothe of black worsted wt  
[with] a crosse of tawny chamblatt [used to  
cover a coffin]

Itm one other herse clothe of black worsted  
wt a crosse of red chamblatt

Itm one surpluse

Itm vj [6] rotchete [or rochet, a long white  
vestment]

Itm belles in the stepyll iij [4]



Solde by Thomas Whythynge  
 c. 1500. Sold to John Brend  
 one belle wayng cccij  
 quarteres xxvj li [pounds] [303 quarters 26  
 pounds, or over 75 cwt or about 4,000kg  
 which seems impossibly large for the time and  
 size of the church] for the some [sum] of  
 v<sup>li</sup>.vj<sup>s</sup>.vij<sup>d</sup>. [i.e. £5 6s. 8d., £5.33 or about  
 £2,750 in today's money]  
 Itm other churchgoodes solde by the  
 seyd John Brend & Rycharde  
 Battell to Robt etyngm of  
 Yppyswiche for the some of  
 ix<sup>li</sup>.vij<sup>d</sup>. [i.e. £9 0s. 8d., £9.03 or  
 about £5,000 in today's money]  
 Total (Smm) xiiij<sup>li</sup>.vij<sup>s</sup>.iiij<sup>d</sup>. [i.e. £14 7s. 4d.,  
 £14.37 or about £7,500 in today's money]  
 Dyd owt st pz in batte agynow  
 Willelmus Afozthij  
 En me Johes Holland by ind maffs to gooden

Solde by Thomas Whythynge and Henr.  
 Bryges to John Brende one belle wayng cccij  
 quarteres xxvj li [pounds] [303 quarters 26  
 pounds, or over 75 cwt or about 4,000kg  
 which seems impossibly large for the time and  
 size of the church] for the some [sum] of  
 v<sup>li</sup>.vj<sup>s</sup>.vij<sup>d</sup>. [i.e. £5 6s. 8d., £5.33 or about  
 £2,750 in today's money]  
 Itm other churchgoodes solde by the seyd  
 John Brend and Rycharde Battell to Robt  
 etyngm of Yppyswiche [Ipswich] for the  
 some of ix<sup>li</sup>.vij<sup>d</sup>. [i.e. £9 0s. 8d., £9.03 or  
 about £5,000 in today's money]  
 Total (Smm) xiiij<sup>li</sup>.vij<sup>s</sup>.iiij<sup>d</sup>. [i.e. £14 7s. 4d.,  
 £14.37 or about £7,500 in today's money]

Leyd owt by the seyd  
 churchwardens wt the assent of the hole  
 pysshe [whole parish] for repacon don in and  
 [here as a mediaeval ampersand] upon  
 [repairs done in and upon] the seyd church  
 in the ij<sup>de</sup>, iij<sup>de</sup>, iiij and v yeeve [the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>  
 and 5<sup>th</sup> years] of the reygne of [the] seyd  
 sovrayne lorde that nowe ys [i.e. Edward VI  
 is the present king] that ys to saye in Glasynge  
 of the wyndowes of the churche whiche weer  
 decayed wt (with) the great tempest of hayle,  
 pavyng and ledyng wt other necessary  
 repoacons [in glazing the windows of the  
 church which were decayed with the great  
 tempest of hail, paving and leading with other  
 necessary repairs].  
 Remaining clear [i.e. once payments have  
 been deducted] in the hande of the seyd  
 churchwardens iiij<sup>li</sup>.vij<sup>s</sup>.iiij<sup>d</sup>. [i.e. £4 7s. 4d.,  
 £4.37, or about £2,250 in today's money]

Leyd owt [laid out i.e. spent] by the seyd  
 churchwardens wt the assent of the hole  
 pysshe [whole parish] for repacon don in and  
 [here as a mediaeval ampersand] upon  
 [repairs done in and upon] the seyd church  
 in the ij<sup>de</sup>, iij<sup>de</sup>, iiij and v yeeve [the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>  
 and 5<sup>th</sup> years] of the reygne of [the] seyd  
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